



Portland State UNIVERSITY

Laptop Computer Purchase Program and Recommended Systems Department of Art, Portland State University

(Updated April 21, 2009)

Laptop Computer Ownership Requirement

Beginning Fall Term 2009, all *upper-division students* majoring in Art with a concentration in Graphic Design are required to own a laptop computer that meets minimum system specifications, including software required for courses in our program. Minimum system specifications for your laptop are described below.

All *lower-division students* majoring in Art with a concentration in Graphic Design are also strongly advised to purchase one of these recommended laptop systems. The sooner you make a commitment to your own system, the sooner the advantages of ownership will impact your ability to perform competitively and successfully in your studies.

Purchasing Your Laptop System

Your purchase of a laptop through this Laptop Computer Purchase Program may be eligible for an extension of any student loans you receive through the PSU Financial Aid Office. Please contact the PSU Financial Aid Office at (503) 725-3461 or toll-free: (800) 547-8887 (<http://www.pdx.edu/finaid/>).

If you already own a laptop computer but it does not meet our minimum system specifications, you should be able to meet this requirement by upgrading your system. (See below.)

Working in our classroom and labs

Upper-division courses in our Graphic Design program may meet in classrooms that do not provide a computer system for each student. Bringing your own system to class therefore provides a number of critical advantages, especially your ability to:

- review digital handouts and make notes during lectures
- obtain resources from our course servers
- complete tutorials and assignments in specific software and digital workflows
- research and develop projects during or outside class time
- collaborate with peers on group projects using chat and video conferencing
- deliver work on our network during or outside class time
- participate in critiques presented on either classroom projection screens or your own laptop display.

Shattuck 107 hosts upper-division design and digital media courses, especially those that provide specific instruction in software and digital workflow. In this classroom, laptops can be connected to our campus network through either a wired or wireless connection, providing access to network services such as web, e-mail, messaging, and video conferencing.

The FPA Media Arts Center in Neuberger Hall, Room 251 and the Art Lab in Art Building Annex, Room 165 both continue to offer desktop systems with printers, scanners, and digital camcorders to use for course projects. However, these labs may be rather busy as they host lower-division digital media courses as well as courses in other Art programs such as Photography and Time Arts.

System support and technical services

We recommend all systems include extended warranty coverage to protect your investment and insure reliable warranty service. For hardware and software support, please consult your product manufacturer. For instructions and advice on configuring your system to work efficiently in PSU facilities, please contact the PSU Help Desk at (503) 725-HELP.

Choosing your computer platform

While the Department of Art expects that its students choose to work on the computer platform most comfortable to them, we strongly recommend Macintosh systems from Apple for the following reasons:

- Mac OS X running on Macintosh computers is the dominant industry-standard platform for design, illustration, publishing, photography, video, and animation. A majority of professionals in these fields have clearly recognized that graphics, multimedia, and Internet technologies on the Mac OS X platform are superior in many respects to those found on Windows running on PC systems.
- Current Macintosh laptop systems are capable of running both Mac OS X and Windows operating systems. In other words, if you are a Windows user, there is still a strong argument for using an Apple Macintosh computer, because it allows you to work on both platforms, thus extending the range of software you can use and providing the flexibility to work compatibly at all times with instructors, employers, labs, and colleagues. A Macintosh therefore provides the most cost-effective solution for developing cross-platform skills that are highly valued by your future employers.
- Running Windows on a Macintosh provides an additional layer of system safety and security, because it is installed on a disk partition, with these advantages:
 - boot the system completely in Mac OS X or in Windows; or, run both platforms simultaneously
 - seamless movement between applications and transfer of data between platforms
 - ability to navigate the web and download files in Mac OS X to protect Windows from viruses
 - ability to boot from Mac OS X to restore a clean Windows installation from an external backup in case Windows fails
- Our faculty are design professionals who use the Macintosh as their primary platform and will be most comfortable demonstrating software on a Macintosh.
- Our computer labs are standardized on the Macintosh platform, so using our labs to support your work will maximize compatibility with your laptop system.
- Mac OS X includes integrated peer-to-peer networking (iChat) with advanced yet simple-to-use capability to chat and video conference with colleagues and friends, including the ability to share files and screens online.
- Mac OS X provides automated backup software that is so easy to use that it insures you never lose valuable work.
- Repeated comparative studies show Macintosh computers typically have lower overall costs of ownership, based on the original cost of a system plus ongoing costs for support, maintenance, upgrades, repair, compatibility, and longevity.
- In 2007, PCWorld awarded the MacBook Pro the honor of being the fastest laptop for running Windows Vista.

