University of Utah

Graduate Council Program Review

Department of Art and Art History

5. Program Effectiveness – Outcomes Assessment

Assessment of programs and curricula encompasses both formal and informal

procedures. The department Policy Statement of Criteria for Retention,

Promotion, and Tenure (Appendix E) serves as a first step in evaluating

curriculum and teaching. In the description of standards, a faculty member’s

teaching portfolio should demonstrate a "continued development of content and

methodology in one's own area of expertise." The policy provides a framework for

assessing teaching effectiveness, as measured in part by the faculty member’s:

• knowledge of subject matter, both its traditions and contemporary

perspectives,

• quality of course material organization in syllabi and handouts,

• evidence of a demonstrated ability to communicate subject matter in ways that

motivate students,

• evidence of a demonstrated ability to mentor students effectively,

• guest lectures in other courses,

• workshops,

• collaborative, interdisciplinary projects,

• successful grant funding for teaching proposals,

• teaching awards,

• community-engaged learning courses and other pedagogical endeavors,

• other evidence as determined appropriate by the RPT committee and

Department Chair.

The Department RPT Committee reviews faculty course evaluations, the Student

Advisory Committee (SAC) Report and syllabi when individuals are formally

reviewed. In addition, the Department’s RPT Policy (adopted in 2014) requires an

in-class review by the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) to be

done during the year prior to a formal review. This report is included in the RPT

file.

Outcomes assessment is undertaken by individual faculty members, Area Heads

and the Art History Program Director, as well as by faculty discussion. Much of

this section concerns the undergraduate curriculum since graduate students are

provided greater opportunity for one-on-one instruction, mentoring, and feedback.

The faculty uses the following tools to ensure successful outcomes for the

student:

• course syllabi

• course evaluations

• mid-term course evaluation by CTLE

• formal CTLE course evaluations

• peer review of teaching by colleagues

• student response on individual class projects

• department curriculum committee

• college curriculum committee

• University Advisory Council for Teacher Educators and the Utah State Office

of Education for the art teaching BFA requirements

• portfolio reviews for scholarships and for entrance into graphic design

• internship evaluations

• capstone classes in the Art History Program and for BFA areas

• Annual Student Exhibition, juried by a visiting artist funded through the Fine

Arts Fees Committee

• exit surveys by students after graduation

• feedback from alumni working in the respective disciplines

• Student Advisory Committee (SAC) reports

Less quantitative in method, but equally valuable, are the efforts of faculty

members to keep current in the discipline and their field of expertise that, in turn,

impacts their pedagogy. Faculty members make concerted efforts to keep abreast

of initiatives, developments, and innovations and to network with colleagues at

local, regional, national and international conferences, exhibition openings, and

when giving invited lectures.

5.1 Learning outcome assessment procedures

The faculty have helped create and have approved the following Learning

Outcomes and Assessments:

Art History

BA in Art History

Program Purpose

The Art History Program educates students about the production, practice, and

interpretation of art and visual and material cultures. By developing skills in

critical looking, thinking, reading, writing, and research, students become better

equipped as visually literate members of society. Upon graduation, students are

prepared for a diverse range of professional careers in the public, private, and

non-profit sectors or to undertake advanced graduate study in an academic or

professional program.

Learning Outcomes

• Develop critical looking, thinking, reading and writing skills;

• Examine a diversity of cultural artifacts, images, and visual representations

specific to different historical, cultural, or geographical contexts;

• Gain an understanding of concepts, theories, and approaches specific to the

research and interpretation of art objects and visual culture;

• Identify, analyze, and assess processes in the production, circulation and

consumption of images;

• Formulate and express an argument clearly and cogently in both oral and

written communication.

Assessment

• Students in coursework complete a number of written assignments, essays,

examinations and research papers that demonstrate their knowledge and

employment of appropriate vocabulary, art historical concepts, and ability to

conduct research.

