

MUSIC DEPARTMENT BACHELOR OF MUSIC, YEAR 2

2024-2025 Laptop, Peripheral, and Software Requirements

MacEwan University students enrolled in the Bachelor of Music Degree are required to own a laptop computer beginning in their second year of their studies. In recent years, we've allowed students to purchase either Windows or Macintosh laptops, but because of recent experiences, we strongly encourage all students to purchase an Apple MacBook Pro or MacBook Air. Overall, students have had a much more positive experience using the Apple platform. The current generation of Apple's own M1 through M4 Silicon processors are far outperforming similar Windows-based machines or even Intel-based Macs. Please see below for further information. The Department of Music is an Avid Learning Partner, and courses are taught using the Pro Tools music software which is available for Mac OS as well as Windows (but the minimum requirements must still be observed; further details below).

We also recommend obtaining an appropriate case, as well as the various peripherals and software outlined below. Please pay close attention to the requirements outlined as you will need your system installed and ready to go for the first day of classes.

Note that laptops are not required for the first year of studies in the Bachelor of Music programs, as there are a number of dedicated desktop computers available to students in the Computer Commons, Library, and various labs that accessible in the University. The highest demands for owning a laptop will generally occur in the third and fourth years of the BMus. Many students, however, want to own a laptop when they begin their studies. Students may wish to use an older laptop and then purchase a current model in years 2 or 3 of their studies. An alternative for first year, though not officially supported for music applications, is a tablet such as an iPad, which will allow students to access the Internet and email, use eBooks, connect to social media, create basic content for assignments, and run various music apps to support their studies. The tablet is also substantially less expensive than a laptop and can continue to be used once they own their required laptop.

Why a laptop?

A laptop requirement for the above mentioned programs of study will give you the most flexibility in and out of the classroom. Whether you're working in a classroom, lab, or from home, you'll have all the tools you need when and where you need them.

Why is the Apple laptop our recommendation? Why a MacBook Pro or Air?

Apple uses high quality components in all of their laptops that will give students a superior technological experience throughout their studies. It will also prepare them for entry into the workforce as Mac is the standard platform used in the Music industry, and several prominent pieces of software are only available on the Macintosh platform.

We selected the MacBook Pro in particular as a standard for a number of reasons: it is one of the most powerful and adaptable Apple laptops, has a highly efficient battery, it is comparatively light and easy to commute with, and has a processor capable of running the most demanding applications that are required from the Department (we do, however, make allowances for other Mac laptops if you already own one). If you do not plan to focus on the tech related courses, then the MacBook Air will be more than sufficient for your studies.

Can I use a Windows laptop for my studies?

Only recently, since the Department introduced the use of laptops as required hardware, we recognize the significant cost of the Macintosh laptops, we are now offering minimum support of Windows-based laptops, as long as they meet the minimum requirements. But please note that for both Mac and Windows laptops, the bare minimum may prove to be a less than satisfactory user experience. Try to balance out processing power, RAM, storage type/size, connectivity and how comfortable the laptop feels – and relate them to your needs; and not your current needs – think about how you may be using the laptop a few years down the line so your investment is truly worth the test of time. There WILL be a significant performance impact if you expect satisfactory results from a \$300 Windows laptop purchased from a chain department/grocery store!

I already own an Apple laptop. Do I need to upgrade or buy a new laptop?

Only earlier generation MacBook Pros from mid-2016 onward are optimized to efficiently run the advanced graphically intensive applications you will need. If you have purchased a MacBook Pro previous to your application for Music, it will be subject to approval by our department as not all hardware configurations will meet the Program's minimum requirements (upgrades *may* be possible and required).

