

**REVIEW OF THE M.A., M.S. IN ART**  
Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 50.0701  
Art/Art Studies, General

**OVERVIEW**

The **M.A., M.S., in Art** program at Illinois State University is housed in the Wonsook Kim School of Art within the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts. The School offers four degree programs: a B.A., B.S. in Art, B.F.A. in Art, an M.A., M.S. in Art, and M.F.A. in Art. In addition, the School offers a minor in Art History. Students enrolling in the **M.A., M.S., in Art** select either a sequences of study offered by the program which include Art Education (M.S.) and Visual Culture (M.A.).

**Enrollment, Fall Census Day, 2014-2021**  
**M.A., M.S., in Art, Illinois State University**  
First Majors Only

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Art Education sequence	8	10	11	11	12	11	15	9
Visual Culture sequence	4	6	5	2	2	3	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>

**Degrees Conferred, Graduating Fiscal Year, 2015-2022**  
**M.A., M.S., in Art, Illinois State University**  
First Majors Only

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Total</b>	-	6	5	4	5	3	7	5

Table notes:

Graduating Fiscal Year consists of summer, fall, and spring terms, in that order. For example, Graduating Fiscal Year 2019 consists of the following terms: summer 2017, fall 2017, and spring 2018.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT**

**Self-study process**

In Spring semester 2023, Associate Director Sarah Smelser was tasked with gathering information and initiating the self-study. After receiving the training from Planning Research and Polycy Analysis (PRPA), Smelser conducted individual meetings and a retreat with faculty and staff to gather information on all degree programs in the Wonsook Kim School of Art. With some assistance from Professor Melissa Oresky, Smelser crafted drafts of the documents in the spring of 2023. Duties were then transferred to incoming Associate Director Brian Franklin, who completed the document with assistance from Director Tyler Lotz.

**Program curriculum**

The Wonsook Kim School of Art has an MA in Visual Culture and an MS in Art Education.

**Program or academic unit faculty**

In the spring of 2023, school consisted of 30 tenured or tenure track faculty and 10 non tenure track instructional assistant professors. Art Education Faculty included Associate Professor Daniella Barroqueiro, Professor Judith Briggs, Assistant Professor Felix Rodriquez Suero, and Assistant Professor Albert Stabler. Art History T/TT

faculty included Assistant Professor Saskia Beranek, Professor Lea Cline, Associate Professor Elisabeth Friedman, and Associate Professor Melissa Johnson.

### **Program goals and quality indices**

Within the MA program, student success means developing and writing a compelling thesis with an original claim. Essentially, this entails creating new and original content that contributes to the field of visual culture. At the same time, successful students should build an interdisciplinary professional network on and off campus, a group of peers and collaborators.

Student success in the MS program is evidenced when students directly apply their research foci and interests through educational programs in the university and Bloomington-Normal communities; they create and explore curricular content centered on community-based learning and making, informed by historical, social, and emotional factors in the lives of young people; they are able to adapt to the changes in the labor market; and they negotiate difficult situations in the workplace.

“Student success” has become a more expansive term than it used to be, and its connotations have changed since pandemic isolation. Metrics are varied; they could be as straightforward and measurable as curriculum, articulation, student support, reactions to teaching, and post-graduation opportunities. Admission into a PhD program is a metric of student success, as is job placement.

Student success in the MS program is largely assessed through an ability to complete coursework and undertake independent research in a timely manner in order to graduate with an expanded idea of the potential and purposes of teaching art. Many of the MS students enter the Art Teacher Education program as working grade school art teachers interested in advancing their knowledge, changing jobs, or earning a higher salary. Their success in these pursuits has a straightforward metric.

### **Student learning outcomes assessment plan and process**

Students pursuing the MA in Visual Culture identify a personal focus of research and must clearly and fluently discuss the ideas, methods, goals, and achievement of their research in the process of defending it. Students pursuing the MS in Art Teacher Education gather and use knowledge of historical and contemporary art education and education theory to create and teach curriculum. In their thesis, they conduct meaningful research that is informed by current research in art education, such as assessment, disability right, technology, arts advocacy, socio-economic impact on education, and government regulation of education.

