

CORNISH COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

DESIGN DEPARTMENT

First Year Supplies and Materials 2026-2027

Dear Design, Interactive Experience Design, and Illustration Majors:

Welcome to Cornish College of the Arts! In preparation for your studio classes, please read this document thoroughly to help you set yourself up for success.

1. Incoming Student Laptop Requirements and Recommendations

Having a laptop is an essential tool in the fields of Design, Illustration, Interior Architecture, Animation and Game Arts. Visual Arts Students are required to have a **laptop (Apple or PC) with a subscription to the Adobe Creative Cloud and an external Solid State Drive (SSD).**

NOTE: At the end of this document, you will find specifications and advice for making an informed decision when purchasing—or updating—a computer laptop that you will use in many of your courses.

2. Supplies and materials for the first-year studios

As you enter Cornish, you are expected to acquire supplies just as you would buy textbooks. Below is a list designed to encompass the basic needs of many first-year required studio courses. All tools will continue to be useful throughout your years of study at Cornish. Additional tools or supplies may need to be purchased throughout the year for specific classes, projects, or personal work outside of class. Make sure to get all of these before the start of classes, and have them available for your first studio course.

Kit options

We work with [Blick Art Materials](#) to get some purchasing options and discounts for incoming students. Blick Art Materials created a number of kits complete with all the items on the list; they will be sold based on a first-come, first-served basis.

In the following pages, find two options for obtaining your kit, and the full list of supplies and materials:

PLEASE NOTE: While every care has been made to reflect accurate price information, prices can change frequently: please verify and don't assume the price is spot-on.

Kit Option 1 – Pick up at Cornish: Estimated \$279.99 + Tax

Buy the complete kit online at any time and pick it up on campus during orientation week. To purchase the kit, click through the email that you will receive later in the summer to pre-purchase.

Kit Option 2 – Pick up at Blick: Estimated \$279.99 + Tax

Buy the complete kit online and pick it up at Blick's Capitol Hill store.

Blick Art Materials, Seattle: [1600 Broadway, Seattle, WA 98122](#), open every day from 10 am to 8 pm. Phone: (206) 324-0750 / Email: BlickCapitolHill@dickblick.com.

Note: Kits will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis, and we recommend incoming students purchase them at your earlier convenience.

Complete list of materials, purchase on your own: up to \$311 + Tax

We recommend this option for students who already have many supplies like rulers, scissors, art bins, etc., and may focus on getting paper, paints, and other consumable materials.

We strongly recommend sticking to the brands and sizes of paper recommended here, especially Holbein gouache set, as it will best support your understanding of standard color reproduction practices.

Note: Supplies will be available also on a first-come, first-served basis, so we recommend incoming students purchase them at your earliest convenience.

Visit Blick's website and purchase individual materials as needed:

- [Artbin or similar storage container](#)

- [Portfolio case \(20 x 26in\)](#)
- [18 x 24in, 80LB Drawing pad—70 pages](#)
- [Tracing pad \(9 x 12in\), 50 sheets](#)
- [Sketch pad \(9 x 12in\), 100 sheets](#)
- [Bristol pad \(9 x 12in\)](#)
- [Newsprint \(18 x 24 in 100 sheets pad\)](#)
- Graphite pencils [6B](#), [4B](#), [2B](#), [HB](#), [2H](#) (each is a separate link)
- [Charcoal pencil \(4B\)](#)
- Prismacolor pencil set ([12ct minimum](#))
- [Pencil sharpener](#)
- [UHU glue stick](#)
- [Painter's tape](#) and [drafting tape](#), one roll of each
- [Scotch tape, preferably with dispenser](#)
- [White vinyl eraser](#)
- [Kneaded eraser](#)
- [Art Gum eraser](#)

The following brand of gouache paints will make your work for assignments in Color + Composition easier; we strongly recommend that you purchase this particular brand:

- [Holbein set of gouache paints \(white, black, magenta, yellow, cyan\)](#)
- [Holbein white gouache paint \(15ml\)](#)
- Watercolor brushes: ½ inch flat brush, #6 round brush (feel free to buy a [small set with assorted sizes](#), natural or synthetic will work, as long as they are for water-based media)
- [Cutting mat \(12 x 18in\)](#)
- [X-acto knife](#) with [50 blades](#) (or [these](#))
- [24 inches steel ruler](#)
- Micron pens [01](#), [03](#), [05](#) (each is a separate ink; depending on your habits, you may want to get more than one of your favorite numbers)
- [Black Tombow brush pen](#)
- [Plastic pallets with wells](#) (2 pallets)
- [8 inch scissors](#)

ADDENDUM: Choosing a laptop computer

Better computing resources mean a better learning experience based on smoother operation, faster workflows, and better digital representations of your art and design media.

