STUDENT PERSONAL COMPUTER RECOMMENDATION

NOTE: We encourage students to consider getting a touchscreen laptop or a laptop AND tablet if feasible. With some remote instruction this academic year, the ability to draw directly on the screen (using a stylus or other drawing tool) for design work, desk crits, and related activities has proven very helpful for students.

We recommend that all students entering the Department of Landscape Architecture own a laptop or mobile workstation computer for use in studios and courses. If purchasing a personal computer is not an option, there are options for long-term laptop rental on campus (UW Student Technology Loan Program and CBE Student Loaner Program). Students who have been impacted by COVID-19 and are unable to secure a laptop through one of the loaner programs can also request funds to purchase a home computer through the CBE Student Emergency Fund. Contact your adviser for help requesting funds.

CBE Computing has information on recommended minimum hardware specifications and advice for purchasing computers. Students who plan to use the equipment they currently own should confirm that it meets these recommended minimum specifications.

For Windows PCs, the CBE has had very good luck with the Dell and Lenovo laptops. Special academic pricing for Dell laptops is available online. Student discounts for Lenovo laptops are available online. The University Bookstore offers special academic pricing for Macs as well. All Apple laptops will meet specifications.

The Department HIGHLY ENCOURAGES students to purchase an external hard drive (1 TB is ideal) or get access to sufficient cloud storage for regular backup. Students losing files because of computers crashing is one of the most devastating and stressful things that happens.

Mac or PC?
Both Macs and Windows PCs are used by our students and supported at UW. CBE Computing does not have the resources to provide extensive support for personally owned computers, however, they do have expertise with both platforms.

In general, PCs work better as some of the software (such as ArcGIS) does not work on the Mac OS. PCs are also more customizable in terms of memory, RAM, graphics cards, etc which is important for running some of the graphics-heavy and 3D modeling software we use. Some software has Mac versions (like AutoCAD and Rhino 3D) but often their capabilities are more restrictive and the interfaces quite different. If you do prefer Mac, there are ways to make it work. You can install Windows on your Mac, however, we highly recommend you partition your harddrive and run Parallels or Bootcamp. Parallels lets you run Windows AND Mac simultaneously, while with Bootcamp you restart and select which OS you want to run individually. This can use a lot of virtual memory, so if you go that route, you'll need more memory and RAM. Often Mac users (and students with older computers in general) supplement their working process with the PCs on campus or by accessing the CBE computers remotely through their personal computer. Students often do this if their computer cannot run graphic-heavy software (especially rendering programs such as Lumion) but students do find that there is often a "lag" between when they move the mouse and the action on the screen which can make the process frustrating and harder. You can also use a loaner laptop, however they will be prioritized for students who do not have any computer for Autumn 2020 due to remote learning.

Software Information
Students in the Department of Landscape Architecture will use a variety of software, primarily:
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Acrobat)
- AutoCAD
- McNeel Rhinoceros + Grasshopper
- ArcGIS
- Sketchup

updated: 4 September 2020 JP

Student may use other software such as Revit, Lumion (see Lumion recommended system requirements), and video editing software.

With remote learning, we have added:
- Zoom
- MS Teams

Accessing Software + College Resources
UW IT Connect provides enrolled UW students with free or discounted software, including most Microsoft programs.
CBE Online Learning Resources for CBE students, staff, and faculty including access to software, training + tutorials
CBE Computing Spaces and Resources online hub for all things digital at CBE