

Student Support Policy

Computing and Information Services- Fred Miller, Chief Information Officer

Title: C&IS Support For Student Computers

Applicable: Furman University (Students)

Contacts: Computer Help Desk ext. 3277

Background:

Current Practice:

Student machines are accepted by the Help Desk when any configuration, OS or software issue prevents the system from achieving an appropriate connection to the Furman network. Hardware issues are referred to local vendors, and machines not meeting minimum requirements may also be returned to students. Escalation assistance for this process is provided by professional staff from various C&IS areas.

Fall 2004 Experience:

In the Fall of 2004, C&IS implemented a network software/hardware solution named Perfigo/SmartEnforcer to scan student computers for updated anti-virus software and windows security patches. The requirement of fully updated virus-free systems, brought to light a number of problems that may otherwise have gone unnoticed. More than 200 student systems were brought to the Help Desk for support that year, with many requiring extended troubleshooting and multiple man-hours of professional time. We have endeavored to work on these systems often with multiple attempts to repair over several days. This time consuming troubleshooting has overwhelmed our support staff, requiring us to create a policy that limits the amount of man-hours spent on a single machine.

Policy:

Student computers connecting to the Furman network must have Furman's antivirus software installed and updated, and be running a fully updated and supported operating system. Students are required to log in to the Bradford Campus Manager with their personal network account information in order for their systems to be connected. The Furman University Help Desk provides assistance for students in setting up their personal computers to access the Furman network.

Guidelines:

1. In order for a student to receive assistance, his or her computer system must:
 - a. meet the minimum system and operating system requirements published on the Computing and Information Services web site, <http://computing.furman.edu/minspec.php>. (Students may choose to use other operating systems on their personal computers. Computing and Information Services will only offer support to the operating systems listed on the web site.)
 - b. be able to power on
2. If a machine is brought to the Help Desk and found not to meet these criteria, it is the student's responsibility to bring the machine into compliance. The Help Desk can provide information regarding local computer service professionals willing to assist students on a fee basis if such assistance is needed.
3. The Help Desk will provide no more than two hours of technician assistance before recommending a system restoration or a clean installation of the operating system and applications. In this event, the student is responsible for backing up any data needed prior to bringing the system to the Help Desk for technician assistance. Properly licensed system restoration or installation media must be provided by the student. Such an installation may result in the inadvertent loss of system or data files currently installed on the system. A signed Release of Liability form will be required before the Help Desk or other C&IS staff will attempt a system restoration or new operating system installation. Students are generally encouraged to bring installation media and other media provided by their computer system manufacturer to campus to enable quick recovery in the event of a major system problem requiring a clean installation.
4. It is strongly recommended that all students run both virus and spyware scans before the compliant machine is brought the Help Desk. Students are also encouraged to have all current Windows Updates installed before bringing their machines to the Help Desk. These processes can take an excess of two hours, thus making the machine an immediate candidate for system restoration.