

[Equipment and Software](#)

Apple MacBook Pro Laptop Computer

All students at Compass College of Cinematic Arts are required to have an Apple MacBook Pro (MBP) laptop computer. This computer will be used daily in most classes, especially those with a technical basis. Because the film/digital media industry is predominantly Mac-based, Compass is an exclusively Mac-based program. PC laptops are not considered an acceptable substitute. Please note that Compass students are eligible for academic discounts at the [Apple Store for Education](#). You can also purchase [factory-refurbished MacBook Pros](#) from the Apple online store. These refurbished machines come with a one-year factory warranty, and are often a great way to save some money. Click this link if you are interested in [refurbished MacBook Pro laptops](#).

The MBP machines are currently available with either 13" or 15" screen featuring the ultra-high resolution Retina Display. These Retina Display machines are great for editors and VFX artists because of the huge number of pixels on the screen. The latest models are considerably slimmer, lighter, and faster than the models they replaced. New 13" MBP models start at \$1199, while 15" MBP models start at \$1899.

Older MacBook Pro laptops came in 3 screen sizes - 13", 15" and 17". The 17" has the highest resolution screen of the older machines and is the model to have if editing and computer graphics are one of your primary interests. However, the 17" is the most expensive model, is much heavier and is a quite a bit less portable, so if you are predominantly interested in writing, producing or directing, the 13" or 15" models might be a better choice. Historically, most CCCA students buy the 15" model. Computers age very quickly, so avoid the temptation to buy an older model just to save money. You may find that an older MacBook Pro will not run the current MacOS X (Sierra) or other current programs used at Compass (like the Adobe CC suite). Newer and more powerful is almost always better in computers.

Once you select the screen size you want, the other main considerations are processor speed, hard drive storage size, and amount of RAM memory. You should choose the fastest processor that fits your budget, and likewise the largest amount of storage space and RAM. You can never have enough hard disk space or speed, especially if using the computer for editing, graphics or animation!

We would also strongly recommend purchasing a separate external hard drive of at least 1TB with USB 3.0 or Thunderbolt (faster but more expensive) connectivity. [Other World Computing](#) is an excellent source for those at very reasonable prices, as is Best Buy, Amazon or Costco. Over the course of your time at Compass, you will accumulate a significant amount of footage, audio, software, documents, reference material, and more. Again, you can never have enough disk storage space. A 32Gb or 64Gb Flash drive for sharing files with classmates and instructors is also very useful.

HD Digital Video Camera

A high-quality HD digital video camera is not required, but is very highly recommended. Students will begin shooting projects in their first few weeks at CCCA and will shoot stills or video constantly throughout their time at Compass.

CCCA maintains many cameras and lenses for individual student use, but does not have enough inventory to supply all students. If you have your own camera, you are not limited by CCCA equipment availability for your assignments and projects. CCCA also has (5) state-of-the-art RED digital cinema camera packages which are used primarily for classroom instruction and larger projects. These RED cameras may be available for use on student project films on a case-by-case basis, however, students must be certified by their Cinematography instructor before being allowed to use the RED cameras. For students purchasing cameras, we find that various models of Canon DSLR cameras are the best value and are most commonly used in the industry. These Canon DSLRs offer a great combination of high quality video recording, still photo shooting, interchangeable lenses, work great in low light, are light weight and compact, and are fairly inexpensive. All the Canon DSLRs have basically the same video recording circuitry, so the main differences are in construction quality, still photo quality and a few feature differences. Any of these cameras are hard to beat for the indie filmmaker.

The Canon DSLR models currently available:

- T6i - approx. \$500-700 depending on lenses and options
- T7i - approx. \$700-900 depending on lenses and options
- 80D - approx. \$1,000-1500 depending on lenses and options
- 6D - approx. \$1,500-2200 depending on lenses and options
- 5DMk4 - approx. \$2,500-3200 depending on lenses and options

There are many packages available combining camera bodies and different lenses, and they can use the complete range of Canon's excellent still-photo lenses. In the Grand Rapids area, [Norman Camera](#) on 28th Street carries them, another good source for these cameras at good prices is [B&H Photo](#) in New York City. [Amazon](#) is also a popular place to find these cameras.

Any student who does not have their own camera will need to partner with someone that does for those assignments that require shooting. Again, it is highly recommended that each student has their own camera.

Required Software

Students learn editing in the first semester Basic Editing course using Adobe Premiere Pro CC2017. In the second semester Intermediate Editing course, you learn Adobe Photoshop and some Adobe After Effects. You can get all these software programs by subscribing to the Adobe Creative Cloud (monthly subscription required) for Students and Teachers which gives you access to all Adobe software, including Premiere Pro, Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects, Audition and many more. The Adobe Creative Cloud CC2017 bundle is currently available to students on a monthly subscription for \$20/month from Adobe (or \$199 if you choose to prepay an entire year) and is required for all CCCA students. [Click Here](#) for more information on Adobe Creative Cloud.

You must also have either Apple iWork or Microsoft Office for Macintosh on your MacBook Pro. You will need to work with Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents on a regular basis, so these are required.

For Screenwriting, we also recommend that you have a copy of Final Draft screenwriting software (Note: You can also use Celtx as a free alternative, but Final Draft has more features and is an industry standard).

NOTE: Because models often change during the spring and summer, we recommend waiting until near the beginning of the school year before purchasing a MacBook Pro, a camera, or any software to insure that you are getting the latest model or version. Feel free to contact CCCA anytime with your equipment or software questions.