

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

Bachelor of Fine Arts (214)

College: 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.

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 unequalled 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 as a whole. 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 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.

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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 as a whole. 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.

Bachelor of Fine Arts Program Mission Statement: Students in the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program will experience a thorough educational experience in the visual arts. They will learn a variety of foundational principles and mediums in art that will lead to upper-level specificity and personal development. Each concentration will help the students reach their personal, career, and artistic goals by giving them opportunities through projects and class assignments to develop skills, habits, style, and artistic voice. These class experiences will culminate with professional studies, business practices, and the capstone Senior Exhibition in order to provide the students with experience in planning, processing, and carrying out professional artistic and design practice. The students should graduate with a portfolio and experience to begin professional practice or graduate studies.

Methodology: The assessment process for the BFA program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct and indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected and returned to the Program Chair;
- (2) The Program Chair will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty if required (show cause);
- (5) The Program Chair will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricular and program changes.

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Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Through directed studies in art and design, students secure an in-depth understanding and application of visual art techniques.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives in all courses

Measure 1.1

Student understanding and application of visual art techniques will be tested through projects, annual student reviews with faculty advising committees, and class critiques. Data will be collected through curricular benchmarks, annual student review rubric forms, and course reports. Faculty advising committees will collect data at annual student reviews. Data collected will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs. Acceptable target is that 50% of students secure an in-depth understanding and application of visual art techniques as evidenced by a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. The target is that 80% of students meet the same standard. Faculty and students (curriculum and outcomes) reach a competitive level of professional proficiency early in the students' studies.

Findings: The target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met when 72% of students earned a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty provided increased and improved advising opportunities for students, continued to offer open studios for work outside of class time, and arranged off-campus trips to view artists and museums.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-26, the target was not met. However, an acceptable number of students achieved SLO 1 - 74.5% of students (Freshman, Sophomores and Juniors: N=55).

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met. However, the percentage of students who met SLO 1 was acceptable and showed an increase from 72% to 74.5%. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, Art Unit faculty will maintain the practices added in AC 2025-2026 and provide on campus workshops with visiting artists and artisans to provide greater exposure to the expertise and experiences of other creatives in immersive settings. This should improve the students' ability to build real world skills, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement in AC 2026-2027.

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SLO 2. Students acquire valuable production experience that is reflected in their own independent achievements.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives in all courses

Measure 2.1

Students' production experience is observable through projects and academic patterns as assessed by regular faculty evaluations and review of sketchbook work. Data will be collected through annual student review rubric forms and curricular benchmarks.

Faculty advising committees will collect data at annual student reviews. Data will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs, as well as the frequency and quality of the evaluation processes. Faculty and students (curriculum and outcomes) increase in the level of expectation and professional output. Students are expected to deliver a qualitative and quantitative level of involvement and production. Acceptable data is 50% of students exhibiting high levels of production in their individual artistic achievements as evidenced by a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. The target is 80% of students achieving the same standard.

Findings: The target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met with only 58% of students meeting the SLO 2 standard.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty added more opportunities for students to attend workshops and internships and to work on public art projects as part of their studies and courses. Students received a handbook, "Art School in a Nutshell" that provided them with information about what to expect, how to plan, and resources that were available to students. As faculty efforts to abide by the University's absence policy increased, fewer students grappled with unexcused absences. The faculty observed that efforts to push student involvement and participation have left faculty drained. Even with the changes implemented in AC 2025-2026, the target was not met with only 36% of students meeting the SLO 2 standard.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met. In AC 2025-2026, only 36% of student reviews (N=55) met with a 3.5 or higher mark on SLO 2. In AC 2026-27, in order to drive an upward trend, faculty will implement the new activities and practices from 2025-2026 as well as spend additional time focusing on faculty professional development and supporting faculty needs to boost morale and increase the positive energy and enthusiasm shared with students. These changes will improve the students' ability to experience positive classroom production experience with faculty and other

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students thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3. Students synthesize the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals.

Course Map: Tied to the course syllabus objectives in all courses.

