NASAD Competencies Summary

Degree: The <u>BFA in Digital Media</u>, *a professional undergraduate degree*

> **Essential Note: Items below are excerpts from the NASAD *Handbook*.** Items 1 through 4 indicate the content and natures of the competencies expected of those graduating with the above degree. Items 5 and 6 indicate recommendations for competency development.
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> **Only the *Handbook* <u>in its entirety</u> contains all standards and guidelines applicable to and used by all phases of NASAD membership reviews.** In the text below "H." indicates the location of the excerpted text in the Handbook; the term "(All)" indicates standards applicable to all professional undergraduate art/design degrees including digital media; "(Digital Media)" indicates specific standards for that major.

Item 1. (All)
Common Body of Knowledge and Skills (H.VIII.B.)

1. **Studio.** Studies, practice, and experiences in studio subjects are of prime importance in the preparation of students for professional careers in art and design. The excellence of the creative work produced by students is the best determinant of the adequacy of the studio studies offered by an institution. Creative work includes, but is not limited to, conceptualization, process, product, and critique.

    Irrespective of major or specialization, students must:

    a. Gain functional competence with principles of visual organization, including the ability to work with visual elements in two and three dimensions; color theory and its applications; and drawing.

    b. Present work that demonstrates perceptual acuity, conceptual understanding, and technical facility at a professional entry level in their chosen field(s).

    c. Become familiar with the historical achievements, current major issues, processes, and directions of their field(s).

    d. Be afforded opportunities to exhibit their work and to experience and participate in critiques and discussions of their work and the work of others.

    Studio work normally begins at the freshman level and extends with progressively greater intensity throughout the degree program.

    There should be opportunities for independent study at the advanced level that includes appropriate supervision and evaluation upon completion.

2. **Art/Design History, Theory, and Criticism.** Through comprehensive courses in the history of art/design, students must:

    a. Learn to analyze works of art/design from both Western and non-Western cultures perceptively and to evaluate them critically.

    b. Develop an understanding of the common elements and vocabulary of art/design and of the interaction of these elements, and be able to employ this knowledge in analysis.

    c. Acquire the ability to place works of art/design in historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts.

    In certain areas of specialization, it is advisable to require that students study the historical development of works within the specialization.

    Normally, studies in art and design history and analysis occupy at least 10% of the total curriculum.

3. **Technology.** Students must acquire a working knowledge of technologies and equipment applicable to their area(s) of specialization.

4. **Synthesis.** While synthesis is a lifetime process, by the end of undergraduate studies students should be able to work independently on a variety of art and/or design problems by combining, as appropriate to the issue, their capabilities in studio, analysis, history, and technology.

Item 2. (All)
Results (H.VIII.C.)

Upon completion of any specific professional undergraduate degree program:

1. Students must demonstrate achievement of professional, entry-level competence in the major area of specialization, including significant technical mastery, capability to produce work and solve professional problems independently, and a coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals, which are evident in their work.

2. Students must demonstrate their competence by developing a body of work for evaluation in the major area of study. A senior project or final presentation in the major area is required.

3. Students must have the ability to form and defend value judgments about art and design and to communicate art/design ideas, concepts, and requirements to professionals and laypersons related to the practice of the major field. They are able to work collaboratively as appropriate to the area(s) of specialization.

Item 3. (Digital Media)
Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (H.IX.C.3.)

(*in addition to those stated for all professional degree programs in VIII.B. and C.*)**:**

a. Knowledge of the concepts related to the visual, spatial, sound, motion, interactive, and temporal elements/features of digital technology and principles for their use in the creation and application of digital media-based work.

b. Understanding of narrative and other information/language structures for organizing content in time-based or interactive media; the ability to organize and represent content structures in ways that are responsive to technological, social, and cultural systems.

c. Understanding of the characteristics and capabilities of various technologies (hardware and software); their appropriateness for particular expressive, functional, and strategic applications; their positions within larger contexts and systems; and their influences on individuals and society.

d. Knowledge of the processes for the development and coordination of digitally-based art and design strategies (for example, storyboarding, concept mapping, and the use of scenarios and personas.)

e. Ability to analyze and synthesize relevant aspects of human interaction in various contexts (physical, cognitive, cultural, social, political, and economic) and with respect to technologically-mediated communication, objects, and environments.

f. Understanding of what is useful, usable, effective, and desirable with respect to user/audience-centered digitally-based communication, objects, and environments.

g. Knowledge of history, theory, and criticism with respect to such areas as film, video, technology, and digital art and design.

h. Ability to work in teams and to organize collaborations among people from different disciplines.

   i.   Ability to use the above competencies in the creation and development of professional quality digital media productions.

