



First-year journalism photo gear recommendations

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To participate in first-year photo courses within SAIT's journalism program, you must outfit yourself with camera equipment suited to the shooting of news, sports and journalistic portraits at an introductory level. **This document outlines the recommended gear**, along with the computer accessories and software licenses that you will use throughout your SAIT journalism coursework.

Photo course equipment summary

The following photo course equipment, *at minimum*, is recommended. Specific model suggestions follow on subsequent pages.

- **One Canon, Nikon or Sony interchangeable-lens camera, digital SLR or mirrorless**, with a resolution of 16 megapixels or higher, decent image quality at higher ISO (light sensitivity) settings, a frame rate of at least 4 frames per second (fps), superior autofocus tracking of moving subjects (digital SLR or mirrorless) and eye-detect autofocus capability when tracking moving subjects (mirrorless only), a responsive silent-shooting mode (mirrorless only), support for high speed flash sync and 1080p video-capture capability
- **One wide angle-to-telephoto zoom lens**
- **One fixed focal length (non-zoom) lens** with a maximum aperture between f/1.4 and f/2.8
- **One fully compatible flash** with a tilt/swivel head, through-the-lens (TTL) flash exposure support and off-camera control capability
- **One collapsible-type reflector** that's 22" or larger
- **One tripod** that's capable of being extended to at least 1.2 metres
- **One camera bag** large enough to comfortably hold the majority of your gear, even when a lens is attached to the camera body
- **Two 16GB or larger memory cards**
- **One USB multi-port adapter and card reader**
- **One portable hard drive** with a capacity of at least 1TB
- **One lens cleaning cloth** and **one set of AA batteries** for your flash

The above equipment will start to be used in the second photo class of the first semester.

This textbook is needed for your photo courses as well:

- *Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach, 7th Edition* by Kenneth Kobre.

Computer and software requirements

For all your SAIT coursework, you're required to have a laptop computer running macOS Catalina or later. **The journalism program page on sait.ca lists the minimum Mac hardware requirements**, so be sure to check the list of specifications there before you go computer shopping. Also note the following:

- If you intend to purchase a brand-new Mac laptop, **select one equipped with an M1 processor**: these models provide incredible photo- and video-processing performance for the price.
- Apple Canada offers discounts to post-secondary students on Mac laptops (and other products). Search for "**Apple Canada education pricing and student discounts**" on Google to access the higher education prices within Apple's online store. For a journalism student to buy a Mac from a physical Apple Store in Canada, either by walking into the store to select and purchase, or by ordering online for delivery to the store, you can expect to be asked to show a SAIT ID or other student ID at the time of pickup. If you order from the Apple Store online, for delivery to your home in Canada, then Apple Canada will in some cases ask for additional information from you to prove student status before granting the discount.
- If the Mac laptop you choose is a recent model, one outfitted with Thunderbolt ports that utilize a USB-C connector, **you'll need a port adapter and card reader accessory for it. A recommendation is on pg. 16.**
- In your first-semester photo course, you'll be taken through the process of automatically and regularly backing up your entire Mac. So that you don't lose the many gigabytes of pictures, video, articles, layouts and other content you'll create as a journalism student, even if something unfortunate happens to your computer.

To perform the automatic backup, you'll require a portable hard drive.
Recommendations are on pg. 17.

The following software is needed for your Mac as well:

- **Camera Bits Photo Mechanic 6 for Mac (standard not Plus version)** SAIT journalism students can purchase the software for USD\$59, down from the professional photography app's regular USD\$139 price. Search for "**Photo Mechanic educational discounts how do I apply**" on Google for more information.
- **Adobe Creative Cloud for Mac (all-apps subscription, latest release)** SAIT journalism students are eligible for Adobe's Student Plan subscription discount. Search for "**Adobe Creative Cloud for students and teachers Canada**" on Google for more information.
- **Microsoft 365 apps for Mac (Word, Excel, etc.)** As a SAIT student, you will automatically have access to SAIT's Microsoft 365 subscription and all its features at no extra charge, including unrestricted use of Office apps such Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

Audio recorder recommendation

Finally, though not a required piece of gear nor part of your first-year photo courses, you will find it beneficial as a SAIT journalism student to have a handheld audio recorder for recording interviews for your stories. The recommended one is the **Zoom H1N Handy Recorder**, or the previous-generation H1. Both Zoom models capture professional-quality audio and will therefore also serve you well when your multimedia training starts in earnest during the program's second year.

