

Technical Requirements for Computer Science Essentials

This document describes the hardware, software, and network requirements needed for PLTW Computer Science Essentials (CSE). It is divided into the following sections:

[Hardware Requirements](#)

[Allow Lists](#)

[Software Requirements](#)

[Additional PLTW Core Training Requirements](#)

[Questions](#)



Hardware Requirements

IMPORTANT: Please note that the following hardware requirements are common across ALL courses in the PLTW Computer Science program.

A computing platform is required for each teacher and for each student taking a computer science course. A desktop or laptop is the preferred platform.

Computer Specifications	Minimum	Recommended
Processor	Intel® or AMD processor 2.0 GHz +	Intel® or AMD processor 2.3 GHz +
RAM	4 GB +	8 GB +
Hard Drives	250 GB +	250 GB +
Video	Graphics 128 MB +	Graphics 256 MB +
Operating System	Windows 7, Windows 8.1, Windows 10, Windows 11 64-bit, or Apple device with macOS 13+	
Misc.	External mouse Headphones or earbuds	

Distance Learning: To accommodate distance learning environments, students may use a Chromebook in place of the recommended desktop or laptop. A Chromebook is not recommended for the teacher's computing platform.

Chromebook Specifications	Minimum
Processor	1.0 GHz +
RAM	4 GB +
Screen Size	11 inch +
On Board Storage	16 GB +
Operating System	Chrome OS current version (updated continuously)
Network	Wireless enabled (cellular/LTE not required)
Misc.	Graphics Integrated Bluetooth® USB port and drivers

Each classroom must have a digital projector with a screen (or equivalent classroom display hardware) including the appropriate cables, adapters, or software to connect to the teacher device.



Course-Specific Hardware Requirements

In addition to the common requirements above, CSE requires additional hardware.

Android™ tablets and iPads (new this year) are part of the CSE curriculum. Each teacher needs a tablet and one tablet for every two students is recommended.

Android Tablet Specifications	Minimum
Processor	1 GHz +
RAM	1 GB +
Screen Size	7 inch +
On Board Storage	16 GB
Network	Wireless network enabled (cellular/LTE not required)
Misc.	Front or rear facing camera Accelerometer Microphone Bluetooth® USB port and drivers

iPad Specifications	Minimum
Supported Models	Models that can update to iPadOS 13 or higher. See list of models.
Screen Size	7.9 inch +
On Board Storage	16 GB
Operating System	iOS 13 + (MIT App Inventor may work on iPadOS less than 13.0)
Network	Wireless network enabled (cellular/LTE not required)
Misc.	Front or rear facing camera Accelerometer Microphone Bluetooth® USB port and drivers

Note: Other equipment and supplies required for your classroom can be purchased from the PLTW Store. Please refer to the [PLTW Investment Tool](#) for more information.



Allow Lists

All teacher and student computers must have access to the internet. To comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), an unrestricted internet is prohibited at school sites. IT departments and/or school districts configure *allow lists* which contain approved domains, URLs, and IP addresses that school computers can access.

Collaborate with the appropriate group to confirm the allow list has been configured for all teacher and student computers.

NOTE: The Allow List below is a comprehensive list for all courses in the computer science program.

[General PLTW and CS Program Allow List.](#)

Distance Learning: If your school issues Chromebooks to students for distance learning, make sure to incorporate the Distance Learning Allow List as well.



Software Requirements

Your IT department or your school district usually installs software on school computers. Collaborate with the appropriate group to confirm the required software has been installed for all student and teacher computers, including the computer you will be using during core training.

Common Software Requirements

The following are the software requirements for all courses in the CS pathway.

Chrome or Firefox browser, latest version

End-of-Course Assessment software:

[Installation Guide for Windows](#)

[Installation Guide for Mac](#)

[Installation Guide for iPads](#)

[Installation Guide for Chromebooks](#)

Course-Specific Software Requirements

The following installations are required for Computer Science Essentials.

- [MIT App Inventor](#)
- [VEXcode EXP](#)
- [VEXcode V5](#) was previously used in this course. You may need to use VEXcode V5 if your school purchased Self Driving Vehicles before 2023. Core Training will utilize VEXcode EXP, which supports the current version of the Self Driving Vehicles.

Chrome Browser and/or Distance Learning: Students will need the “Talend API Tester” extension from the chrome web store. If students are to add the [extension themselves, make sure to add the chrome web store to your Allow List.](#)



Additional PLTW Core Training Requirements

In addition to the hardware, network, and software requirements identified above, PLTW Core Training has a few recommendations to make your learning experience the best possible.

Request administrative rights to your device(s). While this is not always possible, it is very useful to have if you need help troubleshooting issues.

Hardware for Core Training

A personal computer is required. See “Hardware Requirements” section.

A mobile device (preferably an Android™ or iOS tablet) is required for testing the apps you create during training. See “Hardware Requirements” section.

(For online Core Training only) A system with a full-size monitor is recommended, and a system with two monitors, one of which can be a laptop screen, is ideal.

Allow List for Core Training

If you are using your own computer and have open access to the internet, you will not need to configure the allow list for core training. If you are using a desktop or laptop provided by your school, you will most likely need to have the allow list configured on your device. Refer to the “Allow Lists” section for details.

Software for Core Training

Refer to the “Software Requirements” section for details.

Participant Supply List

You will receive a PLTW Core Training Welcome and Equipment Kit for your course. Your kit will be delivered to the address you provided at registration. It will include a welcome kit and a PLTW Computer Science Notebook.

Questions?

Our friendly PLTW Solution Center team members are here to answer any of your questions. Call us at 877.335.7589 for live, one-on-one support Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. ET. You can also email us at solutioncenter@pltw.org.

