

## Computer Suggestion for Fall 2011

Department of Architecture  
University of Hartford

First year architecture students will not need the computer for architecture courses but it will be easier to have one for other courses. There are several labs around campus but it is easier to have your own. Although some students begin to explore the use of computers for building design, we direct them away from that for the first year, encouraging them to explore hand drawing and sketching as a necessary skill for design as well as for the development of the understanding of design and digital graphics.

The University and suppliers of architectural software lean heavily towards the PC. However, our students have had no issues using Apple/Mac. These days, computers come with most everything you will need from a hardware perspective. Make sure that you get plenty of RAM - recommend at least 4 GB (6GB better; 8GB best – graphics software is memory intensive). The hard drive should also be large (300 - 500 GB). Get a DVD/CD burner (most come standard).

Current Windows operating system. (Windows 7).

Microsoft Office Professional or Office Small Business for suite of applications (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook, Publisher).

For monitors, 17" is good. The larger the screen, up to 17", the better. Beyond 17" (19" and 21") are OK but tend to be overkill. For space and ease of use, get an "Ultra Sharp Flat Panel" (or equal). Also, look for monitors that have USB ports built into them, usually on the sides. These are much more convenient than in the computer base. Recommend at least 4 USB ports. 6 is better. 8 is great! These will be used for mouse, thumb drives, printer, scanner, etc.

Wireless mouse is nice and convenient (although watch them; they can "walk" easier)  
Network, both hardwire Ethernet and wireless port, are essential. You can check Information Technology Services for more information. They have a couple of sites:  
<http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/its/ITSstandards.html> and <http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/its/services.htm>.  
Also, check information from Admissions.

Two flash/thumb drives. Each at least 4 GB. These are essential for creating backups of your files (create backups daily!!). As an alternate to two flash drives, buy one flash drive and an external hard drive for backups. The external should be at least 500 MB. You'll want to start creating a digital portfolio by second year and having a large backup is essential.

### Laptop:

I recommend a laptop for full flexibility. Configuration comparable to above: min. 4GB RAM (8GB better), 300-500 GB hard drive, Windows Vista, 15" screen fine, DVD/CD burner, 4 to 6 USB ports (6 ports are hard to get. 4 is good. 2 is minimum. Multi-port adaptors are available but tend to be slower.) If you want a Mac, simply match the above specifications as close as possible.

Also - take note - laptops are not as safe as desktops. I have not heard of any great issues with this as long as students are aware. Definitely get a security cable so you can keep it locked when not "on the road". The studios are pretty safe. Most occurrences happen elsewhere. Not a huge worry, but everyone should be aware.

Software: Microsoft Office is essential - Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook. Other software, such as modeling (SketchUp for example) and CAD (AutoCAD, Revit, etc), should wait until second year.

Printer: color inkjet, 8 1/2" x 14" capability fine. 11 x 17 better (but price jumps and won't need this size until second year). Also, there are printers and plotters (large format) in the architecture department for student use.

See you in late August!