• Students participate in classroom discussions about readings and write about

selected works of art and/or objects of visual and material culture to

demonstrate their command of analytical and interpretive methods.

• During focused art history seminars, students work closely with faculty in

learning how to analyze and present readings, as well as how to research and

write about a diverse array of objects and concepts.

• Through the seminar Good Looking: Writing About Visual Art and Culture

(ARTH 4000), students are introduced to diverse theoretical and

methodological perspectives on art history and visual studies while developing

skills in writing about visual material and practice.

MA in Art History

Program Purpose

The Art History Program provides a focused graduate degree path with a

rigorously interdisciplinary emphasis. Students learn about key issues in art

history and visual studies while developing a specific scholarly focus, and

are prepared for a diverse range of professional careers in the public, private, or

nonprofit sectors or to undertake advanced graduate study in an academic or

professional program.

Learning Outcomes

• Deepen critical looking, thinking, reading and writing skills;

• Research a diversity of cultural artifacts, images, and visual representations

specific to different historical, cultural, or geographical contexts;

• Understand, analyze, and employ major concepts, theories, and approaches

specific to the research and interpretation of art objects and visual culture;

• Formulate and express an argument clearly and cogently in both oral and

written communication;

• Have sufficient ability in a foreign language to enhance their knowledge of the

visual art and culture of nations or people outside the English-speaking

nations;

• Develop a specific scholarly focus and increased expertise in a historical

period, genre, or critical method of art history.

• Expand research skills to include working with primary materials and archival

sources.

Assessment

• Students in the seminar Critical Theory and Methodology of Art History (ARTH

6800) demonstrate an understanding of diverse methodological perspectives

through classroom presentations, discussions about readings and visual

materials, and a series of written assignments.

• In Visual Intersections: Critical Approaches to Art and Visual Culture (ARTH

6810) students work closely with faculty to produce extended papers that

develop research strategies, as well as analytical and argumentation skills.

• A qualifying paper demonstrates competency in graduate level art historical

research and critical writing.

• Language proficiency certification confirms sufficient ability in a foreign

language to engage with scholarship on visual art and culture of non Englishspeaking

nations.

• A master’s thesis or project demonstrates the ability to conduct innovative

research, analyze and synthesize diverse approaches to the study of visual

and material cultures, develop a specific scholarly focus, and formulate and

express an argument clearly and cogently in written form.

• An oral defense of the master’s thesis or project demonstrates the ability to

present research clearly, to discuss and respond to critiques, and to cogently

address topics of art historical significance.

Studio Art

BFA in Art

Program Purpose

The program prepares students to be broadly knowledgeable in the visual art and

design disciplines and to possess the necessary research and communication

skills to continue to learn about and be active participants in the art and

professional design world at large. The program prepares students for entry into

professional art and/or design practice or to undertake graduate study in an

academic or professional program.

Learning Outcomes

• Demonstrate an understanding of and acquired skills relating to techniques

and technologies needed to realize their artistic goals;

• Be able to formulate and express ideas through creative problem solving in the

production of contemporary visual art and design and research into creative

processes;

• Demonstrate a general understanding of major historical and contemporary

concepts, theories, and approaches to research in the study of visual art and design;

• Be able to identify, analyze, and assess information from a variety of sources

and perspectives;

• Have sufficient ability in visual expression to enhance their knowledge of

global culture and fine art and contemporary design;

• Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental practices and professional

standards related to visual arts and professional design locally, nationally and

internationally;

• Be prepared for entry into professional art practice or to undertake graduate

study in an academic or professional program;

• Possess the research and communication skills necessary to understand and

participate in the world of the visual arts and professional design;

• Be able to bring creativity, innovation and effective problem solving into any

endeavor they engage in.

Assessment

• Students gain foundational skills in the first year Foundations sequence. They

continue to develop these techniques and technologies in the required studio

courses for their BFA major emphasis.

