

Minimum Technical Recommendations For Screen Scoring Students

Students in the Screen Scoring program at the USC Thornton School of Music will be working towards careers in music where technology is a fundamental tool used in music-making. The following are minimum hardware and software recommendations that faculty and staff feel are necessary for students and their coursework.

We have been able to find the below prices from reliable vendors as of May 2026. Prices are subject to change.

Computer	
14" MacBook Pro laptop or larger (educational pricing available with your USC enrollment here: https://www.apple.com/us-edu/store) ⁱ - Memory: 24 GB or greater (36+ GB recommended) - Storage: 1 TB or greater (4TB recommended) - Processor: Apple Silicon chip (Mxⁱⁱ including all variants)	\$1,799.00 ¹
Accessories & Misc.: - External Drives: while not required, 4TB+ external SSD drives are recommended for audio and video storage. - USB-C to USB Adapter (<i>if needed</i>) - AppleCare	\$400.00 \$20.00 \$99.00/year
Hardware	
<i>For students in need of multiple items, we recommend contacting our partner at Sweetwater.com to inquire about educational discounts on software, hardware, and unpublished bundles. William Roach at william_roach@sweetwater.com - (260) 218-0270 call or text.</i>	
Audio Interface: (<i>one of the following or equivalent or better</i>) - Universal Audio Volt 2 OR - Focusrite Scarlet 2i2	\$199.00
Keyboard & Accessories: - Arturia KeyLab Essential 61 (<i>or equivalent or better</i>) 88 key recommended - Sustain Pedal	\$299.00 \$34.99
Microphone & Accessories: - High quality large diaphragm condenser microphone - For example Warm Audio WA-14 – discount availableⁱⁱⁱ - Microphone cable & stand	\$399.00 \$100.00
Headphones: choose a high quality, studio set of headphones - Sony MDR 7506 OR - Beyerdynamic DT 770	\$113.00 \$179.99
Also have a small portable WIRED set of headphones to carry with you at all times JBL Tune 110 In-ear Headphones - Black	\$14.95

Software

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DAW:	
▪ AVID Pro Tools – Studio required Ultimate recommended (1 year education subscription, see note with education contact at Sweetwater)	\$299.99/year
▪ Logic Pro X (can be purchased as a part of Apple Pro Apps bundle)	\$199
AND/OR	
▪ Cubase educational	\$359.99
Notation: pick one	
▪ Avid Sibelius Ultimate (1 year education subscription, see note with education contact at Sweetwater) ²	\$99.00/year
AND/OR	
▪ Dorico educational	\$359.99
Additional Software	
▪ Macro Software: Keyboard Maestro	\$36.00
▪ Microsoft Office Bundle (currently provided by USC)	
Samples: select as needed (a full orchestral library, solo orchestral instruments, contemporary instruments, and synthesis elements are required)	
▪ Complete Ultimate recommended/Kontakt 8 full required	\$799.00
▪ Orchestral Tools 40% educational + additional USC 30% discount (email jeaninec@usc.edu)	\$??
▪ Musio (education pricing) ^{iv}	\$49/year
▪ EW Composer's Cloud -EDU (monthly subscription)	\$9.99/month
▪ Splice EDU (monthly subscription)	\$8.99/month
Effects/DSP (students should have access to equivalent plugins as listed below):	
▪ iZotope Music Production Suite ^v / RX xx Standard required (education pricing)	\$299.00
AND/OR	
▪ Fab Filter Pro Plug-in Bundle ^{vi}	\$345.00
▪ Seventh Heaven or any professional reverb	\$249.00

ⁱ Apple Education Pricing. When making this purchase, you will have the option to purchase the Apple Pro Apps Bundle and AppleCare at the time of customization.

ⁱⁱ Apple routinely updates new macs with newer chips and Operating Systems (OS). Be advised that, (1) music applications may not work on newer machines/OS until manufacturers release updated versions, and (2) it is important to research ports on your choice of computers to ensure that you will be able to connect hardware like audio interfaces and external drives. For compatibility research you can utilize this research: <https://www.sweetwater.com/sweetcare/articles/mac-os-tahoe-26-compatibility-guide/>

ⁱⁱⁱ 40 % discount on Warm Audio from William Roach at william_roach@sweetwater.com - (260) 218-0270 call or text

^{iv} 50% discount on Musio <https://musio.com/edu>

^v Students are eligible for an education discount at iZotope <https://www.izotope.com/en/company/education.html>

^{vi} Students are eligible for a 50% discount at Fab Filter <https://www.fabfilter.com/shop/educational-discounts>