ADMISSION TO BFA PROGRAMS

Prospective students interested in Art or Graphic Design (BA or BFA) need to be accepted at Oswego through the Admissions Office. Only those interested in pursuing the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree need to apply to the Art Department for acceptance into either the BFA Studio Art or Graphic Design program.

Application Process

If you are applying or transferring into one of the two BFA degree programs you are required to submit a portfolio for review by the faculty of the Art Department. In addition to this, you must submit a statement of intent, an annotated work list, an application form, and copies of your transcripts.

Students seeking admission for one of our BFA programs need to demonstrate that they possess an aptitude for hard work as evidenced by a well-crafted portfolio, exemplary academic performance (preferably 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher), and writing skills. Transfer students with associate degrees in Art or Graphic Design are strongly encouraged to apply for acceptance in a BFA program before matriculating at Oswego. Transfer students without associate degrees in Art or Graphic Design should apply before attending Oswego if they have 30 hours or more in Art. Students may apply more than once. However, repeated rejection should be taken as a sign that perhaps you should consider an alternative path and we strongly advise students to not submit more than twice. Successful applicants typically work closely with their academic advisors.

COMING TO OSWEGO AS A FRESHMEN

Freshmen are strongly encouraged to attend Oswego as BA majors and apply for the BFA during their sophomore year. This allows students time to understand the demands of the program and to build a portfolio for admission. Freshmen are enrolled in courses that are designed to specifically help them address their development as artist, including exploring the benefits of BFA versus BA degrees. If a student is denied admission into a BFA, he or she can apply again, or consider alternative study plans. Academic advisors are able to assist students in this situation.

COMING TO OSWEGO AS A TRANSFER STUDENT

Transfer students with Associate Degrees in Art or Graphic Design should consider applying to the BFA before coming to Oswego. Students without degrees, or those with degrees in other areas, should come to Oswego and work with an advisor here to determine the degree program most appropriate for their development. All transfer students are enrolled in courses that are designed to specifically help them address their development as an artist, including exploring the benefits of BFA versus BA degrees.

All transfer students should keep in mind that no more than 27 hours of Studio Art/Graphic Design credit may be transferred into the BA program and no more than 40 hours of studio art, graphic design, or art history credit may be transferred into the BFA program.

QUESTIONS THE DEGREE & APPLICATION

Why would I want to apply to the BFA program?

The BFA degree is a specialized degree for which students take a large number of courses in their discipline (Graphic Design or Studio Art). It allows for advanced training in these areas and is often the choice of students who wish to enroll in a graduate program. SUNY Oswego requires the BFA degree of students who wish to apply to our Masters in Arts Teaching degree (MAT); however, many other schools do not require a BFA degree for acceptance into a MAT program.

Why do I have to submit a portfolio to gain acceptance to the BFA program?

Due to the large demand for the BFA program we can only accept a limited number of students. Only the students that show a high level of artistic and academic skill are accepted to this program. This selection process allows us to control both the number and quality of students that gain admittance to this degree. It is a highly competitive process and should only be undertaken by students who have a true passion for and skill in their discipline; not all students who apply to the BFA program are accepted.

When should I apply to the BFA program?

If you are an incoming freshmen you should apply before you accumulate thirty hours in Art, Graphic Design and Art History. If you come from a high school program that has an exceptionally strong art program you can apply before you come to Oswego. We recommend that you apply during your sophomore year at Oswego. If you are a transfer student with more than 30 hours in Art, Graphic Design and Art History, and you want to pursue the BFA degree, you should apply before you come to Oswego. If you don’t do that, apply before the end of your first semester at Oswego.

What do I do if I get rejected from the BFA program?

First of all, do not panic; this does not mean you are a bad artist or designer. The BFA is an extremely competitive program and many of the people who apply are not accepted the first time they apply. You can apply a second time if you want to do so. Contact your faculty advisor and ask her or him to assist you in the preparation of your portfolio. Make sure they know you were rejected, this way they can help you scrutinize for weaknesses in your application. Also, keep in mind that grades and the quality of your writing are just as important in the application. Should you be repeatedly rejected from the BFA program keep in mind that you can either choose to pursue a BA degree at SUNY Oswego, or you can enroll at another school.

What if I wanted to pursue a Masters in Art teaching degree and I don’t get into the BFA program?