Photo course equipment in detail

This section provides more information about the camera, lenses and some of the accessories you'll find indispensable for journalism's first-year photo courses.

It's recommended that you come equipped with either:

- **A digital SLR camera body, plus lenses and flash, made by Canon or Nikon.** These two companies are among the dominant makers of camera equipment in the hands of professional photographers today, both have a service program for post-secondary photography students that dramatically shortens the turnaround time and lowers the cost of repairs, SAIT journalism's no-charge lens loaner pool (which students typically have access to starting in the second semester) is comprised mainly of Canon and Nikon digital SLR lenses and the majority of in-class lessons will be based around Canon and Nikon digital SLR systems. **Plus, their digital SLR systems remain the most affordable combinations of bodies and lenses that are capable of fully meeting the demands of first-year journalism.**
- **A mirrorless camera body, plus lenses and flash, made by Canon, Nikon or Sony.** Mirrorless is the future of professional photography, and that future has already arrived with gusto in the higher end of camera gear available today. The option to capture pictures without making any noise, as well as tremendous improvements in autofocus, are among the key potential benefits of mirrorless.

Within the price range of first-year photo gear, however, mirrorless cameras are still evolving and not superior to digital SLRs in all ways. In fact, affordable digital SLRs remain more capable and less frustrating to use than their nearest mirrorless equivalents, especially in fast-moving environments.

That's changing, but not fast enough for us to recommend mirrorless as the clearly better option if you're trying to stay within a typical first-year-student budget. That said, there are mirrorless models from Canon, Nikon and Sony that are decent and are worth putting on your purchasing short list. **Do expect to pay more for mirrorless than digital SLR, however, particularly once suitable lenses are factored in.**

Digital SLR camera body options

The following current or recently discontinued entry-level and midrange digital SLR camera bodies are all able to record 1080p video, shoot at 4 fps or faster, produce pictures that are 16 megapixels or greater in resolution, deliver reasonable image quality at light sensitivities up to at least ISO 4000, provide acceptable (and with some models, excellent) still-picture autofocus tracking and support for high speed flash sync. As a result, they meet or exceed program minimums:

Canon

Entry level: EOS Rebel SL1, SL2, SL3, T4i*, T5i*, T6i*, T6s*, T7i*, 77D*, T8i*
Midrange: EOS 80D*, 90D*, 7D Mark II*

Nikon

Entry level: none
Midrange: D7100*, D7200*, D7500*

** Models with an asterisk incorporate optical off-camera control and triggering of external flashes of the same brand. Though not a must-have feature, it is one that motivated first-years have enjoyed and made good use of in recent times.*

If your budget dictates that you purchase an entry-level digital SLR model, consider only cameras in Canon's Rebel series, **with the Canon EOS Rebel T7i or T8i being a great way to go**. Nikon's least-expensive digital SLRs, while fine cameras in many respects, are missing high speed sync, which is a key flash feature that you will expected to employ throughout your time in the SAIT journalism program. Regardless of whether writing or photography is your main focus.

