

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY

- 1. Reporting Institution:** Eastern Illinois University
- 2. Program Reviewed:** 50.0701 MA in Art
- 3. Date:** January 26, 2024
- 4. Contact Person** Chris Kahler
 - 4.1. Telephone** 217 581 3410
 - 4.2. E-mail** cbkahler@eiu.edu

Section 5. Overview

The Department of Art + Design at Eastern Illinois University offers two distinct Master's degrees: an MA in Art (on campus) and an MA in Art Education (online plus summer 8-day studio residency). The MA in Art facilitates studio artist's advanced artistic development and professional growth while preparing them for further graduate study including the MFA terminal degree. The program consists of an intensive 32-hour one-year course of study in the studio arts including ceramics, jewelry/metalsmithing, drawing and painting, printmaking, sculpture, fashion, and graphic design. The MA in Art Education is a 33-hour program blending online courses with intensive studio experiences designed to strengthen the development of certified art teachers and allow them to engage in professional development and graduate studies. The program is designed to be completed in two years.

Our graduate art programs connect with the University's mission: "Students learn the methods and results of free and rigorous inquiry in the arts, humanities, sciences, and professions, guided by a faculty known for its excellence in teaching, research, creative activity, and service." Students in the MA in Art program work closely with instructional faculty led by an MA Committee to develop a focused body of artworks and assist them in pursuit of their professional aspirations. Graduate students in Art Education work closely with graduate faculty to develop and complete an independent research project while also receiving a broad education in the area. The goals of the Art + Design Department's Master's degree programs also tie directly to the Graduate School's mission of providing superior programs for professional development and as preparation for advanced scholarship, while fostering critical thinking, problem solving, and creative activity.

Our MA degrees are both uniquely positioned in terms of similar programs in Illinois. Our studio MA is predicated on helping young artists refine their work in such a way that they are prepared for and will be accepted into MFA programs that otherwise might have been outside their reach. Our program is the perfect stepping-stone to the MFA and we take great pride in the many students who have gone on to matriculate at prestigious programs including Cranbrook, Notre Dame, and KCAI. Also, our studio program has cultivated relationships with international institutions that have allowed us to host a consistent number of candidates from West Africa. In the Art Education program, EIU pioneered the intensive online MA in Illinois. This forward-thinking program has leveraged its early establishment and quality so that it enjoys consistent high enrollment, much of it driven by the word-of-mouth of successful graduates. Art Education graduate students have also benefitted from the Art + Design Department's Study Abroad program to Florence and Rome, which hosted 8 Art Education graduate students in the summer of 2017 (the program will next be offered summer 2024).

The National Association of Schools of Art and Design's (NASAD) framework for Specific Initial Graduate Degree Programs Studio Art and Design (NASAD Handbook 2023-2024, p. 143) provides the basis of the Art + Design department's curricular structure and Learning Objectives. To wit:

1. The Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in fields of studio art or design requires at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of concentrated, advanced post-baccalaureate study.
2. At least 50% of the work should be in the chosen studio or design field, supported by related advanced art/design history courses and studies in other arts fields as appropriate to the particular studio discipline and to the individual's program of study.

In addition to applicable requirements for all graduate programs, all studio art and design initial master's degrees:

1. Develop advanced capacities to work independently and make effective artistic and intellectual judgments, and professional decisions in the area of specialization.
2. Require graduates to demonstrate professional competence in the area of specialization before peers and faculty.
3. Require a final project or some equivalent reviewed by more than one faculty member.

NASAD standards also guide our Art Education degree (NASAD Handbook 2023-2024, p. 145):

An initial master's degree program in art education requires at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours. The program should be constructed to add breadth and depth beyond the undergraduate program in studio, in art and design history and analysis, and in art education.

The art and design programs of Eastern Illinois University continue to enjoy NASAD accreditation. In 2024, after substantial COVID-related delay, the Art + Design department submitted a final version of its self-study and hosted an evaluation team that assessed all aspects of our programs. The team concluded that our MA degrees met all NASAD standards for continued accreditation. Furthermore, our Art Education degree is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Graduate faculty in the Art + Design Department are active researchers and creative artists. From 2016 to 2024 they have participated in hundreds of exhibitions (regional/national/international) and published 2 books and over 100 articles. The faculty continually make conference presentations, jury exhibitions/art fairs, and serve as visiting artist/lecturer or workshop presenters.

Section 6. Major Findings and Recommendations

a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program:

- (1) changes in the overall discipline or field
- (2) student demand
- (3) societal needs
- (4) institutional context for offering the degree
- (5) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question

One of our MA programs' greatest strengths is stable enrollment. The Art + Design Department's MA in Studio Art and MA in Art Education together enrolled 95 students as of Spring 2024; 13 graduate students in the on-campus studio program while the online MA in Art Education has 82 students currently enrolled. These degree numbers are nearly 20% higher than those provided to the IBHE in 2016 and are testament to the MA programs' continuing professional relevance and academic appeal.

