

## REVIEW OF THE B.A., B.S. IN CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 11.0899  
Visual and Performing Arts, Other

### OVERVIEW

The **B.A., B.S., in Creative Technologies** program at Illinois State University is housed in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts. The Program consists of two degree programs: a B.A., B.S. in Creative Technologies, and M.S in Creative Technologies. Students enrolling in the **B.A., B.S., in Creative Technologies** select from one of four sequences: Audio and Music Production, Creative Technologies accelerated, Game Design, or Interdisciplinary Technologies.

#### Enrollment, Fall Census Day, 2015-2022

#### B.A., B.S. in Creative Technologies, Illinois State University

First Majors Only

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Audio and Music Production sequence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Creative Technologies accelerated sequence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Game Design sequence							54	106
Interdisciplinary Technologies sequence							27	53
Default sequence	42	87	111	129	133	108	57	19
No-subplan	31	2	2	-	-	-	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>203</b>

Audio and Music Production & Creative Technologies accelerated sequences began in 2022

Game Design and Interdisciplinary Technologies sequences began in 2021

The default sequence is in sunset with the creation of the new sequences

#### Degrees Conferred, Graduating Fiscal Year, 2015-2022

#### B.A., B.S. in Creative Technologies, Illinois State University

First Majors Only

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>44</b>

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

This document is the outcome of comprehensive discussions and evaluations among Creative Technologies program faculty, students, administration, and external stakeholders over multiple years. The study began in the fall of 2022 with meetings with CTK faculty led by the University's Assessment office and the Academic Planning Committee. Collaboration on the document involved the program's director, assistant director, three faculty members representing each of the College's Schools, and input from the entire Creative Technologies faculty. The substantive writing process, was initiated at a faculty retreat at the end of Spring 2023 and continued during the

summer of 2023, using collaborative online platforms. Meetings throughout the summer and into the fall were conducted to review and then finalize the findings.

### **Program curriculum**

The Creative Technologies program spans from sophomore to senior levels, offering an expanding array of courses focused on diverse digital interactive experiences. These include web development, game design, UI/UX, VR and XR, music composition, computer programming, motion graphics, audio engineering, and Design Thinking. Students choose coursework from three sequences: Game Design, Audio and Music Production, and Interdisciplinary Technologies, and take foundational courses housed within the College's fine arts curriculum. The program's three sequences were instantiated over the past review cycle with 30 new courses added to the catalog during that time.

The CTK Game Design sequence consists of structured studies in programming development, artistic and aesthetic design, and team management. The Audio and Music Production (AMP) sequence accommodates students aspiring to excel in the music industry without conventional classical training, offering them a more comprehensive liberal arts education than the usual limited, vocational music production path. The Interdisciplinary Technologies sequence grants the freedom to create one's own path through the diverse array of CTK electives. CTK further includes an accelerated master's degree, providing an avenue for candidates interested in advanced education. In curriculum, the program has a notable highlight - the CTK380 "Selected Topics" course, present from the program's inception. This course is offered in a wide variety of subjects that dynamically respond to industry innovations, allowing faculty to rapidly prototype experimental courses that delve into cutting-edge themes.

### **Program or academic unit faculty**

The Creative Technologies Program has 9 full-time tenure-track faculty members assigned to deliver its curriculum. Each faculty member has their locus of tenure in one of the three schools in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts. Peers in their respective "home" school review faculty members. All tenure-track faculty members in the program have a strong arts and digital media practice and/or theory-based scholarship and hold either an MFA or a PhD in a fine arts, digital media or technology discipline. The program seeks faculty with wide-ranging interests and welcomes those who blur disciplinary boundaries.

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

- Promoting the fusion of fine arts and technology through the creation of digital media, interactive installations, VR/XR experiences, music and video production, and game design.
- Encouraging conceptual exploration while fostering the development of essential skills.
- Facilitating research and innovation in collaboration with other units and industry partners.
- Teaching methods of interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Cultivating critical thinking, analytical skills, empathetic and ethical considerations.
- Investigating the cultural and societal impact of art + technology.
- Emphasizing project-based learning, professional development, and active civic engagement.
- Supporting the mental and emotional well-being of our students.

Quality indices include quality of student applications, student retention, successes in program assessment, student and faculty success, outward-facing program endeavors, and student job placement rates.

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

- **The Creative Technologies Program assesses the following learning goals:**
- **Verbal and Written Articulation.** Ability to communicate work persuasively and coherently to both industry experts and the public. Ability to construct robust arguments that elucidate their decision-making processes and the significance of their work through diverse written formats, including artist statements, essays, and work descriptions.

