MEDIA & EQUIPMENT GUIDE FOR FOUNDATION STUDENTS 2025/2026

INTRODUCTION

At The Open Window, we adopt a 'bring-your-own-device' policy. While we do ensure there are devices in studios where necessary, it is important that creatives invest in their own equipment for the following reasons:

+ Creatives utilise these tools at all times during their studies. The more a student can use their tools (software and hardware) - the more practised they will be and the more successful they will be in skills acquisition (learning takes practice, practice requires tools beyond class time)
+ While OW provides specialist spaces and gear sharing platforms for specialist equipment, we believe the basic tools should be invested in by the students - such as a laptop and headphones, plus a camera or tablet where necessary later on.
+ It is important for creatives to invest in acquiring the basic tools of their trade - they can utilise these devices beyond academic study (additional learning, freelancing opportunities, etc.)

We thus provide a basic outline of the needed media and equipment per subject below to assist in guiding purchases. We suggest a mobile device (laptop) to account for a multi-modal teaching approach adopted by The Open Window, and then suggest further equipment specs to account for specific subject choices.

Please keep in mind that we write the list as a purchasing guide, and provide cost estimates available at the time of writing. The Open Window cannot be held responsible for price increases - all equipment is supplied by external parties with whom we do not have any formal arrangement or affiliation. All the information provided here is a GUIDE to assist you in planning and budgeting for your studies. Furthermore, if you already own some of these items or there are similar requirements between subjects, you are not required to purchase new, or have two of the same items.

SHOULD I BUY A PC or A MAC?

Let's set your mind at ease: _you do not have to have a Mac to study any of the degrees at Open Window_. Some students prefer working on a Mac interface and others prefer a PC. Mac tends to run graphic software (Adobe Suite) slightly smoother than PC and it has a more accurate colour display. It is worth noting that Mac is regarded as industry standard for some fields (such as design agencies), whereas PC is more common in rendering, game and industrial design fields.

How do I know which computer will be best for me to use during my degree?

We do provide some insights and guidelines per subject below.

ESSENTIAL HARDWARE SPECIFICATIONS FOR ALL OW STUDENTS:

All students enrolled in programmes at The Open Window must have the essential hardware specifications (computer and internet access) <u>prior</u> to classes starting. It is suggested that students opt to purchase a portable device (laptop) due to the multimodal learning & teaching model adopted at Open Window.

Overall recommended Specifications for devices

Modern multi-core processor, 16GB RAM, a minimum 512GB SSD, 4GB GPU + 1TB external SSD (via USB-C)

*Please note that the new Apple M-series chip architecture has integrated memory and should be benchmarked against the recommended specifications

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OTHER ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT FOR <u>ALL</u> STUDENTS

- Stable internet connection that allows students to join online classes & comfortable home work-space environment
- **<u>A web camera and headphones for online classes</u>**
- A smartphone

*Adobe Software is included in the Foundation level registration fee and is made available to students once term starts.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ACCORDING TO SUBJECT CHOICE ON FIRST YEAR

FILM & TV, PRODUCTION DESIGN, MOTION DESIGN

LAPTOP:	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
Minimum Requirements: Quad-core processor, 16GB RAM, 256GB SSD + 1TB external SSD	**Production Design:** A digital drawing tablet is beneficial, but not compulsory. **Film & TV:** Every student needs to have access to a DSLR or mirrorless camera with video capabilities - ***Estimated cost: R20 000 - 30 000** (depending on brand).*[1]

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[1] *FV100 students only need cameras from Term 3. Should they have decided at that point that majoring in the subject is unlikely - we do have rental options rather than purchasing options.*
For more information: please see the FV Camera Buying Guide (2025).
📄 ***FA Camera Buying Guide 2025.pdf***

3D ANIMATION, GAME DESIGN & INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

LAPTOP:	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
Minimum Requirements: Quad-core processor, 16GB RAM, 512GB SSD, 4GB GPU + 1TB SSD (or external)	**Game Design:** *students should aim for a VR-compatible GPU (4GB+), if possible.* **2D Animation:** The digital drawing tablet is <u>essential</u>! *(Wacom / XPPen. Students may also use iPads with Apple Pencils)* **3D Animation, Game Design, Motion Design:** A digital drawing tablet is highly beneficial. **Animation, Game Design, Motion Design:** SSD for external storage is essential. **Industrial Design:** *requires a Microsoft Windows Operating System.* - Visual diary A3 landscape hardcover 4 x Copic Markers (Three [Lighter] grey shades [C2, C3, C5] and a colour of your choice) 2mm clutch pencil/s - Clutch pencil sharpener - NT cutter 18mm - A1 or A2 cutting mat - Optional Consumable: 2mm clutch pencil leads B, HB, H, 2H, 1 set of each - Consumable: Staedtler Traditional eraser - Consumable: Replacement NT Cutting Knife blades 18mm 60cm Steel ruler. An additional amount of approximately R600 should be budgeted per term for projects.