Once you reach the midrange of each makers' digital SLR lineup, however, things tip in Nikon's favour. The **Nikon D7500** and earlier **D7200** both meet or exceed all the minimum recommendations, provide superb value for the money and will enable you to shoot all your first-year assignments particularly well. **Canon's EOS 80D**, as well as its successor the **EOS 90D**, are reasonable midrange choices, though both trail the D7500 and D7200 in still-picture autofocus performance to a degree that makes Nikon the better bet of the two brands for SAIT journalism. Additionally, the D7500 produces better quality pictures

in lower light conditions than the D7200, 80D or 90D. **The D7500 is a midrange digital SLR gem.**

The Nikon D7200, D7500, Canon EOS 80D and EOS 90D meet program minimums for the program's second-year photojournalism stream, should you want to pursue that option (though, increasingly, students who see themselves in the photojournalism major will be encouraged to move towards professionally oriented mirrorless camera options leading into the program's second year).

Digital SLR wide angle-to-telephoto zoom lens options

Most entry-level digital SLR cameras can be purchased in a bundle with an 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 lens. While this will provide you with a wide angle-to-telephoto zoom, and this lens is minimally acceptable for use during the program's first year, both **its zoom range and its optical quality will limit the kind and quality of pictures** you're able to make for your assignments.

As a result, it's recommended that you purchase the camera body plus one of the zooms marked as *much better* in the columns below. Their much wider zoom range will give you greater compositional flexibility under a wider variety of shooting scenarios from portraits to sports and more:

Canon EF-S-series lenses

Minimally acceptable

- EF-S 18-55mm (any version)

Much better

- EF-S 15-85mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM
- EF-S 17-85mm f/4-5.6 IS USM
- EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM
- EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM
- EF-S 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6 IS

Nikon (Nikkor) DX-series lenses

Minimally acceptable

- AF-S DX Zoom 18-55mm (any version)
- AF-P DX Zoom 18-55mm (any version)

Much better

- AF-S DX 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR
- AF-S DX 18-105mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR
- AF-S DX 18-140mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR
- AF-S DX 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR II

Either of the **EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 lenses** will be the best overall choice for Canon shooters. The newer STM version is superior when recording video of moving subjects, but as that element of video capture won't be a significant part of your SAIT journalism training, and the older USM version is sometimes available for less money, including in camera body + lens bundles, you can safely go with the USM variant of this lens unless moving-subject video capture is a personal priority for you.

The **AF-S DX 18-140mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR** is recommended for those armed with a Nikon.

Note: this list of recommended zoom lenses assumes that your digital SLR is one of the entry-level or midrange models in the previous section.

Digital SLR large-aperture fixed focal length (non-zoom) lens options

An affordable wide angle-to-telephoto zoom will be what you need to photograph the majority of your first-year assignments. An important minority of assignments, though, will require a lens that's tailored to low light and portrait work. This means, among other things, a non-zoom lens whose maximum aperture is between f/1.4 and f/2.8. (Don't worry if you're not sure what this f-number means as it'll be covered in first semester.)

Choose from one of the following lenses:

Canon digital SLR lenses

Acceptable

- EF 50mm f/1.8 STM
- EF 50mm f/1.4 USM

Much better

- EF 40mm f/2.8 STM
- EF 85mm f/1.8 USM

Nikon (Nikkor) digital SLR lenses

Acceptable

- AF-S 50mm f/1.8G
- AF-S 50mm f/1.4G

Much better

- AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G
- AF-S 85mm f/1.8G

Of these, the **EF 40mm f/2.8 STM** is recommended for Canon and the **AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G** for Nikon. These two lenses have proven themselves to be great performers for first-year students.

Note: As before, this list of fixed-focal-length-lens recommendations assumes that your camera is one of the entry-level or midrange models described earlier. (That said, all but the AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G are compatible with the higher-end digital SLRs too.)

Mirrorless camera body options

The following current entry-level and midrange digital mirrorless bodies are all able to record 1080p video, shoot at 4 fps or faster, produce pictures that are 16 megapixels or greater in resolution, deliver reasonable image quality at light sensitivities up to at least ISO 4000, provide acceptable or superior still-picture autofocus tracking, an eye-detect autofocus option that works with both stationary and moving subjects, a responsive silent-shooting mode and support for high speed flash sync. As a result, they meet or exceed program minimums:

Canon

Canon EOS M50 Mark II

Nikon

Nikon Z50

Sony

Sony α6100

The three recommended models differ slightly in cost, capabilities, overall usability and the breadth of lenses available for each one. Lens cost also varies, a lot.

