

Digital Skills for Engineering Students



Work Smarter with Your Computer

An introduction to common workflows and skills for managing your applications and files, together with shortcuts to improve efficiency when studying.

Information is given for Windows, Mac and Linux.



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Introduction to Computer Hardware

We do not expect you to have a personal computer, but if you are buying one, it will help to know about each component. Below is a summary:



SSD (Solid State Drive) or HDD (Hard Drive Disk)

- Computer's **long term memory**, so data storage.
- It **stores** the operating system, software (apps), and your files.
- HDD is older technology with moving parts, more prone to failure. Avoid.
- SSD is now the new standard; much faster than HDD

What Size? 512GB is considered decent among average users.



Processor or CPU (Central Processing Unit)

- **Brain** of the computer.
- Gets instructions from apps, performs tasks and calculations and manages data flow. Influences overall performance of the computer.

Which Processor? Any Intel or AMD x86-64 processor with 2+ cores. More cores is better. e.g. Intel® Core™ i5/i7 or AMD Ryzen 5 or 7



RAM (Random Access Memory)

- Computer's **short-term memory**. Where data is stored that the Processor needs to run your apps and open files.
- Determines how many tasks the computer can do simultaneously.

What Size? At least 16 GB of RAM to cope with modern software. More RAM gives better daily performance. Prioritise over SSD size.



Graphics Card or GPU (Graphics Processing Unit)

- Works with the CPU to **display images and videos**.
- Having a separate graphics card offloads processing from the CPU, resulting in improved performance and smoother visuals

Which Card? A dedicated card is better than an integrated card, but an integrated is perfectly fine for our course. If you want to do gaming, video editing or 3D modelling then NVIDIA GeForce RTX or AMD Radeon are popular.



Display

- Smaller is more portable, while larger sizes offer better visibility.
- Higher resolutions (e.g., 1920x1080 or 4K) provide better detail.

Which Size? Ranges from 11 to 17 inches, 15" is a popular choice.

It is not an easy decision which computer to buy, so do your own research. There is plenty of [advice online](#). Also note that the Department has computers with dedicated graphics cards for you to use for any 3D modelling work.

- To compare components, www.userbenchmark.com will help.
- Student Discounts may be helpful: e.g. [UniDays](#), [StudentBeans](#), [Dell](#) etc
- You may want to consider the MATLAB [system requirements](#).



Key University Software

Departmental computers will already have all the software you need, however if you are working on a personal computer, you can get free software to install.

Office 365

Everyone at the University can access Office 365, which contains many useful apps for University work. The Oxford system includes a cloud based working environment called **Nexus365**. To get started, see the [guides on the IT website](#). Spend some time getting to know how to use each app. Below outlines the skills you need for our course:

	Outlook: The Microsoft app to view your University emails. • Set up a Signature with your name, college and year of study • You can get the Oxford term dates imported to your calendar. • Learn how to put events in your calendar to keep track of deadlines • You may want to learn how to create folders to organise your inbox.
	One Drive: A cloud-based storage system. • Use this to backup your files and share files with other people. • See Page 12 12 for more details.
	Word: The Microsoft word processor. File Type (.docx). • You will need to write some lab reports in Word. • You should know how to change fonts, add tables and headers.
	Excel: The Microsoft spreadsheet. Files type (.xlsx). • You will need to work with spreadsheets in labs. • You should know how to input data, write formulas and plots.
	OneNote: A digital notebook, you can use this for notes. • You may want to learn how to use this for studying.
	Powerpoint: Used for creating presentations. • You will likely not need to create presentations until Year 2
	Teams: Used for videocalls and chat within the University. • You will likely only use this occasionally

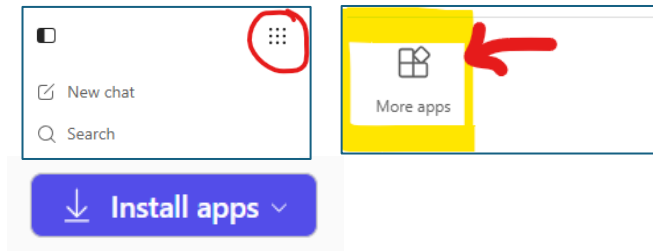
Installing Office Apps

All the Office365 Apps can be used online, in your browser. Some browsers work better than others so have multiple installed (e.g. [Chrome](#) / [Edge](#) / [Firefox](#) / [DuckDuckGo](#)).

You can get full functionality by installing the software directly onto your computer.

Once logged in to Nexus365:

- On the left bar select the 9 dots:
- Then select **More Apps**
- Then **Install Apps** (top right).