### **Specialized accreditation**

Illinois State University’s accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, for the MA/MS programs is currently in good standing. Our last reaccreditation was in 2014. We will submit another self-study and have a site visit Spring semester of 2025.

### **Responses to recommendations resulting from the previous program review**

There were numerous recommendations from the previous review that the school has addressed. The MS in Art Teacher Education is addressing enrollment issues through their exploration of an online plan of study. Our faculty has become more diverse, but more work is required to match the demographics of our student population. The school has utilized the EDEP and SDEP programs in several recent searches. The school's web page has been overhauled and improved during the reporting period, but some challenges remain. The school maintains a graduate catalog entry that accurately and clearly describes available plans of study and graduation requirements. Our alumni tracking efforts continue but would be significantly strengthened if a new advisor could be hired and the assistant to the director could shift duties.

### **Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand**

In the time of this review, technology has become even further integrated into the fields of art education and visual culture. Teachers and students are using digital tools, software, and online resources to create, share, and research

art. Additionally, art teachers are now tasked with constructing learning experiences that cross fluidly between in-person and remote learning environments. The fields have made efforts to be more inclusive and diverse. Art educators have recognized the importance of representing various cultures, perspectives, and voices in the curriculum. This includes teaching about a wider range of artists and art forms. Demand for an MS in Art Teacher Education remains strong, but the need for flexibility in the program has grown. Prospective students are often current K-12 teachers who need to work around their teaching schedule. This need is one of the primary reasons the ATE faculty are exploring an online plan of study option for the MS program.

### **Major findings of this program review self-study**

The Wonsook Kim School of Art's programs have been strong across the board. The Art Education area is pursuing the development of an online plan of study for their existing MS program to make it more competitive with peer institutions. We anticipate this to result in substantial enrollment over the next period of review. The MA in Visual Culture program's admissions are on hold as faculty consider a curriculum rewrite and program restructuring. These conversations are expected to pick up with the new hire of Katie Bruhn. The school's commitment to EDIA has become a formalized priority among faculty and staff through the formation of the school Belonging and Equity Committee and its inclusion in the school bylaws. Civic engagement has increased as a priority in courses. We have hired new TT faculty in several areas including Art Education, Graphic Design, Studio and Art History. The school continues to develop and offer innovative sequences and courses that are desirable to current and prospective students. Co-curricular offerings are very strong. Our alumni have gained employment and utilized their degrees in many different fields. Facilities have been upgraded and the Fine Arts rehabilitation project is in progress.

Despite all of the successes of the school, there are still areas for improvement. Assistantship and tuition waiver funding is essential to recruitment of all graduate programs in the school. Funding for these programs has been stagnant, contracts have resulted in higher wages for graduate students and tuition waivers are now being limited and centralized for distribution at the college level. Fewer assistantship dollars have resulted in the need to hire more student workers to complete the necessary tasks.

Additionally, some faculty and staff feel underappreciated in relation to their teaching, research and service responsibilities. Academic advisors do a lot beyond their job descriptions, especially after the return from pandemic isolation. The pandemic has changed elements of student experience that need to be addressed. Students need to feel welcome, seen and cared for. Facilities including CVA lack communal spaces for students to sit, eat, rest and engage socially. While the diversity of the student population is increasing, the demographics of the faculty and staff have been slower to change. Not all facilities in the school will be touched by the Fine Art rehabilitation project.

### **Initiatives and plans for the next program review cycle**

The school has a number of initiatives and plans for the next cycle in no particular order. We will pursue the development of an online plan of study for the existing MS program, adding substantial enrollment during this cycle. We will review and revise the MA in Visual Culture to make it more competitive and meet student needs. Faculty will formalize a plan to include more information on STEAM in graduate level courses. We will hire replacements for retired faculty in several sequences including Art Education. We will work to increase diversity among faculty and staff. We will renovate existing studios and classrooms untouched by the forthcoming Fine Arts rehabilitation project, and update aging equipment and technology across the school. We will hire more student workers to offset a waning graduate assistant population and changes in school's organizational needs. We will provide faculty and staff with resources to support their work.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Review Outcome.** The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the M.A., M.S. in Art to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks the program for their efforts in completing a comprehensive self-study report. The committee commends the program for developing a thorough self-study report that substantiates claims with insightful evidence. The program demonstrated a commendable level of inclusivity and participation in developing their self-study report. The Academic Planning Committee applauds the program's faculty retreat and ongoing meetings to discuss the self-study and to review program goals and future initiatives. The committee also acknowledges the program's use of various planning documents and the engagement of multiple stakeholders in making programmatic decisions.