There are two methods for running Windows on your Macintosh:

- Reboot your computer into Windows using Apple's BootCamp, which is included in Mac OS X.
- Use virtualization software such as Parallels or VMWare Fusion, which allows you to run Mac OS X and Windows simultaneously while switching between OS and all your applications.

To run Windows on your Macintosh, you will need to purchase and install a copy of Microsoft Windows XP. Extra cost: \$199.

Minimum System Specifications

All laptop systems must meet the following minimum specifications:

- 2.0 Ghz processor
- A display with 1280 x 800 pixel resolution
- 2GB system memory (RAM)
- 120GB hard drive
- Dedicated video processor with 128MB video memory
- Optical drive supporting CD-R/RW and DVD+/-RW formats
- Wireless networking based on 802.11g or 802.11n standards
- Extended warranty for authorized service
- Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium CS4
- Microsoft Office *or* Apple iWork

Purchasing Required Software

Adobe Creative Suite 4:

Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium CS4 is the minimum requirement set by the Department of Art. Adobe CS 4 software can be purchased from Techhead at:

<http://www.techhead.org>

Frequently Asked Questions

I already have a desktop computer at home; do I still need to purchase a laptop computer?

In order to participate fully in courses that meet in our classrooms, you will need a laptop. If your current desktop computer is an older model, perhaps you should consider selling it or using it as an auxiliary system.

I just bought a new laptop computer, but it doesn't meet the minimum requirements—what do I do?

The most typical upgrade is to increase the amount of RAM to facilitate work on larger files and keeping multiple applications running. A larger hard drive may also be an important upgrade. Upgrading the system processor (CPU), the video system, or display of your laptop is usually not possible. However, additional RAM and a larger hard drive can often compensate for a slower or less capable system. The system could still be acceptable in normal classroom use.

Should I buy a printer?

Purchasing and using your own printer is highly recommended for these reasons:

- You can print anytime without worrying whether our department's printers are available, working well, or in demand by other users.
- You can choose exactly the type of printer that is best for your own work.
- You can control the costs of printing yourself, rather than relying on the department to determine the price of your prints.

Can I borrow a computer from PSU?

No, the campus does not have a computer lending program.

When should I get my computer?

It's your responsibility to ensure you have access to a computer by your first upper-division term. The campus recommends you arrange this well before the Fall term.

How long will this computer last me?

It's difficult to say exactly how long a computer will last — mostly because you can tax the capabilities of your computer system more and more as you integrate it into your daily work. The recommended configurations are designed to last for a four-year stay on campus or to accompany you into your chosen profession after you complete your degree program. If in the future you expect to upgrade to the latest software or are going to use your computer for applications beyond its current capability, you may need to upgrade your hardware more frequently.

Can I get financial aid to help purchase a computer?

Eligible financial aid recipients may receive an increase in the amount of their loan package that will help with a computer purchase. For more details, please contact the PSU Financial Aid Office at (503) 725-3461 or toll-free: (800) 547-8887 (<http://www.pdx.edu/finaid/>).

What's going to happen to the campus computer labs?

The Department of Art plans on maintaining both The Media Arts Center and Art Lab facilities throughout the 09-10 academic year. Due to an increase in digital courses, open lab time will be more limited. PSU will continue to manage, maintain, and upgrade its General Access computer labs.

I have a laptop computer; where can I use it on campus?

There are many available network access ports in classrooms and labs in every building on campus. If you have a wireless-network card, there are wireless access points providing wireless access from most locations on campus. Please contact our OIT Help Desk for instructions on how to connect to our campus network.

Where can I find technical and software support on campus?

Our OIT User Support Services (USS) Help Desk is the central campus access point to help you with common computer problems or questions. Located in the basement of Smith Center, Room 18, our Help Desk provides consulting in person, over the telephone at 503-725-HELP (4357), and by email (help@pdx.edu). Our Help Desk web site (<http://www.uss.pdx.edu/>) provides numerous articles that answer your questions, show you how to install and configure your computer, and assist you in troubleshooting problems. If you experience computer problems, this is the best place on campus to begin.

Does the campus have printer repair services?

Not at the current time.

How can I find out about all the campus computing resources available to students at PSU?

Go to the Help Desk in Smith Center Room 18 or visit <http://www.uss.pdx.edu/online>.

Are there computer labs on campus?

In addition to Department of Art facilities (See **Working in our Labs and Classrooms**), there are several General Access Labs:

Branford Price Millar Library Lab Room 115, (503) 725-8425

Broadway Housing Building Lab Room 226, (503) 725-2940

Neuberger Hall Room 96, (503) 725-3288