• Students in Sculpture II (ART 4410) demonstrate an understanding of the

means of the creative process, contemporary art issues, historical context, the

function of the art community along with aspects of the art market and possible

future artistic directions in contemporary sculpture.

• Students demonstrate their understanding of major historical and

contemporary concepts in visual art in First Year Studio: Introduction to Visual

Language (ART 2400), Intro to History of Art &Visual Culture (ART 2500) and

required Art History courses;

• Students in Writing for New Media (FA3600) demonstrate their ability to

identify, analyze, and assess information from a variety of sources and

perspectives through research-based papers that focus on using alternative

ways to tell stories. Rubrics are used to assess these papers.

• Students in Senior Studio Seminar (ART 4980) demonstrate their

understanding of fundamental practices and professional standards as well as

their preparation for post-graduation professional or academic endeavors

through grant writing assignments, artist statements and writing and projects

that address various aspects of professional practice.

• Students in the multiple capstone courses offered in each studio area

demonstrate research and communication skills through final portfolios,

presentations, written texts and final projects.

• Students in Site, Space and Installation (ART 4460) are able to reflect and

assess the interconnectedness of how their creative expression and discipline

demonstrates and comments on the concerns and issues of our time in the

twenty-first-century.

BFA in Art Composite Teaching

Program Purpose

In addition to the program purpose and assessment for the BFA in Art, the BFA

in Art Teaching is designed to give students the opportunity to explore the

purposes, practices and possibilities for art education. Faculty fosters a climate of

critical inquiry, experiential education, teaching opportunities, and

experimentation with multiple forms of instruction.

Learning Outcomes

• Gain an in-depth understanding of the historical and theoretical foundations of

art education;

• Compare, contrast and demonstrate the major pedagogical approaches of art

education;

• Demonstrate an understanding of current issues in art education, including

major research findings and art education policy.

• Incorporate knowledge of standards and standards-based instructional

approaches to the design and the implementation of teaching;

• Understand and apply human development to the teaching of art;

• Develop skills needed to be critical teachers of art education who value

cultural difference, civic participation and the role of the arts in school and

community settings;

• Create, apply and assess learning in the visual arts in school- and communitybased

settings.

Assessment

• Students in Introduction to Art Education (ART 3520) demonstrate their

understanding of the foundations of art education, major pedagogical

approaches to art education and current issues in art education through

weekly reading responses, presentations and papers.

• Students in Art Education in the Secondary Schools (ART 3530) learn and

apply their understanding of multiple pedagogical approaches to art education,

standards-based instruction, human development and assessment through

writing unit plans, lesson plans and assessments. They apply these skills

through teaching art education lessons to their peers in class.

• Students in Art Teaching Practicum (ART 4540), Art Education in the

Secondary Schools (ART 3530) and Art in the Community (ART 4530) plan,

implement and assess their teaching in school and community settings.

Students in Art Teaching Practicum are evaluated by site supervisors.

MFA in Art

Program Purpose

The Master of Fine Arts/Studio Program prepares candidates for the high level of

investigation and creative production demanded of the professional artist.

Through mentorship, seminars, visiting artist programs, art history and rigorous

critique, students are prepared with the necessary skills and discipline to

participate professionally in the world of visual art.

Learning Outcomes

• Demonstrate mature and intelligent conceptualization and production of their

work;

• Demonstrate the mastery of techniques and technologies needed to realize

their artistic goals;

• Be able to formulate and express ideas through a high level of creative

problem solving in the production of a well-researched and executed body of

work;

• Demonstrate an elevated understanding of art history, theories, major

concepts and approaches to research in the study of visual art;

• Demonstrate an understanding of the different perspectives in contemporary

art both in practice and in theory;

• Be able to identify, analyze, assess and put into practice information from a

variety of sources and perspectives;

• Demonstrate, through oral and/or written critique, an in-depth understanding of

personal artistic goals with historical context;

• Demonstrate a sufficient ability in visual expression to enhance their

knowledge of culture and fine art of nations or people outside the United

States;

• Possess advanced techniques, research and communication skills necessary

to understand and participate in the world of visual art.

