General Questions

What is the FAS Refresh Program?

Harvard University Information Technology (HUIT) provides a computer lifecycle management service to FAS departments, including acquisition, setup, management, ongoing support and recycling for desktop and laptop computers. The FAS Refresh program provides funding for desktops and laptops for eligible FAS faculty and staff. Please consult your Administrative Dean’s office or FAS Finance for specific details on eligibility.

Why is my computer being refreshed on a 4 year cycle rather than a 3 year cycle?

In July 2012, Harvard made a decision to partner with a new leasing vendor. To offset incremental costs of the lease buyout program and to dampen desktop refresh costs, we are extending the computer replacement cycle from three to four years, which should have little effect on performance and reliability. Keep in mind that HUIT will also replace any FAS-funded computers that are not performing, regardless of when they went into service (provided, of course, that they were not previously replaced).

Why does the program purchase computers instead of leasing them?

The anticipated, school-wide savings from leasing was predicated on high-volume acquisitions that did not meet the timing needs of individual faculty and staff. The new purchasing model for centrally funded computers enables departments to redeploy older computers for common areas or other uses as desired. Computers purchased with departmental funds or grants can be purchased or leased – under new, more favorable terms – at the discretion of each department.

When will HUIT refresh computers in my department?

Computers will be refreshed during the quarter after the 4 year anniversary of the originally deployed computer. Please contact ithelp@harvard.edu for more specific information pertaining to a specific computer or department refresh schedule.

What if I want or need a computer prior to the end of the 4 year refresh cycle?

HUIT will support and service your computer for the full four years. Should the computer perform unfavorably and HUIT is unable to properly service it within the 4 year refresh cycle, your FAS-funded computer can be replaced ahead of schedule.

What is the refresh process for my department?

A HUIT representative will contact each Department Administrator (DA) as the end of the four-year refresh cycle approaches.

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HUIT will supply an account of the inventory that is up for renewal and ask the DA to review and edit any data that needs to be updated. Once the information is received by HUIT, a schedule for deploying the new computers will be created.

Once the list of users and computers is finalized, the units are ordered and prepared by the HUIT staff. The computers are then deployed based on the agreed upon customer schedule.

About the Computers

What computers are available?

The program offers eight models for general purpose/office computing. These include Dell and Apple desktops and laptops listed here: http://huit.harvard.edu/pages/computer-standards

These are models are configured with high-end components for fast and reliable performance.

All computers come as a "bundle" which includes:

- External monitor (widescreen, high resolution)
- External keyboard and mouse
- Network cable
- Docking station* (Dell laptop)

*Docking stations enable laptops to be used like desktops while in the office.

What type of computer am I eligible for?

**Faculty:**

Eligible faculty members are able to choose from any of the standard FAS Refresh models.

**Staff:**

Eligible staff are able to choose a standard FAS Refresh model on the platform they currently use. For example, a staff member who uses a Windows desktop computer is eligible for either a Dell Desktop Bundle or Dell Laptop Bundle. A staff member who uses an Apple (Mac) laptop is eligible for either an Apple Desktop or Apple Laptop Bundle.

Eligible staff members who wish to change platforms (Windows to Apple or Apple to Windows) are required to receive the approval of their Department Administrator.

Can I get a different computer than those specified by the program through the FAS Refresh program?

Yes, for qualified faculty or staff who require a machine with a different hardware configuration, FAS will contribute a standard amount (currently $1,000) towards the cost of the purchase. The balance is to be funded via a departmental billing code supplied by the department administrator.

What if I need lab or common use computers?

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Shared, common use, and department lab computers do not qualify for central funding under the FAS Refresh program.

If you need common use or lab computers, however, HUIT is available to assist you in defining appropriate configurations, purchasing equipment using your department’s funds, preparing your computer and setting it up within your environment.

**I want a desktop and a laptop. Can I use this program to fund this?**

No, the FAS Refresh program provides one computer per eligible employee. Additional computers can be purchased at departmental expense.

**Acquisition and Leases**

**How do I request a new computer?**

Department Administrators coordinate computer requests directly with the FAS Refresh program office. Every four years, individuals will be notified approximately 60-90 days in advance of the 4 year anniversary to prepare for the next upgrade of their computer.

The FAS Refresh program is currently following a 4 year deployment schedule and will contact Department Administrators for upcoming departments to plan and coordinate.

Please contact HUIT if for help in acquiring a new computer if:

- An existing computer is not available for an eligible new hire (.5 FTE or greater)
- An existing computer has failed (HUIT will determine if it can be repaired or should be replaced)
- Departmental or grant funds are available for the purchase

**What type of warranty comes with the FAS Refresh computers?**

Due to the change of moving to a 4 year refresh cycle all Dell computers will be ordered with 4 year warranties. However, Apple does not provide such a warranty and will continue to come with a 3 year warranty. For those computers under a 3 year warranty, HUIT support staff will continue to support these computers and fund any out-of-warranty work that would have been covered otherwise. An early replacement may be recommended in those instances where it does not make economic sense to fund a repair.