Reading PDFs

You will read many PDFs when studying. Most browsers can open PDFs directly, and have good functionality. Make sure you can:

- **Search for key terms in a PDF:** Much faster than scrolling: **Ctrl+F** or **⌘+F**
- **Annotate:** PDFs will be your study notes, you will want to write on them.
- **Viewing Headings to speed up navigation:**

Enable the navigation pane to click through Headings / Bookmarks.

If your browser can't do all of the above, you can install a dedicated PDF Reader such as [Adobe Acrobat](#) (the free version is fine, you do not need the paid version).

macOS has [Mac Previewer](#). You can view headings by opening **Table of Contents**.



Other Applications

There is software available to you for free ([see Oxford IT site](#)) or at a discounted rate.

There are other apps not needed for the Engineering course, but may be of interest.

e.g. Parallels for Mac or Adobe Creative Cloud which includes Photoshop/Lightroom.



Generative AI: ChatGPT, Copilot

This is the second academic year where everyone at the University has free access to various AI tools: ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and Google Gemini. See the full list here:

oerc.ox.ac.uk/ai-centre/generative-ai-tools

As an emerging technology, the guidance for AI use is often changing, see information:

www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/use-generative-ai-services-such-as-chatgpt-safely

Here are the highlights as of summer 2026:

- If you want to use generative ai, use the University licenced tools rather than other tools which may be less secure.
- Don't use external custom GPTs with any personal data unless reviewed and approved. Similarly, if you're building your own custom GPTs, don't include internal or confidential University data if sharing outside Oxford.
- Always review outputs critically, be cautious of misleading/unsafe suggestions.

Departmental AI Policy

The Department of Engineering Science has a full AI usage policy, which can be [read here](#) once you have access to the Canvas MEng site. It states:

- You must reference generative AI anywhere it has been used
- It should not be used for assignments unless permission has been granted.

P5 Computing Lab AI Policy

1. In the lab, unless the exercise or example explicitly says, you may not use AI.

Computing Lecture 1 will outline the risks and benefits of using AI as a novice programmer. In your first year, make use of expert teachers in the labs and practice professional interactions.

2. Outside of the lab, we recommend you do not use it to generate code

Instead use it to help understand new topics.

Post lab exercises are short and simple. If you get AI "help" for this, it will just give you the answer. This is a waste of time and robs you of a learning experience.



Keeping Devices Secure

To protect your personal information, University data and your coursework, it is important to manage your accounts and follow some security practices.

University Accounts and Multi-Factor Authentication

There are many different accounts you need at University. The main accounts are:

Single Sign On (SSO) - To access many services and software



Username format is **abc0123** or for Microsoft use **abc0123@ox.ac.uk**

It has [multi-factor authentication \(MFA\)](#).

Password reset by Central IT via webauth.ox.ac.uk

Departmental Account - For Departmental Computers and engsci WiFi



Username format is **abc0123** same as your SSO.

Password reset by Engineering IT via adselfservice.eng.ox.ac.uk

Remote Access Account - For Eduroam WiFi and University VPN



Use to connect to [eduroam](#) WiFi around the world

Change your password at register.it.ox.ac.uk/self/index

They have similar usernames but should all have different passwords. You should:

- [create strong passwords](#) (advice at [here](#) or [Reporters without Borders](#))
- [Use a password manager](#)
- Password game for something a bit silly: neal.fun/password-game



Set up **at least two ways** of authenticating your **SSO**:

e.g. your phone and laptop. If you lose one, you still need access!

mysignins.microsoft.com/security-info then **Add Sign-in Methods**.

Using Shared Departmental Computer

When using a Departmental computer, you must follow Departmental Security Rules:

- Lock the screen if you leave the computer unattended
- Log off when you are finished.

University Requirements for Mobile Phone Security

If you are accessing University information using your mobile (such as your e-mail), you must follow basic security requirements:

- **Use a screen lock** (PIN, password or biometrics).
- **Enable auto-lock** after no more than **5 minutes** of inactivity.
- **Enable Find My Device/iPhone** so you can locate or remotely erase if it is lost.
- **Only install apps from trusted app stores** (Apple App Store or Google Play).
- **Install security updates promptly** and keep your apps up to date.

More information at www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/secure-my-mobile-devices

University Requirements for Tablet/Laptop Security

If you use your own computer for University work or on our network, you should:

- **Use a supported operating system** that still receives security updates.
 - [Microsoft's security lifecycle](#) has guidelines on the support it provides.
 - Officially [Apple only supports the latest version of its operating system](#).
- **Enable automatic updates** for your operating system, web browser and apps.
- **Use strong, unique passwords** and a password manager.
- **Enable anti-virus protection**, keep it up to date and schedule regular scans.

