

LAPTOP & TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The architecture and interior design majors utilize a robust set of computer applications. The applications are the same that are used in the design industry, and include:

- Autodesk AutoCAD
- Autodesk Revit
- SketchUp
- Rhino
- Various rendering software such as Enscape, V-Ray, Lumion, or D5
- Adobe Creative Suite: Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign

To best support your computer needs as an architecture or interior design major, below are the **minimum recommended specifications**. These recommendations are intended to support students throughout the duration of their program and accommodate increasingly advanced modeling, rendering, and visualization workflows over time.

	Windows-based PC	Apple OS MacBook
Operating System	64-bit Microsoft® Windows® 10 or later	OS 11.0 (Big Sur) or later
CPU Processor or Model	Intel Core i7 / Core Ultra 7 or AMD Ryzen 7 equivalent, 2.5 GHz or higher <i>The highest affordable CPU speed rating recommended.</i>	Apple Silicon M3 Pro minimum M4 Pro or higher recommended <i>The highest affordable CPU speed rating recommended.</i>
System RAM	16 GB minimum 32 GB recommended	16 GB minimum 32 GB recommended
Hard Drive	512 GB SSD	512 GB SSD
Monitor/Display	15" <i>Supporting 1920 x 1200 resolution with true color or higher.</i>	14" <i>Supporting 1920 x 1200 resolution with true color or higher.</i>
Video Adapter/ Graphics Card	NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4050 minimum RTX 4060/4070 recommended (8GB VRAM minimum), NVIDIA RTX A-Series equivalent, or AMD Radeon RX 7800M XT or higher	Apple MacBook Pro with Apple Silicon M3 Pro minimum M4 Pro or higher with minimum 18-core GPU recommended <i>Dedicated/discrete graphics capability is strongly recommended.</i>
Audio	Windows compliant sound-card	Built in
Network Adapters	Wi-Fi included	Wi-Fi included
Warranty	At the student's discretion	At the student's discretion

*Please note, an Apple iPad or Google Chromebook are **not** acceptable substitutions for your laptop. Major specific software/applications are not compatible with these devices. The MacBook Air or new MacBook Neo also do **not** meet the recommended requirements.*

Peripherals	Wireless optical two-button mouse with scroll wheel/ball Webcam with full video & audio functionality – <i>built in or external is acceptable</i> Additional external monitor and keyboard – <i>recommended</i> 8GB USB thumb drive and an external hard drive for backups – 1 TB – <i>recommended</i>
Required Software	Microsoft Office 365 – <i>free for Samford students</i> Adobe Creative Cloud – <i>\$19.99/month for first year then \$39.99/month</i> Autodesk AutoCAD – <i>free educational version through Autodesk.com</i> *Autodesk Revit – <i>free educational version through Autodesk</i> **SketchUp – <i>web version is free; Studio/Pro ≈ \$55 annually</i> **Rhino – <i>onetime cost ≈ \$195 / upgrade older version ≈ \$95</i> Zoom – <i>free for Samford students</i> Cloud-based storage services such as OneDrive, Box, DropBox, or Google Drive – <i>OneDrive is provided free for Samford students</i>
Additional Software	Additional software utilized in architecture and interior design coursework may include BIM, modeling, visualization, rendering, environmental analysis, fabrication, collaboration, and emerging AI-assisted design platforms. Examples include: Grasshopper, Enscape, Lumion, D5 Render, Twinmotion, Blender, Bluebeam, Unreal Engine, or ArcGIS. These programs are provided on department lab computers, but if a student desires them on a personal computer also, they should plan accordingly.

* Autodesk Revit is currently Windows-only software. While Apple Silicon devices can run Windows through virtualization platforms such as Parallels, students intending to use Revit extensively may find a Windows-based PC to provide the most seamless workflow experience. Parallels is ≈ \$49.99 for a one-year subscription. There is no cost for Windows 10.

** For SketchUp and Rhino, it is not recommended to purchase or subscribe until coursework requires it.

Students are expected to have a laptop that meets departmental recommendations, in line with Samford University's general laptop requirement for all students. Having a personal computer allows students to work comfortably outside of class, manage assignments more easily, and stay on track throughout the semester. Since students may occasionally need to participate remotely, it's important that everyone has the necessary technology readily available. Starting with an appropriate computer helps ensure a smooth learning experience and lets students focus on their creative work rather than technical concerns.

Department computer labs, fabrication spaces, and software resources are available to support student learning; however, students are strongly encouraged to maintain a personal laptop that meets departmental recommendations for flexibility and consistent workflow access.

Students are encouraged to purchase the strongest computer reasonably within budget, as architecture and interior design software requirements typically increase over a student's 4-5 year academic program.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT EXPENSE ESTIMATES

Estimated costs associated with architecture and interior design coursework vary by semester, project scope, individual student work habits, and elective course selection. Typical additional expenses may include books, digital resources, drawing and model-making supplies, printing and plotting, software subscriptions, and optional travel or field-study opportunities.

The department works to minimize unnecessary student costs through shared resources, digital workflows, access to institutional fabrication and computing facilities, and departmental support for printing and software resources whenever possible. Printing/plotting and most standard 3D printing needs are supported through departmental resources.

As well as the technology requirements listed above, students should anticipate the following additional program-related expenses. Some expenses are optional or course-dependent and may not apply every semester.

Category	Major	Estimated Cost
Books/Digital Course Materials	Architecture & Interior Design Majors	\$150–\$200 / semester
Studio Supplies <i>sketchbooks, pens/pencils, drafting materials, trace paper, markers, colored pencils, etc.</i>	Architecture & Interior Design Majors	\$100-\$150 / semester
Model-Making Materials <i>cutting mat, cutting tools, adhesives, basswood, chipboard, foamcore, acrylic, etc.</i>	** Architecture Majors Only Typically	* \$150–\$200 / semester
Field Trips/Travel <i>if applicable</i>	Architecture & Interior Design Majors	*** Variable
Software/Digital Tools	Architecture & Interior Design Majors	See Above
3D Printing	** Architecture Majors Only Typically	Covered by Department
Printing/Plotting	Architecture & Interior Design Majors	Covered by Department

* *Costs vary significantly depending on project approach and material selection.*

** *The Interior Design Furniture & Millwork course specifically uses model-making materials and 3D printing.*

*** *In their 4th year, students typically have the opportunity to participate in a missionally-based international trip, corresponding to studio coursework. Costs tend to be very reasonable for a trip of this nature. However, it is recommended to plan in advance for this opportunity.*