Measure 3.1

Students' ability to synthesize the curricular experience is observable and testable through the curricular opportunity to take upper-level courses in specific areas and the presentation of a cohesive body of artwork by the end of their degree program. It will also be assessed through an alumni survey administered at one-year, three-year and five-year intervals. Data will be collected through annual student review rubric forms, curricular benchmarks, reviews of exhibitions, and through the administered surveys. Students will submit a proposal for their senior exhibition. Advisors and committees will assess the success or failure of the exhibits. Faculty will administer the surveys and collect the data. Data will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs. Faculty and students (curriculum and outcomes) will work together to develop and foster the individual voice and style of the student in preparation for professional work. The acceptable target is 50% of students synthesizing the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals as evidenced by a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. The target is 80% of students meeting that standard.

Findings: The target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met; however, there was a marked increase in students who exhibited high levels of production in their individual artistic achievements as evidenced by a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. This was achieved by 64% of students

To maintain this upward trend, in AC 2025-2026, faculty focused efforts on involving students in external exhibitions and creating opportunities for students to meet alumni who are professionals in art fields. Continued emphasis was placed on workforce readiness, graduate study readiness, and professional development earlier in the curriculum.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met with only 33% of students (Freshman, Sophomores and Juniors: N=55) meet the SLO 3 standard.

To mitigate and improve this downward turn, in AC 2026-2027, faculty will host more opportunities for students to attend career focused events like job fairs and conferences

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with an emphasis on the job market. These changes will improve the students' ability to interact with professionals more fluently, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 4. Students participate in experiences that encourage familiarity with a broad variety of work in various specializations and media.

Course Map: Tied to the course syllabus objectives in all courses

Measure 4.1

Students' experiences with a broad variety of work is observable through participation in departmental or class field trips to museums, galleries, and design centers as well as participation in student exhibitions and organizations. The percentage of majors attending major semester field trips and entering the annual student exhibition will be measured. Data will be collected by generating lists of the percentage of students attending various class and departmental trips. Also, in annual student reviews, faculty will report independent trips the students have initiated as well as their participation in student and other exhibitions. The faculty will collect the data for student exhibition participation and the data for student trip attendance. Data will allow faculty to assess frequency and effectiveness of exhibitions and trips. Faculty and students (curriculum and outcome) will foster an atmosphere of learning through participation in gallery and extra-curricular experiences. The acceptable target is 50% of students participating in enrichment experiences as evidenced by a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. The target is 80% of students meeting the same standard.

Findings: The target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-25, the target was not met with only 71% of students meeting the standard. Faculty arranged opportunities for students to travel to exhibitions, took attendance at exhibitions/receptions offered for credit in UNIV1000 freshmen interest group dedicated to Art majors and other courses, and they hosted regular gallery talks with visiting artists. Likewise, uniform measures of attendance based on university policies were maintained. Faculty additionally increased opportunities for students to assist with the preparation of gallery exhibitions held at NSULA.

As a result of the changes of AC 2025-2026, the target when 58% of students (Freshman, Sophomores and Juniors: N=55) met with SLO 4 standard.

Decision: The target was not met in AC 2025-2026. To drive improvement in AC 2026-2027, faculty will include calendars of upcoming important events in each Moodle shell and syllabus as well as broadcasting events on departmental monitors, etc. The faculty

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will also investigate using Mongoose as an appropriate conduit of communication in real time with students. These changes will improve the students' ability to receive communication thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement.

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 2025-2026. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results.

- Provided exposure to workshops and internship opportunities.
- Add improved advising opportunities for students.
- Offer supervised open studios for work outside of class time.
- Arranged off-campus trips to museums, galleries, and appropriate work sites.
- Placed appropriate emphasis on workforce readiness, graduate study readiness, and profession development earlier in the curriculum.
- Develop uniform measures of attendance and interventions to unexcused absences based on existing University policies.

Plan of action moving forward:

As the Art Unit saw overall decreases in AC 2025-2026, new measures should be added in AC 2026-2027, to recreate our upward trend from the previous year. In 2026-27, the Art Unit will strive to build a better environment for student improvement by:

- Providing more on campus workshops with visiting artists and artisans.
- Hosting more opportunities for students to attend career-focused events like job fairs and conferences with an emphasis on the job market.
- Including calendars of upcoming important events to each Moodle shell and syllabus as well as broadcasting events on departmental monitors, etc.
- Investigating the use of Mongoose as an appropriate conduit of communication in real time with students.
- Spending additional time focusing on faculty professional development and

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supporting faculty needs in order to boost morale.