DEPAUL UNIVERSITY
JARVIS COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Computer Recommendations for School of Design Programs

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School of Design

Graphic Design

MacBook Pro is preferred (or comparable Windows laptop), but a MacBook Air will suffice (get as much memory as possible). Mac is the preferred platform 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. If you use a Windows-based laptop, it should be running Windows 10 or higher. You'll want at least 500 GB of storage on an SSD disk. 16 GB (or more) of RAM is necessary for running the latest version of Adobe Creative Cloud.

A 15" laptop screen is necessary if you plan on spending any amount of time working as a designer on your laptop. It would be a good idea to invest in an external monitor as well. While it's difficult to beat the technical specifications of Mac's Studio Display, other brands like LG and Dell make 24–27" monitors that are sufficient in quality at a fraction of the price.

You should also have access to some form of cloud storage (e.g. Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, etc.) for storing project files.

Please do not expect to be able to use a tablet computer. While Adobe ships mobile versions of some of its applications, these are not the same as the desktop versions and lack many necessary features. Be aware that DePaul provides access to Adobe Creative Cloud while you're enrolled in courses that require its use (which includes most of your graphic design coursework)—but this access does not extend through breaks between quarters.

User Experience Design

We do not have a specific recommendation in terms of a suggested personal computer, however having a laptop computer will be more useful than a desktop machine. Either a PC or a Mac would work for most situations in the UXD program. Most software you'll use (e.g. Figma, Adobe products, prototyping software) will work on both systems or have a cloud-based version. Whether you use a Mac or a PC, we do recommend at least 16 GB of RAM.

Game Design

A laptop or desktop running Windows (10 or higher, 64-bit) is preferred to allow students to work easily across a range of game development environments, though Windows 11 (64-bit) is recommended. We recommend a Quad core AMD or Intel processor between 2.7 and 5 GHz (3.7 GHz is a good median), 16GB RAM, and a discrete video card with DirectX 11 support and at least 8GB of RAM. Alternatively, a MacBook Pro with M1 or M2 processor has its benefits, as it can run both Windows and Mac operating systems as well as allow for iOS game development. Regardless of your operating system, you'll want to avoid systems that use integrated Intel graphics as their main graphics chipset, as they just don't hold up once you move onto more complicated work in most commercial game engines.

Industrial Design

For industrial designers, Windows is the hardware standard for several reasons:

- Rhino will be taught using the Windows version, plus more functionality-extending plugins are available on the Windows platform.
- SolidWorks is Windows-only and will only run on Mac (UNSUPPORTED) when dual-booted into Windows using Parallels, a sizable performance compromise.
- Keyshot running on a Mac sacrifices GPU rendering—plus, Macs are incompatible with RTX-class GPUs.

Although Macs are capable machines, for Industrial Designers, Windows provides better performance and more flexibility for less money.

Graphics Processing Unit—A dedicated graphic processor improves performance over integrated graphics. An independent GPU facilitates accelerated rendering (including textures, shading, and lighting) and smoother motion at higher resolutions. Highly recommended by Adobe, Rhino, Keyshot, and Solidworks.

Display—You'll need every millimeter of a 15" screen, but don't spend more for 4K resolution, 142% color gamut score, touch screen, or OLED technology. Instead, buy a 27-32" external display for your room. Your eyes will thank you - 3D CAD eats up almost as much space as the foam prototypes in your closet.

Capable Laptop Specifications for Industrial Design

CPU: i7 64-bit Intel processor with 8-16 Cores or higher and support for SSE4.2 or higher
OS: Windows 10 or 11 (64-bit)
GPU: Nvidia GeForce RTX 40xx to 50xx or higher, minimum of 8 GB VRAM or higher, DirectX 12 support
RAM: 16 - 32 GB (32 GB recommended)
SSD: 500 MB - 1 TB

Acronym Reveal:

CPU –Central Processing Unit
OS –Operating System
GPU –Graphics Processing Unit
RAM –Random Access Memory
SSD –Solid State Drive

Digital Sketching Options:

- Apple iPad Pro
- Samsung S9
- Wacom Intuos or Cintiq
- Xencelabs Pen Tablet Medium