Assessment

• Students are assessed on the conceptualization and production of their work

throughout their MFA program by their graduate committees, by faculty they

take independent hours with or classes from, and by their passing their first

year probationary period. The Graduate Student Handbook outlines the entire

process for MFA students.

• A master’s thesis exhibition and project paper demonstrate mastery of

techniques and technologies needed to realize their artistic goals as well as a

student’s ability to formulate and express ideas through a high level of creative

problem solving in the production of a well-researched and executed body of

work.

• Students demonstrate their understanding of art history and contemporary art

through their papers, projects and writing assignments in various graduate

level Art History courses, MFA Graduate Seminar, and Graduate Critique.

• An oral defense of the master’s thesis exhibition demonstrates an in-depth

understanding of personal artistic goals with historical context.

MFA in Community-Based Art Education

Program Purpose

In addition to the program purpose and assessment for the MFA in Art, the MFA

in Community-Based Art Education is intended for artists, art educators, and

other arts professionals who want to become teaching artists and cultural

workers. The degree enables graduates to develop, teach, and facilitate visual

arts education programs in community-based organizations, museums, afterschool

programs, and other alternative learning sites.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are the same as for the MFA in Art with these additions:

• Gain an in-depth understanding of the theoretical foundations of art as a tool

for personal, interpersonal, social, political and environmental action;

• Develop an understanding of the history and applied practice of art as a form

of action and social practice;

• Understand and articulate the history of community-based art education as it

applies to their specific medium/a;

• Design, implement and assess a major community-based art education

project.

Assessment

Assessment measures are the same as for the MFA in Art with these additions:

• Students demonstrate all of the aforementioned learning outcomes in the Artist

as Cultural Worker (ART 6560) class through project proposals, research

papers, the development of a plan and assessment for a major communitybased

art project and presentations.

• Students demonstrate their ability to design, implement and assess a major

community-based art education project in Graduate Art in the Community

(ART 6570), Graduate Art Teaching Practicum (ART 6580) and through their

thesis exhibition or project.

5.2 Outcomes assessment feedback

As outlined in Section 5.1, the department uses multiple approaches to assess

teaching and learning that encompass individual faculty members’ teaching,

program level curriculum, and departmental effectiveness. We strive to make

effective changes that reflect the current state of the disciplines as well as

developing trends.

The department uses the following elements to assess teaching and learning in

the department. Feedback is provided to and used by individual faculty members,

Area Heads, Director of the Art History Program, Department Chair and

Associate Chair, Executive Committee, Graduate Directors, Foundations

Committee (who redesigned our first-year sequence for all BFA students, based

on assessment feedback), Curriculum Committee and the faculty at large. The

feedback is used to inform and facilitate changes on faculty, program, and

departmental levels.

Course syllabi

The syllabus is the first step in providing students with adequate information

about objectives and learning outcomes. A template, approved by the

University's Undergraduate Studies Council and mandatory for all non-major and

General Education courses, is intended to inform a student about the course

content and course structure. It addresses a range of items from the name of the

department offering the course to evaluation methods. More explicit information

along these lines in course syllabi for a major is strongly encouraged by the

University.

Course evaluations

Students use the opportunity at the end of each semester to complete online

course evaluations for each course in which they are enrolled. Places to capture

statistical data on the form are followed by text fields, and student comments add

immeasurably to the faculty member's evaluation of the success of the course.

Copies of the evaluations are given to the faculty member and also filed in the

instructor's permanent file in the department office. These reports are available

for consultation on site. These evaluations are included in faculty RPT files.

In-Class Observation by CTLE

The Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) offers the opportunity

to have trained personnel conduct in-class course evaluations. A CTLE

consultant will attend a class session, videotape the class with the instructor's

permission, and meet with the professor to provide feedback and suggestions.

