

Additional Expenses & Laptop Specifications 2026

Dear parents and students,

The programmes at a creative educational institution inevitably require materials, apart from digital media, to produce professional art and design portfolios. Since many of the courses are of a digital nature, only limited extra materials are used by students, with the Contemporary Arts Degree as an obvious exception. However, hands-on practice in all courses is essential. We educate students to be familiar with the materials and media used in the arts or design industry.

Be assured that we keep expenses to a minimum and if the extra expenses concern you as a parent, do not hesitate to bring it to our attention.

The requirements and media differ from programme to programme, and the costs also depend on the student's choice of media and execution of ideas. By choice, some students may spend more on projects than others. To save as much as possible, students should adhere to the material lists supplied by the lecturers at the start of each term. These lists contain essential, cost-effective items that have been negotiated with the retailers by the Creative Academy. Also, keep in mind that many stores offer discounts to enrolled students.

Please use the following additional costs estimation for budgeting purposes:

BACHELOR OF ARTS: COMMUNICATION DESIGN / INTERACTION DESIGN / MOTION DESIGN		
*Adobe Suite software license (compulsory)	Range of software used by students at a substantially discounted student rate. Adobe software description - Creative Cloud is a collection of 20+ desktop and mobile apps and services for photography, design, video, web, UX and more. Creative Cloud includes Photoshop, InDesign, Premiere Pro, Illustrator, Adobe Xd, Acrobat DC, and more.	Covered by the compulsory Software License Fee payable at registration. and purchased by the CTCA on behalf of the student.

Foundation year only: General studio materials (compulsory)	Variety of materials	Covered by the compulsory Materials Levy payable at registration and purchased by the CTCA on behalf of the student.
Computer It is essential that students have access to a computer, software and stable internet at home.	Please refer to the laptop specifications for detailed guidelines on computer specifications: List of suppliers: Computers: DigiCape, iStore, Incredible Connection, and other retailers	R20000-R60000 If possible, add the computer expenses to the first year. Most students prefer a good quality laptop.
Stationery & Printing	Pencils, charcoal, paper, glue stick, fixatives, drawing and cutting utensils, etc.	R1000 per year
Communication Design	For mounting and printing of work, construction of mock-ups - spray glue, double-sided tape, cutting knife, steel ruler clutch pencil and eraser.	R800 - R1000 per year [will differ slightly per student and project]
BACHELOR OF ARTS: CONTEMPORARY ART		
General Studio materials (compulsory)	Variety of materials	Covered by the compulsory Materials Levy payable at registration and purchased by the CTCA on behalf of the student.
*Adobe Suite software license (compulsory)	Range of software used by students at a substantially discounted student rate. Adobe software description - Creative Cloud is a collection of 20+ desktop and mobile apps and services for photography, design, video, web, UX and more. Creative Cloud includes Photoshop, InDesign, Premiere Pro, Illustrator, Adobe Xd, Acrobat DC, and more.	Covered by the compulsory Software License Fee payable at registration. and purchased by the CTCA on behalf of the student.
Computer It is essential that students have access to a computer, software and stable internet at home.	Please refer to the laptop specifications for detailed guidelines on computer specifications: List of suppliers: Computers: DigiCape, iStore, Incredible Connection, and other retailers	R20000-R60000 If possible, add the computer expenses to the first year. Most students prefer a good quality laptop.
Stationery & Printing	Pencils, charcoal, paper, glue stick, fixatives, drawing and cutting utensils, etc.	R1000 per year

Laptop specifications | 2026

Recommended specifications for Cape Town Creative Academy students purchasing or upgrading laptops (Applicable to Art and Design Students).

It is recommended that all students have a mobile (laptop) computer workstation to effectively enable blended-mode learning from home and on campus. The following hardware specifications for **Mac or Windows PC** should be seriously considered for optimum performance and workflow when using the prescribed software - Adobe Creative Cloud 2024/2025 which requires moderate/high-performance devices to run smoothly.

Following the recommendations below, there will be no need for further upgrades for the duration of the study.

**Note that software licences for new students are activated in mid February and require no action yet. Software costs are included in the study fees.*

**Note that our software packages and online learning management systems require a stable internet connection, therefore please ensure that your laptop workstation includes a quality wifi adapter. We also recommend you have an integrated camera and microphone (for video classes/calls).*

Apple MacBook Air or Pro (macOS)

Processor	Apple Silicon (M2/M3/M4)
Operating system	macOS Sonoma (14) or later
RAM	16 GB Recommended (8GB Minimum)
Hard disk space	512GB Recommended (256GB Minimum)

Laptop PC (Windows 11)

Processor	Intel Core Ultra / i7 / i5 or Ryzen AI / 7 / 5
Operating system	Windows 11

RAM	16 GB or higher (32 GB Recommended)
GPU	Dedicated Graphics preferred (recommended for Motion Design)
Hard disk space	512GB SSD minimum (1 TB Recommended)
Monitor resolution	1920 x 1080 minimum (2560 x 1600 or higher recommended)

Detailed system requirements

The specifications provided here should only be understood as suggestions - to make a more informed decision, please visit the Adobe website [here](#) for more detailed hardware requirements specific to each app in the Adobe Creative Cloud. Though students have full access to the Creative Cloud suite of software, we focus on the following applications for graphics, layout, video editing and motion design:

- Illustrator
- Photoshop
- InDesign
- Premiere Pro
- After Effects

**Training for Adobe software and our online environment is provided in Digital Skills 110*

3D Animation

Students who intend on majoring in 3D modelling/animation (2nd/3rd year) should also consult the hardware guide provided by Autodesk Maya (2025) [here](#) and particularly look at the graphics card recommendations. We strongly recommend buying a Windows PC for work in 3D.

PC retailers:

- [Wootware](#) (Online)
- [Evetech](#) (Online)
- Resolve ITS - email accounts@resolveits.co.za for a quote

Chosen solution and budget

Adobe Software and most other software used by CTCA students will run perfectly on Windows 11 and a recently updated Apple macOS machine, provided they meet the requirements above. Therefore it entirely depends on your budget to decide which to choose. In most cases, students prefer buying an Apple Macbook - but please note that a PC laptop works equally well.

Should affordability be a concern, a home workstation (iMac or Desktop PC) with similar specifications can work. There are a limited number of iMac workstations on campus that are open for all students to use depending on the current studio activity.

Recommended Apple resellers:

- [Digicape](#)
- [iStore](#)
- [iStore Pre-Owned](#)

Basic Computer Literacy

Computer literacy is essential for modern-day design and forward-thinking art students. From day one, all students will be required to use online learning resources, use email & instant messaging, and manage project files. If a student is not used to working on either a macOS or Windows based computer, we strongly suggest looking into a bridging course outside the Academy for basic computer literacy - we do not provide bridging courses.

If sufficient, these free computer literacy courses from LinkedIn might be of help:

Mac: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/computer-literacy-for-mac-3/welcome>

Windows: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/computer-literacy-for-windows-10/welcome>

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Special note from IT

Being a modern-day designer or artist means relying on your computer. Please make sure that your operating system, graphics drivers and anti-virus software are kept up to date at all times. Similarly, all Adobe software must also be allowed to be updated when needed. Be sure to keep all working files well organised and backed up on external hard drives or on the cloud storage provided by us through Google Drive and always ensure that there is enough free disk space for software to run efficiently.

Upkeep of a student's workstation's functionality and data is their responsibility - delays and loss of work will not be accepted as valid excuses for missing project deadlines. Here, we assume that you have competent computer skills.

Best for 2026!