SUNY Oswego is one of the few schools that requires students who wish to enroll in a MAT program to have their BFA degree. Many other schools will accept students with a BA degree. You should investigate all of your options and consider enrolling in a school that will accept students who have a BA degree.
PORTFOLIO REVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

The portfolio serves as a visual summary of your experience with art making and/or graphic design. The Department of Art Faculty Review Committee will evaluate your portfolio. The committee will examine your portfolio based on the following criteria:

- Perceptual Skills — ability to draw from direct observation.
- Composition — definition of space in respect to foreground, middleground, and background, color, shape, etc.
- Craft — technical knowledge and skills in media as well as presentation.
- Concept — use of the formal elements of design to express your ideas.
- Critical Analysis — ability to reflect on the quality of the work and speak to its strengths, weaknesses, and intentions.

Your portfolio may be submitted on CD or DVD disk, or in original form. The portfolio must contain fifteen (15) examples of your best original artwork that reflects your development in the areas of Design, Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, Photography, Sculpture, Graphic Design and Digital Media. You can submit any combination of two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. (Please note: three-dimensional work may only be submitted as photographs taken from multiple vantage points) A variety of media may be used, such as graphite, colored pencil, charcoal, pastel, ink, watercolor, acrylic or oil paint, or combinations there of.

SPECIFIC TO BFA—STUDIO ART PORTFOLIOS

If you are applying to the Studio Art program, include at least (6) pieces based on direct observation such as still life, landscape, interior spaces, portraits, and figures. We discourage work produced by means of magazine photo montage, stipple, airbrush, and scratch board. Additionally, we discourage “heavy metal,” science fiction, and fantasy imagery, as well as T-shirt art.

SPECIFIC TO BFA—GRAPHIC DESIGN PORTFOLIOS

If you are applying to the Graphic Design program, include examples of design studies that illustrate your skill in respect to positive/negative space, two-dimensional design studies, color, and drawing. When including graphic design pieces, be sure to note the source of all imagery (is it stock art or clip art?), or written content (name of author) in your annotated work list. You should also include at least four (4) pieces based on direct observation, such as images of still life, landscape, interior spaces, portraits, and figures. We discourage work that has a preponderance of computer-generated filters or step-by-step tutorials. We look for work that shows how well you can design and plan a composition with as much original imagery as possible.

SPECIFIC TO ALL PORTFOLIOS

Submitting Computer Prints or Disks

You can submit work samples in the form of photographic prints, high quality digital prints, or PDF or Photoshop files on a CD/DVD disk or flash drive. If you apply primarily by means of electronic media, you need to submit at least three printed pieces. Each digital file must be clearly named and numbered to correspond to your annotated work list. We will look at web sites only as an example of web design and will not evaluate other portfolio work contained on that site. Additionally, be aware that all digital imagery is not equal in terms of quality and does not always reflect positively on the original. Avoid submitting digital imagery that is low resolution, pixilated or lacking in detail.

Submit digital work in a letter size pocket folder that contains the disk in some sort of protective sleeve. The application form, written essay, annotated work list, and unofficial transcripts should be printed and included in the folder.

Submitting Original Work

Submit original work in a portfolio, cardboard is acceptable. Portfolios should not exceed 32” x 40” in size. You can include a mixture of digital and original. Work should be well organized and easy to review. Please include a folder containing the application form, written essay, annotated work list, and unofficial transcripts. Also place any digital disks in this folder.

Annotated Work List

The annotations should include: name, size, medium, date, and a brief statement as to the purpose of the work, such as why and for whom it was done. Please be thorough in describing the work. Indicate whether or not the project was done for a class, and whether or not it depicts your own solutions to the problem. Explain why you made the choices that you made. Remember, we are looking for evidence that you can create your own imagery, as well as evidence that you have the fortitude to discipline yourself, and build skills, and hand-eye coordination. We want to see a balance of original work as well as the studies all artists do to gain skill and ability. [The annotated work list is where you prove you have done the work and understand what that means.]

Written Statement

Please include a 500-1000 word written statement that describes your art/design work, your interest in art, and your future career plans. As a professional artist, designer or educator you will be required to write about your work and it is essential that you are able to describe your work to a diverse clientele. Writing statements are carefully examined; grammatical and spelling mistakes are not acceptable.

First, describe one or more of your artworks in terms of its visual formal elements including: line, space, light, color, texture, design, and the other elements of composition. Secondly, carefully analyze the content of one or more of your pieces. What meaning is communicated to the viewer and how is this achieved? Compare one of your pieces to that of a well-known artist or graphic designer. When discussing your future plans at Oswego, be sure to address your previous experiences in art and your long-term career goals. What qualities do you possess that would ensure your success?