This resource is available to all faculty members; however, it is a required as part

of a formal RPT review.

**Curriculum committees**

Department and college curriculum committees are important for assessing and

providing feedback on individual classes and how courses fit into a

rigorous, coherent degree curriculum. Our department curriculum committee has

been tasked with thinking broadly about the assessment process and how to

make changes that move the department forward with a cohesive vision.

University Advisory Council for Teacher Educators (UACTE) and the Utah State

Office of Education (USOE)

To retain the approval to offer courses in art teaching that applies to the

standards for teaching in the visual arts in the public schools, the curriculum must

be approved first by UACTE before submission to the Utah State Office of

Education. Criteria have been established to distinguish between department

autonomy to make minor changes and USOE approval on major changes to the

degree requirements.

**Portfolio reviews**

Evaluation of art produced in courses is used as evidence of curriculum success

and areas for improvement. Students are accepted into graphic design through a

portfolio review at the end of the first-year studio program. Another portfolio

review is conducted at the end of the second year. The remaining junior-level

students form a cohort group of committed graphic design students. An annual

portfolio review for art scholarships is another measure of the success of the

curriculum and frames faculty discussion on how and what students learn.

**Capstone classes**

Courses at the end of the degree program ensure that students have the best

opportunity to think about their chosen discipline, apply what they have learned

while pursuing their degree and begin to plan the next stage of their career. The

same courses offer the instructors the chance to articulate how the program is

structured and to think about changes to make the educational process more

effective.

**Juried Annual Student Exhibition**

The department hosts an annual exhibition of student work each April. All

students are encouraged to submit one or more pieces for review by a visiting

juror invited by faculty and students. Students get involved by petitioning the Fine

Arts Fees Committee for funding to advertise the exhibition and to bring in a

visiting artist as juror. In recent years, nearly 200 pieces have been assembled in

the Alvin Gittins Gallery for consideration; approximately 50-100 artworks are

selected each year. Local businesses contribute gift cards or cash to be used as

exhibition awards, and the juror is asked to select pieces for merit awards as well

as the best of show.

**Exit surveys**

Since 2005, graduating students have been invited to voluntarily complete an exit

survey that requests information on the undergraduate experience that includes:

reasons for declaring a major, evaluating the success of meeting their goals;

assessing the facility, extracurricular enhancements, and plans for the future.

Very few students have completed the survey in the last few years. The surveys

are available for review on site.

**SNAAP Data**

The College of Fine Arts participated in the 2013 Strategic National Arts Alumni

Project (SNAAP). This survey collected information on our undergraduate and

graduate alumni. Some of the SNAAP employment statistics are included in

Section 5.4; however, the report includes additional data that is available for

review on site.

**Alumni feedback**

Many students have a natural inclination to keep in contact with a favorite

teacher or respond to department announcements about exhibition receptions

and other department events such as special guest lectures. The faculty collects

anecdotal evidence about the career tracks and ongoing connection with the

discipline. Graphic Design keeps a database of their alumni and Art Teaching

informally keeps track of where their students are teaching.

5.3 Degree completion data

Table 5.1: Graduate Degree Completion/Attrition Data

Department of Art and Art History 2009-2016

Incoming

Year/

Program

Name Institution of

Higher

Education

Degree(s) Grad Area of

Specialization

Withdrew Grad

Year

Years

to

Degree

Residency

Status

2016-2017

[Content of table redacted because it includes student names]

5.4 Employment

The University of Utah College of Fine Arts participated in the 2013 Strategic

National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), a one-of-a-kind survey that explores the

lives of arts alumni nationwide. Undergraduate and graduate alumni from the

Department of Art and Art History participated in this survey, which included postgraduation

employment statistics.

The SNAAP data found that Department of Art and Art History undergraduate

alumni (206 respondents) were employed in various arts-based jobs. 75% of the

respondents had previously been or currently were professional artists (58%

current, 17% previous) and 24% responded that they never had worked as

professional artists. 51% of the respondents had previously been or currently

were arts educators (21% current, 30% previous).