Essential Opportunities and Experiences

a.   Regular access to studios and libraries with appropriate digital media resources and reference materials in other relevant disciplines such as film studies, cultural studies, history of technology, communication theory, cognitive psychology, human factors, computer science, and business.

b.   Regular access (for instruction and for independent work) to the appropriate technology and staff necessary for the development and professional production of work in digital media. Consistent with the goals and objectives of the program, equipment should match or approach disciplinary/industry standards.

c.   Regular access to instruction and critique under faculty with educational and professional backgrounds in digital media. Appropriate faculty backgrounds and instruction should include more than software skills.

d.   Opportunities to do work that combines several disciplines or media applications, or that explores relationships between practice and research.

e.   In order to accomplish some kinds of work, students may need to study computer programming or scripting. Students expecting to practice professionally in the development of strategic uses of technology in business should engage in coursework that acquaints them with large-scale technological and information systems.

f.   Programs that require student purchase of computers should provide the technological infrastructure and staff to support use of privately-owned machines in the classroom. The institution should be cognizant of industry preferences for certain computer platforms in setting their computer purchase requirements and infrastructure support.

Item 4. (All)
General Studies Competencies (H.VIII.A.6.)

a.   **Competencies**. Specific competency expectations are determined by the institution. Normally, students holding a professional undergraduate degree in art and/or design are expected to have:

(1)   The ability to think, speak, and write clearly and effectively, and to communicate with precision, cogency, and rhetorical force.

(2)   An informed acquaintance with the mathematical and experimental methods of the physical and biological sciences and with the main forms of analysis and the historical and quantitative techniques needed for investigating the workings and developments of modern society.

(3)   An ability to address culture and history from a variety of perspectives.

(4)   Understanding of, and experience in thinking about, moral and ethical problems.

(5)   The ability to respect, understand, and evaluate work in a variety of disciplines.

(6)   The capacity to explain and defend views effectively and rationally.

(7)   Understanding of and experience in art forms other than the visual arts and design.

Item 5. (Digital Media)
Recommendations for General Studies (H.IX.C.2.)

(*in addition to VIII.A.6.*).

Work in digital media is inherently synthetic and often collaborative; it draws content, resources, and methods from many disciplines. General studies requirements should have direct correlation with the

overall goals and objectives of the degree program. Studies in areas such as writing, film studies, cultural studies, history of technology, communication theory, cognitive psychology, human factors, computer science, and business are recommended.

Item 6. (All)
Recommendations for Professional Studies (H.VIII.D.)

Students engaged in professional undergraduate degrees in art/design should have opportunities to:

1. Gain a basic understanding of the nature of professional work in their major field. Examples are: organizational structures and working patterns; artistic, intellectual, economic, technological, and political contexts; and development potential.

2. Acquire the skills necessary to assist in the development and advancement of their careers, normally including the development of competencies in communication, presentation, business, and leadership skills necessary to engage in professional practice in their major field.

3. Develop teaching skills, particularly as related to their major area of study.

4. Explore areas of individual interest related to art/design in general or to the major. Among the many possible examples are: aesthetics, theory, specialized topics in art/design history, analysis, and technology.

5. Explore multidisciplinary issues that include art and design.

6. Practice synthesis of a broad range of art/design knowledge and skills, particularly through learning activities that involve a minimum of faculty guidance, where the emphasis is on evaluation at completion (see Standards for Accreditation III.G.).

Please Note:

For specific information regarding curricular structure, see H.IX.C.1. Normally, approximately 65% of a 120 semester hour program is in art/design studies to ensure that time is available to develop the requisite competencies.

For a table of contents for all standards, see NASAD *Handbook*.