All students are automatically entitled to a free copy of Sophos Anti-Virus, for as long as you're here. It's available for PC, Mac and Linux, see [IT Services website](#).

- **Lock your device when unattended.**
 - Use a password-protected screen lock.
 - Ensure it auto locks after 15 minutes of inactivity.
- **Only use trusted USB devices.**
 - Avoid plugging in unknown USB drives.
 - Disable autorun for newly-connected devices.
- **Only install software from trusted sources.** Avoid pirated or unofficial software.

For more information, see <https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/protect-my-computer>



Sophos Anti-Virus is available for free, see [IT Services website](#).

Ensure your personal computer has anti-virus!

Managing your Files

Files and Folders



A **file** is just a lot of ones and zeros stored in a permanent location on the computer. Each file is used to store a particular type of object.

Each file has a name, which ends •('dot') something. This is the file type, which helps to show what the file contains. For example **.jpg** is an image or **.docx** is a document.



A **folder**, also known as a **directory**, is a location where all the files related to a particular topic are stored. This avoids them getting mixed up with other files.

Files and folders may seem basic, but keeping them organised can be a difficult habit to develop. This year, you must learn to maintain a **file system**.

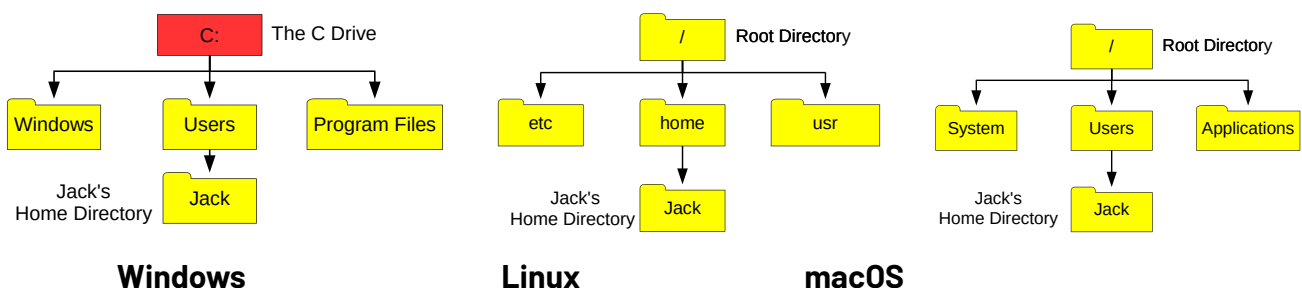


When you download a file, it is usually stored automatically in your **Downloads** folder. If you want to store it long term, **move the file** so it is **stored in a sensible folder elsewhere** in your file system.



A File System

A **hierarchy** of folders within folders creates a **file system**. The diagrams below show the top of a file system, for Windows, Linux and MacOS. For Windows the top folder has a letter e.g. **C: Drive**, for Linux and macOS it is called the **Root Directory**.



Departmental computers are all Windows 11, so you must also be confident with folder management on that system: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDhhXI7hGol



Home Directory

We need to avoid mixing up our personal files with those used by the operating system or other users. To store their personal files, each user on a system is allocated a **Home Directory**. Here is an example of an organised Home Directory:

The diagram looks like a family tree.

The words **Parent** and **Child** are used in computing to describe the relationship between folders or other objects:

- The **Parent** of **Lab1** is **P5Computing**.
- **Lecture** and **Examples** are the **Children** of **Lab1**.

There are apps to view your files and folders:



