

Laptop Recommendations - Academic Year 2019-2020

Durham College of Applied Arts and Technology
School of Media, Art & Design (Updated May 3, 2019)

This document is for students taking the following programs in the School of Media, Art & Design:

Program	Recommended Laptop
Video Production	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD or more
Photography	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD or more
Advertising and Marketing Communications	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD
Advertising - Digital Media Management	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD
Interactive Media Design	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD
Contemporary Web Design	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD
Broadcasting - Radio and Contemporary Media	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD
Journalism - Mass Media	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD
Graphic Design	MacBook Pro - 256GB SSD
Public Relations (compressed)	MacBook Air - 256GB SSD
Fine Arts - Advanced (Year 2)	MacBook Air - 256GB SSD

Why Mac?

Students breaking into creative and design professions need to be familiar with hardware and software used in industry. Our Program Advisories monitor this closely. Student success is the goal of these recommendations.

Students need to purchase the following items:

- 1) Apple MacBook Pro 13- or 15-inch with at least 256GB of storage (2014 or newer) or a 2018 MacBook Air if taking Public Relations or Fine Arts Year 2.
- 2) Portable storage device for backup (Photography/Video/Web/Interactive are provided a drive in the kit they receive in first year.)
- 3) Ethernet adapter (To convert USB-C to Ethernet)
- 4) Ethernet cable (To connect to the campus network at high speed)
- 5) Three-prong Power Adapter Extension Cable (Some desks will require this)

Do not buy software, for example:

- 1) Do not buy a subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud. This is provided for eligible programs.
- 2) Do not buy Microsoft Office. Students can download this for free from DC Mail.

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Apple MacBook Pro Details

With the MacBook Pro you get better performance and a brighter Retina display. If you need a larger display, get the 15-inch. We recommend a 13-inch MacBook Pro or a 13-inch MacBook Air, depending upon which program you are entering. The MacBook Air is suitable for Public Relations and Fine Arts Year 2, in which there is minimal video editing.

Where To Buy

You can buy in person at any Apple store or Authorized Dealer or online from Apple Canada. When visiting a store in person, be sure to provide proof of enrolment to obtain student pricing. To obtain student pricing online, please visit this URL:

https://www.apple.com/ca_edu_93120/shop

If you are buying a new computer off-the-shelf, we recommended these specific models:

13-inch 2017 MacBook Pro 256GB SSD, Space Grey, Part number: MPXT2LL/A

13-inch 2017 MacBook Pro 256GB SSD, Silver, Part number: MPXU2LL/A

13-inch 2018 MacBook Air 256GB SSD - Space Grey, Part number: MRE922LL/A

13-inch 2018 MacBook Air 256GB SSD - Gold, Part number: MREF2LL/A

13-inch 2018 MacBook Air 256GB SSD - Silver, Part number: MREC2LL/A

You also need to purchase:

- Belkin USB-C to Gigabit Ethernet Adapter, Part number: HJKF2ZM/A
- Three-prong Power Adapter Extension Cable, Part number: MK122LL/A
- Card reader for your camera if needed or a USB-A adapter if you have an older card reader.

While we recommend a 13-inch notebook, if your vision isn't 20/20 you may prefer a 15-inch model, although these are more expensive:

15-inch 2018 MacBook Pro 256GB SSD, Silver, Part number: MR962LL/A

15-inch 2018 MacBook Pro 256GB SSD, Space Grey, Part number: MR932LL/A

We do *not* recommend the MacBook (2015 or 2017) as it is a premium-priced offering with few ports and a slow processor, aimed at business travellers. If you need all-day battery life, choose the new MacBook Air instead. The 2014 or 2015 MacBook Air has an inferior display and is slow when compared to the new 2018 MacBook Air.

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Configure To Order

Most students like to buy off-the-shelf. However, there are advantages to customizing your own configure-to-order (CTO) Mac. You can only do that online. To obtain student pricing online, please visit this URL: https://www.apple.com/ca_edu_93120/shop

Customizations to consider:

- 1) You can increase the amount of solid-state storage
- 2) You can increase the amount of memory

In terms of priority, we recommend additional storage before additional memory but the choice is a personal one and how it affects your budget. We do not recommend upgrading to a faster processor.

NOTE: These upgrades cannot be added after the purchase because they are soldered onto the main logic board at the factory.

Additional Items

Please buy an Ethernet cable (Category 6) 1-2 meters, to connect to the Campus network. You can buy these inexpensively online through Amazon Basics, for example. If you are scheduled in room B105A (Photography or Video) please get a 2-meter cable as the ports in B105A are on the floor.

Apple normally runs a student promotion during the summer months, June to early September. We have no influence on Apple's pricing, promotions or product refresh cycles. Time your purchase no earlier than three weeks before school begins to ensure you get the latest and greatest. If you prefer to purchase your notebook computer immediately, keep in mind that a better model may be released at a later date for a similar price. That is simply the nature of the computer industry. Please see Apple's website for details on their refund/exchange policies.

Extended Warranties

Apple notebook computers come with a one-year hardware warranty and 90 days of phone support. Apple's extended warranty is called AppleCare+. End-users can purchase it at any time during the first 60 days after buying a new Mac. AppleCare+ for Mac extends your coverage to three years and adds up to two incidents of accidental damage coverage, each subject to a service fee, with some limitations. See Apple's website for details.

Other vendors may offer their own extended warranties which should not be confused with Apple's offering. Warranties from other vendors can only be processed by those vendors. Non-Apple warranties may limit your service options and repair completion time. It is important for the buyer to assess the risk that a retail institution may go out of business before the buyer needs to make a warranty claim.