Data from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, indicates that the median annual wage for art and design occupations was \$51,150 in 2023, which was higher than the median annual wage for all occupations of \$46,310. Graphic Designers and Fashion Designers have been added to our Studio MA program in the last few years. Per the Department of Labor those fields have salaries that average somewhat higher: \$57,990 for Graphic Designers and \$76,700 for Fashion Designers. According to the Department of Labor, "Overall employment in arts and design occupations is projected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations from 2022 to 2032. About 95,800 openings are projected each year, on average, in these occupations due to employment growth and the need to replace workers who leave the occupations permanently."

According to the Department of Labor, the median annual wage for K-12 teachers ranged between \$61,620 and \$62,360 as of 2023, which was higher than the median annual wage for all occupations of \$46,310. Most of our graduate students in Art Education are already employed as teachers, but will receive a salary increase for attaining a Master's degree. Research shows that a Master's degree in teaching can result in a 10-15% salary

increase depending on multiple variables. The Department of Labor expects that “Overall employment in educational instruction and library occupations is projected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations from 2022 to 2032. About 857,600 openings are projected each year, on average, in these occupations due to employment growth and the need to replace workers who leave the occupations permanently.”

b. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement

The Art + Design department’s Learning Objectives are based on NASAD standards. The graduate faculty of the department engage in refinements to the MA in Art curriculum based on the individual graduate student’s creative activities and educational goals. A formal assessment occurs in the studio program at the fall semester review and oral examination conducted near the end of the spring semester. The graduate student’s MA committee conducts these assessments. At the fall review, the committee recommends a continued direction of study based on the artwork completed; the student must pass the fall review to continue as a degree-seeking student. The fall review has proven to be effective in getting the graduate student to develop the potential of his/her creative work for the Graduate Exhibition held in the Spring Semester.

The graduate oral examination takes place in the spring while the student’s art is on exhibit and the student is expected to explain, evaluate, and defend his/her artwork in a manner that demonstrates knowledge of the art process(es) used to create the artwork, use of the elements of art and principles of design, and how the subject matter/content is articulated visually. The student must pass the oral examination to complete program. In addition, graduate students in the program are evaluated at department-wide critiques and by visiting art professionals. The general response from these working artists is that the studio MA in Art has high standards and the graduate students are producing artwork that meets those high standards. For example, Conrad Bakker, who critiqued our students as a visiting artist in November 2023, wrote, “I can say that I was impressed by all the grads, with their work and their ability to talk critically about what they are doing. And they were very eager to have outside input.” For Art Education students, the major degree assessment consists of a research paper that must be defended during an online oral review. The research topic is selected in consultation with the supervising faculty member with the expectation the topic will be of value to the student’s professional teaching activities.

As evidence of program success, we are pleased to demonstrate that over the past several years we have had students accepted into MFA programs and continuing our tradition of academic excellence as a bridge program.

Students accepted to MFA programs

Year	Student	School
2023	Eric Burton	Illinois State U
	Carla Erausquin Bayona	Syracuse (Computer Arts)
	Candy Fordjour Frimpong	University of Delaware
	Ivo Makianich	Boston University
	Sam Wilson	PennWest Edinboro
2022	Francis Akosah	U Tennessee
	Samuel Aye-Gboyen	U Florida
	Emma Kameron	Ohio University
	Joy Okokon	Missouri State
2021	Chris Hughes	SIU Carbondale
	Jocelyn Hall	SIU Edwardsville
	Mikhail Kogan	Massachusetts School of Art & Design Low-Res
	Erin Dellasega	Ohio University
2020	Teddy Osei	Missouri State
	Glover Marfo	Miami of Ohio

	Sophia Reed	University of Kansas
	Nick Callaway	University of Delaware
	Morgan Calabrese	Edinboro University
	Rachel Head	Cardiff Metropolitan University (teaching program)
2019	Crystalyn Hutchens	Bowling Green State University (2020)
	Garrett Brown	SIU Edwardsville
	Leila Malekadeli	Colorado State University
2018	Chad Hayward	University of Georgia (2020)
	PyLynne Myers	Ohio University (2019?)
	Claudia Tommasi	Kent State University post bac
	Heidi Zenisek	University of Maryland
2017	Ryan Eckert	Arizona State University
	Prince Owusu Attah	Purdue
	Marcus Serafim Neto	Michigan State University
	Dongzi Pan	Cranbrook
	Courtney Chatham	Columbia College
	Lauren McKee	Cranbrook
	Joe Nivens	Louisiana State University (2018)

c. Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes

The following changes in the MA Art Programs at EIU have occurred since 2016.