The Canon EOS M50 Mark II, when it ships towards the end of 2020, will be the most affordable of the three mirrorless options and will also be a really good entry-level camera. That said, there are relatively few lenses designed expressly for its EF-M lens mount, which will be limiting for some. This means the M50 Mark II is a not-great choice for a student who intends to be a second-year photojournalism major, because equipment in Canon's M-series mirrorless won't really be able to join you on that second-year photojournalism major journey.

That said, the M50 Mark II and available EF-M lens options absolutely meet the needs of first year as well as the second-year writing major. Also, you'll probably be able to purchase an M50 Mark II and two suitable lenses for less money than systems built around a Z50 or α6100.

The Nikon Z50 offers easily the best overall handling and the deepest feature set. In the area of autofocus tracking and general performance peppiness, though, it lags well behind the Sony α6100 and is likely to be on par or possibly just shy of the M50 Mark II in this area. Plus, the mirrorless (Z-mount) lenses that Nikon has released so far are mainly targeted at the company's more-costly mirrorless cameras (the Z5 and up), which means your lens options for the Z50 are less than ideal right now.

The Sony α6100 delivers best-in-class autofocus, by a wide margin, in a camera body that's somewhat unpleasant to use. Especially when compared to the smart and refined Z50 from Nikon. There's no denying, however, that the number of perfectly in-focus pictures the α6100 will deliver sets it apart from anything else in its price range. Developing an ability to capture sharp frames is an important part of the training you'll receive in your photo courses, and the α6100 can be a strong ally in that regard.

***Note:** None of these models from Canon, Nikon and Sony include built-in support for optical off-camera control and triggering of external flashes. Among affordable cameras, this feature is found mainly in digital SLRs from Canon and Nikon.*

***Also note:** Canon makes Mount Adapter EF-EOS M, an accessory that allow the use of the company's digital SLR lenses on the M50 Mark II. Nikon offers a similar product for the Z50: Mount Adapter FTZ. While these adapters do work as advertised, and greatly expand the range of lenses that can be attached, we don't recommend entering into the world of mirrorless with a plan to also purchase an adapter and digital SLR lenses for the mirrorless camera you select.*

Why? First, the adapter adds to the overall cost. Second, digital SLR lenses adapted onto mirrorless bodies don't tend to autofocus quite as well as lenses that are native to the mirrorless system. Third, if it's not possible to go mirrorless, and get the mirrorless lenses you need at a price you can afford, then you're better off choosing a digital SLR-based system instead.

As a result, all lens recommendations in this section are ones that attach directly to the mirrorless camera, without the aid of an adapter.

Mirrorless wide angle-to-telephoto zoom lens options

Most mirrorless bodies in the affordable category can be purchased in a bundle with a basic lens that offers about a 3x zoom range. While this will provide you with a wide angle-to-telephoto zoom, and a lens such as this is acceptable for use during the program's first year, both **the zoom range and typical optical quality will limit the kind and quality of pictures** you're able to make for your assignments.

As a result, to accompany the Canon EOS M50 Mark II or Sony α6100, it's recommended you purchase the camera body plus one of the zooms marked as *much better* in the columns below. Their 7-8x zoom range will give you much greater compositional flexibility under a wider variety of shooting scenarios from portraits to sports and more.

For the Z50, things are more complicated: Nikon does not yet produce a Z-mount zoom lens for this camera that covers a usefully broad range from wide angle to telephoto. As a result, your Z50 options are either to get both Z-mount zooms listed below – that's the best way to go, but also the most expensive – or opt for only the 16-50mm and live without the additional telephoto reach provided by the 50-250mm.

