

23 January 2020

**To whom it may concern**

Students in the BEng programmes make regular use of personal computers. All undergraduate students of the Engineering Faculty have access to the Faculty's computer users' area (FIRGA) for 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. In FIRGA all the software required in the BEng programmes is available, as well as internet access and printers.

Many students are, however, more productive if they have their own laptop or tablet at their place of residence. To access online learning materials, any device with a common web browser, will be adequate. However, when students write assignments, a laptop with typical office software (such as Microsoft Word and Excel), will save students the time of traveling to and from FIRGA. Any assistance to students for obtaining a tablet or computer for personal use, is therefore of substantial benefit.

The most demanding software in terms of computer resources, that all first year BEng students use, is Autodesk Inventor. Inventor's current minimum system requirements are a Windows 64-bit operating system, at least 8 Gb of RAM and a CPU speed of at least 2.5 GHz. In our experience a laptop with a current quad-core Intel I3 CPU and 8 Gb RAM has adequate computing power. The on-board Intel graphics processors for such computers are also adequate for using Inventor in our educational programmes. One should note, however, that with the continual growth in the demands that software place on the computer hardware, a computer with higher specifications is likely to remain productive for a longer time.

Stellenbosch University also participates in the national Student Technology Program (<http://www.stp.ac.za/>) which provides students with some benefits regarding a variety of computer options.

Student licenses are available for most of the software that BEng students need. [IT Student Services wiki](#) (access to this wiki requires a Stellenbosch University student or staff login) gives details about the software and services available to Stellenbosch University students for installation on their own device (for example MS Office 365 is available free of charge). The Engineering Faculty is also part of the Microsoft Ignite Premium program which makes certain Microsoft products available to our students at no cost or at a very low fee. More details here: <http://www.firga.sun.ac.za/microsoft.html>.

Sincerely



Prof AH Basson  
Vice-Dean: Teaching & Quality Assurance