



## Basic IT equipment for students

Do you intend to start your studies at Ulm University in the coming winter semester 2020/21 and are wondering whether you can continue to use your existing laptop or tablet or which device will best support you during your studies? Find answers to the most important questions about online teaching at Ulm University below.

### **Which device do I need? Desktop PC, laptop, convertible, Chromebook, tablet or smartphone?**

The number of device categories has increased considerably in recent years. In principle, the teaching-related software systems of Ulm University can be used with all equipment categories, although with some restrictions. We recommend that you do not rely solely on the use of a smartphone. Even the combined use of a smartphone and a tablet may not lead to the desired results. As an all-round device we recommend to use a laptop or a convertible with stylus pen with an up-to-date operating system, a screen size of at least 13 inches, a good (built-in) webcam, a good microphone and sound system.

### **What are the main criteria when choosing my device?**

The increased use of lecture recordings and video conferencing is also changing the requirements for laptops and tablets. Until now, weight, battery life, processor and storage capacity have been and continue to be important features.

Other important features for optimal participation in online teaching are:

- Camera and microphone:  
Through the increased use of video conferencing and lecture recording, the quality of the microphone, loudspeakers and video camera is moving further into the foreground. A good built-in camera with good light intensity and resolution is very helpful. It may be worth buying an external webcam with microphone.
- Headset:  
We recommend that you use a comfortable and high-quality headset. You will probably participate in courses via video conferencing fairly often this winter semester, and spend a relatively large amount of time watching and listening to lecture recordings when you are out and about or on campus.
- External hard drive:



Depending on your personal learning style, we also recommend that you download the video recordings of your lectures in order to be able to access them independently of an internet connection. It may be helpful to use an additional external hard drive with a high capacity.

## **Which operating system do I need – Android / iOS / iPadOS / macOS / Windows / Linux?**

The operating systems have also diversified considerably in recent years. As with the device categories, the same applies here that you can basically use the teaching-related software systems with all operating systems and an up-to-date browser. However, some restrictions may apply. Exclusive use of Android, iOS, iPadOS is certainly possible in individual cases depending on the field of study, but in principle not recommended. With an up-to-date Linux, macOS or Windows you are on the safe side. Individual subject-specific software may only be available for individual operating systems. Please ask your course advisor what special requirements apply to your study programme.

## **What criteria should my internet connection meet?**

- Internet connection at home:  
A LAN (wired) connection with a data rate of at least 10 Mbit/s and without limitation of the data volume is recommended. The download of video recordings involves large amounts of data.  
You can test the quality of your internet connection on this website: <http://speedtest.belwue.net/browser-speedtest/> Relevant for the fast download of large amounts of data is the information under Download. The larger that number, the better.
- Video conference via WLAN?  
For interactive video conferences we recommend a wired connection to your internet router. A wireless connection might be prone to signal propagation delays for various reasons, which can result in an unsatisfactory or poor quality of the video conference. Please also remember to deactivate the WLAN connection after you have established the ethernet connection.  
You can test the quality of your internet connection on this website: <http://speedtest.belwue.net/browser-speedtest/>  
Ulm University uses BigBlueButton (BBB) as a video conferencing system for teaching, and CISCO WebEx as an addition for individual use by students.  
We have compiled the most frequently asked questions & answers for both systems:

BBB:



For the optimal use of BigBlueButton we recommend using the open source web browser Chromium (<https://www.chromium.org>), or the web browser Google Chrome ([https://www.google.com/intl/de\\_de/chrome/](https://www.google.com/intl/de_de/chrome/)) if you already use that one.

FAQs about BBB

<https://www.uni-ulm.de/en/einrichtungen/e-learning/services/moodle/moodle-hilfe-tips/aktivitaeten-materialien/aktivitaet-bigbluebutton/faq-bigbluebutton/>

WebEx:

<https://www.uni-ulm.de/en/einrichtungen/kiz-covid-19-crisis/information-on-the-operation-of-services-during-covid-19-crisis/webex/>

## Troubleshooting

- Backup your data

Familiarise yourself early on with the backup functions of your operating system and make use of them, either with one or more external hard drives or via backup options from cloud providers.

- IT consultation hours:

The trained staff of the kiz advise members of the University e.g. on the purchase of PC hardware or the installation of operating systems and software programmes, help with the configuration of network access (WLAN, LAN, VPN), anti-virus solutions and the elimination of minor disturbances of all kinds.

The service is especially (but not exclusively) aimed at the users of mobile devices (notebooks, tablets) and is provided as a 'walk-in' service in the kiz office and not on site at the user's location.

<https://www.uni-ulm.de/en/einrichtungen/kiz/service-katalog/consulting-courses-support/itsprechstunde/>

- Help Desk

The Help Desk is the central contact point for questions regarding the kiz services as well as for reporting and solving problems and malfunctions in connection with these services. You can reach the Help Desk by phone at +49 731 / 50 - 30000 and via email at [helpdesk@uni-ulm.de](mailto:helpdesk@uni-ulm.de)