

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

Program: Masters of Art (MA) in Art (511)

Department of Fine and Graphic Art

Graduate School & College of Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern State University Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

Graduate School Mission: Northwestern State University's Graduate School maintains as its mission and purpose to develop, provide, and support innovative, responsive, and accessible graduate programs of the highest quality. The Graduate School encourages mastery of disciplinary literature, innovative research, and professional development and practice opportunities. It further supports research by members of its scholarly community. The Graduate School is a source of intellectual capital for the University and contributes to the public welfare of the region, state, and nation.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Department of Fine and Graphic Arts. The mission of the Art Unit within the School of Creative and Performing Arts operates under the mission of the university. This mission involves three primary goals: first, to provide quality instruction in a variety of disciplines; second, to encourage creative activity and scholarship, and third, to serve the college and

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surrounding community via the educational, cultural and economic opportunities provided by the university.

A broad range of educational offerings in fine and applied art and art history, in conjunction with the university's core curriculum, provides in-depth study for the professional major, as well as a body of knowledge associated with a liberal arts degree.

In addition to facilities, expertise and instruction regarding traditional media, the Art Unit has a strong commitment to technologically enhanced instruction and relevant technology curriculum. The availability of new technology and instruction is considered imperative by the faculty and administration.

The Art Unit is committed to an academic and professional environment, which encourages creative activities, scholarship, and research. Faculty development in the areas of personal research and creative growth, technological competencies and teaching is nourished by the department and the university. This emphasis on active professional competence promotes excellence in the learning environment while engaging the public in university activities.

The university serves a diverse cultural and economic audience encompassing not only the local area, but also the state, region and beyond. Students come from small communities as well as metropolitan areas. Through academic offerings, art exhibitions, and the contributions of students to the community and contributions of graduates to the work force, the Art Unit is deeply tied to the surrounding community. The unit is committed to an environment of mutual respect, in which academic and cultural opportunities are made available; helping to meet the educational, cultural, and professional needs of the community at large.

Master of Arts in Art Program Mission Statement: The Master of Arts in Art degree program offers the student an opportunity to study graduate level art courses either on campus or online. The curriculum allows the student to propose their vision for their studies that coincides with the vision for their personal art practice. Seminar and research-based courses will assist the student in personal research to expand their understanding of their own artistic context and methodology. These courses will culminate in the capstone experiences writing and presenting a creative research document and exhibition. The outcomes of these will propel the student into terminal degree studies or artistic and professional practice.

Methodology: The assessment process for the MA/MS program is as follows:

- 1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the program chair and graduate coordinator.
- 2) They will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes.
- 3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program graduate faculty.
- 4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty if required (show cause).

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The Program Chair and Graduate Coordinator will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Evaluate own artistic experience and formulate an advanced direction, voice, and momentum in the creation of personal artwork.

Measure: Observable through projects, seminars, and by semester faculty and peer evaluations. Data will be collected through semester reviews. Benchmark reviews will be after the first semester and with the proposal of their creative research project. Advisor will collect data for the first benchmark. Graduate Coordinator will collect data for the proposals. Student and faculty (outcome and curriculum) will work together with the appropriate balance of direction and freedom for the student to build upon their artistic voice and style. Acceptable data would reflect 75% of the students actively evaluating their own artistic experience and formulating an advanced direction, voice, and momentum in the creation of personal artwork. Target data would show 95%.

Findings: The target was met with 95% of graduate students (N=15).

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Responses from graduate students again showed that 95% of students engaged in graduate student critiques—held twice a semester—100% of the time. Students were actively engaged in online peer and faculty critiques. The faculty worked hard to establish and maintain online courses through Moodle that better served the online students and themselves.

Based on the analysis of AC 2023-2024, in AC 2024-2025, to drive the cycle of improvement, graduate committees explored other means—like Teams—to provide virtual and distance experiences to enhance the use of Moodle. The summer session also included online critiques offered to all students.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Responses from graduate students showed that greater involvement from graduate committees virtually was a positive impact on the students who felt that communications were enhanced by this addition to their online experiences. Students who did not meet with SLO 1 were unable to engage virtually and online in general because of family and health reasons.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the results of AC 2024-2025, in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement, the faculty will engage in more outreach to graduate students on multiple levels to assure students have the greatest opportunities to participate in reviews. This will include telephone and email contacts by the Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate Committee Chairs to assure that students understand and have access to the critiques. Individual critiques with the committees will also be initiated.

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SLO 2. Synthesize the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals.

