

Dear incoming architecture and architectural engineering students,

Welcome to the CAED at Cal Poly SLO!

You are about to begin a new adventure in thinking and making. Over the coming year, you will expand your capacities for abstract thought, creativity, and practical application—talents you will carry for the rest of your lives. This letter will orient you to some of the principles, tools, and logistics of your first year in the design studio.

ARCH 131 (and 132 and 133) will typically be referred to as “studio.”

Studio refers to both a place—a big, open room with tables for creative work—and a way of learning that is communal, exploratory, and experimental. The hours dedicated to studio are a time to develop ideas through thinking, making, and discussion. Studio provides an opportunity to grow as an individual creator and as a contributor to the studio collective. The studio experience is fundamental, and our studio culture will support each of you. The three mutually dependent principles of studio culture at Cal Poly are the cultivation of respect, the cultivation of community and the cultivation of ideas. Our Studio Culture document will be included with the syllabus for ARCH 131.

There are two main categories of things you will need to obtain before we start school this fall as outlined below.

COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

The computer will be an invaluable tool for you for the entirety of your career at Cal Poly. Because software in later years is more demanding, a more powerful computer will likely last longer (or for the duration of your education). Below is the minimum computer requirement that will satisfy first year software demands and allow you to continue with the machine in subsequent years. In previous years, students have regretted the decision not to meet these requirements, as they had to purchase another machine to match the needs of software down the line.

Laptop (more info: http://www.caed.calpoly.edu/computer_info)

- Mac or PC (Both can work. Some faculty believe that a PC is ultimately the better choice because some advanced software which you will use after first year is only available on PC. However, students have succeeded equally on both platforms.)
- 15” screen size recommended
- 4 GB graphics card
- 16GB RAM
- 500GB hard drive
- i7 (9th gen or later) or AMD Processor

Other Hardware

- 2-button (min.) mouse with scrolling wheel
- USB Flash Drive (4GB min.)
- External Hard Drive, 1 TB (4TB is a plus; wireless back-up capability is a plus)
- Recommended but not required: personal inkjet printer/scanner (up to 11x17 size)

Software

Note: the CAED tech support team has links to free and student discounted software on their website at <http://www.caed.calpoly.edu/techsupport>

You do not need to have the software below installed before we start school—we can help you with that in the first week. However, you are welcome to get a head start and install the software, and even give it a try!

- Adobe Creative Cloud available here: <https://tech.calpoly.edu/services/adobe>
- Word Processing and Presentation (Microsoft Office or equivalent), Office available here: <https://tech.calpoly.edu/microsoft-office-office-365-cal-poly>
- Anti-virus software as required by the University, available here: <https://tech.calpoly.edu/services/antivirus-sophos>
- Rhinoceros (Rhino) 7, available with a student discount at the Cal Poly Store: <https://www.bkstr.com/calpolystore/search/keyword/rhino%25207>
Purchasing Rhino is required—the 30-day trial will only last...30 days

SUPPLIES

There are three options for obtaining the set of supplies required for studio this fall:

Option 1: Art Central, a local art supply store in San Luis Obispo, has assembled a supply kit for purchase at a discounted price. The kit is available from Art Central's website. You may choose to have it shipped to you or pick up at Art Central upon your arrival in San Luis Obispo in September. Because supply chains are impacted by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, ordering the supply kit is time critical. It is available here:

<https://artcentralslo.com/product/arch131-fall-2021/>

Option 2: The University Store on campus has also assembled a kit, however it varies slightly from the list provided and does not contain a few items. It is less expensive than the Art Central kit, but the items not contained in the University store kit are still required and you will need to buy them separately—you may do that after the start of school. Depending on how those are purchased, the University Store kit could be an even better value. It is available here:

<https://www.bkstr.com/calpolystore/product/arch-131-kit-str2020-572715-1>

Option 3: Alternatively, you may review the list of supplies below and bring items you already own combined with items purchased separately. It is important to note that regardless of where you purchase supplies, you need all the items on the list by the start of studio in September.

