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University Guidelines for Student-Owned Laptops

Issued by the CIO, June 22, 2009

These guidelines articulate how McGill incorporates student-owned laptops in its pedagogical, physical and financial planning. The essential elements informing these guidelines include:

a. Pedagogy
b. Responsible management of IT funds for student learning
c. Reasonable cost to students
d. Space
e. Appropriate infrastructure, software licensing, support and service

Context
Surveys show that the use of student-owned laptops has increased dramatically on campus. For example, in the First-Year Undergraduate Survey conducted by the Planning and Institutional Analysis Office, 68% of students reported laptop ownership in 2005-2006 compared to 82% in 2007-2008. This year’s numbers will likely show further increase.

There have been previous University discussions related to the need to develop a position related to this ownership, though no formal guidelines have been established. A study was conducted at the request of the CIO in 2006, the results of which were presented to the CIO and to the Teaching and Learning Space Work Group in 2007. One of the work groups of the Principal’s Task Force on Student Life and Learning was devoted to the “e-experience” of students and debated the need for a University program related to students’ use.

In parallel, IT Services has invested heavily in measures that acknowledge the use of laptops: a 3-year investment in ubiquitous wireless on campus which has increased the support level for laptops to an unprecedented level; the development of an iCare program that assists students (and staff) in how to configure laptops for safe network access; an investment in software site licenses, such as anti-virus software, that where possible include a license for use by students on student-owned equipment; the development of a lending program for laptops for students who need on-campus access; the development of a recommended laptop program for Engineering students.

To provide ongoing feedback to administrative groups, the CIO will ensure that questions related to laptop ownership and usage are regularly included in McGill surveys, such as the
First-Year Undergraduate Student Survey, and that the results are made available to the evaluation team for recommended student laptops, as well as the Teaching and Learning Space Working Group (TLSWG) and the University Teaching Labs Working Group (UTLWG).

This document reflects the best technological and pedagogical knowledge at this time; it will be reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate.

**Guidelines**

1) Student ownership requirements:
   a. McGill will not establish a university-wide mandatory student-owned laptop program at this time.
   b. Individual programs or Faculties may wish to have a mandatory program. In such cases, appropriate approvals are required from the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) who will consult as needed. Units with mandatory laptop programs are listed in the Appendix (to be maintained by the Office of the CIO).

2) Laptop standards
   a. The University will establish minimum standards for any student-owned laptop for connection to the McGill network and access to basic resources such as myCourses, Library resources and University email.
   b. The University will select recommended model(s) on an annual basis with appropriate lead time to accommodate prospective students. The evaluation process will include students and staff from a variety of disciplinary and administrative areas. The evaluation process will be managed by the Director, IT Customer Services and will be conducted in a transparent way according to published criteria. The published criteria should include student affordability and sustainability.
   c. The recommended models will qualify for preferred campus software and hardware support arrangements.
   d. If a unit wishes to select an alternative to the recommended model, it should do so in consultation with IT Customer Services so that the best arrangements for support and pricing may be obtained.

3) Laptop lending
   a. The University funds a laptop lending program delivered through Library service points. This program ensures access to computing resources for all students for academic needs, including those students who do not own a laptop. Details of the program will be posted by the Office of the CIO and the Library on an annual basis.
4) Laptop software
   a. The University, through the McGill Computer Store, will make software available at educational or volume prices where demand warrants.
   b. When purchasing software site licenses, the University should consider extending the licenses to student-owned laptops where vendor terms and budget makes them advantageous.

5) Laptops in the classroom
   a. The University has committed to having wireless access available in all classrooms.
   b. Each classroom instructor may set guidelines for the appropriate student use of computing resources in class. Recommended templates will be prepared by Teaching and Learning Services.
   c. Proposals for classroom renovations and redesigns should consider the impact of student laptop use on design requirements: furniture, power, lighting, networking, etc.

6) Laptops in teaching labs (computer or other)
   a. Teaching labs will not normally be equipped with University-owned laptops.
   b. Proposals for equipping teaching labs with new desktop machines should include a consideration of whether University-provided software for student-owned laptops would make it possible to reduce the number of University-owned desktop machines.
   c. Proposals for teaching lab renovations and redesigns should consider the impact of student laptop use on design requirements: furniture, power, lighting, networking, etc.

7) Laptops for exams
   a. The University currently provides software and lends laptops for exams for selected Faculties. Policy related to their use will be established by the Faculties and the Committee on Student Affairs, and implementation will be developed in consultation with the Library and IT Customer Services.
8) Laptops in public spaces
   a. The impact of student laptop use will be considered in the renovation or redesign of public spaces in conformance with the University Master Plan.

9) Laptop support levels
   a. The University provides basic support services as described in the Service Catalogue (www.mcgill.ca/it) for anti-virus and best practices for laptop connectivity for laptops that meet the minimum standards.
   b. For the University-recommended models, the University will facilitate provision of hardware servicing.

10) Laptop disposal program
    a. The University will facilitate the responsible disposition of student-owned laptops.

Appendix: Current mandatory laptop programs
None.

Appendix: Consultations

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<th>Academic Computing Working Group (subcommittee of Teaching and Learning Space Working Group)</th>
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<tr>
<td>TLSWG (Teaching and Learning Space Working Group) e-team</td>
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<td>Academic Planning Group</td>
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