

Computing Recommendations for the Film and Video Studies Program at George Mason University

Dear Film at Mason student,

Welcome to the Film and Video Studies Program! As you prepare to produce creative content, consider our list of recommended hardware and software investments.

Throughout this document, we list our recommendations in order of importance. We also lean toward Apple computers as these are the systems we use in our labs. There are many great PC options available, but sharing content from your personal computer to the school's systems will be a challenge.

If you have any questions, contact FAVS' Technical Coordinator, Andrew Jorgensen, at favslabs@gmu.edu or visit our Equipment Cage once you arrive.

1. EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE - Required

Students must purchase an external drive for their editing work. We require that you purchase one drive but recommend purchasing two. One you will transport to campus course meetings and to the labs, and one you keep safely at home as a media storage backup. The drive you bring to campus classes and editing labs must be portable.

We recommend that you purchase or format your drives for the Mac OS (our format is MAC OS EXTENDED JOURNALED) to match our editing labs.

Minimum and Recommended Drive specs:

- 1 TB (terabyte) minimum.
- USB 3 connectivity at minimum, Thunderbolt, and USB C are highly recommended, Thunderbolt or USB C adapter to USB 3 is also recommended.
- At least 7200rpm
- Drive case to protect your portable drive
- Label your drive with a sharpie marker

This drive is one of our favorites: [LaCie Rugged Mini Hard Disk LAC301558](#)

2. Apple Computer - recommended

All of our edit labs and auxiliary facilities are equipped with Apple computers. We find them to be very stable tools for editing and integrate well within the university as a whole. As an industry standard platform for video post-production we find that these systems are the most sensible investment for our students and program. As a college student, you may want to invest in a laptop that you can take to your classes with you, but having a desktop in your dorm/or at home may work just as well.

Our Recommended Specs:

Apple Mac Book Pro 15"	Apple iMac (21.5" or 27")
2.8 GHz quad core i7 or higher	3.4 GHz quad core i5 or higher
512gb of storage or higher	1tb Fusion Drive
Radeon Pro 560 with 4gb Memory	Radeon Pro 560 with 4gb Memory or higher
No less than 8gb of memory (16gb recommended)	No less than 8gb of memory (16gb recommended)

We recommend you consult with Patriot Tech in the Johnson Center or an Apple sales rep either at your local Apple store when purchasing. As you purchase, please consider the adapters you will need with your hard drive and any other accessories and cases.

3. ADOBE CREATIVE CLOUD - recommended

Through your time in the Film and Video Studies Program, you will be exposed to a variety of different editing platforms and post-production tools. Final Cut 7, Final Cut X and Avid are a few of these platforms. However, the primary tool we use for editing instruction is Adobe Premiere. We use many of the other products within the Creative Cloud Suite as well.

You are welcome to explore and purchase those other products, but we feel Creative Cloud is the best tool for students to invest in, and will aid in their collaboration and sharing of work.

Contact our Mason campus store, Patriot Tech, for your purchase. Please keep in mind this is a subscription software and will need to be renewed annually.

<http://pcstore.gmu.edu/adobe-creative-cloud>

4. FINAL DRAFT - recommended

Final Draft is an industry standard tool for writing and formatting your scripts and it is installed in Film at Mason labs. Final Draft has a student license available.

<https://store.finaldraft.com/final-draft-10-edu.html>

There is also a freeware screenwriting software available called **Celtx** that you can use. Visit <https://www.celtx.com/> for more information.

5. MICROSOFT OFFICE - recommended

As a Mason student, you are allowed to download Microsoft Office for Mac or PC for free. Visit the website below for more details

<http://tsd.gmu.edu/services/office365/ProPlus/index.cfm>

6. HEADPHONES - strongly recommended

Headphones are an essential tool for film students. You will need a good pair to do everything from recording on set audio, to editing your projects in our labs or

completing your final mix.

Purchase headphones with these very important features:

- Studio grade headphones with a flat EQ. These headphones are designed to give an unbiased representation of the high, mid, and low frequencies, so you can mix your audio accordingly. (i.e. avoid purchasing Beats by Dr. Dre, or Bose headphones)
- Headphones should be “closed back” with soft cups that surround your ear (they do not project sound outwards.) We strongly discourage the use of earbuds for film sound work.

These are some of our favorite headphones:

- [Audio-Technica ATH-M20x Professional Monitor Headphones](#)
- [Sony MDR-V150 Monitor Series Headphones](#)

7. USB Flash Drive - recommended

Most USB flash drives will do, but we recommend using a drive with at least 16GB of space. You will need to format it for the Mac OS, similar to the above instructions for external hard drives. Label with your name and carry with you on campus.

8. Rent a locker on campus - recommended

Drives and headphones are an investment. Keep your items safe in a locker on campus. You can rent a locker from the [School of Art](#) (\$20 per semester/\$35 per year) or [Student Centers](#) (\$20-30 per semester).

We look forward to seeing you in the new semester!

Sincerely,

Andrew Jorgensen, Technical Coordinator
Amanda Kraus, Assistant Professor, Editing Concentration Head
Giovanna Chesler, Program Director and Associate Professor

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