CORNISH COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

D E S I G N   D E P A R T M E N T

Incoming Student Laptop and materials requirements, 2025-2026

Dear Design, Interaction Design, and Illustration Students:

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

C O N T E N T

1. Laptop requirements and recommendations

(Scroll down to go directly to examples.)

As a student in Graphic Design, Interaction Design, or Illustration, your laptop is a key tool for success. You'll use it with creative software, for projects, research, and presentations. We've put together guidelines for selecting a computer that meets the needs of your coursework—including minimum specifications and suggested models.

If you have questions or need clarification, please reach out to your [admissions counselor](#) or department coordinator, [Sarah Lenoue](#).

If you need financial assistance with purchasing a laptop, please contact your [financial aid counselor](#) to explore available options. Some students may be able to borrow an additional $3,000 through private loans or Parent PLUS loans for their first year.

a. Tech requirements

You will need:

> → **A laptop** (Apple or PC) that meets or exceeds the specifications detailed below. A mouse is also recommended.

> → [**A subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud**](#) (Student and Teacher Edition). **Avoid using bootleg software or open-source alternatives unless directed by your studio faculty.**

> → **An external SSD** for file storage and backup (e.g., [Transcend 2 TB USB 3.0](#) or equivalent) for file storage and backup.

Additionally, you may consider investing in a mouse (for using design and illustration software), an external monitor (for your dorm or personal space), and a tablet. These are not required, but if you already have them or can afford them (new or refurbished), they will make your work easier and more enjoyable.

b. Choosing a Laptop computer

Not all laptops are designed for design work. Laptops intended for web browsing or office tasks may not provide the performance required for creative applications like Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects, and Blender. Choose models designed for creative professionals or gaming, as these typically offer the performance you'll need.

> → For **2D** (graphic design or illustration) work, integrated graphics should suffice, but note that your needs may increase over time.

→ For **3D**, motion graphics, or video editing, choose a laptop with a dedicated graphics card (GPU).

c. Laptop recommendations

A P P L E   L A P T O P   R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

Apple laptops, when configured for design work, tend to be more expensive, but they are optimized for performance with excellent build quality. If you're accustomed to macOS and use an iPad for drawing, this might be the right choice.

We do not recommend the MacBook Air models for students planning to work with high-res video, 3D software, motion graphics, or games.

Apple specs

Specs	Minimum	Recommended
CPU	M3	M3 or greater
RAM (system memory)	16GB unified	24-32GB unified
SSD Storage	512GB	1TB
WiFi	WiFi 6or greater	WiFi 6, 6E or greater

Examples

Below are examples that follow our recommended specifications. Remember: 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 [Admissions](#) or [IT](#) if you have any questions or need advice on the purchase of a laptop.

Apple Minimum Specifications example (Not recommended for students that plan to work with high-res video, 3D software, motion graphics or games.)

[MacBook Air 15 in](#)

10-Core CPU, 10-Core GPU, 24GB Unified Memory, 512GB SSD Storage

$1,499.00 or $124.91/mo.per month for 12 mo.months with [Apple Education Store](#)

[MacBook Pro 16 in](#)

14-Core CPU, 20-Core GPU, 24GB Unified Memory, 512GB SSD Storage

$2,299.00 or $191.59/mo. For 12 months with [Apple Education Store](#)

Apple High-end examples

[MacBook Pro 16 in](#)

14-Core CPU, 32-Core GPU, 36GB Unified Memory, 1TB SSD Storage

$3,199.00 or $266.58/mo.per month for 12 months with [Apple Education Store](#)

Not required—but recommended—accessories

→ Very recommended: **[Magic Mouse](#)** (USB-C) $79.00 with [Apple Education Store](#)

→ Optional: external monitor (for dorm or personal space) like [Dell UltraSharp U2725QE, 27"](#), Thunderbolt 4, USB-C, HDMI, DisplayPort $699.99

→ Optional: [iPad](#), several models from $329 or $27.41/mo. For 12mo. At Apple Education Store

Notes + *tips*

→ If purchasing a refurbished laptop, ensure you include a warranty. (Cornish IT cannot service defective computers.)

→ Prices are subject to change, so be sure to shop around for the best deal.