The committee commends the program's emphasis on individualized attention and goal alignment to the university's *Educate-Connect-Elevate* Strategic Plan. The program's enrollment ranged from 11 to 19 students between 2015 and 2022. The program noted a general upward trend that stalled in 2020 by the pandemic, eventually leading to a modest decrease in 2022. The committee congratulates the program's work in developing an online plan of study for the M.S. program in response to the enrollment declines. Multiple recruitment efforts have also been employed by the program, including student funding opportunities, communication with professional contacts, and work with the Graduate School and University Marketing. The committee also recognizes the program's work to increase graduate student diversity. Self-identified students from historically underrepresented populations increased from 16.7 percent in 2015 to 36.4 percent in 2022. The program's efforts to track diverse student populations and the establishment of the Belonging and Equity Committee in 2021 indicate a commitment to monitoring and improving diversity initiatives. These efforts were applauded by the committee. The committee congratulates the program's efforts to align with its mission and values and promote student diversity.

The committee appreciates the program's efforts to support student success. The program has drafted a definition of student success and outlined strategies to monitor and support the success of their students. The committee also appreciates the program's assessment of the challenges associated with supporting student success including finite financial resources, mental health, faculty fatigue, and overload. Despite these challenges, the committee commends the program for the launching of various initiatives including gathering feedback from alumni and prospective students, pursuing online options, and a substantial review of the curriculum.

Changes to the program's curriculum since the last review have been primarily focused on the infusion of EDI into the program's curriculum. The committee commends the program for obtaining approval of ART 307 for IDEAS in 2023 as well as the submission of several other courses for approval. The committee also applauds faculty efforts to make Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access (EDIA) a priority in the development of course assignments and lessons, focusing on non-American, non-Western cultures or BIPOC artists. The committee recognized faculty's attendance at workshops such as inclusive teaching, decolonizing the curriculum, and diversity. The committee also congratulates the program on integrating EDIA into student artist exhibits and at University Galleries.

The committee recognizes the program's work in assessment. The committee commends the program on their work with University Assessment Services (UAS) in developing an assessment plan in 2018 and annually submitting updates to UAS since that time. The committee applauds the program's willingness to invest time into developing an assessment plan and encourages the program to continue their work in refining and using the assessment findings in their future planning efforts.

The committee notes a solid and consistent increase in faculty's scholarly productivity since 2014. The committee also praises the program's faculty for completing 973 professional development workshops focused on pedagogy delivered by the Center for Integrated Professional Development. Over 200 spring and summer institute courses, 57 DART/AIM training sessions, attendance at the Teaching and Learning Symposium, and a variety of other professional development experiences were also completed by the program's faculty. The committee also notes the faculty's engagement in professional development experiences that were external to the university.

The committee commends the program's attempt to develop and administer an alumni survey and encourages the program to revisit these efforts or possibly consider other methods to formally track alumni. The program also maintains social media sites with strong populations of followers. Several other informal and formal activities to stay connected with alumni were also noted by the committee including an annual alumni reception and communication between faculty and alumni groups with whom they have maintained contact over the years.

### **Follow Up Reports.**

**Strategic plan.** The committee commends the program for establishing goals that align with college and university priorities but also notes that the program does not have a formal strategic planning document. The committee recommends the program develop a strategic plan for their own area. The plan and associated activities could help the program be more strategic in identifying internal and external trends while also developing focused priorities that might provide insight into how to best address some of the challenges presented in the self-study. The committee asks the program to submit an aspirational plan to the Office of the Provost by August 15, 2026.

