

Student Checklist for Online Technology Readiness

Being prepared with the right technology can make your online learning experience smoother, more reliable, and less stressful. This guide outlines the recommended minimum technology, software, and internet resources needed to access UHCL online courses and tools such as Canvas LMS, Echo360, Respondus LockDown Browser, web conferencing platforms, and more.

Tip: All UHCL computer labs meet or exceed these recommendations. If your personal device does not, consider completing online coursework in one of the labs when they are open.

Recommended Hardware

- **Computer:** A desktop or laptop less than **5 years old** is strongly recommended. Newer tablets or smartphones (also less than 5 years old) can work for some activities but have limitations (see *Using a Cell Phone or Tablet* below).
 - **Note:** Chromebooks are *not recommended* and may be incompatible with third-party tools used in Canvas.
- **Audio:** Headphones, earbuds, or speakers for listening to course videos and audio.
- **Webcam and Microphone:** Needed for activities requiring video participation (e.g., virtual class sessions) and for online proctoring tools such as Respondus Monitor.
 - If you lack external audio equipment, be sure your webcam includes a built-in microphone.

Recommended Software

- **Operating System:** Use the most recent version available for your device (e.g., Windows 11, macOS 15.6 Sequoia, iOS 26.2, etc.).
- **Web Browser:** Install and regularly update a supported browser:
 - Mozilla Firefox (latest version)
 - Google Chrome (latest version)
 - Microsoft Edge (latest version)
 - Apple Safari (latest version)

To confirm your device and browser are compatible with Canvas, review Instructure's official guide: [What are the browser and computer requirements for Instructure products?](#)

- **PDF Reader:** Adobe Acrobat Reader (latest version)
- **Productivity Tools:** [Office 365](#) (free for UHCL students)

Internet Requirements

- A **stable broadband internet connection** is strongly recommended.
- While a 56K dial-up connection may work for very basic tasks, it is **not sufficient** for video conferencing, streaming lectures, or online exams.
- Aim for a download speed of **512 kbps or higher**.
- If you share Wi-Fi with others (family, roommates, etc.), your connection quality may vary based on the number of devices in use.

Synchronous Online Meetings (Teams, etc.)

For live online class sessions, a reliable computer is essential. Phones and tablets may cause technical issues or limit your ability to participate. To improve your experience:

- Close all unused applications and browser tabs—this frees up memory and bandwidth.
- Turn your camera **off** unless your instructor requests otherwise.
- Keep your microphone **muted** until it is your turn to speak.
- Ask others in your home to pause high-bandwidth activities (e.g., streaming video, online gaming) during important class meetings.

Online Exam Proctoring

Some UHCL courses require online exam proctoring tools such as Respondus LockDown Browser or Respondus Monitor. These tools have additional requirements:

- A functioning webcam and microphone (built-in or USB-connected)
- Installation of a specific browser, plug-in, or the LockDown Browser application

More information is available on UHCL's **Online Proctoring Resources** page. Your instructor will provide specific proctoring instructions in the course syllabus or within Canvas.

Using a Cell Phone or Tablet

Canvas offers a mobile app — **Canvas Student** — available on iOS and Android devices. While useful for reading course content, checking announcements, or reviewing grades:

- The mobile app does **not** provide full Canvas functionality.
- Submitting assignments, quizzes, or completing exams may not work reliably.
- Accessing Canvas through a mobile browser has similar limitations.

For graded assignments, discussions, exams, and most course activities, plan to use a full-function desktop or laptop computer.