A more pleasurable and efficient experience means less down time waiting for loading, rendering, etc., and less frustration due to lack of screen area for effective workspaces in

software. Basically, if using your primary learning tool sucks, your art and design will suffer—directly and indirectly.

Nowadays “pre-built” computers (just purchase-and-use, no assembly needed) target different uses. For example, some laptops are designed just to browse the internet, some for business people working on spreadsheets and powerpoints, while others are for creatives making complex media works, playing games, editing and rendering video, and so on.

If you want to be able to edit high-resolution video and work with 3D software and motion graphics, as well as play games, you need a powerful machine with a dedicated graphics card.

Evaluating cost-to-performance and features of a laptop depends on your budget, of course, but also on how you plan to use it. For school, choose a model and product line that is appropriate for your needs. Compare product pages and read what use-cases their models target. Even though you may not be gaming, you may need the performance associated with gaming to do professional media work on a laptop.

Base Specifications

Here are some specifications you should aim for, in order of importance, and what they mean. Scroll down to go directly to examples that follow these specifications.

- **CPU / processor: 6 performance core or more processor**

The processor is the Intel or AMD branded central processing unit (CPU), and you want it to have at least 6 cores. This usually means Intel i7 (now Core Ultra 7) models, or Ryzen 7 models at minimum for Windows machines. For Apple laptops, target M3 chips.

- **RAM / Memory: at least 16GB system memory, but ideally 32GB or more**

Random Access Memory (RAM), is important for having multiple applications open, browser tabs, etc. Basically, everything you do in a specific context (window, application, etc.) requires this kind of memory, which is faster than the *storage memory* on the hard drive. Running out of RAM can sometimes lead to crashing and loss of work.

- **GPU / Graphics**

If you are planning to game, or work with a lot of motion in 3D, or high-resolution video, you should buy a machine with a dedicated graphics-processing unit (GPU). This is more or less another smaller computer inside your laptop that handles specific graphics related tasks. Many cheaper laptops have “integrated” graphics where the

CPU and system memory are used instead of a separate piece of hardware, but as you might imagine this is not as effective.

- If you are just doing graphic design or digital illustration, integrated graphics works just fine, but if you are doing 3D, video editing, and motion-based media, often you will want to spend more here. Avoid the RTX 4050 options and go for an RTX 4060 or higher. Having 8GB of video memory is the sweet spot.

- **SSD / Storage**

You want a laptop with a solid-state drive (SSD), with at least 500GB of space—though we recommend 1TB. This is where all your applications and files will be stored. If you are working with large files, like 4k video, large 3D textures, etc. you will want to have the larger option.

Finally, connectivity features you should have:

- Wifi 6
- An HDMI, USB 3 type C, or Thunderbolt port for connecting to external screens
- A USB 3 port for using “thumb” drives

Software: Required for Visual Arts

[Adobe Creative Cloud Student and Teacher Edition](#)

Laptop recommendations

Below are examples that follow our recommended specifications. Remember that, if you are planning to work with video or film, animation, or motion design, you should opt to get the higher-end optional specifications. Please contact the IT helpdesk at helpdesk@cornish.edu should you have any questions or need advice on the purchase of a laptop.

If you need **financial assistance** in purchasing a laptop, please contact your financial aid counselor at finaid@cornish.edu for guidance in identifying any available options. Some students can borrow more in private loans or Parent Plus loans by \$3,000 for the first year.

APPLE LAPTOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Apple laptops, when configured for your needs, will tend to be more expensive. However, they are optimized with that “Apple magic,” have excellent build quality, and really do perform well—especially the models with the M3 chips. If you are already used to MacOS, and use an iPad for drawing, this option makes sense. We don’t recommend the Air models for students that plan to work with high-res video, 3D software, motion graphics or games.