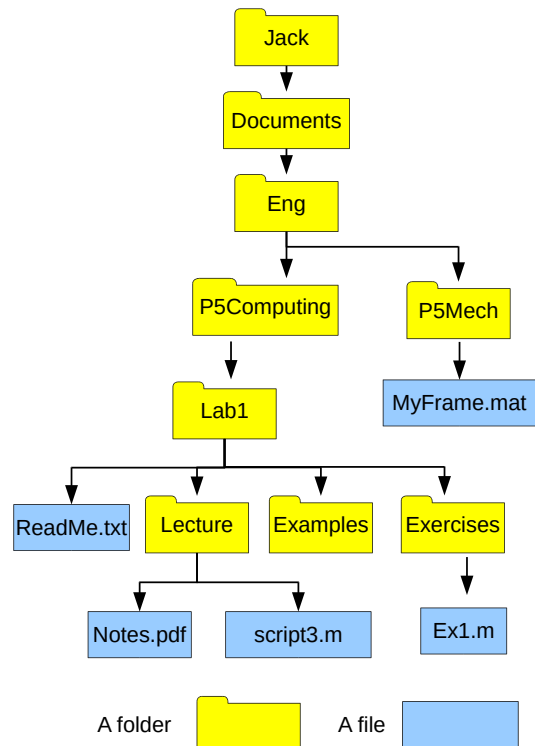
Windows: File Explorer



macOS: Finder



Linux: GNOME



Windows

- Open **File Explorer** using Windows Key + E
- This PC and then C:\Users\username is your Home Directory

macOS

- Along the Dock, use the application called **Finder** to view your files.
- Finder has great preview capabilities to help navigating your files.
- In Finder, your **Home** is a house icon. If you cannot see it in menu:
Finder > Preferences > SideBar > Tick home under Favourites

Linux

- There are different applications on different Linux distributions.
- The default file manager of the GNOME desktop is Nautilus or Files.

Moving Files

Moving files between folders is a task you will need to do frequently in labs and as a professional engineer. Being able to do this quickly will save you time. While most people have their preferred method, try out each of the multiple ways. You should know:

1. Drag-and-drop
2. Right-click context menus or menu bars
3. Basic keyboard shortcuts (Ctrl+C/Ctrl+V – see Page 18)
4. Advanced shortcuts (e.g. Ctrl+A to select all, Shift to select in list – see below)

The following videos introduce the different methods for different operating systems:

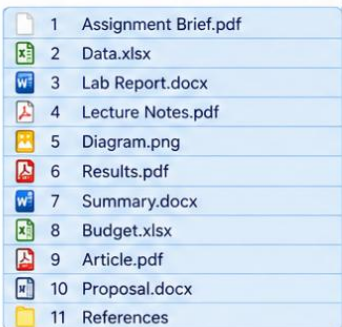
- **Windows:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iz8kmeslVkk
- **macOS:** 10 Ways to Move Files www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1izlhicjvQ
- **Linux:** Search based on your own operating system

Shortcuts for Selecting Files/Folders

The following keyboard shortcuts work in many apps, including file managers, browsers and Office. They are useful for copying, moving or deleting multiple files at once.

1 SELECTING ALL

Select everything in the folder.



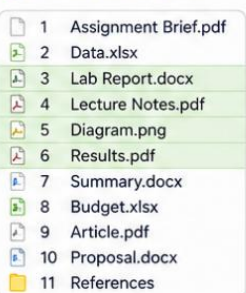
Ctrl + **A** Windows / Linux

⌘ + **A** macOS

2 SELECTING A RANGE

Select a block of consecutive files.

- 1 Click the first item.
- 2 Hold **Shift**.
- 3 Click the last item.



Everything between the first and last item is selected.

Shift +  Then click the last item

3 SELECTING DISCONTINUOUS MULTIPLE FILES

Select files that are not next to each other.



Hold the key and click each file you want.

Ctrl +  Windows / Linux

⌘ +  macOS

Local vs Remote Storage

A file system can be stored **locally** on a computer, or stored **remotely** (in 'the cloud').

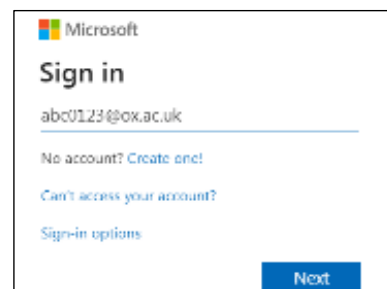
Local files may only exist on that computer. If the computer is damaged, there is no way to recover them. Therefore, it is best to have a remote backup.

Using OneDrive

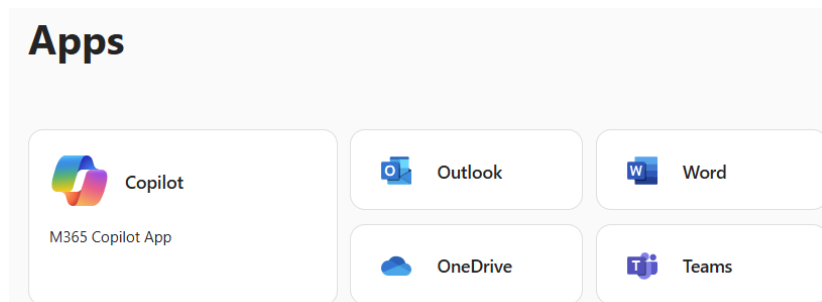
As part of your University Single Sign On (SSO) account, you have access to **One Drive**.

