

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

School of Media, Arts and Humanities

Computing equipment purchasing

MAH School computing equipment budget

The School equipment budget, ME004-02, is £81k for 23/24. These funds are used to purchase computing equipment, software and other items such as office furniture. We need to ensure that the budget is managed sensibly and there is a fair and transparent process in place for purchasing computing equipment for staff.

Current challenges facing the School

- Ageing desktop machines throughout MAH (at least 10 years old) – they are very slow and struggle to run new software
- Increasing numbers of non-practice staff requesting non-standard Apple machines as they are more compatible with their existing equipment/infrastructure
- Requests for tablets, e.g. to support research archive activity
- Requests for replacement high spec machines that were originally purchased via a research grant

Now that hybrid working has been introduced, ITS will only supply desktops if a special business case has been made and accepted. It is assumed that the majority of staff will use a laptop. It has been agreed that:

- The standard replacement machine for **non-practice** staff will be a Dell laptop. A 16GB Dell laptop and docking station (which will allow existing monitors to be used as an additional screen) costs around £1.3k (this is more than the retail price because the University pays for an extended warranty). A 16GB MacBook Air is slightly cheaper at just over £1.1k (but does not include a docking station, which can cost between £150 and £300)
- **Practice staff** – i.e. those in Creative and Critical Practice; Journalism; Music; Drama; Technical Services and digital humanities research may request non-standard, high power machines and/or specialist software, such as an Apple laptop, as the nature of their teaching and research activity is likely to require this. Most Apple MacBook Pro machines cost at least £2k, so there could be a maximum spend of £2-2.5k per member of staff. Note that ITS provides only limited support for Apple Mac machines so the more we buy, the more stretched our colleagues in ITS will be
- A special case – including a clear business case – must be made for non-standard machines, to be approved by the relevant Subject Head and Dean. The School [webform](#) should be completed to make such requests
- Equipment for specific **research projects** (e.g. film editing or sound recording equipment which is needed for a particular research output) is not covered by the School equipment budget, but may be eligible for funding from the School Research fund. You can find the application form for this [here](#).

Due to budget constraints:

- The School is unable to provide tablets to support research activity. Colleagues will instead be encouraged to use their laptops; e.g. when visiting archives
- It will not be possible to replace equipment purchased via a research grant once it has reached the end of its life. Additional research funding will have to be applied for.

Portfolio Liaison Group, 31st October 2023