Apple High-end examples

[MacBook Pro 16"](#)

- M3 Pro Chip
- 12-Core CPU
- 18-Core GPU
- 18GB Unified Memory
- 512GB SSD Storage
- 16-inch Liquid Retina XDR display²
- Three Thunderbolt 4 ports, HDMI port, SDXC card slot, headphone jack, MagSafe 3 port
- Magic Keyboard with Touch ID
- Force Touch trackpad
- 140W USB-C Power Adapter

[Apple Education Store](#)

[Apple Macbook Pro 14" M3](#)

- M3 chip
- 8-core CPU
- 10-core GPU
- 24GB unified memory
- 1TB SSD storage
- 14-inch Liquid Retina XDR display²
- Two Thunderbolt / USB 4 ports, HDMI port, SDXC card slot, headphone jack, MagSafe 3 port Backlit Magic Keyboard with Touch ID
- 70W USB-C Power Adapter

[Apple Education Store](#)

Apple Minimum Specifications

[Macbook Air 15"](#)

- Apple M3 chip 8-Core CPU
- 10-Core GPU
- 16GB Unified Memory
- 512GB SSD Storage footnote ¹
- 16-core Neural Engine
- 15.3-inch Liquid Retina display with True Tone²
- 1080p FaceTime HD camera
- MagSafe 3 charging port
- Two Thunderbolt / USB 4 ports

- Support for up to two external displays (with laptop lid closed)
- Magic Keyboard with Touch ID
- Force Touch trackpad
- 35W Dual USB-C Port Compact Power Adapter

[Apple Education Store](#)

Notes

- If you decide to purchase a refurbished computer, make sure to add a warranty plan! (our IT department cannot fix broken or defective computers).
- We cannot guarantee that these prices will be available when you purchase your laptop.

Software: Required for Visual Arts

[Adobe Creative Cloud Student and Teacher Edition](#)

External 2 TB SSD Storage: Required for Visual Arts

For example: [Transcend 2 TB USB 3.0](#)

WINDOWS LAPTOP EXAMPLES

PC laptops come in more varieties than Apple computers, and they can be customized.

We are providing some examples below. Please contact the [Cornish IT Department](#) for additional guidance if needed.

We recommend [Framework laptops](#) for students who know a little about computers, or want to learn, and are eco-conscious. These laptops are ready to be configured individually, and allow you to swap components for something higher should you see the need later on (add memory, storage, etc.)

PC/Windows high-end examples

[Framework 16 Ryzen 7 DIY-edition](#)

- with 32GB memory option
- with 1TB NVME
- add Expansion Bay Module: AMD Radeon RX 7700S
- with expansion ports: USB-A x2, USB-C x2, HDMI, Audio

[Dell Alienware m16 R2 Gaming Laptop](#)

- with RTX 4060
- with 64GB memory option

[Dell Alienware M16 R2 Gaming Laptop](#)

- Intel Core Ultra 7 processor
(this processor has a slight edge over the standard i7)
- Windows 11 Home operating system
- NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4060, 8GB GDDR graphics card
- 16 GB RAM
- 1 TB storage
- 16" Display

PC/Windows Laptop Minimum Specifications example:

[Framework 13 Ryzen 7 DIY-edition](#) (\$900)

- with 7840U option (+\$300)
- with 32GB memory (2x16) option (+\$160)
- with 1TB NVME (+\$100)
- with expansion ports: USB-C x2, USB-A x1, HDMI (+\$46)

[Dell G16 Gaming Laptop](#) (\$1000)

- with i9-13900HX + RTX 4060 options (+\$200)

[Dell G15 Gaming Laptop](#)

- 13th Gen Intel Core Processor
(bumping it up to i9 would be ideal, but increases the price)
- Windows 11
- NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4060 graphics card
- 16 GB memory (has room for an additional memory slot to increase it to 32gb)
- 1 TB storage
- 15.6" display

Software: Required for Visual Arts

[Adobe Creative Cloud Student and Teacher Edition](#)

External 2 TB SSD Storage: Required for Visual Arts

For example: [Transcend 2 TB USB 3.0](#)