**If you purchased a 15" MacBook Pro (Model # MacBookPro 6,2) prior to February 2014 or a 13" Macbook Pro (Model # MacbookPro 8,1) prior to June 2015 it will not be eligible for use in the Music Department. Please contact Marcel Hamel (hamelm@macewan.ca) to verify what system you have if you're unsure.*

Windows Recommended Requirements (as posted by Avid for Pro Tools)

Minimum System Requirements (note that all models of the Microsoft Surface are NOT recommended):

- Windows 10 (22H2), Windows 11 (23H2)
- 64-bit Intel Core Processor (i3 2GHz or faster recommended)




For more information on supported computer models and operating systems, please click [here](#)

All Computer Systems:

- minimum 8GB RAM
- 15GB of free space for installation

The complete minimum specifications for Avid Pro Tools for Mac and Windows can be found [HERE](#):

New Apple Macintosh Recommendations

Minimum	Recommended	Optimal Configuration
		
13.6" MacBook Air	14" Liquid Retina Macbook Pro	14" Liquid Retina Macbook Pro
512 GB SSD Storage	512GB SSD Storage*	1TB SSD Storage
2 Thunderbolt 4/USB 4 ports	3 Thunderbolt 4/USB 4 ports, HDMI and SDXC Card slot	3 Thunderbolt 4/USB 4 ports, HDMI and SDXC Card slot
Apple M3 chip	Apple M3 Pro chip	Apple M3 Max chip
8-core CPU/10-core GPU	11-core CPU/ 14-core GPU	14-core CPU/ 30-core GPU
8GB memory	18GB memory	36GB memory*
Base cost: \$1,549**	Base cost: \$2,499**	Base cost: #3,939**

*denotes upgrade at time of purchase.

** price reflects **Shop for University** discount at <https://www.apple.com/ca-edu/store>

A Quick note on RAM requirements:

Avid Pro Tools recommends a minimum of 16GB of RAM (which is often an upgrade). All Macs are NOT able to upgrade their RAM after purchase, so larger configurations must be specified only at the time of purchase, and typically through custom channels like Apple online "Shop for University" store.

Buying a new MacBook Air or Pro

A new MacBook Air or Pro can be purchased at an academic discount at Apple's Online "Shop for University" or at Apple's two Edmonton retail locations, as well as several Authorized Apple resellers (Best Buy, London Drugs, Staples, etc.). If you plan to customize a MacBook Pro, you may only be able to do so through the Apple Canada "Shop for University" online store at time of purchase.

Note: Apple offers a "Back-To-School" promotion in late June/July, where you get up to a \$200 Apple Gift Card and 20% off AppleCare with an eligible Mac purchase, and typically runs until mid-September.




Buy Mac or iPad, get
a gift card up to \$200.000







For a limited time, purchase an eligible product and receive a gift card for up to \$200. Redeem your gift card after purchase for university-ready accessories and more.



Required and optional Peripherals



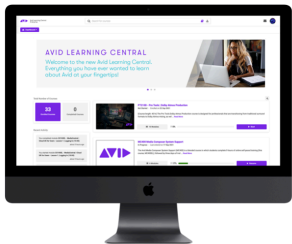
There are a number of peripherals you'll need to consider with the purchase of your MacBook Pro or Windows laptop. In particular you'll need an external hard drive for backing up your work and storing content, and some form of protective case or sleeve to prevent damage to your computer.

	<p>External USB 3 hard drive 2TB or greater (such as WD MyPassport 2TB) or 1TB External SSD (such as WD My Passport 1TB USB-C External Solid State Drive)</p> <p><i>For backing up and storing your files.</i></p> <p>Required (for Music Technology Minors):</p>	<p>Approx \$90-\$140</p>
	<p>Minimum 16GB USB 3.1 Flash drive</p> <p><i>Short-term backup and moving files between computers e.g. Lexar 32GB S80 USB 3.1</i></p> <p>Required</p>	<p>Approx. \$15-\$25</p>
	<p>USB-A to USB-C adapter</p> <p>highly recommended</p>	<p>Approx \$10 for three</p>