Supply List

- Charcoal 3 pack
- Self-healing cutting mat 18x24''
- Masking tape 1/2x60''
- Architectural scale (triangular profile) 12''
- Erasing shield
- White mesh bag 12x16
- White mesh bag 20x26
- Alumicutter brand metal ruler 24''
- Aleene's Tacky Glue Quik-Dry 8oz
- Trace paper roll white 12x20 yard
- Masking tape assorted color
- Bristol pad 19x24
- Shipping tube 3x25
- Elmers glue 4oz
- Excel K1 knife w/ #11 blade
- Kneaded eraser
- Mini glue-sticks
- Longnose pliers
- Graphite pencils – 4H, 2H, H, HB, 3B, 6B
- Sandpaper assorted pack
- Scissors 8'' precision
- Pencil sharpener 2-hole
- Utility knife w/ grip
- Snap-off blades 5pk
- Pentel Sign Pens – black, grey, and 1 color
- Prismacolor colored pencils – Black, White, Sepia, Warm grey 50
- Sharpie
- Papermate Flair pens 2 pk
- Micron pens – .25mm, .45mm
- Recycled sketch pad 9x12 100sheets
- White eraser
- Glue Stick
- Black Promarker
- Xacto #11 blades 5pk
- 24'' T-Square
- 10'' plastic square 45 degree with inking edge

We have tried to pare down the supply list to minimize the initial expense, but we realize that the cost is sizable. As you assemble your gear, please remember you now have access to student discounts, including on computers and software. Students that have severe financial limitations should contact their Student Academic Services (SAS), Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), or Financial Aid Advisors.

We are looking forward to a challenging, exciting, and collaborative year in studio with you. Whether or not you are familiar with any of this gear or these ways of working (and we are assuming you aren't), over the next year you will become capable of more than

you ever thought possible. You will also find your peers and your instructors very supportive in this endeavor. On behalf of the first-year architecture faculty, welcome. We look forward to meeting you in September!

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F.A.Q.

Q: I have heard studio is time intensive- is that true?

A: Yes! You will likely find you have less free time than your peers in other majors. Design involves new ways of thinking, something like learning a language or a musical instrument- time on task leads to proficiency and confidence. You will find the design projects are very open ended with multiple paths to discovery and success. This kind of lateral and creative thinking is critical for both architects and architectural engineers. However, intensive should not be taken to mean all-consuming. Studio is one component of a rich array of courses and activities that will be a part of your time at Cal Poly.

Q: Will I have time for sports or music?

A: Time management is a skill you must master to do well in studio. You have to be even more disciplined here due to all your freedom as a collegiate scholar vs. your high school days! If you are an athlete or musician and have meets or concerts in the fall, please notify your instructor as soon as possible.

Q: Do we need special clothes?

A: In studio you should dress comfortably and know that you may get dirty from pencil, pen, adhesives, etc. When working in the shop, closed toed shoes and safety glasses are required. Our studios generally do not get especially hot (Mediterranean climate) but can get chilly in our rainy winter. We can have 40+ degree temperature swings during any season. Think layers.

Q: I already have some triangles and scales that are metric- will they be satisfactory?

A: All drafting and modeling will be in Imperial Units (aka US Customary Units, aka feet and inches), so having an Imperial units based architectural scale is essential. As a side note: you don't have to have any drafting background for day one—we will cross that bridge (among many) later this fall.

Q: Will we use Sketch-Up? Autocad?

A: Software tends to be used either for design or for development and production. We are concerned with design in first year and will use the digital modeling software Rhinoceros (aka Rhino), which is highly flexible. Autocad and its companion Revit are also useful for precision construction documentation, and you may encounter them in future studios. We won't use them or Sketch-Up in first year.

Q: Is a 17" laptop preferable to a 15" model? How about 13"? Is a desktop model ok?

A: We recommend a 15" screen. 17" can be heavy and doesn't always fit comfortably on lecture hall desks. Get something that you are able/willing to always carry. Desktop computers are not allowed in the first-year studio space; however, many students choose to have a desktop and/or additional monitors in later years, when each student has a dedicated desk.

Q: I'm an ARCE student, do I really need all of the tools?

A: Supplies may be purchased used or borrowed from past students. However, every student must have all the required supplies. Check out the Cal Poly Architecture Class of 2023 and 2024 Facebook groups for used supplies for sale.