

Music Recording Tech List

What follows is list of equipment that can be purchased to build music recording and production capabilities for your classroom. It is listed in order of most to least essential and includes suggested guidelines on what to purchase with an example for each.

1. Computer/laptop/iPad

Suggested: MacBook Pro

Capabilities: Use free internet based programs (or GarageBand if you have the Mac) with internal programming and computer keyboard mapping.

2. Software

Suggestion: Logic Pro (Garageband is a good intro if you have a Mac) *note-requires Mac

Added capabilities: Are now using a professional Digital Audio Workstation system with a great sound library

3: MIDI keyboard

Suggestion: 25-key is enough for and should have some pads and knobs on it for more advanced, keys not too tiny so that it is not difficult to play. You may want a full 88-key without pads for a more stationary studio set up- M-Audio 88-key

Added capabilities: Adds the feel of playing a real instrument with more control of the articulations etc.

3. Headphones

Suggestion: Should be closed back for better isolation- Audio Technica closed back

Added capabilities: Students can work independently without disturbing the rest of the class

4. Headphone amp or splitter

Suggestion: Keep it simple, at least 4 channels. If you only anticipate having two student work together at a time you can just get a basic headphone splitter- Behring MICROAMP 4channel

Added capabilities: Multiple students can work together and not disturb the rest of the class

5. Audio interface

Suggestion: One or two channels is enough, has XLR and instrument cable input jacks. Conversion quality does effect the sound so you can't go too cheap- Focusrite Scarlett Solo

Added capabilities: can input audio from the outside to use with tracks, i.e. plug in electronic instrument like a guitar

6. Instruments, amps, microphone + cables & accessories

Suggestion: large diaphragm vocal mic is most versatile and better for recording than a live performance vocal mic. You can also plug in your keyboards or electric guitars directly into your interface- Rode NT1

Added capabilities: Can record vocals or acoustic instruments onto your tracks

7. Speakers + cables and accessories

Suggestion: Active studio monitors are best with a flat response. Active so that you don't need a separate amp and studio monitors that can be transitioned into a more official studio set up- Yamaha HS8

Added capabilities: Allows students to share their work with the whole class throughout without relying on the computer speakers which may not be loud enough and have limited frequency band response. Are also best for mixing when it comes time for that in the production process.

8. Acoustic treatment

Suggestion: it depends greatly on the space in which you are recording. Wall panels are needed to reduce reflections in a fixed place like a closet. There are also portable acoustic environments that can go with the microphone. You can get floor gobos to create a partially isolated room-within-a-room- SE Electronics Reflection Filter Pro

Added capabilities: improves the quality of a microphone recording by reducing the effects of bad room acoustics

9. Additional workstations

Suggestion: A simple set up could be an iPad with Garageband, an interface, headphones and a small MIDI keyboard

Added capabilities: You can create small workstations so that students can work out ideas on their own in a simplified set up before producing the tracks in the full studio set up.

10. Mobile carts

Suggestion: dual adjustable laptop cart, one cart for each set up

Added capabilities: allows a place to store and lock equipment and has a surface that the student can set it up and use it