Measure: Observable and testable through the curricular opportunity to take independent courses in specific areas. Students will submit a proposal for each class of what they will accomplish for the course. The students will present a cohesive body of artwork and a creative research paper at the end of their degree program. An alumni survey will be administered at one-year, three-year and five-year intervals. Data will be collected through individual courses, reviews of exhibition and paper, and through the administered surveys. The faculty will assess whether the students have accomplished the proposals for each class. Advisors and committees will assess the success or failure of the papers and exhibits. Faculty will administer the surveys and collect the data. Data will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs. Students will respond to curriculum and their own creative drive to build a research and object-based output for review that will propel them to the next level of our artistic and academic goals. Acceptable data would reflect 75% of the students synthesizing the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals. Target data would show 95%.

Findings: 95%. Target met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-25, the target was met. The faculty added more extracurricular experiences for students attending the July session on campus, appointed a graduate student coordinator, and began to prepare a survey for students to complete before they leave at the end of the July session—thus beginning to collect information throughout the program rather than only relying on alumni data.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the results of AC 2024-2025, in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement, the graduate student coordinator will begin a cycle of touchpoints throughout the semester for both low-residency and face-to-face graduate students to establish clear communication with faculty and students regarding student progress and to collected materials like creative research documents in progress in a centralized location on Teams.

SLO 3. Participate in experiences that encourage familiarity with a broad variety of work in various specializations and media.

Measure: Observable through participation in departmental or class field trips to museums, galleries, and design centers; in national/international juried exhibitions; and in the graduate student exhibition opportunities. Also observable through teaching assistant opportunities. Data will be collected by generating lists of the percentage of graduate students attending the various class and departmental trips. Also, in reviews, faculty will report independent trips the students have initiated and their participation in student and other exhibitions. Data will also be received through reports of the Graduate Assistants' level of participation and professional candor in various assignments. The faculty will collect the data for student exhibition participation. The faculty will collect the date for student trip attendance. Advisors and committee members will collect the data for individual assignments in the Assistantships. Data will allow faculty to assess the frequency and effectiveness of exhibitions and trips. Students will independently seek life-long learning not based solely upon curricular experience. Acceptable data would reflect 75% of the students

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actively participating in experiences that encourage familiarity with a broad variety of work in various specializations and media. Target data would show 95%.

Findings: 99%. Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Graduate committees were honed to be most helpful to students in their research and art practices; additional opportunities were created for on-campus and low residency students to attend gallery/artists' talks. The 2025 summer session included additional trips to area artists' workshops. On-campus students were offered these opportunities in addition to the fall and spring semester events.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was met.

Decision: Based on the results of AC 2024-2025, in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement, the faculty will implement a series of milestones that will be added to the official curriculum of the graduate degree. These will include a writing assignment at the end of the first semester as well as individual critiques with committees each semester. A revamping of our comprehensive examination process will also be explored.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results. The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2024-2025. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2023-2024 results.

- In SLO 1, responses from graduate students showed that greater involvement from graduate committees virtually had a positive impact on the students who felt that communications were enhanced by this addition to their online experiences. Students who did not meet with SLO 1 were unable to engage virtually and online in general because of family and health reasons.
- In SLO 2, the faculty added more extracurricular experiences for students attending the July session on campus, appointed a graduate student coordinator, and began to prepare a survey for students to complete before they leave at the end of the July session—thus beginning to collect information throughout the program rather than only relying on alumni data.
- In SLO 3, graduate committees were honed to be most helpful to students in their research and art practices; additional opportunities were created for on-campus and low residency students to attend gallery/artists' talks. The 2024 summer session included additional trips to area artists' workshops. On-campus students were offered these opportunities in addition to the fall and spring semester events.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- In SLO 1, the faculty will engage in more outreach to graduate students on multiple levels to assure students have the greatest opportunities to participate in reviews. This will include telephone and email contacts by the Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate Committee Chairs to assure that students understand and have access to

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the critiques. Individual critiques with the committees will also be initiated.

- In SLO 2, the graduate student coordinator will begin a cycle of touchpoints throughout the semester for both low-residency and face-to-face graduate students, to establish clear communication with faculty and students regarding student progress and to collected materials, like creative research documents in progress, in a centralized location on Teams.
- In SLO 3, the faculty will implement a series of milestones that will be added to the official curriculum of the graduate degree. These will include a writing assignment at the end of the first semester as well as individual critiques with committees each semester. A revamping of our comprehensive examination process will also be explored.