Transcripts

Please include a copy of your academic transcripts. These may be copies given to you by your school and stamped as such by the transcript office of the school issuing the document. Do not submit a transcript printed from the web that does not show your name. Transcripts must be included in the application. Please do not send transcripts under separate cover or ask us to get them for you.

Application Form

The attached application must be filled out in its entirety and included in the portfolio. Additional application forms can be downloaded from our web site at www.oswego.edu/art/.

Application Submission

Digital portfolios may be submitted by mail/carrier or delivered in person. Portfolios containing original work must be submitted in person. You can drop off portfolio applications in person between 8:30–11:30 am and 1:30–4 pm, Monday through Friday in room 24H Hewitt Union. (You may wish to call in advance to make sure that someone will be there to take your portfolio. The telephone number is: 315-312-2111). Portfolios sent via mail/UPS/FedX can be sent to Art Department, ATTN: BFA Application, 24H Hewitt Union, SUNY Oswego, Oswego, NY, 13126. Be sure to include information, labeling, and postage/call tags for return shipping.

REVIEW CYCLE

Portfolios are reviewed at the end of the following months: October, November, February, March, April, May and June. Notices regarding acceptance follow shortly thereafter. Work will be returned at that time.

Note: The department is not responsible for any portfolios not picked up at the end of a review, or for those that are sent without a return shipping envelope or box.
BFA PROGRAM APPLICATION

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Name ____________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
City __________________________ State ______ ZIP ________
Home Phone Number __________________________________
Alternate Phone Number __________________________________
email ________________________________________________

BFA Degree Program (check only one)

○ Studio ○ Graphic Design

Have You Applied To The BFA Program Before? ○ Yes ○ No

Are You A Transfer Student? ○ Yes ○ No

Are You Currently Attending Oswego? ○ Yes ○ No

If Yes, What Is Your SUNY Oswego ID Number, GPA, and Advisor?
______________________________________________________

If No, When Do You Plan To Attend Oswego? ______________________

Post Secondary School Experience:
School Name, City, and State (if more than one, list most recent)

______________________________________________________
Major __________________________ GPA ______

High School Experience:
School Name, City, and State (if more than one, list school you graduated from)

______________________________________________________
Major __________________________ GPA ______

Send Portfolios to:
Art Department
Portfolio Review
24H Hewitt U.
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, NY 13126

Portfolio Applications should be sent directly to the Art Department and must be separate from your SUNY Oswego admission application. The Art Department is not responsible for locating portfolios not mailed directly to the Art Department. Portfolios can be sent by Express Carrier, UPS, or Mail and must include return postage or call slips.

Submission Information

SHIPPED DELIVERIES

Portfolio Applications should be sent directly to the Art Department and must be separate from your SUNY Oswego admission application. The Art Department is not responsible for locating portfolios not mailed directly to the Art Department. Portfolios can be sent by Express Carrier, UPS, or Mail and must include return postage or call slips.

REV 1/12
APPLICATION CHECKLIST

☐ Application Form

☐ Transcripts (Student Issued Copies and Web Prints are Acceptable, Must Include Name)

☐ Written Statement

☐ Annotated Work List

☐ Return Envelope with Postage and Label (if Applicable)

☐ Clearly Labeled Pieces

Number of Pieces Submitted

Media Type (Check all that apply)

☐ Original Work       ☐ Prints      ☐ CD/DVD Disk       ☐ Flash Drive      ☐ Web Site

My URL is: ________________________________

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

☐ I am waiting to see if I get into the BFA program before applying to the College

☐ I have applied to the College and am waiting for notification

☐ I have already been accepted to the College

☐ I have applied to the BFA program before, this is my ________ attempt

GENTLE REMINDER

- Please submit application material in a portfolio or presentation case. These cases can be made of leather, fabric, plastic or cardboard. They should be sturdy, but need not be expensive. The application, transcripts, statement, work list and work samples should be enclosed in a pocket folder placed inside the case, or mailing envelope. Please do not submit loose material as it is easy for these to become separated from the rest of the application. The materials needed to prepare your application can be purchased at most art or business supply stores.

- The Art Department is not responsible for lost or damaged items, or for portfolios that are not picked up or shipped without a self-addressed stamped envelope or carton.

- The Art Department strongly encourages applicants not to ship any “one-of-a-kind” items.

- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

- This application process is separate from admission to the university and may be done before or after admission to Oswego. However, final admission into the BFA is contingent on acceptance by the college.