W I N D O W S   L A P T O P   R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

Window computer specs

Specs	Minimum	Recommended
CPU (Intel or AMD)	– Intel Core 5, Core 7, Core 9 (or Core Ultra variants of these)	– Intel Core 5, Core 7, Core 9 (or Core Ultra variants of these) – AMD Ryzen 5 or Ryzen 7, Ryzen 9

	or – AMD Ryzen 5 or Ryzen 7, Ryzen 9 (or Ryzen AI variants of these)*	(or Ryzen AI variants of these)*
RAM (system memory)	16GB	32GB
SSD Storage	500GB	1TB
WiFi	WiFi 6, 6E or greater	WiFi 6, 6E or greater
Ports	USB 3.0 or greater port, type A or C (for thumb drives)	HDMI or Thunderbolt (for external screen connection)

* Core 5 / Ryzen 5 = Entry-level Core 7/9 / Ryzen 7/9 = Better, smoother performance

Core Ultra / Ryzen AI = Nice upgrade if budget allows

Examples

Below are examples that follow our recommended specifications. Remember: 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 [Admissions](#) or [IT](#) if you have any questions or need advice on the purchase of a laptop.

Dell: Alienware or G-Series (Preferred vendor for Cornish IT).

[Alienware series](#)

Framework: Customizable and sustainable laptops (13" or 16").

[Framework 16](#)

[Framework 13](#)

HP: Omen or Victus series.

[Omen Transcend](#)

[Victus 16](#)

ASUS: ProArt or Zephyrus series (Premium but expensive)— specifically designed for creatives, though support is not as robust as Dell/HP/Apple.

[ProArt series](#)

[Zephyrus series](#)

Not required—but recommended—accessories

→ Very recommended: a mouse, like **[Logitech G305 Lightspeed (Wireless)](#)**, $59.99

→ Optional: external monitor (for dorm or personal space) like **[Dell UltraSharp 24 Monitor - U2424H](#)**, $254.99

→ Optional: Screenless Pen Tablets connected to your laptop (e.g. **[Wacom](#)** or **[Huion](#)** pen tablets): examples: **[Framework 12](#)**, **[Wacom](#)** or **[Huion](#)** Pen Displays (expensive)

2. Supplies and materials for the first year studios

You are expected to purchase supplies for your studio courses, similar to how you would buy textbooks. These tools will be useful throughout your time at Cornish. Additional materials may be required throughout the year based on specific classes or projects. Be sure to have everything ready before the start of classes.

You will be expected to purchase additional materials and supplies 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.

If you are a transfer student and won't be taking classes in any of the first year studios, you will certainly need a laptop, but you can wait till to hear from your instructors what materials they expect you to have. Anyway, [from the complete list below](#), we marked with an asterisk the ones that we recommend you to have ready, for you most certainly will need them at some point.

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. The kits will be sold based on a first-come, first-served basis.

1. Recommended—Pick up at Blick or Cornish (during orientation week): $234.99 + Tax

Buy the complete kit online at any time and pick it up at Blick's Capitol Hill store, or on Cornish's main campus during orientation week (ask your admissions counselor for the date in which the kits will be delivered at campus).

To purchase the kit, scan the barcode below or click here and pick-up the kit in store starting **July 10th**. Our partners at Blick have spent some time browsing to make sure this is a competitive price.

Link to the Design Kit

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

Notes

→ Kits will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis, and we recommend purchasing them at your earliest convenience.

→ Careful!: Once opened, the kit cannot be returned.

2. Online purchase through Blick—$265.61 + tax.

This is the approximate price if you purchase the same items individually—prices and availability are not guaranteed. Shipping free on orders over $69.00, from IL ,in about 5–7 business days.

Complete list of materials purchased on your own—up to $289.97 + tax, before 10% student discount.

This is the shelf tag price in store if you purchase each item individually: Prices are not guaranteed, as well as availability.

Consider this option if you already have many supplies like rulers, scissors, art bins, etc., and 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.

Visit Blick's website and purchase individual materials as needed:
- ☐ Artbin or similar storage container
- ☐ Portfolio case (24 x 31 in)
- ☐ 18 x 24in, 80LB Drawing pad—30 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) and Holbein white gouache paint (15ml)
- ☐ https://www.dickblick.com/items/blick-black-cat-waterproof-india-ink-3-oz/ *
- ☐ 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 5 blades *
- ☐ 24 inches steel ruler *
- ☐ Plastic triangles, 30-60 Degree*
- ☐ 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 *

* Items with the red asterisk are recommended for transfer students who are entering Cornish as Sophomores; you will certainly need a laptop, but can wait to hear from your instructors which specific materials they will need for your studio.