**Is my department eligible for FAS Refresh program funded computer replacements?**

Funding is determined by FAS Finance and the divisional Administrative Deans. In general, departments in the FAS expanded core that receive subventions are funded through the FAS Refresh program. Other departments, centers, institutes and tubs can participate in the FAS Refresh program but must use department funds to purchase or lease computers. Please check with your department administrator or divisional Administrative Dean to determine your department’s funding status.

**I already have a computer. May I use this program to fund additional computers for my home/travel?**

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No, this program is intended to provide one primary computer for your use. Departments who want to obtain additional computers for employees or ineligible participants may do so at department expense. Contact the FAS Refresh (ithelp@harvard.edu) program for details.

**What happens after four years?**

At the end of four years, participants are once again presented with the choice of a replacement desktop or laptop from the set of program computers available at that time. When the new unit arrives, HUIT will transfer data from the old computer to the new, collect the old computer for security wipe and dispose of the computer or reuse it where applicable.

**Can I keep or buy the computer after four years?**

No, computers obtained through the FAS Refresh program will be retrieved at the end of the 4-year refresh cycle.

**What happens if I leave Harvard before the 4 years is up?**

The computer is managed as an FAS asset and retained for departmental use.

**I need a more specialized computer than those provided under the program. Can I obtain that type of computer through the program?**

Yes, FAS will contribute a standard amount (currently $1,000) towards the cost of the purchase. The balance is to be funded via a departmental bill code supplied by the department administrator.

**I would like a different monitor than what is provided under the program. Can I obtain an upgraded monitor through the program?**

FAS will fund the cost of the standard monitor of the time. If a different/upgraded monitor is requested the total cost is to be funded via a departmental bill code supplied by the department administrator.

**Can I purchase my computer outside the program?**

Yes, HUIT is happy to facilitate the purchase of the computer, receive it, prepare it and deploy it to you and your department. All FAS computers must adhere to approved Harvard network and security requirements.

HUIT can also advise on upcoming changes to certain models or computer components that may affect your purchasing decision. For example, we may know about a faster processor (i.e. chip) that will be released shortly that may influence you to postpone your purchase so that you can benefit from the upgrade.

**What happens with a computer that was purchased with the assistance of the stipend FAS provides qualified individuals who request a nonstandard computer?**

Computers purchased with the assistance of the FAS stipend will be managed as an FAS asset and will be refreshed at the end of the 4 year refresh cycle.

**Can the program office help me lease computers?**

Yes, the program office is available to all FAS-associated departments and can be used to lease computers from the lease vendor. Charges for these computers will be billed by the leasing vendor on a quarterly basis to the
department over the lease period. HUIT will facilitate the lease process by obtaining bill back information and a bill-to contact. The leasing vendor will then work directly with the department once HUIT facilitates the computer order.

**Department Administrators**

**If I don’t need the computer, can I get money back to my budget?**

No, the program is intended to provide a base level of computing capability so the benefit cannot be transferred into budget funds.

**How will the changeover from non-program to program computers be accomplished?**

Department Administrators will coordinate orders with the FAS Refresh program office. The FAS Refresh program will work with the department to create an upgrade schedule to address specific needs.

**If my department agrees to pay for additional units, what funds can I use?**

If a department wants to purchase non-program funded computers with department funds, the funds and billing codes used for purchases are used at the discretion of the Department financial staff.

**What are the Department Administrator responsibilities for FAS Refresh inventory management?**

**Inventory Review and Confirmation**

- Department Administrators will be responsible for periodic review of computers for their staff.
- HUIT will send out an inventory, which will need to be reviewed for accuracy and confirmed that all units have been located by departmental staff.

**Staff with FAS Refresh computer leaves the department**

- A Department Administrator must inform HUIT ([ithelp@harvard.edu](mailto:ithelp@harvard.edu)) if a staff member with a FAS Refresh computer is leaving their position.

**What is the process for transitioning a computer when a staff member departs the FAS or their FAS department?**

HUIT should be notified when an employee leaves the FAS or the department. If the headcount will not be replaced, HUIT will retrieve the computer to be redeployed elsewhere, if appropriate. Should the headcount be replaced HUIT will wipe the drive clean of all potentially sensitive data and reimaged and prepare it for the incoming staff member.

All computers purchased outside the FAS Refresh program are at department expense.

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What should I do if I need a computer right away, for instance, for arriving employees or as a replacement for lost or broken computers?

The FAS Refresh program can provide urgent computer deployments for new hires or for dire need situations (the old computer has died and is not serviceable). The department administrator should contact the FAS Refresh program (ithelp@harvard.edu) to coordinate.

If my department or a staff member is not eligible for a FAS Refresh program funded computer, but they really need one, what can I do?

Departments can still purchase FAS Refresh computer with department funds. Department administrators can work with the FAS refresh program team to coordinate the transaction.