

ASSESSMENT PLAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS AND NEW MEDIA

Approved by Department Faculty - March 2012

I. Department Mission Statement

The curricular structure in the Department of Visual Arts and New Media provides a comprehensive foundation of field skills for both studio and art history, emphasizing visual expression, conceptual thinking, and the ability to create with artistic sensibilities. Visual Arts and New Media majors study an interdisciplinary curriculum emphasizing the concepts, theories, design, aesthetics and skills that underlie the domain of the visual arts and computer graphics. Content covers traditional methods and materials, emerging technologies, and the ideas inherent in art making and art awareness. Students are introduced to the interpretation of images and objects of the visual world and encouraged to make theoretical connections between ideas and processes through completion of a foundation core. Students acquire an appreciation for the varied historical, social, and cultural contexts for the creation and understanding of works of art through the completion of courses in art history and/or new media criticism and theory. Majors also study a variety of aesthetic movements and media across the historical spectrum with an emphasis on the underlying aesthetic theories and art historical methodologies that have shaped and inform the discipline today.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

- A. To utilize and expand critical thinking skills, the ability to comprehend and to analyze information through the careful consideration of evidence and the application of reasoned argument.
- B. To practice and improve analytical writing, the appropriate, accurate and effective use of written words to communicate ideas, explain evidence, and support assertions.
- C. To promote effective oral communication through the practice of various kinds of public speaking such as classroom presentations as well as individual and/or group critiques.
- D. To enhance visual sophistication and interpretation through the development of craftsmanship, the refinement of conceptual issues, and the expansion of artistic awareness.
- E. To advance scholarly expertise and professional preparation through the practice of in-depth research, the application of knowledge to one's own body of work, and the improvement of professional readiness and sophistication.

III. Description of Assessment Methods

A. Entry Level Review

- i. Studio Majors: Entry-level Portfolio. Any student wishing to major in Visual Arts and New Media must submit a portfolio and application. Prospective students submit 10-20 images of their work. These are reviewed and scored by

department faculty to determine if the student will be admitted to the program. If accepted, the images submitted and accompanying evaluation sheet become a part of the student's file. This file is used to document the level of achievement of the student since entry to the department. Rejected applications are automatically placed in an appeal process to be reviewed by additional faculty.

ii. Art History Majors: Writing sample. Within the first year of major declaration, an entry-level writing sample will be collected and placed in student's file.

B. Sophomore Level Review

i. Studio Majors: 24-Credit Hour Review. This annual spring semester review is required for every studio major who has completed 24 credit hours in the Visual Arts and New Media major. Participating students are required to submit a paper responding to a series of questions distributed prior to the review date. These questions focus on the student's ability to assess and articulate his or her progress and goals. The student is also required to present work completed at SUNY Fredonia (both in and out of class). The student meets with a panel of faculty to respond to questions about his/her work, progress, and goals. The quality of the paper is also discussed. During the review students are queried in a manner designed to encourage the utilization of knowledge, history, vocabulary and critical thinking skills acquired in the foundation program and art history courses. Faculty members comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the work and offer suggestions and guidance as to how the student can improve while studying in the Department of Visual Arts and New Media. The reviews have both qualitative (oral and written) and quantitative (scaled from 6-10 and then averaged across five categories) assessment methods. The evaluation questions are as follows:

1. How well does the student demonstrate critical thinking skills: the ability to comprehend and analyze information through available evidence and/or reasoned argument?
2. At what skill-level is the student's written statement: the appropriate, accurate and effective use of written words to communicate ideas, explain evidence, and support assertions?
3. What level of oral communication is demonstrated: effective use of visual vocabulary, style and tone of public speaking, and physical mannerisms that complement oral presentations?
4. How well does the student rate in terms of visual sophistication, conceptual interpretation, artistic awareness, and the refinement of craft?
5. To what degree is the student prepared for professional advancement, including the practice of in-depth research and/or the application of knowledge

and skills to his/her own body of work?

Individuals demonstrating weaknesses are given clear directions on how to advance their work. Student scores and ranks during the 24-Credit Hour Review are used to determine scholarships and awards. The review scores are also used as a qualifier for applying to the BFA degree program. The department assessment committee is currently working to update the assessment rubrics to reflect student learning outcomes.

ii. Art History Majors: 24-Credit Hour Review. Art History majors undergo an annual spring semester review similar to that of studio majors. Students who have completed, or are in the process of completing, a minimum of 18 Art History credits (excluding VAP, but including ART 100 Visual Concepts, Art History courses taken here or transferred in, and no more than one VANM studio) must participate in this review. Participating students are required to submit a paper responding to a series of questions distributed prior to the review date. These questions focus on the student's ability to assess and articulate his or her progress and goals. The student is also required to present written art historical work completed at SUNY Fredonia (both in and out of class). The student meets with a panel of faculty to respond to questions about his/her written work, progress within the major, and career plans. During the review students are queried in a manner designed to evaluate their art historical knowledge, visual literacy, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. Faculty members comment on the strengths and weaknesses of submitted work and offer suggestions and guidance as to how the student can improve while studying in the Department of Visual Arts and New Media. The reviews have both qualitative (oral and written) and quantitative (scaled from 6-10 and then averaged across five categories) assessment methods. The evaluation questions are the same as those listed above for the studio review. Individuals demonstrating weaknesses are offered clear directions on how to advance their work. Student scores and ranks at the 24-Credit Hour level are used to determine scholarships and awards, and the student's preparedness for advancement within the major.