**Recommendations from previous program review.** The Academic Planning Committee recognizes the program's work to improve and address the recommendations from the previous program review. As noted in the self-study, a variety of challenges or circumstances impacted the program's efforts to fully respond to some of these recommendations. For instance, some efforts were put on hold while the program considered significant curricular revisions or restructuring. In other instances, initiatives to work on the recommendations appear to be in the planning or early stages of implementation. The committee recommends the program submit a follow-up report to update the committee on the continued progress made with those recommendations that have not been fully addressed. The committee asks the program to submit a revised assessment plan to the Office of the Provost by August 15, 2026.

**Changes in discipline.** The committee commends the program for identifying the role of technology in art education and visual culture and its impact on educators and students. However, the committee believes the program would benefit from a more in-depth examination of additional changes in the discipline, societal trends, and program demand. A brief discussion of each of these elements is provided in the self-study report. The committee requests building upon these discussions, provide additional reflection on industry trends, report how the program has responded to these changes, and share the program's strategies in response to these changes in the discipline. The committee asks the program to submit an update in these areas to the Office of the Provost by August 15, 2026.

### **Recommendations.**

The Academic Planning Committee appreciates the work of the M.A., M.S. in Art faculty and staff in developing this self-study report. Overall, the report was well-written, thorough, and provided insightful information about the program's current initiatives and future plans. The committee congratulates the M.A., M.S. in Art program on a successful eight years.

In addition to the program's noteworthy efforts and accomplishments, the Academic Planning Committee provided recommendations for consideration. The committee's recommendations outlined below are to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle. Details describing the actions and outcomes associated with each of the committee's recommendations should be included in the next program review self-study report that is tentatively due October 1, 2031.

**Further engagement in program planning.** The committee recommends the program consider further engaging stakeholders in the planning processes. While the program has demonstrated inclusivity in various aspects, involving additional stakeholders throughout the assessment and planning phases could further promote a participatory culture while also garnering valuable insights and perspectives that may not otherwise be considered. Possible strategies include bringing more students into the planning and self-study processes, exploring ways to collect more than self-assessment feedback on the graduate advising experience, identifying potential partnering organizations, and the development of an Advisory Board.

**Exploration of additional data tracking.** The committee suggests the program identify and consider ways to further integrate data into their operations. For instance, the program noted a decrease in student quality. The collection and utilization of data from sources such as program comparators could serve to not only confirm these assertions but, could also be used to identify "best practices" to support the potential changing student needs. Other examples where additional data could be helpful include timeline to degree completion, scholarly activity among students, and placement rates of graduates.

**Continued review of curriculum.** The committee recognizes the program's work with the curriculum, particularly in the integration of EDIA into course curricula and pursuit of an online M.S. Art Education

curriculum. The committee encourages the program to consider undergoing a curricular review with special attention given toward the upcoming 2026 standards to consider what changes or developing trends have occurred in the field since the last review. The committee also recommends the program track or formalize assignments for non-course credit-hour producing activities such as independent studies and mentoring graduate students.

**Continue implementing and refining the student learning outcomes assessment plan.** The committee encourages faculty to continue their implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, to continue to utilize information gathered through plan implementation to make program revisions as necessary, and to document how that has been done. The committee encourages faculty to periodically evaluate the plan's effectiveness in assessing student learning to identify any changes faculty may deem necessary. If not currently being used, the committee also suggests the program consider the role of data collected for external accreditors in the assessment plan.

**Continue alumni engagement efforts.** Several informal and formal alumni engagement activities that were led by various faculty were highlighted in the self-study report. The committee applauds the program's faculty for their work in supporting these high-impact experiences. The committee suggests the program may want to increase efficiency and possible resource sharing in this area by establishing a working group/committee to organize and promote these experiences. Working with the Alumni Engagement Office is also encouraged.

**Continue the collaborative work with Milner Library.** The committee recommends that the program work with the subject liaison librarian to examine and evaluate the library's journals and monograph collection to aid in both the selection and deselection process of these sources. Given recent journal cancellations and expected increases in distance and hybrid courses, we encourage the department and library to further collaborate to increase awareness of alternative access to resources, such as Interlibrary Loan and I-Share lending, among faculty and students. We also recommend that the program work with the subject liaison librarian to develop a tiered approach for information fluency learning outcomes for the department, align those outcomes to the curricula, and integrate those outcomes into the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program.