



Fay Jones School of Architecture + Design 2025-2026 Recommended Laptop Specifications

Dear Fay Jones School Entering Students,

The Fay Jones School incorporates digital tools, techniques, and methods of design in the education of students beginning in the first year, across all departments and disciplines. These important approaches are integrated with a parallel emphasis on hand drawing and analog tools to provide a holistic education, one valued within the school and beyond, into professional practice. Due to this integrated approach and the mobility of our teaching and learning methods, the school asks all students to arrive at their design studies with a laptop computer of suitable capacity, memory, and capability for the demands of both design studio and classroom use. This machine will be a primary tool and resource for your studies.

Students will need a computer capable of running Autodesk Revit, Rhino 3D, Adobe Design Suite, Enscape, and other graphics-intensive applications for 4 to 5 years. **Windows 10 Pro** is required to run Autodesk Revit and other BIM/CAD/CAM applications. Apple computers should NOT be purchased as your primary laptop, as Macs do not support Autodesk Revit and other software that students may use while studying at the Fay Jones School of Architecture + Design.

Considering the balance between cost and performance, the school recommends two tiers of laptop specifications:

High performance offers more computing power at a higher cost.

Reliable performance offers reliable performance with graphics-intensive programs at a more affordable cost.

Both tiers will provide effective computing power for applications taught and used by the school. If you can afford it, we recommend the highest-performance laptop specification tier, as it will extend its usefulness for five years, better support Virtual Reality (VR), and future-proof your purchase for unforeseen experimental software that may become available.

Note: Purchasing a laptop computer at a lower specification than the recommended Reliable Performance tier listed below will put a student at a disadvantage when using graphics-intensive software.

You are free to purchase any brand from any retailer of your choice as long as the purchase matches or exceeds the specifications listed below. Pay special attention to the CPU, system memory, and graphics card (GPU). The graphics card (GPU) selection has the greatest impact on Laptop performance and price. When verifying if the graphics card meets recommendations, look at the brand, the amount of graphics card memory (VRAM), and the model number (such as GeForce RTX 3070).

Recommended Brands

Dell, Alienware (owned by Dell), MSI, Lenovo, and Microsoft.

Most quality branded laptops offer education discounts on both the hardware and extended warranties. It is advisable to purchase the extended warranty for the longest duration that you can afford, as regularly carrying and using laptops over a period of 4 to 5 years can be physically demanding on them.

Software

Students will be expected to purchase software licenses during their time at the Fay Jones School of Architecture + Design. Near the start of your first semester, expect to purchase an Adobe Suite subscription and a Rhino 3D license. Both software packages are available for purchase at a discounted price on their providers' websites. Over the next few

years, different courses may require the purchase of additional licenses, such as V-Ray or Enscape. Autodesk Revit is free for students for educational use.

Note: Windows Pro operating system is highly recommended to give students access to printing and plotting services at the Fay Jones School of Architecture + Design.

Required Accessories

You will need to purchase a three-button mouse, a 6' 4K HDMI cable, an HDMI USB-C adaptor (if needed), a Cat6 Ethernet cable, and an Ethernet USB-C adaptor (if needed). 3D modeling programs like Revit and Rhino require three-button mice, and most studio desks are equipped with a large monitor and Ethernet port.

High Performance - Higher Cost

For the highest performance and longest use value.

(Based on the high to the medium recommended spec for the highest demanding software - (VR capable specs))

Specifications	
CPU Processor	Intel® i-Series, Xeon®, AMD® Ryzen, Ryzen Threadripper PRO. 2.5GHz or Higher.
System Memory	64 GB RAM
Graphics Card (GPU)	RTX 2000 Ada Generation, NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4070 Ti or AMD RX7900 XT (DirectX 11 capable graphics card with Shader Model 5)
Graphics Card Memory (VRAM)	8 GB or higher
Storage	512GB SSD or higher (Solid State Drive)
Operating System	64-bit Microsoft® Windows 11 Pro
Display	Non-touch - 1920 x 1200 or higher

Reliable Performance - Lower Cost

For reliable performance at a more affordable cost.

(Based on the medium-level recommended spec for the highest-demanding software.)

Specifications	
CPU Processor	Intel® i-Series, Xeon®, AMD® Ryzen, Ryzen Threadripper PRO. 2.5GHz or Higher.
System Memory	32 GB RAM
Graphics Card (GPU)	NVIDIA RTX 500 Ada Generation, NVIDIA GeForce RTX 3070 Ti, or AMD RX 6800 (DirectX 11 capable graphics card with Shader Model 5)
Graphics Card Memory (VRAM)	4 GB or higher
Storage	512GB SSD (Solid State Drive)
Operating System	64-bit Microsoft® Windows 11 Pro
Display	Non-touch - 1920 x 1200 or higher