This is a file storage area linked to the Microsoft Office Suite available online.

- Visit office.com and click **Sign In**.
- Use your SSO username
e.g. **abc123@ox.ac.uk**
- Use your SSO username and password.



Once you logged in, select **Apps** and then **OneDrive** to open your file storage:



- Use the **Upload** button to add files/folders to your area, or drag and drop.
- You can also use the **OneDrive application** for macOS or Windows.



Spend 5 minutes organising your [OneDrive](#).

For example you could set up folders for Labs, Tutorials and Lectures.

If you have a personal computer, set up the OneDrive App.



Speeding up your Workflow

You will spend many hours working at a computer during University: writing lecture notes, typing up lab results, searching the library databases, writing e-mails to organise tutorials – the list is long! How efficient you are with using your computer can have a big impact on the time taken to complete a task.



Typing Skills

The speed at which you can type (in words per minute **wpm**) will impact how quickly you can work. Use any of the following to test your current typing speed in English:

- monkeytype.com
- 10fastfingers.com/typing-test/english

The average typing speed for someone who doesn't use computers often is 40 wpm. A productive speed is 60 – 70 wpm, whereas experts can type at 120+ wpm.

To improve your speed, learning [Touch Typing with the Home Row Method](#) can help.

There is lots of [advice available on Reddit](#) and many free resources to learn:

agilefingers.com/lessons	Jump in with typing
www.typingclub.com	Learn one letter at a time, through videos
www.keybr.com	Jump in with typing words
typing.academy/typing-tutor/lessons www.typing.com/en-gb/student/	Different lessons, from letters to words

Games to Help

-  Type Racer play.typeracer.com
-  Typing Sniper typetest.io/games/typing-sniper
-  Destroy the letter typetest.io/games/destroy-the-letter
-  Type out books agilefingers.com/texts

Faster Working by Managing Applications

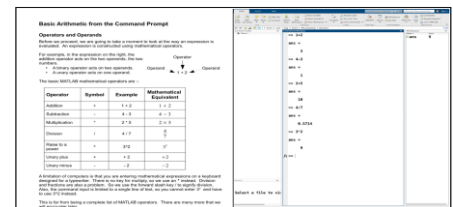
Often you will need to work with multiple apps open. For example, you may need a PDF of instructions open and another piece of software. Or if you are writing a report, you may need an internet browser and a Word document.

This section introduces you to different ways to work with multiple apps. To start, the shortcuts may seem awkward but it is worthwhile spending some time practising, as it will allow you to perform tasks faster in the long run.



Split Screen View

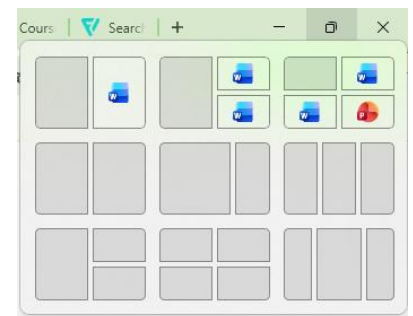
To work with two applications at once, a simple option is to split the screen. The image below on the right shows a Desktop with notes on the left and an app on the right.



Windows: Windows key + arrows

When using an app, move the app right or left by using:

- **Windows key + right arrow**
- **Windows key + left arrow**
- Alternatively, use the **Windows Snap Layouts**
by hovering over the Maximise button (two overlapping squares on the top right). Click the layout you want.



macOS: Select and hold the green button in the top-left corner of an app.

The Desktop splits into two. Drag the application to one half and release.

You can drag the divide between the two applications to the left and right.

Linux: Manual Resize

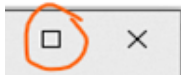
You can snap a window to half the screen by dragging a window to the left or right edge of the screen until a highlight appears, then releasing. Or using keyboard shortcuts:

Windows key + ← or **Windows Key + →**



Maximising

Splitting the screen is not useful if you have a small monitor. Often we need to work with an app which has been maximised to fill the screen. It is useful to quickly maximise.

Windows or Linux: Click top right square icon  Or **Windows Key + ↑**

The windows can be resized by dragging any of the corners or sides.

Move your mouse until you see an arrow, and then click and drag.

macOS: Click the green button  in the top-left corner of an app window, or double-click an app's title bar (if the option to do so is set to "zoom" in [Dock & Menu Bar preferences](#)). Once maximised, view the menu bar by moving the mouse to the top.