COMMUNICATION DESIGN, ILLUSTRATION, PHOTOGRAPHY & USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN & INTERACTIVE DEVELOPMENT

LAPTOP:	*ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:*
Minimum Requirements: Quad-core processor, 16GB RAM, 512GB SSD + 1TB external SSD	**COMMUNICATION DESIGN 100: Termly budget of** approximately R800-R1000 for projects. **ILLUSTRATION 100:** • Artist fixative • Woodless charcoal pencil H • Woodless charcoal pencil M • Woodless charcoal pencil S • Charcoal willow 6 – 8mm • Fabriano pad A4/160grm landscape hardcover • Palette 10 wells • Smudge tools • Visual diary A3 landscape hardcover • Winsor & Newton gouache set (x 5 colour) • 2 x Fabriano Illustration Boards ***Available at an estimated cost of: R1750*** **PHOTOGRAPHY 100:** *Students will need to purchase a camera - **Estimated cost: R45 000.** [2]* **Termly budget of** approximately R600 for projects.

SCREENWRITING, SCREEN ACTING, SOUND DESIGN

LAPTOP:	*ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:*
Minimum Requirements: Dual-core (64-bit) processor, 8GB RAM, 512GB SSD	***Sound Design:*** a pair of production/mix quality headphones from Term 2 - with a standard audio jack (3.5mm TRS) port, so avoid Bluetooth headphones or those with

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[2] *Please see the Photography camera buying guide for advice and recommendations. At the start of the year, the Photography & Film Departments organise an on campus expowhere suppliers provide photography related gear It is preferable that students purchase their cameras from these suppliers at the expo, as the latest equipment will be available here at discounted rates. Suppliers will also be able to provide additional technical info on the camera. Please be in contact with the necessary department for more information. We recommend that students purchase their cameras at the photography expo that we host at the start of the academic year.*

	other plugs (like Apple lightning). ***Please see the [Headphones for Sound Design](#) buying guide for advice and recommendations***

LAPTOP:	*ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:*
Please consider the intended subject-field's minimum requirements - with emphasis on **web camera & headphones for online classes**	***Drawing & Narrative:*** Students receive the drawing materials as part of their 'welcome pack' - no need to purchase further items.[3] **Academic Practice / Media Perspectives / Theory:** These subjects do not require any equipment, other than basic stationery, notebooks/journals, and at times, the printing of projects.

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMMES

PHOTOGRAPHY

Equipment Requirements for Photography Students

All photography students must have access to or purchase a digital DSLR camera body or an interchangeable mirrorless camera.

First-Year Degree Students and Photography & Videography Certificate Students: Required Equipment
- A versatile multi-purpose zoom lens (16–55mm range). Generic lenses such as SIGMA and Tamron are perfectly suitable.
- A reflector board no smaller than 107–110cm.
- A sturdy tripod capable of supporting your camera and lens.
- A cable release.
- A memory card with a write speed of at least 150MB/s.
- A camera cleaning kit.

Estimated cost: ± R45 000

Photography & Videography Certificate Students and Second Year Degree Students
(Additional Requirements – Semester 1, Second Half)
- Godox Speedlight
- One battery-operated on-location studio light
- One light stand
- One flash trigger

Estimated cost: ± R15 000

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[3] Students who fail DN need to buy their own Drawing pack the following year.

Additional Expenses
Please budget approximately R600 per year for photographic field trips and off-campus workshops.

Guidance for Camera Purchases
We strongly recommend discussing your options with the service providers listed in the Camera Buying Guide document on our website or contacting the Photography Department directly for assistance.

Very Important: Expo Day
At the start of each academic year, the Photography Department hosts an on-campus Expo Day, where professional suppliers offer photography equipment at discounted prices. This is the ideal time to purchase your gear, as suppliers will be available to offer technical guidance alongside your lecturers to help you make the most informed choice.

For further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact the Photography Department.

DIGITAL FILM

It is essential that every student purchases/has access to a DSLR or mirrorless camera with HD video capabilities from the beginning of Term 1.

Estimated cost: R20 000
Please see the FV Camera Buying Guide for advice and recommendations

📄 *FA Camera Buying Guide 2025.pdf*

PRIMARY SOFTWARE APPLICATION PER FIELD

*Please note that Adobe is included in fees, as well as select applications such as the Google Workspace system.
This list is for information purposes only - and should not be utilised to guide software purchases. The list is also not exhaustive, but provides an overview of the main applications per department / field - noting that there may be further software introductions as industry standards adapt.

SUBJECT:	SOFTWARE APPLICATION
FILM & TV **PRODUCTION DESIGN** **SCREENWRITING** **SCREEN ACTING** **SOUND DESIGN**	• Adobe Premiere / DaVinci Resolve • Adobe Photoshop • Slugline / STARC • Adobe Premiere • Pro Tools
MOTION DESIGN **3D ANIMATION** **GAME DESIGN**	• Adobe AfterEffects • Blender • Unity
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN **USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN** **INTERACTIVE DEVELOPMENT**	• Solidworks • Keyshot (from 2nd year) • Adobe Photoshop / Illustrator

	- Figma - Visual Studio Code (dev) - Github (dev)
COMMUNICATION DESIGN **ILLUSTRATION** **PHOTOGRAPHY**	- Adobe Photoshop, InDesign & Illustrator - Adobe Photoshop & Illustrator - Adobe Photoshop & Lightroom