- **Technical Skills.** This includes basic levels of fluency in standard multimedia software apps such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Audition, and Ableton Live; web development; coding and programming; music and sound design; and video production.
- **Aesthetic Decision-Making.** Ability to make sound compositional judgments when producing multimedia work. Ability to analyze their work and the work of others based on the value of its content and its artistic merit beyond technical proficiency.
- **Cultural and Ethical Discourse.** Ability to use technology to create new forms of expression, to challenge traditional notions of art and culture, and to examine the social and ethical implications of the outcomes (of work and critique).
- **Professional Skills.** Adeptness in collaborating and acknowledging different perspectives, ability to problem-solve, envision the future, and adapt to real-world challenges, ability to consistently produce work that aligns with professional standards and showcase their work in professional settings.

**The Creative Technologies Program uses the following assessment indices:**

Project critiques and evaluations, quizzes and exams, portfolio and CV/resume reviews, peer review and capstone projects, student self-assessments, participation in student art installations, concerts, publishing and presenting at peer-reviewed regional and international conferences, feedback from internship placements, and alumni success and feedback.

**Specialized accreditation**

The program will be reaccredited in the next year by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) in conjunction with the Wonsook Kim School of Art, under the academic category, Disciplines in Combination. When the program becomes a School, it may explore other accreditation bodies.

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

- **Formalize recruitment plan.** Our enrollment is growing steadily due to curricular changes and participation in university recruiting efforts.
- **Increase research output.** Faculty and faculty-student participation in national and international professional conferences has increased. The addition of a research paper requirement in grad-level courses and adding new faculty into the program has helped with this endeavor.
- **Formally track alumni.** We now track alumni through social media and alumni events.
- **Concern regarding the current system of external faculty evaluating CTK faculty.** Resolved through greater communication with external colleagues resulting in greater respect paid to CTK faculty. The entire problem will be resolved by CTK becoming a School.
- **Increase representation of underrepresented groups in faculty.** The two CTK hires at the beginning of this cycle were both non-Caucasian, one representing LGBTQIA+ and one female. All faculty members are committed to push for recruiting racial/ethnic diversity in new faculty.
- **The self-study report describes numerous deficiencies in facilities and equipment currently available to the program.** CTK has increased and improved its facilities through internal grants, awards for enrollment increases (RERIP), and use of its general revenue funding.
- **Continue to utilize data collected through student learning outcomes assessments to make program improvements and to document how that has been done.** Student learning outcomes assessments are now collected in our program through faculty discussion and reflection on yearly portfolio reviews, test scores, research published, and evaluation of forward-facing student exhibitions. Extensive changes have been made to our curriculum through these evaluations.

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

Over the past review cycle, the following trends have developed.

- Advancements in emerging technologies (VR, AR, AI, machine learning, internet of things)
- Increased accessibility and democratization of media tools
- Rise of creative coding and generative design

- Increased focus on user experience and human-centered design
- Growing awareness of ethical considerations (data privacy, algorithmic bias, digital rights, and the ethical implications of technology use)
- Collaborations with other disciplines and industries (The field is increasingly partnering with sectors such as healthcare, education, entertainment, marketing, and social impact)

Program demand is growing as evidenced by our enrollment increase. We continue to add newly demanded sequences and explore new topics in Creative Technologies.

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

- CTK is actively striving to effectively manage the challenges posed by rapid growth.
- Becoming a School will solve problems by providing a support staff and a “home” tenure line for our faculty.
- Diversity of faculty could be improved. ASPT requirements and TT requirements might need to be altered to provide a greater pool.
- Easing program entry requirements necessitates accommodations for less-prepared students. A mentoring program or increasing minimum GPA could offer viable solutions.
- We hope to organize an additional sequence in digital animation since we are already teaching these topics and have prospective students asking for this sequence.
- The program's external visibility could be enhanced.
- Graduate assistant assessment, advisement assessment, program assessment, and student creative and research activity tracking can all be improved.

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

- CTK anticipates becoming a School in the next year or two. We will be spending time developing a proper mission statement, ASPT, by-laws, committees, hiring staff, and all other necessary activities for moving to School status.
- We hope to develop our Softtecc initiative which will enhance diversity in our program.
- We would like to develop a visually concentrated sequence for students who are interested in pursuing drawing and animation.
- We would like to identify funding sources for student travel to conferences.
- We would like to create an incubator and forward-facing operation so students can experience the business side of their creative output.
- We want to continue to provide opportunities for student and faculty research and continue to develop partnerships with industry.
- Facilities – we wish to continue to develop a full Music Production suite, an efficient and inviting administrators' suite, and a "hang-out" space for our students.

### **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 B.A., B.S. in Creative Technologies to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee congratulates the program on the efforts and activities that led to becoming a school. The committee commends the program on the development of a thorough self-study report that substantiates claims with insightful evidence. The self-study report indicates multiple stakeholders were engaged

with evidence of collaborative and inclusive practices such as, the faculty retreat and parent breakfast event, being used throughout the self-study process. Ongoing meetings were also held to garner faculty input and feedback on the self-study report.