Quickly Switching between Apps

If you have many apps open, there are ways to automatically space these out so that you can select which window you want in front. In Windows it is called **Task view**, in macOS it is **Mission Control** and in Linux it is called **Activities Overview**.

Windows and Linux shortcuts (Task View and Activities Overview)

Quickly switch between multiple applications by holding **Alt** and then pressing **Tab** 

Pressing **Tab** will move through each window, or you can select one with the mouse or arrow keys. This is a quick way to move between different pieces of software.



- **Windows key** and **M** to **minimise** all windows and see the desktop.
- **Windows**  **key** and **E** to **open the File Explorer**.

If you have Windows 11, [see this video](#) to learn more shortcuts or [this video](#) for Ubuntu.

macOS: Mission Control

This is a quick way to switch between multiple apps. To start [Mission Control](#):

- Press the **Mission Control Key**, as shown on the right. 
- Or hold down the **control** key and press the up arrow key, **↑**.
- Or on a **trackpad**: Swipe up with three fingers. Swipe down to leave.



Customising the Dock / Taskbar

You can pin frequently used Apps to the Start Menu or Taskbar (Dock in macOS).

It is worth taking some time to arrange these icons in the most useful way to you:

- **Windows:** Right-click any icon on the taskbar to **Pin** or  **Unpin from taskbar**
- **Linux:** Right-click any icon on the dock, select **Pin to Dock** or **Add to Favourites**.
- **macOS:** The dock can be fully customised, see [this video](#).

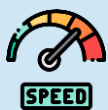
Minimising vs Closing vs Quitting Apps

To get the best from your computer, only have open applications that you need for your current task. Having too many applications open at once will cause your computer to be slow. You may be familiar with minimising and closing:

- **Minimise** an app by pressing the minimise button **--** in the top corner.
- **Close** windows of an app by pressing the close button **X** the top corner.

But even closing will sometimes mean the software still runs in the background.

Instead, when you are finished it is better to quit the app.



Quit rather than **close/minimise** any applications you are not using.
This will free up RAM (a type of computer memory).

Quitting Apps

You can check which apps are still using memory by using a system monitoring tool.

This shows all software running, even those running in the background. Each Operating System gives this monitoring tool a different name. For:

- Windows it is Task Manager
- macOS it is Activity Monitor
- Linux it is System Monitor.

Using this monitor (see next page) you can force applications to close.

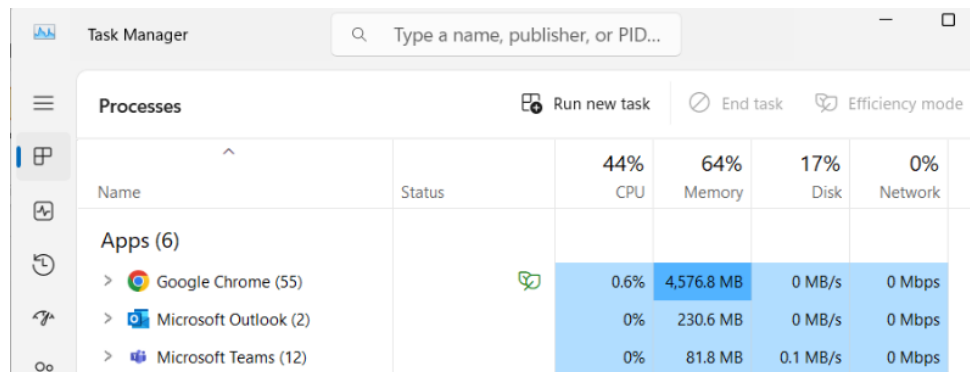


Use the **System Monitor** to **Quit** software
that is frozen and unresponsive

Windows: Task Manager

To see what is using the computer memory, use the **Task Manager** via **Ctrl + Shift + Esc**.

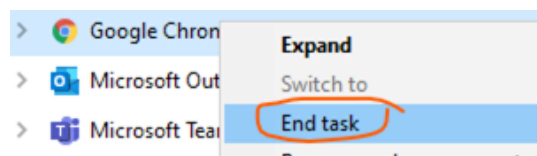
In this example, you can see Chrome is using lots of memory (over 4GB!):



The screenshot shows the Windows Task Manager window with the 'Processes' tab selected. The window title is 'Task Manager' and there is a search bar at the top. Below the search bar, there are buttons for 'Run new task', 'End task', and 'Efficiency mode'. The main area displays a table of running processes. The table has columns for 'Name', 'Status', 'CPU', 'Memory', 'Disk', and 'Network'. Under the 'Apps (6)' section, three processes are listed: Google Chrome (55), Microsoft Outlook (2), and Microsoft Teams (12). Google Chrome is highlighted in blue, indicating it is the selected process. The 'Memory' column for Google Chrome shows '4,576.8 MB'.