Canon EF-M lenses

Acceptable

- EF-M 15-45mm f/3.5-6.3 IS STM
- EF-M 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 IS STM

Much better

- EF-M 18-150mm f/3.5-6.3 IS STM

Nikon (Nikkor) Z lenses

Must-have

- Z DX 16-50mm f/3.5-6.3 VR
- Get in addition to the above**
- Z DX 50-250mm f/4.5-6.3 VR

Sony E lenses

Acceptable

- E PZ 16-50mm F3.5-5.6 OSS

Much better

- E 18-135mm F3.5-5.6 OSS

Mirrorless large-aperture fixed focal length (non-zoom) lens options

An affordable wide angle-to-telephoto zoom will be what you need to photograph the majority of your first-year assignments. An important minority of assignments, though, will require a lens that's tailored to low light and portrait work. This means, among other things, a non-zoom lens whose maximum aperture is between f/1.4 and f/2.8. (Don't worry if you're not sure what this f-number means as it'll be covered in first semester.)

For the Canon EOS M50 Mark II and Sony α 6100, there are semi-affordable options in this category. For the Nikon Z50, the available lenses are great optically but also prohibitively expensive for a first-year student.

Canon EF-M lenses

Semi-affordable

- EF-M 22mm f/2 STM

Pricey

- EF-M 32mm f/1.4 STM

Nikon (Nikkor) Z lenses

Semi-affordable

- none

Pricey

- Z 35mm f/1.8 S
- Z 50mm f/1.8 S

Sony E lenses

Semi-affordable

- E 50mm F1.8 OSS

Canon, Nikon and Sony external flash options

Many of the assignments you will photograph in the first year will either benefit from or require that an external flash be employed to supplement the room light or sunlight. The flash you select must be the kind that slides onto the top of the camera, supports through-the-lens (TTL) flash exposure metering and has a head that can tilt straight up as well as swivel fully to the left and right.

While various third-party companies produce external flashes that purport to be compatible with Canon, Nikon and Sony cameras, each one we've tried falls short in the area of through-the-lens (TTL) flash exposure correctness and consistency. The camera makers' own flash units work the best in this regard.

Therefore, you're encouraged to purchase only flash units actually made by Canon, Nikon or Sony. Students who've purchased other brands of flash in recent years, including K&F Concept, Metz, Neewer, Nissin and Yongnuo, have experienced at-times significant TTL-related troubles with those units. Since TTL mode is how flash will be used exclusively in first year, this can be a real problem. Those who opted for Canon, Nikon or Sony flash units have had a much better experience.

With that in mind, choose one of the following current or discontinued (but still fully compatible) flash units.

Canon

Bare minimum

- Speedlite 320EX

Much better

- Speedlite 430EX II
- Speedlite 430EX III-RT

More than necessary

- Speedlite 600EX-RT
- Speedlite 600EX II-RT
- Speedlite EL-1

Nikon

Bare minimum

- Speedlight SB-500

Acceptable

- Speedlight SB-600
- Speedlight SB-800

Much better

- Speedlight SB-700

More than necessary

- Speedlight SB-910
- Speedlight SB-5000

Sony

Better

- Sony HVL-43M
- Sony HVL-45RM

More than necessary

- Sony HVL-60RM

Note: All but the Speedlite EL-1 above require AA batteries, purchased separately, to function. Most require four AAs.

The **Canon Speedlite 430EX II and 430EX III-RT** will do everything a Canon shooter needs in the first year of the program as well as both the second-year writing major and second-year photojournalism major. (The 430EX II is long gone from most store shelves. But if you can find one, and it's selling for less than the 430EX III-RT, buy it.)

Note:** The Canon Speedlite 470EX-AI does have the necessary capabilities but is also overly bulky and – unless on sale – somewhat costly, particularly when compared to the Speedlites mentioned in the previous paragraph. As a result, **the 470EX-AI is not recommended.

Despite its age, the **Nikon Speedlight SB-700** remains a really good flash for the money. It has all the features Nikon shooters will need in the first year as well as the second-year writing and photojournalism majors.

