

ART, B.F.A.

Begin Campus: University Park

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree requires thorough preparation and is intended to develop a level of competence that will enable persons who wish to pursue professional careers in art to prepare themselves for specialized graduate studies, specialized professional training, and/or immediate participation in creative work.

Students enrolled in the School of Visual Arts may seek entrance into the B.F.A. program no earlier than the second semester and no later than the fourth semester.

There will be a continuous review of portfolio and performance of students enrolled in the B.F.A. program throughout the entire program. Students who do not meet the standards or who do not want to continue in the B.F.A. program may return to the B.A. program in art or choose another program of study.

What is Art?

Art is an individual and social practice that makes an impact. When people create or respond to art, they make connections between themselves and the experiences of others. In some cases, art provides a private encounter whereby individual thoughts and feelings are expressed through art, or recognized in the art of someone else. In other cases, art gives form to ideas and issues that concern entire communities. It is because art extends personal and public awareness that it is highly valued as a cultural activity. Those who make art and write about art offer imaginative insights that challenge us to see things differently. By creating artworks yourself, and enhancing your capacity to interpret artworks made by other individuals, communities, and cultures, you contribute to one of the most important purposes of art, which is to celebrate this unique human form of social communication that shapes the way we see ourselves.

You Might Like this Program If...

- You are creative and love to communicate about the world through visual expression.
- You believe that artists are creative and critical thinkers and makers who shape our awareness about what is possible and, in doing so, change the way we see, experience, and understand things.
- You think that making art can impact others and make a difference in the world.

Entrance Procedures

Incoming First Year Students

Incoming first year students must apply to Penn State. Students who are accepted will be admitted to the School of Visual Arts pre-major (AAART) with the intended major of Art, B.F.A. Students will typically submit a portfolio for entrance to Art (B.F.A.) at the end of their 3rd or 4th semester.

Change of Campus Students

Students interested in pursuing ART (B.F.A.) should follow the appropriate change of major or transfer application instructions found under Visual Arts at <https://arts.psu.edu/how-to-apply/#specific>.

Transfer Students

Students interested in pursuing ART (B.F.A.) should follow the appropriate change of major or transfer application instructions found under Visual Arts at <https://arts.psu.edu/how-to-apply/#specific>.

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Art, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Requirements for the Major	84

6 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes 6 credits of General Education GA courses.

Requirements for the Major

To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn a grade of C or better in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
ART 11	First-Year Seminar- School of Visual Arts	1
ART 110	Ideas as Visual Images	3
ART 111	Ideas as Objects	3
ART 122Y	Commentary on Art	3
ARTH 111	Ancient to Medieval Art	3
ARTH 112	Renaissance to Modern Art	3
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 15 credits at the beginning level from the following:		15
ART 201		
ART 203		
ART 211	Introduction to Digital Art and Design Criticism	
ART 220	Figure Drawing	
ART 223	Drawing: Techniques, Materials, and Tools	
ART 230	Beginning Sculpture	
ART 240	Beginning Printmaking	
ART 250	Beginning Oil Painting	
ART 280	Beginning Ceramics	
ART 296	Independent Studies	
ART 297	Special Topics	
ART 299	Foreign Study--Art	
PHOTO 100	Introduction to Photography	
PHOTO 201	A Chronological Survey of Photography	

Supporting Courses and Related Areas

Select 6 credits in art history	6
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>	
Select 47 credits in Art at the 300 or 400 level ¹	47

¹ 24 of these 47 credits must be in an area of concentration from the following:

- Ceramics
- Drawing and Painting
- New Media
- Photography
- Printmaking
- Sculpture

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Learning Outcomes

- Achieve the conceptual and technical knowhow evident in a developed body of work that demonstrates personal commitment, aesthetic intent, and a clear notion of an artistic voice;
- Apply a level of competence in the pursuit of a professional career in art and cultural production;
- Be prepared for specialized graduate studies in visual arts and design;
- Participate in a comprehensive program of discourse of art theory and criticism, direct engagement with contemporary artists, and the ongoing production of exhibitions;
- Demonstrate a capacity to use and apply art skills, artistic knowledge and material thinking processes able to be applied to learning situations across disciplines.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged

in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

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Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Art, B.F.A. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ART 11 (First Year Seminar)*	1 ART 111*	3
ART 110*	3 ART 122Y (W; US)*	3
ARTH 111 (GA; IL)**	3 ARTH 112 (GA)**	3
ENGL 15, 15A, or 30H (GWS)‡	3 Additional Course, beginning-level studio (see list)*1	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course (GQ)‡	3
General Education Course	3	
	16	15