Name	Status	44% CPU	64% Memory	17% Disk	0% Network
Apps (6)					
> Google Chrome (55)		0.6%	4,576.8 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
> Microsoft Outlook (2)		0%	230.6 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
> Microsoft Teams (12)		0%	81.8 MB	0.1 MB/s	0 Mbps

For any app, force it to quit by Right-clicking and selecting **End Task**.



macOS: Activity Monitor



Go to **Applications** → **Utilities** → **Activity Monitor**

Here you can see tasks running and even energy usage.

Full guidance: support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/activity-monitor

To stop a program: Use **⌘+Q**, or click the app's name in the menu bar, then **Quit**.

Linux: Systems Monitor

Open **Applications** then scroll to **Utilities**. Select **Systems Monitor**.

Under the Processes tab you will see a list of all programs running. To stop an unresponsive program, simply select it and right-click. You can then select:

- **Stop** to pause the process
- **End** which will fully close an application safely.
- **Kill** which forces the app to quit, only use if End Process does not work.

For more information, see [this article](#) on how Linux uses memory.

Faster Working with Text Tools

Copy/Paste

You will copy/paste text, images and files often. Learning the keyboard shortcuts is much faster than using the right-click menu. You can also copy and paste files using the same shortcuts. Cut will move something, and not leave a copy behind.

Action	Windows / Linux	macOS
Copy	Ctrl + C	⌘ + C
Paste	Ctrl + V	⌘ + V
Cut (Move)	Ctrl + X	⌘ + X
Undo	Ctrl + Z	⌘ + Z
Redo	Ctrl + Y	⌘ + Shift+ Z

Windows Clipboard History

Normally, copying something replaces whatever was previously on your clipboard. Clipboard history on Windows allows you to keep a history of recently copied items, so you can paste something you copied earlier. This saves a lot of time!

- Press **Windows key + V**. If prompted, select Turn On.
- Click any item in the list to paste it. Frequently used items can be Pinned.

For macOS and Linux, there is no clipboard history. Third-party apps are available.

Inserting Symbols

When writing reports, notes or emails, you may need to insert symbols such as °, ±, μ, Ω, α or mathematical operators. Most operating systems include a built-in symbol panel.

- **Windows/Linux:** Press **Windows key + .** (full stop) or **Windows key + ;** (semicolon).
- **macOS:** Press **Ctrl + ⌘ + Space**. Double-click a symbol to insert it.

Using an Equation Editor

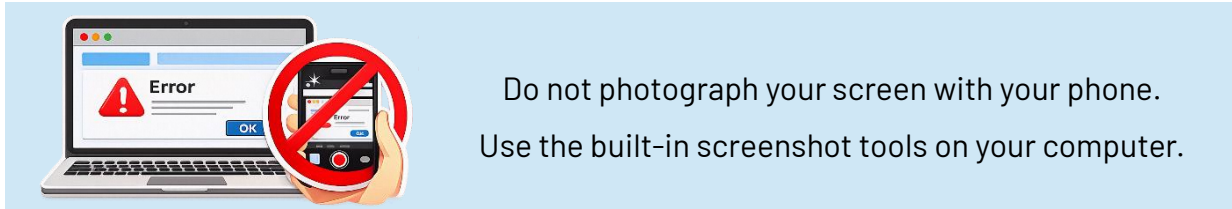
You will need to write reports containing equations. Rather than typing them as plain text or inserting screenshots, it is better to learn to use a proper equation editor.

- **Microsoft Word** has a built-in [equation editor](#) (performs best locally, not via Word online). Use **Alt + =** to start. Then use shortcuts e.g. \alpha or \frac, \sqrt.
- You may want to learn [LaTeX](#), a free LaTeX editor widely used is [overleaf.com](#)

Both approaches produce clear, well-formatted equations that are much easier to edit and read than images. If this is new to you, you will be slow to start but keep practicing.

Useful Tool: Screenshots

Screenshots are useful for sharing error messages, grabbing information from slides, and saving important images. There are tools for taking screenshots and even for extracting text from those screenshots.



Windows: Snipping Tool to capture part or all of your screen.

- Press **Windows + Shift + S**. Select the area of the screen you want to capture.
- The screenshot is copied to the clipboard and can be pasted using **Ctrl + V**.