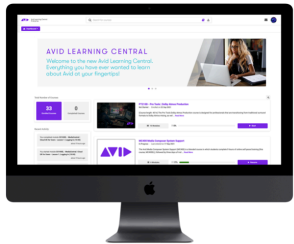
	<p>Laptop Case or sleeve <i>There are a wide range of laptop cases available.</i> Recommended</p>	<p>\$25 - \$100</p>
	<p>Midi controller keyboard: <i>even if you are not a keyboard player, this is an essential tool for the electronic musician; select various sizes and features</i> Highly Recommended</p>	<p>\$79 to \$700+</p>
	<p>21" to 24" External LCD Monitor <i>Allows your Mac to connect to a large display at home e.g. LG MP55 Series AH-IPS LED Monitor</i> Recommended</p>	<p>approx.CA\$179</p>
	<p>Ear Buds or Professional Headphones (recommended for Music Tech and Recording) <i>A list of recommended headphones will be provided at the beginning of the semester</i> Required: <u>Weblink</u></p>	<p>\$99-\$200</p>
	<p>AppleCare Protection Plan <i>Adds two years to your system warranty.</i> Highly Recommended: <u>Weblink</u></p>	<p>\$199-\$339</p>
	<p>USB-C hub for newer laptops with USB-C connectors <i>Adds USB-A 3 ports, HDMI, ethernet connection, memory card reader, etc. (example; Anker 7-in-1)</i> Highly Recommended for laptops with only two USB-C ports</p>	<p>\$50 to \$150</p>

Software Requirements

There are various requirements for software purchases depending on your course of studies. Those who are not studying in the technology streams are only required to subscribe or buy software for the Intro to Music Technology class (MUSC 263)

MUSC 263 Intro to Music Technology software requirements		
	<p>(Recommended) Pro Tools Studio; minimum one-year commitment</p> <p>(Minimum) Pro Tools Artist; min. 3 month subscription required</p> <p>Pro Tools Artist: Weblink</p>	<p>\$129.95 CAD for one year commitment</p> <p>\$12.99/month x 3 (no annual commitment)</p>
	<p>MakeMusic Finale V27 (or compatible equivalent) or Avid Sibelius music notation software</p> <p>Finale: Weblink Sibelius: Weblink</p>	<p>Finale \$99 USD purchase-for students.</p> <p>Sibelius Artist subscription: \$16.95 x 3 months with no commitment Sibelius Ultimate: \$129.95 for one year commitment</p>
	<p>Avid Learning Central: online learning materials for Pro Tools and Sibelius Required of all students</p>	<p>Included as part of your Material Fees</p>

Software Requirements for Music Technology minors and Recording Major streams

	<p>Pro Tools Studio; 1 year subscription required</p> <p>Pro Tools Studio: Weblink</p>	<p>\$129.95 for one year paid up-front subscription Includes \$2000+ of bonus with Inner Circle</p>
	<p>MakeMusic Finale V27 (or compatible equivalent) or Avid Sibelius music notation software</p> <p>Finale: Weblink Sibelius: Weblink</p>	<p>Finale \$99 USD purchase-for students.</p> <p>Sibelius Artist subscription: \$16.95 x 3 months with no commitment Sibelius Ultimate: \$129.95 for one year commitment</p>
	<p>Avid Learning Central: online learning materials for Pro Tools and Sibelius Required of all students</p>	<p>Included as part of Material Fees. Also includes two exam attempts for Avid Certifications</p>

Important note regarding music notation software : the requirements for students to purchase music notation software is currently under review. Since assignments will be submitted in a PDF format, a number of professional music software programs could be used, including Finale, Sibelius and Dorico. Please note that assignments done in free online programs such as MuseScore is NOT supported.

RECOMMENDED: Microsoft Office 365 is available **free** to students through the MacEwan Portal, through a special arrangement with Microsoft. Alternately, iWork is included with any newly purchased Mac; however, if you have a previously purchased Mac laptop you will need to purchase the applications (Pages, Numbers, and Keynote) through the Mac Appstore for \$27.99 each. These programs are useful for many applications such as creating papers, spreadsheets and presentations.

Summary

Please remember that you are responsible for backing up your work and managing your own files. For Music Department students, we recommend you purchase a new machine that will be “fresh out of the box” and optimized for your school use over the next few years. If you have an older MacBook Air or Pro or Windows laptop (or opt to purchase a used or refurbished system) please make certain the hardware meets at least the minimum spec requirements.

You will need to have your laptop and backup drive purchased and ready to go for the first day of classes. The headphones and software should be purchased within the first week of classes.

Need additional pre-purchase information?

Please contact the Technology Coordinator, Marcel Hamel, at hamelm@macewan.ca, or call 780.497.4433 for any Music software and hardware inquiries

Please allow time to purchase and setup your laptop, particularly if you're ordering online.