For Sony photographers, consider the **Sony HVL-43M** or **Sony HVL-45RM**. Either model has all the functionality required for first year as well as the second-year writing and photojournalism majors.

***Note:** You can't use one camera maker's flash on another brand of camera. For instance, a Canon flash won't work on a Nikon camera and a Nikon flash isn't compatible with a Sony camera.*

Flash options on a tighter budget

As mentioned, getting a Canon flash for a Canon camera, a Nikon flash for a Nikon camera or a Sony flash for a Sony camera is the smartest way to go. That said, if you're willing to risk some amount of flash exposure error in TTL, you can generally save money, or get a higher-specification flash for your money, by choosing a third-party unit.

The only third-party brand you should look at is Godox (also sold locally under the Strobepro brand name), as it's the only independent maker of shoe-mount flash equipment delivering a level of manufacturing quality and performance we feel comfortable recommending.

That said, even Godox/Strobepro flashes suffer from a certain amount of TTL-related flash weirdness when coupled with most, though not all, Canon, Nikon and Sony bodies we've tested. So, **you can expect a Godox/Strobepro flash to work okay overall, but not as well as it should, or as well as Canon's or Nikon's or Sony's own flashes, when operating in TTL mode.** If you're going to go with a third-party flash, though, make it Godox/Strobepro.

The list of suitable flashes is below. Both the Godox and, where applicable, Strobepro product names are listed. In each instance, the **Godox and the Strobepro are the identical product**, the only difference is the name stamped on the outside.

The power source, either AA batteries (which must be bought separately) or included rechargeable lithium pack, is noted in brackets.

Godox/Strobepro shoe-mount flashes with required features

Minimum

- Godox TT350/Strobepro X35 (2 x AA batteries)
- Godox V350/Strobepro X35 Lithium (lithium pack)

Much Better

- Godox TT685/Strobepro X60 with TTL (4 x AA batteries)
- Godox V860 II/Strobepro X60 Lithium (lithium pack)

Deluxe

- Godox V1 (lithium pack)

Note: All of these flashes are available in versions specific to Canon, Nikon or Sony. Be sure to purchase the version – C for Canon, N for Nikon or S for Sony – that’s compatible with your camera system.

Also note: If the flash comes in both AA and lithium variants, get the lithium one if you can. Though more expensive, the flash-performance payoff is worth it in all instances.

Batteries for external flash

Most Canon, Nikon and Sony flashes, as well as certain models from Godox/Strobepro, require AA batteries. Most take either two or four AAs, either non-rechargeable alkaline or rechargeable nickel metal hydride (NiMH). Flashes that use AAs don’t usually include them, so plan on purchasing a set separately.

NiMH AA batteries, though more expensive, will quickly save you a lot of money compared to purchasing multiple sets of non-rechargeable AA alkalines to keep your flash powered over time. Plus, some NiMH batteries, including the specific ones listed below, enable the flash to fire again MUCH sooner than alkalines (or lower-cost NiMH for that matter). The flash performance difference between the best NiMH and everything else is significant. The result is more exposures in which the flash fires properly, giving you greater opportunity to capture successful pictures.

You'll quickly appreciate, as you start to work with flash, the benefits that come from using the right rechargeables to power a Canon, Nikon, Sony or other brand of flash that takes AAs.

The following NiMH AA rechargeables are recommended, as all have been tested to provide excellent performance:

- **IKEA LADDA 2450** (in the white battery casing, not the brown)
- **Energizer Recharge Power Plus** (the flash-friendly version of this battery says "Power Plus" on the product packaging and "2300 mAh" on the cells themselves)
- **Panasonic Eneloop Pro** (which can be bought in a bundle with an excellent charger)

You'll need a charger too. Any NiMH-compatible charger will do, though if you spend more on a charger you generally get one that charges more batteries simultaneously and completes the charging process faster.

Portable reflector options

An essential tool for brightening shadows outdoors, one that can also act as a surface to bounce light from your flash, a collapsible reflector will get lots of use in the first semester and beyond.