C. Junior Level Review

i. BA Visual Arts and New Media Studio Majors interested in applying for the BFA Curriculum must apply through the BFA Review Process. To qualify for application students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in Visual Arts and New Media courses, including Art History, and a minimum GPA 2.0 is required in all courses taken outside the department. With approval of the major area, students with a 3.25 or higher GPA in all Visual Art and New Media courses and 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA and a score of 3.5 or greater during the 24 Credit-Hour Review may gain advanced acceptance to BFA without committee review. Students must select a committee of three full-time Visual Art and New Media faculty to serve as their review panel; one faculty member must represent the major; the remaining two must be from outside the individual major area.

Students must contact the chosen faculty members individually to discuss their intention to apply for the BFA well in advance of the scheduled review time frame. Students are required to submit a written statement about their work at least one week prior to the committee review; copies of the written statement must be provided to all members of the review committee and the departmental secretary. The content of the student's statement should be discussed with the chair of the committee in advance of completion so that the student receives advice on how to orient his/her paper. In all cases, the written statement should contain a statement explaining why the student wishes to gain BFA status in a specific major. Students will be responsible for presenting examples of work from all art courses taken in the concentration. Outside work is expected. All work should be labeled with the student's name, course for which work was done, and the semester completed. After consideration/discussion, the committee will complete the BFA Review Evaluation form. If accepted into a BFA major, the student is then responsible for completing a Change of Major form. The Change of Major form must be submitted to the departmental secretary and must have an authorizing signature from the BFA committee chair for appropriate processing. A student whose initial application for the BFA degree is rejected may reapply after one additional semester of study. The student may choose two different faculty members for the appeal panel, but must still include the faculty member from his/her chosen major. Native Fredonia students cannot apply for BFA status after completing six semesters of Fredonia coursework; transfer students cannot apply after completing 4 semesters of Fredonia coursework.

D. Exit Assessment

i. Exit Portfolio. A bookend to the entry-level portfolio, all graduating BA and BFA studio majors in Visual Arts and New Media are required to submit an exit portfolio of work completed during their study at SUNY Fredonia. The portfolio is assessed in the same manner as the entry portfolio allowing for a comparative analysis. The major area faculty review the work and comment on the progress made as a student in the Department of Visual Arts and New Media. BFA students have the additional responsibility of presenting examples of their work for public review as part of the required graduating senior exhibition.

ii. Art History Majors: Senior Thesis. All senior Art History majors in the Department of Visual Arts and New Media are required to design, propose, research, write and submit a qualifying 20-to-30 page thesis paper reflecting original art historical research conducted during their study at SUNY Fredonia. The thesis is evaluated and scored by art history faculty in a manner similar to the entry-level and intermediate-level papers.

IV. Time Lines

A. The Entry-level Portfolio for studio students and the application materials of potential art history students are evaluated immediately upon receipt to determine

qualification to enter the program. Reviews begin in early fall and continue until freshman orientation for the following academic year.

B. The 24-Credit Hour Review for studio and art history majors takes place when a student has completed 24 credit hours in the Visual Arts and New Media major (for native Fredonia students this is usually during the spring semester of the sophomore year, and for transfer students the time line varies).

C. The BFA Review for students interested in BFA status takes place in fall of their junior year. Transfer students may initially apply for BFA status in the spring semester of their junior level year, but no student (native or transfer) may initially apply for BFA status in his/her senior level year. Students wishing to apply must have completed a minimum of 27 credits in Visual Arts and New Media courses.

D. The Exit Portfolio for studio students is submitted as part of the class requirements for ART 460: Senior Seminar, a required one-credit course for BFA and advanced BA students. If a BA student does not enroll in ART 460: Senior Seminar, the student will submit the exit portfolio in their 400-level course. If a student does not submit an exit portfolio for review, he or she receives a 'U' for the class. If a student is not registered in ART 460, the exit portfolio is required to be in the student's file by the time of degree audit. The file is screened by the Department Chair to ensure that it is complete and meets all requirements. The Art History Senior Thesis research paper is submitted as part of a one-to-three credit course usually taken in the spring term of the senior year. Submission of the Senior Thesis is required by the time of degree audit. The completed file is then reviewed by the art history faculty and the departmental chair.

V. Plan of Execution

A. The Entry-level Portfolio for studio students is evaluated by the individual area coordinator if the student has indicated an area of interest in the application. If the student has not indicated a preferred area of concentration, the portfolio is evaluated either by faculty members comprising the Recruitment and Retention Committee or by the Department Chair. Any applicant indicating a preference for art history is evaluated by art history faculty.

B. All members of the Department of Visual Arts and New Media faculty conduct the 24-Credit Hour Review for studio and art history students.

C. BFA Review committees are selected by students. Typically, all permanent faculty members of the Department of Visual Arts and New Media are eligible to participate.

D. The individual area coordinator of their concentration or the Department Chair evaluates the Exit Portfolio of studio students. The art history faculty evaluates the Senior Thesis completed by art history students.

VI. Record-keeping and Data Analysis

A. Hard copies of student portfolios (entry and exit), all review evaluation sheets and scores, and student qualifying papers are kept in the student's individual advising folder, which remains on file in the departmental office and then is moved into the department's record room upon graduation. Electronic databases of all the scores recorded from the Entry-level Portfolio, 24-Credit Hour Review and Exit Portfolio are kept on the computers of the Department Chair and Department Secretary's computers (and backed-up on CD/DVD bi-annually). Electronic databases are updated during each assessment period. Assessment results are reported in each departmental annual report and the results of 5-year program reviews are reported to SUNY.

B. The Department of Visual Arts and New Media committee structure allows for substantive discussion of pedagogical issues among the faculty that then come before the entire Department for review and action. Bi-annually, at the first and last meetings of the academic year, the faculty as a whole specifically discusses the assessment findings in relation to curricular modification, hiring priorities and requests for new resources.