

Before you start your SKE course:

In brief you will need the following for the course:

(See the next pages for more details about hardware and software)

✓ A desktop or laptop computer (PC or Mac)	essential
✓ A reliable Broadband internet connection	essential
✓ A headset with a USB connection including integrated microphone and noise-cancellation capability*	essential
✓ A webcam	desirable (especially for German course), but not essential

Guidance on home computer specification for SKE Participants

As a minimum, to study on the SKE course, you have to be able to:

- Use your University e-mail
- Access key University websites (including the Student web pages)
- Use the University's Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment
- Take part in remote tutorials (using Blackboard Collaborate online videoconferencing)
- Access the online Pebblepad software for the e-portfolio (for STEM courses) or online Rosetta Stone Catalyst 2 software (for Language courses)
- Access subscribed e-books and journals provided by CCCU Library Services

Computers with the specification shown on the following pages will allow you to carry out all of the activities listed above, plus other possible learning-related activities on your course.

This specification is primarily for Microsoft Windows PCs, the system used and supported by the University. However, if you use a Mac, ensure it has:

- an internet connection and the **Chrome web browser** (see next page).
- QuickTime to play .WMV files
- Office software: see note about Office 365 (page 3)

Whilst *some* features of the courses *may* be accessible via other devices, many are not. Therefore, **we do NOT support the following** as your primary mode of accessing the course:

- Tablets (whether iPad or Android)
- Smart phones
- Chromebooks

Internet Connection

You will need a **stable, reliable internet connection** to access the Blackboard VLE, other software and your University email from home.

Headset

- **For ALL our courses:** We specify a USB headset as listed above because it automatically switches off the internal speaker and microphone on your laptop or computer during use – otherwise the quality of online tutorials will be adversely affected for all participants.
- **For our language courses:** Speech-recognition technology is a key element of the course. For best results, the USB headset should be certified for speech recognition, either by the vendor or a third party. We recommend the microphone should easily adjust into a consistent position, one to two inches from the corner of your mouth.

Retailers, Brands & Prices

The University cannot recommend where you buy your PC from, or what makes to consider, except to suggest that:

- you buy from a well-known PC retailer you can trust so that, if something goes wrong, you easily have somewhere to go and get help.
- you buy a well-known make as you generally get what you pay for – cheaper, less well-known brands generally are less reliable.

Prices vary, but note from the specification below that you **do NOT need to buy a very expensive, 'high spec' PC.**

A low to middle-of-the-range PC will be fine. Look out for offers of whole packages (including monitor, keyboard, mouse, printer, software etc.) from known manufacturers.

Hardware Specification

Hardware	Minimum	Recommended
Processor	Desktop or laptop computer with a 1.5Ghz processor	2.0 Ghz+ multi-core processor
Memory (RAM)	At least 1 GB (Gigabyte) of available memory	4 GB+ is more than enough.
Hard Drive	50 GB minimum	120 GB+
Available Hard Disk Space	50 MB	100 MB +
Sound Card	A sound card for playing audio and video. (Almost all new PCs come with one.)	
Graphics	A minimum screen resolution of 1024x768	
Internet connection	Your PC must be capable of connecting and sustaining a reliable internet connection.	A fast broadband connection
USB Ports	You will need at least enough USB ports to connect any devices such as a USB headset, printer/scanner etc.	4 or more USB ports will be useful.
Headset (USB)	A comfortable headset with speakers and integrated, noise-cancelling microphone with wired USB connection. Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have stereo sound (NOT 7.1 surround sound). • Bluetooth connections will not work. 	Examples include Logitech PC Headset 960 USB and Microsoft Lifechat LX-3000 USB headset.
Webcam		<i>Especially for the German language course:</i> External or internal webcam
Scanner or digital camera	<i>For STEM courses only (for e-portfolio):</i> You will need a digital camera (eg mobile phone camera) or scanner to capture any hand-written work legibly to upload to the e-portfolio.	<i>For STEM courses (for e-portfolio):</i> Scanner with ability to create multiple page pdf files.

Software Specification

Software	Minimum	Recommended
Operating System	Windows 10 Mac OS 10.14+	
Supported Browsers	When accessing Blackboard, all users need to use Google Chrome. To download the latest version of Google Chrome: https://www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/browser	
Additional software: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word, • Excel, • Powerpoint, • Adobe Acrobat Reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the course, from time to time you will need to access files in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and PDF files using Adobe Acrobat Reader. These programs are available via the Student App Store for CCCU students <i>to use while they are studying at the University.</i> More about accessing the App Store can be found here: https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/current-students/it-services/software-and-online-services/free-software	Save to PDF: For STEM courses (Maths, Physics, Computing, Chemistry), we prefer that you save or print your e-portfolio evidence files to PDF format. This is built into the latest PC and Mac operating systems.
Anti-virus/ Internet Security	Anti-virus software – updated regularly. Sophos Anti-Virus is available via the Student App Store (see link above).	Internet security firewall software.