You're encouraged to purchase one of the following, or an alternate that has the same characteristics:

- **PhotoRepublik 22" Silver/White Reflector** A small-diameter reflector that can easily fit into a backpack or shoulder bag. (PhotoRepublik is the house brand of The

Camera Store in downtown Calgary.)

- **Strobepro 32" 5-in-1 Folding Reflector with Handles** A medium-diameter reflector that comes with five different surfaces. This size of reflector is more useful than the smaller PhotoRepublik one mentioned above, but it's also more expensive and doesn't collapse as small for transport. (Strobepro products are available exclusively at the Calgary retailer of the same name.)

Tripod and memory card notes

A **sturdy tripod, capable of being extended to at least 1.2 metres**, is recommended. You can choose one of the many cheap options available, as most provide okay stability for occasional use as long as they aren't raised too high. To get yourself properly equipped for the first year, though, an entry-level travel tripod such as the **Vanguard VEO 235AB (aluminum model with the TBH-50 ball head)** will serve you well and is a bargain for a tripod of this quality.

Load yourself up with at least two **16GB or larger memory cards**. It's strongly recommended that you **stick to a name brand such as SanDisk, Delkin or Sony** to ensure long-term reliability and to minimize the chance of your cards being incompatible with your camera.

Multi-port adapter and card reader

It will be necessary to connect to your recent-vintage Mac laptop a portable hard drive, AC power, Ethernet and, in many instances, a memory card reader, sometimes simultaneously. With that in mind, you will need to obtain the right accessory or accessories for your computer that enable you to do that.

For instance, if your Mac laptop is a 13-inch model with Thunderbolt 3 ports that use a USB-C-style connector, then the following adapter will supplement the computer with the necessary ports to attach a portable drive, Ethernet and power at the same time, plus the adapter itself incorporates an SD card reader:

- **Anker USB C Hub Adapter, PowerExpand+ 7-in-1 USB C Hub, with 4K USB C to HDMI, 60W Power Delivery, 1Gbps Ethernet, 2 USB 3.0 Ports, SD and microSD Card Readers** If the computer you'll plug the adapter into has either Thunderbolt 3 or USB ports (using a USB-C-style connector in each case) then this is adapter is highly recommended. It's available from several sources, including Amazon Canada.

Note: Our testing of a variety of USB-C adapters since 2018 suggests there's a lot of unreliable junk out there. By comparison, the Anker unit above, as well models from Hootoo, have proven themselves both functional and durable.

Portable hard drive options

A portable hard drive will be an essential backup device, not only for your photos but for everything you create as a SAIT journalism student. **Choose a portable (sometimes called a 2.5-inch) external hard drive** that connects to a USB port on either the computer or multi-port adapter. Be sure to purchase a drive that doesn't require an additional power supply to operate and includes a cable with a USB connector, either USB-A or USB-C, that's compatible with the adapter's and/or computer's ports. Plus, it's a good idea to select one that provides a **basic level of protection against rough handling**.

The capacity must be **1TB** or more.

Our primary recommendation is the **LaCie Rugged Mini**, in a capacity of 1TB. This ruggedized hard drive will better withstand the daily transport and heavy use it'll see during your time in the journalism program and beyond. Plus, the Rugged Mini has served students well for several years. It's available both locally and online.

It's better to avoid the purchase of a non-ruggedized drive, as you put your backup files at greater risk of loss. If, however, a ruggedized drive isn't an option for some reason, then look at standard portable drives such as the **Seagate Backup Plus Slim 1TB**.

If you do go the standard-drive route, be sure to get a protective carrying case that will hold the drive and its cable(s).

***Note:** In recent years, almost all of the drive problems experienced by students, including complete failures, have involved **Western Digital** non-ruggedized products. As a result, we're*

*recommending that you **steer clear of this brand** in favour of the LaCie and Seagate models listed above.*

Equipment FAQ

Q. What happens if I don't buy some of the recommended items?

You run the risk of not being able to complete some assignments and having certain submissions penalized or rejected. More importantly, you won't be able to make the most of the opportunity to learn everything you can in your photography classes within SAIT journalism.