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Additional Course, beginning-level studio (see list)*1	3 Additional Course, beginning-level studio (see list)*1	3
Additional Course, beginning-level studio (see list)*1	3 Additional Course, beginning-level studio (see list)*1	3
Supporting Course from Art History ²	3 General Education Course (GQ)‡	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3

General Education Course	3 Supporting Course from Art History ²	3
	15	15
Third Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
CAS 100A, 100B, or 100C (GWS)‡	3 General Education Course	3
Supporting Course for Major, 300/400-level Studio*2	4 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
Supporting Course for Major, 300/400-level Studio*2	4 Supporting Course for Concentration, 300/400-level Studio*2	4
Supporting Course for Concentration, 300/400-level Studio*2	4 Supporting Course for Major, 300/400-level Studio*2	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5 Supporting Course for Major, 300/400-level Studio*2	4
	16.5	15.5
Fourth Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D (GWS)‡	3 Supporting Course for Concentration, 300/400-level Studio*2	4
Supporting Course for Concentration, 300/400-level Studio*2	4 Supporting Course for Concentration, 300/400-level Studio*2	4
Supporting Course for Concentration, 300/400-level Studio*2	4 Supporting Course for Major, 300/400-level Studio*2	4
Supporting Course for Major, 300/400-level Studio*2	4 General Education Course	3
	15	15

Total Credits 123

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

¹ ADDITIONAL COURSES (15 credits)

Select 15 credits at the beginning level from ART 201 (3), ART 203 (3), ART 211Y US (3), ART 217 (3), ART 220 (3), ART 223 (3), ART 230 (3), ART 240 (3), ART 250 (3), ART 260 (3), ART 280 (3), ART 296 (3), ART 297 (3), ART 299 (3), DART 202 (3), DART 203 (3), DART 204 (3), DART 205 (3), DART 206 (3), DART 213 (3), DART 297 (3), PHOTO 100 GA (3), PHOTO 201 (3), or PHOTO 202 (3) (Sem: 3-8)

² SUPPORTING COURSES AND RELATED AREAS (53 credits)

-Select 47 credits in ART/DART/PHOTO at the 300 or 400 level, 24 of which must be in an area of concentration from the following: ceramics, drawing and painting, new media/digital arts, photography, printmaking, or sculpture (Sem: 3-8)
-Select 6 credits in art history (Sem: 3-8)

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Program notes:

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There will be a continuous review of portfolio and performance of students enrolled in the B.F.A. program throughout the entire program. Students who do not meet the standards or who do not want to continue in the B.F.A. program may return to the B.A. program in art or choose another program of study.

Career Paths

An Art major is a lifelong learner who is forever curious and captivated by the personal journey of everyday life. As you hone your artistic dispositions with working techniques and practical studio skills, you will establish your own artistic vision and voice. We will help you foster dialogue among peers about the place of art in society and how you participate in and contribute to these changing debates. As you deepen your understanding of your own potential as an artist within a challenging and quickly evolving world, you will become equipped with the means necessary to embark upon a career in the visual arts.

Careers

An Art major possesses very distinctive human attributes, including a creative capacity to readily adapt to change, a resilient ability to make do with limited resources, and an inventive desire to seek alternative solutions in times of challenge. This independence is powered by a sense of intrinsic motivation and confidence that anything is possible. These creative capabilities are applied by artists in extraordinarily diverse professional activities, occupations, and careers. Although there are many B.F.A. graduates who achieve professional success as artists in their area of specialty, most "creatives" will use their artistic skills in innumerable ways throughout their entire lives.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

As a graduate with a B.F.A. in Art, you will have achieved a level of competence that grounds your creative and critical capabilities, enabling you to pursue a range of professional options in visual arts and related fields. As a creative artist with a distinctive practice and specialized

expertise in art media of your choosing, you will be informed and prepared to negotiate the different forms of professional participation in the art world that can be built around artist residencies, sustained studio practice, and gallery work. You will also have a body of work that will ensure you can prepare a competitive portfolio for application to graduate school.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://arts.psu.edu/degrees/mfa-art/>)

Professional Resources

- College Art Association (<https://www.collegeart.org>)
- National Art Education Association (<https://www.arteducators.org>)
- National Council of Art Administrators (<https://www.ncaaarts.org/>)
- Pennsylvania Art Education Association (<https://sites.google.com/paea.org/paea/home/>)

Contact

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