Intentional efforts to link the program's goals to the University's strategic plan was appreciated by the committee. The committee also noted the clear tracking of the program's significant enrollment growth and the impact of this growth. More specifically, the program's enrollment has increased from 89 students in 2016 to 206 in 2022. Efforts to enhance the program's diversity initiatives was also recognized by the committee. For instance, the percentage of historically underrepresented students has increased slightly from 2017 (31 percent) to 2021 (34 percent) and has been consistently higher than the University's rates. The committee also commends the program's membership with Unity Academic Alliance to support students' career development.

The committee was impressed with the program's definition and metrics of student success. Plans to integrate student success into the program's learning outcomes was also noteworthy. The number and quality of co-curricular and civic engagement experiences for students were also recognized by the committee. The program has developed an effective system for tracking student scholarship/creative activity participation.

The committee commends the program for the significant curricular work that had been done during the previous eight years. Several of these curricular changes were outlined in the report, including curriculum mapping, the creation of thirty new courses, new sequences (Game Design and Interdisciplinary Technologies and Audio and Music Production), course revisions, and the development of a dedicated curriculum committee since the last review. Efforts to provide flexibility for students and the program as well as the infusion of EDI issues were intentionally integrated into several of these curricular changes which was recognized by the committee.

The program has a clearly developed assessment plan and goals with demonstrated evidence of considerable work being done in this area since the last review. The committee recognizes the mix of direct and indirect measures used within the assessment plan and work with UAS to develop two new learning goals. The committee also applauded the development of a learning outcomes map. The committee also congratulates the program on the job placement tracking of their students and the recent 100 percent placement rate of their graduates.

Faculty scholarship has steadily increased from 60 works to 150 in 2022. The committee also appreciates the program's transparency in outlining the challenges in fully tracking faculty scholarship as the program's faculty are housed across three different schools. As noted in the report, the program's transition to becoming a school might help in better tracking this data. The committee commended faculty for their engagement across numerous professional development experiences that spanned a variety of topics. A clear description of the evaluation and processes for faculty performance reviews as also appreciated by the committee.

The program's engagement and tracking of alumni was also applauded by the committee. The program's work with the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project in 2022 as well as plans to create an advisory council once it becomes a school was also commended. As noted earlier, the 100 percent job placement and list of employers is a point of pride for the program.

**Recommendations.** The Academic Planning Committee appreciates the work of the B.A., B.S. in Creative Technologies' 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 B.A., B.S. in Creative Technologies' 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.

**Enrollment management, recruitment, and retention.** The program is experiencing significant enrollment growth during the review period. The committee recommends the program consider how to efficiently and effectively manage this significant enrollment growth. Thoughtful planning to support this growth while maintaining student-to-faculty ratios that align with university-wide ratios is encouraged. Possible strategies to

consider include, but are not limited to, review of current admission criteria, development and implementation of enrollment management initiatives, international recruitment efforts, monitoring of student retention, exploration of new faculty hires, and adjustments or differentiating grade point average requirements for newly-admitted and continuing students.

**New school adjustments.** While there is considerable excitement with the new school, the committee expects there will also be a great deal of work required during the early years of its inception. The development and refinement of school policies and procedures will require considerable time and input from faculty and staff. Efforts to accurately develop and track school-level data to support various initiatives will also require an investment of time and planning. The committee recommends the program develop a strategic plan that carefully maps out the direction that school needs will have across the various resource areas.

**Stakeholder engagement.** Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with appropriate stakeholders throughout the college, university, and external audiences to ensure a smooth transition to becoming a school is encouraged. Consider leveraging the program's high job placement rates to further improve relationship with alumni and employers.

**Formal Advisor Evaluation.** The committee notes several informal methods are used to evaluate the program's advising services. As the program becomes a school, the committee recommends a formal evaluation tool is considered to better support the school's advisement services.

**Student and faculty diversity.** The committee acknowledges the work faculty and staff have completed regarding the tracking and action-planning within the area of student and faculty diversity. In the self-study report, the program noted the creative technologies field is dominated by white males with underrepresentation of non-Caucasian, non-male faculty. The committee commends the efforts currently underway to increase the diversity of the program's students and faculty and encourages the program to see these initiatives come to fruition. Additional strategies to enhance the student and faculty diversity within the program could include working with the University's Human Resources Department, adding school-specific RSO(s), pursuing additional recruitment strategies, networking with high schools or community college advisors, and the integration of alumni within recruitment efforts.

**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 effectiveness of the plan in assessing student learning to identify any modifications to the plan faculty may deem necessary. 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.

**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.