SNAAP data on Department of Art and Art History graduate alumni (28

respondents) show that 65% of the respondents had previously been or currently

were professional artists (54% current, 11% previous) and that 72% had

previously been or currently were self-employed (54% current, 18% previous).

Please see Appendix M for detailed SNAAP alumni employment data.

The Department of Art and Art History does not routinely collect alumni

employment data, although the Art Teaching area keeps an informal database of

alumni employment and the Graphic Design area has been tracking their

graduates for the past five years and estimates that over 85% of their alumni are

employed in design jobs.

Both BFA and BA students receive career advice and professional practice as

part of their capstone courses and experiences. This content is covered in the

following capstone courses: Art Teaching Senior Seminar, Senior Studio

Seminar, Sculpture II, and various Art History seminars, including Good Looking:

Writing About Visual Art and Culture.

During their two years of residency, MFA students take three sections of the MFA

Graduate Seminar course and one section of Graduate Critique, both of which

focus on professional practice as an artist. Art History MA students take

numerous graduate seminar courses that also address professional practice.

The department also offers three internship classes that allow for hands-on

experience in a student’s chosen field. These include: Art Teaching

Practicum/Graduate Art Teaching Practicum, Graphic Design Internship and

Internship in Art History.

The BA degree in Art History has prepared students for a broad range of

professional careers and to apply for graduate study in art history. The MA

degree in Art History has prepared students for a variety of curatorial and

museum careers as well as for more advanced study in a PhD program in Art

History or cognate disciplines. The accelerated disciplinary shift from a traditional

study of fine arts to wider and more inclusive fields of visual and material culture

corresponds to the growth of inter-related areas in which students can build

careers. The discipline is valued for its humanistic focus on cultural/historical

awareness, critical thought, and communication skills. The variety of student

motivations for declaring an art history major and the broad areas of application

of the degree after graduation make it challenging to analyze the job market.

Students have moved beyond customary expectations of curatorial work and

sought out opportunities in art galleries, libraries, historical societies, arts

councils, publishing, auction houses, educational institutions, business, medicine,

law, and communications.

The BFA degree in Art Teaching has developed as a stand-alone degree for

those intending to become generalists and those who specialize in ceramics,

painting & drawing, photography/digital imaging, or digital intermedia. The

curriculum is designed to prepare students to become teaching artists in a wide

variety of contexts including public or private schools, community organizations

for youth and adults or to work independently as community-based artists.

Approximately 50% of the art teaching students elect to begin the College of

Education "pre-admission" courses for Secondary Licensure while completing the

BFA and follow up with two semesters of required "post-admission" courses to

become certified to teach in the public schools. Some students wait until after

graduation to complete certification through a local school district or as graduate

students in the College of Education at the University of Utah or other area

institutions. Over the past six years, art teaching students have been very

successful getting hired as teaching artists (90% of the graduating class has

been employed each year). Some of the alumni go on to top ranking graduate

schools for their Master of Education and a few opt to enter MFA programs.

The MFA degree in Community-Based Art Education, approved in 2006, is

intended to combine studio work, academic studies related to art education, and

community-based art education collaborative experiences. The MFA designation

makes the graduate course of study a terminal degree program. It appeals to

individuals interested in becoming teaching artists and cultural workers.

The BFA degree in one of the emphases in studio art prepares students for a

career as a practicing artist or for graduate study. Similar to the disciplinary shift

in other visual arts fields, students become quite proactive in finding additional

avenues for self-expression that diversify their career opportunities; often it is a

mixture of submissions to juried exhibitions or public art competitions, finding

appropriate gallery representation, collaborating with visual arts partners, or

working for non-profit visual arts agencies. Many of the BFA students elect to

attend well-respected graduate programs outside of Utah.