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Insurance

While AppleCare+ covers up to two incidents of accidental damage, that does not include coverage for theft, fire or flood. Please add your new notebook computer to your household or tenant insurance policy to protect your new purchase.

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Can I bring a Windows-based notebook computer?

One of your learning outcomes is to learn how to use macOS based computers found in our industry. You can't do that unless you have a Mac. Students who bring a Windows-based notebook computer will have difficulty following Mac-based instructions, collaborating in groups, may encounter cross-platform issues, difficulty connecting to servers, difficulty printing. Most Windows based laptops will have inferior displays and drives and will not perform as well with Adobe Creative Cloud software. Students with computers that do not meet our hardware requirements must be self-supporting. Faculty will not support non-Mac laptops.

Please do not expect to complete your program with a computer that is older than 4 years or does not have specifications similar to the Apple MacBook Pro. If your computer cost under \$500 it won't be powerful enough to get you through your program.

The least expensive version of the new 13-inch MacBook Air only has 128GB of storage, is it recommended?

For students with minimal storage needs (such as Public Relations), this may be sufficient. However, the storage on the least expensive model is only 128 GB or 120.11 GB when formatted, which is very easy to fill, especially for photography or video. If you buy a computer with minimal internal storage you will need an external drive.

What if I purchased my Mac laptop before these new models came out?

Please do not bring a Macintosh that was manufactured before 2014. We recommend:

8 GB or 16 GB of memory (RAM)

Processor - Intel Core i5 or i7 (from 2014 or later)

Retina display (13-inch or 15-inch)

Solid state drive (SSD) 256 GB or larger

My Older Mac has an Intel Core 2 Duo or Intel Core Duo. Will It Work?

Absolutely not. These older machines cannot run the current Mac operating system or Adobe Creative Cloud 2019. You may see them from certain wholesalers available for as low as \$400, but don't be fooled, these are not suitable.

Can I get by without a notebook with my desktop at home or in residence?

Students are expected to have a mobile learning device (a notebook computer) in order to complete assignments and collaborative work in class. Being able to do work in class is **CRITICAL** to student success.

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How do I get the best price?

Make sure you are buying from the online Apple Canada education store or if in person, that store personnel are aware you are a student. Time your purchase to take advantage of promotions. Don't buy generic computer accessories like external storage from Apple; shop around for these. Instead of buying new, consider a refurbished or used Apple Macintosh notebook computer. If you are buying used from local "buy and sell" sites such as Kijiji or Craigslist, be sure you know what to look for. Meet any potential sellers indoors, in a well-lit public place, and bring a Mac expert with you, if possible. Apple often announces new hardware at their annual Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) in June, so if you want the latest and greatest, wait until after this event before making your purchase.

Besides the recommended notebook computer, what else will I need?

Students should come to the college with the following: One Cat 6 Ethernet cable to connect to the campus network, 1-2 meters in length. You need an Ethernet adapter. Most programs recommend a 64 GB USB flash memory "stick" and a portable drive for backup. We recommend 1 TB minimum for your portable backup drive and it should be bus-powered, i.e. not require an external power supply. Some programs may include a portable drive in the student kit.

The college has wireless networking. Why do I need Ethernet?

Wireless networking is *too slow* for moving large files students may be required to download or hand in using our network servers. Strong wireless coverage may not be available in all areas. Ethernet is hundreds of times faster than wireless networking. The cost to plug in is minimal and you only have to buy your adapter and cable once.

How much is enough memory?

Choosing how much memory for your computer is a balancing act between cost and performance. For editing video, more memory means better performance. For video editing we recommend 8GB or 16GB of RAM.

Is system memory the same as storage?

System memory (RAM) should not be confused with mass storage, which is solid state device (SSD) where your programs and data are stored. 256 GB is the minimum size recommended for mass-storage and still may be too small for students with a lot of data needs. *Older computers used hard drives but these are too slow by modern standards. Please don't buy a computer that is based on a hard drive.*

Can I get by with an iPad or other tablet device?

Although a tablet can be useful for some tasks, a Macintosh notebook computer with Adobe Creative Cloud is recommended to meet all learning outcomes and to work in groups, which is a requirement in all courses and programs.

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Buying a used or refurbished MacBook Pro

If you are buying a used or refurbished MacBook Pro, use these specifications to ensure your purchase will meet our requirements. To check the specifications on a Mac, click on the Apple menu and select About This Mac. In the dialog box that appears, and click More Info... If you need assistance please contact the author of this document. Contact information is at the end.

Processor

Intel 64-bit multi-core processor. (Intel Core i5 or Core i7 from 2014 or later)

Memory

8 GB is the minimum. 16GB or 32GB if recommended if you will use After Effects, along with 1440x900 or greater display resolution.

Storage

A Solid-State Device (SSD) for mass storage is highly recommended, 256 GB or more. Hard drives are too slow.

Graphics Processor

NVIDIA GeForce graphics processor or Intel HD Graphics 5000 or better. Must be OpenGL 2.0-capable. All new Apple 13-inch notebooks have Intel Iris Pro graphics. The high-end 15-inch model also has a separate NVIDIA graphics processor. If you buy an older notebook, the 15-inch model has better graphics.

Display

13- or 15-inch Retina display recommended.

Operating System

macOS versions 10.12 (Sierra), 10.13 (High Sierra), 10.14 (Mojave). Operating systems older than 10.12 are not compatible with Adobe Creative Cloud 2019.

Is there someone I can call for more information? Please call Jim Ferr at: 905-721-2000 extension 2645. Or email Jim at: jim.ferr@durhamcollege.ca