

Simulacrum Node Operator Setup Guide

Version 2.9.21 | April 2026

This guide walks you through everything you need to set up your computer as a Simulacrum GPU node and start earning money by contributing your GPU compute power.

What You Need

- A **Windows 10** (version 21H2 or newer) or **Windows 11** computer
- An **NVIDIA RTX graphics card**: RTX 3060, 3070, 3080, 3090, 4060, 4070, 4080, 4090, 5060, 5070, 5080, or 5090 with at least 8GB VRAM
- **Unreal Engine 5.7** installed (free from Epic Games Launcher) — required for UE5 jobs, not needed for Docker Only jobs
- A stable internet connection (at least 10 Mbps upload)
- A Stripe-compatible bank account (for receiving payments)
- **16 GB+ RAM** recommended for larger projects and training workloads

■ **IMPORTANT: Docker Desktop Compatibility**

Simulacrum Node uses the **WSL2 Docker Engine**, NOT Docker Desktop. The two can conflict and cause setup failures. If Docker Desktop is currently installed, **uninstall it before installing Simulacrum Node**. Go to Windows Settings > Apps > Installed Apps and remove Docker Desktop. If Docker Desktop was previously installed and removed, the Simulacrum setup script will automatically clean up leftover configuration files. Common symptom of conflict: 'docker-credential-desktop.exe not found' error during Docker setup.

Step 1: Install Unreal Engine 5.7

UE5 is required for Annotation and Training jobs. If you only plan to accept Docker Only jobs, you can skip this step.

- Download the **Epic Games Launcher** from [epicgames.com](https://www.epicgames.com).
- Open the launcher and click on the **Unreal Engine** tab.
- Click **Install** and select version **5.7**.
- Wait for the download (30-60 minutes depending on internet speed).

Step 2: Install the Simulacrum Node

- Download the latest installer from simulacrumlabs.com.
- Run **SimulacrumNode-2.9.21-Setup.exe**. If Windows SmartScreen warns you, click 'More info' then 'Run anyway'.

- Follow the installer prompts. The default installation directory is fine.
- The installer sets up: the node application, bundled Python 3.12.8, and all required scripts.
- Launch **Simulacrum Node** from your Start menu or desktop shortcut.

Step 3: Docker Setup (Required)

Docker is required for all job types. The node will automatically detect if Docker is not installed and show a 'Setup Docker' button.

- In the node application, look at the **Docker (WSL2)** section.
- If it says 'Docker: Not installed', click the '**Setup Docker**' button.
- Click **Yes** when asked for administrator permission.
- **Phase 1** enables Windows features for Docker. Your computer will need to **restart**.
- **Phase 2** runs automatically after restart. It installs Ubuntu, Docker Engine, NVIDIA GPU support, gVisor sandbox, and the Simulacrum ML image. This takes 5-15 minutes.
- When complete, the Docker section will show '**Docker: Ready**' with a green checkmark.

BIOS Virtualization

If Docker setup fails with a virtualization error, enable virtualization in your BIOS. Restart your computer, press Delete or F2 during startup, find the virtualization setting (usually 'Intel VT-x' or 'AMD-V' or 'SVM Mode'), enable it, save and exit.

Step 4: Verify Your Setup

The node runs a preflight check on startup. All 7 checks must pass:

- **[PASS] CPU Virtualization: Enabled**
- **[PASS] WSL2: Installed**
- **[PASS] Ubuntu: OK**
- **[PASS] Docker Engine: Docker version X.X.X**
- **[PASS] NVIDIA GPU: [Your GPU name]**
- **[PASS] Docker ML Image: simulacrum-ml-base:latest loaded**
- **[PASS] Full GPU Compute Test: [GPU] | CUDA X.X | PyTorch X.X**

Step 5: Create Your Account (Get Paid)

- Click **'Settings'** at the bottom of the node window.
- In 'Account & Payments', enter your **email address**.
- Click **'Create Account'**.
- Click **'Setup Bank Account'**. This opens Stripe in your browser.

On the Stripe page, enter:

- **Business type:** Select 'Individual or sole proprietorship' (no business required)
- **Website:** Enter <https://simulacrumlabs.com>
- **Personal details:** Your real legal name, date of birth, and address
- **SSN:** Last 4 digits (required by US law for tax reporting)
- **Bank account:** Routing number and account number for direct deposit

After completing Stripe, click **'Verify Setup'** in the node Settings. It should show 'Account active — payouts enabled'.

Step 6: Start Earning

Once your node is connected and your account is verified, you automatically start receiving jobs when clients submit them. There is nothing else you need to do.

How Earnings Work:

- You earn **\$0.60 per GPU-hour** (80% of the client rate)
- Earnings accumulate in your pending balance
- When your pending balance reaches **\$50**, a payout is automatically sent to your bank
- Payouts are processed weekly
- View earnings in the main node window under **'Earnings'**

- Click **'View Stripe Dashboard'** in Settings for detailed payout history

Job Types You Can Accept:

- **Annotations + Training + Sweeps** — requires UE5 + Docker
- **Docker Only** — requires Docker only (no UE5 needed)

If you don't have UE5 installed, you will only receive Docker Only jobs. Install UE5 to accept all job types and maximize your earnings.

Tax Information:

If you earn more than \$600 in a calendar year, Stripe will automatically send you a 1099-K tax form. You are responsible for reporting this income as self-employment income. Simulacrum Labs does not provide tax, legal, or financial advice.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use my computer while jobs are running?

Yes, but your GPU will be busy. Light tasks (web browsing, email, documents) are fine. GPU-heavy tasks like gaming will be slow until the job finishes.

Is client data safe on my computer?

Client code runs inside a sealed Docker container with optional gVisor sandboxing. It cannot access your personal files. When the job finishes, all client data is automatically overwritten with zeros and deleted.

What if my internet disconnects during a job?

The job will be marked as failed and resubmitted to another node. You will not be charged or penalized for connection issues.

Do I need to leave my computer on 24/7?

No. You only earn when the node is running and your GPU is idle. Run it whenever you want — there are no uptime requirements.

How do I update the node software?

The node checks for updates automatically. When a new version is available, a blue notification bar appears with an 'Update Now' button.

What GPUs are NOT supported?

GTX 1000-series and older can only run annotation/rendering jobs, not training. AMD and Intel GPUs are not supported. Laptop GPUs may work but are not officially supported due to thermal limitations.

Troubleshooting

Node shows 'Connecting...' but never connects

Check your internet connection. Make sure your firewall is not blocking outbound connections on port 443. Try restarting the node.

Docker setup fails

Ensure BIOS virtualization is enabled. Uninstall Docker Desktop if present. Make sure you are running Windows 10 version 21H2 or newer.

'docker-credential-desktop.exe not found'

This means Docker Desktop was previously installed and left behind configuration files. The Simulacrum setup script should clean this up automatically. If it persists, uninstall Docker Desktop completely and re-run Setup Docker.

'Registration failed: Timestamp too old'

Your computer's clock is wrong. Go to Settings > Time & Language > Date & Time and toggle 'Set time automatically' off then on to sync your clock.

Need Help?

Email: help@simulacrumlabs.com

Export your logs (click 'Export Logs' in the node window) and attach them to your email.