

# Computer recommendations

## School of Computing

Our programs are designed to be platform independent so a Window, Linux, or Mac machine will do, preferably a laptop. One thing freshmen should keep in mind is that cheaper, low end machines may not be powerful enough to run the software built 4 years from now, when they're seniors. They also tend to be less stable. So a machine that is mid-level to high-end is preferable. Battery life and RAM will be the most important things to look for. We never have enough outlets in classrooms, so you will depend on your battery; RAM is what will keep you from getting frustrated running large or multiple processes. Processor, screen size, graphics card, hard disk are personal preference; just about any machine that comes with 16 GB of RAM will have adequate specs.

Note for **Cyber Physical Systems Engineering**: Students will use software that is only well supported in Windows.

Note for **Game Programming** and **Computer Science/game systems concentration**: Student will be better served with a Windows machine. A Mac with dual boot can work although there have been issues with Apple not supporting Vulkan very well.

## School of Design

### **Graphic Design**

MacBook Pro (or comparable Windows laptop) with Adobe Creative Cloud. Mac is preferred as it is the standard in the industry—and it's what your professors will be familiar with—but a Windows machine is equally capable.

## School of Cinematic Arts

### **Film and Television**

#### Hardware

Mac or PC laptop or workstation.

Display: 4k recommended, HD (1920x180) minimum.

RAM: 16GB minimum, but 32GB highly recommended especially for Editing and Visual Effects concentrations.

Graphics Card: 1GB onboard memory minimum. Gaming video cards can be a great value and often perform better for media production than more expensive workstation cards.

Internal Storage: The more storage the better, however due to the amount of data an additional external hard drive will be needed and often is more cost effective.

Ports: Thunderbolt 3, USB-C

External hard drive: 1TB or more with Thunderbolt 3 or USB-C connectivity. The drive should be formatted to exFAT after purchasing so it can be used with both PC and MAC workstations.

#### Software

A subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud (which includes Premiere) is recommended. Students can buy a discounted subscription at <https://e5.onthehub.com/WebStore/OfferingDetails.aspx?o=bb54b8ce-2ccd-e211-9d05-f04da23e67f4&ws=b2c0cd57-97e2-de11-a13b-0030487d8897&vsro=8>

Other software can be acquired later in the program as the student takes more advanced classes, often with student licensing or discounts.

## **Animation**

We recommend that students wait until after their first year to determine if they need their own computer. This will give them time to figure out what their interests are in animation which will in turn dictate what setup best fits their needs.

When/If they do purchase a computer, here are a few primary recommendations:

- They do not need the latest and best processor, but they should get the best they can comfortably afford.
- RAM is extremely helpful. The more the better. We recommend 16GB or more if possible.
- Invest in a good video gaming card if interested in 3D Animation or Effects.

### **MAC or PC**

Both operating systems are good options. Our animation labs are predominantly PC, but students can use either MAC or PC at home depending on what they are most comfortable with. Software that students will use in class is available for either platform. Students focused on 3D Animation will likely benefit more from a PC based system as it is native to most 3D software and hardware.

### **LAPTOP VS. DESKTOP**

- Both types of systems will work well for animation. Whether a student chooses a laptop or a desktop system, purchasing a large monitor can make animating on the computer considerably more efficient.
- Laptops are more expensive, but allow for portability (great for gamers). Students should get a laptop size they are comfortable carrying around all day. Note however, that bigger screens make animating more efficient.
- Desktop systems can be much more robust for less money and are easily upgradable. Downside is lack of portability. A portable hard drive can help.

## ***HARDWARE RECOMMENDATIONS - ANIMATION***

### **2D Animation**

- Same as 3D, but less dependent on a high end graphics card. A better graphics card will improve performance when compositing and editing.
- 2-in-1 laptop like the Microsoft Surface Pro or Wacom Mobile Studio Pro is worth considering. 2-in-1's are versatile laptop/tablet that allows students to draw directly on the screen using a stylus. It will run any software a normal windows laptop computer can.

### **3D Animation and Technical Animation**

- 16GB or more of RAM is recommended. 8GB will do on a laptop, but more is better. 32GB is ideal.
- Invest in a quality gaming graphics card or workstation card (\$250 and up. Gaming cards generally give more bang for the buck and work great)
- i7 processor or better (helps improve render time. Does not have to be top of the line chip). Faster speeds are generally better than more cores, but a balance of both is good.
- Fastest hard drive, 500 GB minimum for laptops. 1 TB or more would be ideal. 1 TB minimum for desktops.

## **HARDWARE DISCOUNTS**

Students are eligible for hardware discounts from some of preferred vendors:

<https://resources.depaul.edu/demon-discounts/technology/Pages/default.aspx>

### **SOFTWARE RECOMMENDATIONS - ANIMATION**

Our labs are loaded with all software our students are required to use for class. If students wish to purchase copies for their own computer they should consider the following:

- Adobe Creative Cloud (CC): Available as a month to month purchase. Photoshop, After Effects, Premiere, Animator, are the most commonly used applications. Students interested in motion graphics may also want to get Adobe Illustrator. These are available as part of a suite or for individual purchase. Discounted student pricing is available at <https://e5.onthehub.com/WebStore/OfferingDetails.aspx?o=bb54b8ce-2ccd-e211-9d05-f04da23e67f4&ws=b2c0cd57-97e2-de11-a13b-0030487d8897&vsro=8>.
- Autodesk Suite: This is essential software for all 3D animators. It includes a full range of Autodesk products including Maya, Max, Mudbox, and Motionbuilder. It is available as a free download for current students at <https://www.autodesk.com/education/free-software/featured>.
- TV Paint: Excellent and versatile software for 2D animators.