Click the notification to annotate and save the image.

macOS: Screenshot

- Press **Shift + ⌘ + 3** to capture the entire screen.
- Press **Shift + ⌘ + 4** to capture a selected area.
- These are saved automatically to your Desktop or another configured location.

Linux (Ubuntu GNOME): Screenshot

- Press the **Print Screen (PrtSc)** key to capture the entire screen.
- Press **Shift + Print Screen** to capture a selected area.
- The screenshot can be saved or copied to the clipboard.

Text Extraction from Images

- **Windows: Text Extractor** Press **Windows + Shift + T**.

Drag a box around the text you want to copy. The text is copied to the clipboard.

Paste it into another app using **Ctrl + V**.

- **macOS: Live Text**

If an image contains text, you can often select it directly using your mouse.

Open the image in Preview, drag to select the text. Press **⌘ + C** to copy it.

Comfort using your Computer

You may spend many hours a day working on a computer. Taking a few minutes to adjust your display settings can make studying more comfortable.

- **Screen Brightness:** A screen that is brighter or darker than the room can contribute to eye fatigue. Some laptops have dedicated brightness keys, or you can adjust your **Display Settings**. Free software [f.lux](https://f.lux.net/) can offer even more colour control, allowing more comfortable studying.
- **Dark Mode:** Most apps support using light text on a dark background. Some people find this more comfortable when working. Try it out and see which you find easiest to read.
- **Zoom:** Most browsers and software support holding down **Ctrl** and use your mouse wheel to zoom in and out. Without a mouse then **Ctrl** (or **⌘** on macOS) with **+** will zoom in, and **Ctrl + 0** can return to the default size.
- **Mouse Pointer:** If you often can't see the mouse pointer, you can increase its size or change its colour in your accessibility settings. A larger, high-contrast pointer can speed up navigating.



There is no single "best" setup, everyone is different.
Experiment until your computer is comfortable for you.

THE 20-20-20 RULE

A simple way to reduce eye strain



Give your eyes a break. **Look away** from your screen regularly.

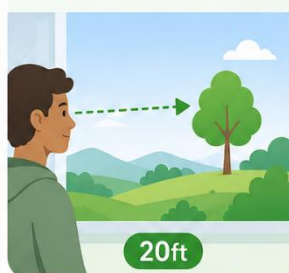
20
MINUTES

Every 20 minutes
of screen time...



20
FEET

Look at something
20 feet away...



20
SECONDS

...for at least
20 seconds.



Oxford Engineering Pre Term IT Checklist (2026-27)



Key University Software

- ☐ I can access Office via Nexus365 and use Word, Excel, OneNote, etc
- ☐ On my University e-mail I have a professional e-mail signature and calendar with term dates
- ☐ I've set up OneDrive and organised folders for e.g. Labs, Tutorials, and Lectures
- ☐ I know how to read PDFs efficiently including searching, bookmarks and annotations
- ☐ I know where to get free/discounted software from the IT Services website
- ☐ *If you have your own computer:* I have anti-virus activated (e.g. Defender, Sophos)
- ☐ *If you have your own computer:* I have installed Word, Excel, OneNote, etc



Accounts & Security

- ☐ I know my log on information for all key accounts: Departmental, SSO, and Remote Access Account
- ☐ I use strong, unique passwords and a password manager
- ☐ I have set up >2 multi-factor authentication (MFA) for SSO (mysignins.microsoft.com/security-info)
- ☐ I have connected to both WiFi networks in Thom Building (eduroam and engsci)
- ☐ I know how to lock my screen and log off a shared computer to maintain computer security



File Management & Backups

- ☐ I understand how a file system works (folders, file types, etc)
- ☐ On a Departmental computer, I know how to find my Home Directory
- ☐ I can move files from Downloads folder to somewhere else on my local drive using shortcuts
- ☐ I've tested uploading and accessing files via OneDrive



Workflow Skills

- ☐ I've tested my typing speed, and if needed, scheduled some weekly practice time
- ☐ I've practiced split-screen view and quick change using shortcuts like Alt+Tab (Windows)
- ☐ *If you have your own computer:* I've customised my Taskbar/Dock with most-used apps
- ☐ I know how to take and annotate screenshots, extract text from images
- ☐ I can use a System Monitor to check running processes, and can quit apps (not just minimise)
- ☐ When using Departmental Windows Computers, I know how to turn on Clipboard History
- ☐ I know how to use shortcuts to quickly: select all, select a continuous range and multiple files.
- ☐ I know how to write equations in Word or LaTeX for professional report writing