

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**  
**STUDENT LAPTOP COMPUTER REQUIREMENT**  
**Art & Visual Communication and**  
**Electronic Media Communications**

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**Why do I need to buy a laptop computer?**

A laptop computer is a powerful learning and production tool that will be integrated into both the classroom and the production studio, getting students out of the artificial learning environment of the computer lab. Laptop computers also afford the flexibility to permit students to continue working on deadline-driven projects at home and the portability for production use in the field. In design and media professions, computers are now used so extensively that they are considered an essential personal tool. So much work is done on a computer, and work of differing types, that no institution can reasonably afford the dedicated space or hardware to fully equip every student through computer labs, and then duplicate these resources for portable use in the studio and field. The personal laptop computer, therefore, is the most reasonable solution to learning software applications, storing personal media and design files, manipulating files, and presenting output in all of our professional environments. Finally, the scheduling of courses can be much more flexible and potentially convenient for students when departments do not have to rely on fitting so many computer-dependent courses into the crowded schedule of a traditional computer lab.

**Who is required to buy a laptop computer?**

All students entering programs in Art & Visual Communications or Electronic Media Communications are required to own a MacBook Pro laptop computer. This includes Associate Degree programs in both departments, Professional Certificate program, and One-Year-Certificate Programs.

**What kind of laptop computer do I need?**

A MacBook Pro with 15-inch Retina Display screen with the current minimal technical specifications:

- **Quad-core 2.2 GHz Intel® Core i7** processor
- 16GB of RAM
- 256GB SSD (hard drive storage)
- Apple Thunderbolt (USB-C) to USB adapter
  - Not included as a built-in option (\$19 add-on)
- Mac OS X v10.11 El Capitan or higher
- AppleCare Protection Plan (\$349 add-on)

**What computer software will I need to buy, and from where?**

The required software applications include the following:

- Adobe Creative Cloud subscription (12-month contract)
  - Purchased through [adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/buy/students.html?promoid=KSDQD) @ 19.99 per month (educational rate) with proper Student ID
  - <http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/buy/students.html?promoid=KSDQD>
  - Media Criticism & Journalism Certificate students do not use this software.
- Microsoft Office Suite (approximately \$10 at UC Bookstore with Student ID)
- Optional software applications will be recommended for specific courses as appropriate.

**Why do I need to buy the AppleCare Protection with the laptop?**

Technical support for personal laptop computers is *not* provided on campus, so the AppleCare Protection Plan is strongly recommended to ensure that students have access to help desk assistance, walk-in assistance at Apple retail stores, and warranty repair services at no additional cost.

### **Where do I get the laptop computer?**

You can purchase the computer online through Apple's web site (<http://store.apple.com/>), at the Apple Store retail location in Kenwood Towne Center, or through the bookstore on UC's Clifton campus. Make sure you already have your UC Student ID so you can request the educational discount through any of these suppliers.

### **How much will the laptop computer cost?**

The estimated retail expense for the recommended laptop options ranges from approximately \$1799 to \$2599. The range in cost reflects the various options you can select, which may be seen on the Apple website (<http://store.apple.com/>). The AppleCare Protection Plan is an additional \$349. All students at UCBA are eligible for Apple Educational Pricing, which will reduce the expense of the selected computer by about \$100. Please note that the Apple website has a special page for education discount purchases.

### **Why do I need a MacBook Pro laptop when Windows machines are cheaper?**

Faculty in both Art & Visual Communication and Electronic Media Communications have agreed that the Apple MacBook Pro is the best production option for UCBA students, despite its added expense, due to the long history of these products being specifically engineered for design and production professionals. This has led to the MacBook Pro being considered a design and production industry standard. In addition, these computers have demonstrated long-term dependability and reliability, with an excellent track record of quick and helpful technical support and repair (when necessary) through the economical AppleCare Protection Plan. These machines will serve students well throughout their education and far beyond.

### **Does UCBA receive anything from Apple for requiring their machines?**

No. Neither the College nor the faculty members are promoting Apple products in exchange for payment, goods or services. We buy our computers just like students do, with exactly the same educational discount. For the reasons note above, our experience is that Apple laptops, while more expensive, are better suited to our professional needs, are well designed so have fewer problems, and have great tech support through AppleCare.

### **What if I can't afford to buy a computer?**

A laptop is a legitimate educational expense. If eligible, students may be able to use their financial aid overage to purchase a laptop. This is dependent upon the type and amount of financial aid. Check with a financial aid officer at UCBA to see if your award residual after tuition and fees have been paid will cover all or part of the cost of the laptop computer. Educational loans in most instances may also be applied to the purchase of required equipment. Finally, required educational expense may be tax deductible when itemizing income taxes. Check with your tax advisor for details on claiming such deductions. Students unable to acquire a laptop computer may wish to consider an alternative major.

### **What if I already have a Windows laptop, can I use it?**

If you have an existing laptop computer, or have recently purchased either an Apple laptop (Macintosh OS) or a Windows OS laptop (such as HP or Dell) prior to matriculating in either Art & Visual Communication or Electronic Media Communications, we suggest contacting the technical staff in the appropriate department to discuss the specifications of the existing computer to see if it can be effectively utilized to run the required software and complete program requirements.

### **Do I need a laptop if I already have a Mac (or Windows) desktop computer at home?**

You will need your computer with you in class to learn how to use software applications to solve specific problems, to perform production activities as class assignments, and to work in groups with other students. If you wish to bring a desktop machine to each class meeting, that would be an inconvenient personal choice.

### **What if I already have an earlier version of the required software, can I use it?**

If you have an earlier version of required software than that currently recommended, we suggest contacting the technical staff in the appropriate department to discuss if it can be effectively utilized to complete program requirements.

### **Where can I ask questions to make sure I'm buying the right computer and software?**

*Art & Visual Communication-*

John Wolfer, Department Chair – john.wolfer@uc.edu, 513-936-7107

*Electronic Media Communications-*

William Boyle, Studio Lab Manager – william.boyle@uc.edu, 513-936-1614

### **Do I need to buy a printer, scanner, external hard drive or other accessories?**

Each student will receive an allocation of free printing each academic term on college–owned printers and will be able to pay for additional prints using the printer stationed in UCBA computer labs. The academic departments also have scanners that you can use. However, the following peripherals are recommended for specific courses to facilitate flexibility, usability and reliable backup of important files. It is recommended that any purchase of these items be deferred until after consulting with the appropriate department faculty members on the use and applicability of these resources.

- Epson Artisan 1430 Inkjet Printer - \$339 (AVC only)
- Epson Perfection V370 Scanner - \$109 (AVC only)
- LaCie Rugged USB 3.0 / USB-C 1TB External Hard Drive STFR1000400- \$79.94 (AVC and eMC)