- Active recruitment efforts by graduate coordinators (Studio and Art Education) and faculty have resulted in an increase in the number of students applying and matriculating to the programs
- The visiting artist series in conjunction with the Tarble Arts Center has been augmented. The visiting artists engage with the studio graduates in both one-on-one critiques and group evaluations.

d. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes

Actions to be taken for improvement of the MA in Art Programs:

- Establish a more thorough and efficient tracking and survey method of graduate alumni from both programs (Art Studio and Art Education).
- Continue the enhancement of recruitment materials.

Other elements appropriate to the discipline in question:

The ideas, strategies and core values of the integrative learning experience have long existed in the educational curriculum of visual arts before it was mandated as a requirement. For the academic year, the Studio MA student is articulated through a well coordinated combination of art historical contextual course work, studio media coursework for both a primary and secondary media choice with faculty, committee and visiting artists critiques, which ultimately culminates in the production of a visually cohesive and conceptually sound body of artwork to be installed and exhibited at a professional arts venue for one of their final graduation. These program components and requirements illustrate the incorporation of integrative learning.

- MA Art students, in all course work and options, are continually educated in self-motivated research to resolve both technical and conceptual ideas and or issues to prepare themselves more fully for professional life beyond the walls of academia.
- MA Art students, with either Teaching or Graduate Assistantships are placed in teaching studio lab sections which are mentored by Art Education area faculty or placed in arts related offices, studio areas or venues on campus exposing them to a variety of learning moments and professional situations that cannot be duplicated in the classroom
- The Graduate Exhibition in and of itself is an integrative learning experience. From the start of the program year in August to its culmination in May, the MA in Art student is working toward a professional art exhibition with a faculty committee overseeing the direction of the work and the Director of the Tarble Arts Center educating them on the relationship between artist and galleries and museums.
- The increased use of the visiting artist series throughout the academic year puts the MA student in front of professional artists in the field which provides vital input to them in regards to their work, direction, meaning, and concepts they are trying to express in their developing artwork.
- Courses such as: ART5850 Teaching Practicum, ART5920 Arts Colloquium and ART5910 Graduate Exhibition Practice and Procedure are centered around having the MA students work with professionals in specific areas of concentration for a greater understanding and appreciation of the profession of art production, professionalism and arts education.

In regard to the one unique and noteworthy program initiative, the clear and obvious answer is the success of the new and retooled MA in Art, with options (online) in Art Education and Community Arts. In Fall 2013, the university approved the Art + Design department's modification to the existing MA in Art with Art Education Option to a hybrid/online program as well as the addition of a hybrid/online Community Arts Option.

These programs have become the models to emulate for other departments at EIU that are considering online educational possibilities.

COMMENTS FROM THE COLLEGE DEAN:

The Art MA in both of its forms (studio and art education) has been a success story for the Department and the College, producing graduates that have gone on to distinction in the field as well as to prestigious terminal degree (MFA) programs. Enrollment has increased 20% since the last full IBHE report; at present, 95 students call the program home, making the MA one of the largest in the College. On the studio side, there is a significant international presence among the student body, evidencing the program's distinguished reputation; it is also noteworthy that visiting artists frequently have praised the quality of the work the students generate. The art education side is known statewide and beyond as a pioneering program, well-suited to the rhythms of the practicing teacher. It enhances careers not only by improving the quality of their instruction and the depth of their artistry but also makes them competitive for significant salary increases. The accreditation body NASAD visited recently and likewise lavished praise on the programs, particularly upon its highly accomplished and dedicated faculty. The programs continue to evolve with regular curricular review and updating, so as to maintain their quality and competitiveness in the field. We anticipate this to be a continued strong growth area for the University.

We recommend a decision of **Program in Good Standing**.

VPAA DECISION:

Program in good standing

Program flagged for priority review

Program enrollment suspended

VPAA EXPLANATION:

50.0701 M.A. in Art

The summary above outlines the meticulous preparation of students in the M.A. in Art program. Whether the student is in the on-campus studio stream, or in the online art education stream, the curriculum appears rigorous and geared towards professional success. The program enjoys healthy enrollment, largely due to its pioneering and sustained efforts in the online space. The instituting of the intensive 8-day studio experience is vital for teacher preparation. The program has an outstanding reputation for preparing its graduates for entry into top MFA programs. This has much to do with the thorough coaching of students to handle the heavily evaluative culture of artistic feedback, through regular engagement with visiting artists and collaborative efforts with the Tarble Arts Center.