Q. Where should I go shopping for camera equipment?

You're encouraged to begin developing a relationship with one of the specialty camera stores in town, as they tend to offer better service at similar prices to big box stores. Staff at the specialty stores are generally more knowledgeable, and more familiar with the needs of SAIT journalism students specifically, than places such as Best Buy or Costco.

Calgary's three photo specialty stores are:

- The Camera Store
- Vistek
- Saneal Cameras

The photo department of London Drugs is also an option.

Q. Do I have to buy gear new or can I get it used?

As long as the camera body, lenses or other gear you're considering will meet your needs for the program, by all means purchase used if you can.

Q. I intend to enter the writing and communications stream in the second year of the program. Will I need to buy a lot of additional photo equipment at that time?

No. Your second-year course work will involve plenty of photography, and video too. But the camera gear you purchase for the first year, as long as it adheres to the minimums set

out in this document, will meet the needs of your second-year courses as well. At most, expect to purchase some inexpensive video accessories during the second-year writing major.

Q. I intend to pursue the photojournalism option in the second year of the program. Will I need to buy additional photo equipment at that time?

Yes. Your gear needs will amp up considerably, as you put yourself on a path to becoming a professional photographer.

Q. Should I get insurance for my camera equipment?

Absolutely! It might be possible to insure the bulk of your newly acquired kit under a homeowner or tenant policy, either yours or your parents (if you live with them). Also, be sure to note down the serial numbers of each item, as well as capture a brief video clip of it all. This will be an important record of what you own. (If you're interested in getting dedicated gear coverage, typical of what a working pro would have, check out Canadian broker Front Row insurance.)

Q. I've heard that both Canon and Nikon offer special programs for post-secondary photo students. Should I join the one offered by my chosen brand?

Both Canon Canada's Student Advantage offering, and NPS Campus from Nikon Canada, provide several benefits, two of which are key: MUCH faster turnaround times in the event your gear needs to be repaired plus discounts on the purchase of certain items. The discounts can be significant.

Nikon's purchase discounts and faster repair service apply to many of the current Nikon cameras, lenses and flashes recommended in this document. Canon's purchase discounts and faster service apply mainly to Canon cameras and lenses that are beyond the budget of first-year students. So, if you intend to buy Nikon, joining NPS Campus will almost certainly be a must and you will almost certainly be eligible. If you intend to go with Canon equipment, then it'll depend on whether you meet the eligibility requirements. Which are effectively much steeper, given the higher specification of gear that's on the Student Advantage list.

More info:

- Canon's **Student Advantage** program is free to join and runs for one year from when you sign up (with the option to renew for a second year). To see the list of Student Advantage-eligible gear, search for "**Canon Canada Student Advantage**" on Google.
- Nikon's **NPS Campus** is free to join. Membership benefits are for one year from the date of acceptance, with the option to renew if you still meet the eligibility requirements (which you very likely will if you're still a SAIT journalism student using Nikon equipment at that time). To see the NPS Campus discounts, search for "**Nikon Canada Student Savings Program**" on Google.

Review each company's program details carefully, to make sure the gear you intend to buy is either eligible for a discount, eligible for other benefits like faster repair times or both.

You should be able to apply for either Student Advantage or NPS Campus once you've been accepted into SAIT journalism.

Q. Does Sony also offer a special program for post-secondary photo students, similar to Canon and Nikon?

No. Sony Canada doesn't offer anything equivalent to Canon's Student Advantage or Nikon's NPS Campus programs. They do, however, offer a 10 per cent discount on certain cameras, lenses and accessories when bought for education purposes. As a SAIT journalism student, you're eligible for this 10 per cent savings. Inquire at a Sony Canada-authorized retailer, including The Camera Store, to find out what's involved in claiming the discount and whether the gear you want to buy is eligible.