

TEN MOST ASKED QUESTIONS: SHEPHERD COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT

1. What kinds of degrees can I earn at Shepherd College?

The Shepherd College Art Department offers three degrees. (See the Shepherd College Catalog for additional information.) AA (Associate of Arts) in Visual Communication is a two-year degree with concentration areas in graphic design, photography, and studio art. The AA program in visual communication is designed to provide students with a diversified experience in art and an in-depth experience in one major concentration area. Although the AA degree has been conceived as a two-year degree, the program allows for continuation into one of the BFA programs or the BA in art education. More specifically the degree and the department concentrate on providing opportunities for the student's self-discovery and research within the various areas of the visual arts.

BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) is a professional four-year degree. This is the only recognized degree for those who wish to compete for professional positions in studio art or to enter graduate school for an MFA (Master of Fine Art). Students select a major in one of the following areas: graphic design, painting, photography, printmaking, or sculpture. (Please refer to the College Catalog for detailed class requirements for each concentration area within the BFA program). After graduation graphic design and photography students will be on a first-name basis with contacts in Washington, D. C. and Baltimore and will be able to compete successfully for positions. Painting, printmaking, and sculpture students may elect to continue toward a master's degree at a major university.

BA (Bachelor of Arts) in Art Education is a four-year degree program which allows students to teach art in levels K-12. The program is designed to provide the graduate with the skills and technical knowledge in art combined with an understanding and experience in the educational process. Graduates may receive certification to teach art at three educational levels, K-4, 5-8, 9-12, and K-12.

2. How many full-time art faculty are there at Shepherd College? What is the difference between full- and part-time faculty and graduate assistants?

The Art Department has five full-time faculty and 10 or more part-time faculty. In a large university, undergraduates often never meet the full-time faculty in their major before the junior year. In large institutions with graduate programs, the freshman and sophomore classes are often taught by teaching assistants who are graduate students. Although the teaching assistants may be excellent instructors, they rarely have the time or opportunity to devote attention to individual students outside of class, and usually these individuals are learning to teach through the experience of teaching undergraduates.

Full-time faculty at Shepherd College are the coordinators of the various degree programs and teach the introductory level courses in their fields. The faculty believe that it is important for students to have contact initially with the individuals responsible for the various degree programs. The full-time faculty have a vested interest in the success of each student and will work hard to insure that freshmen and sophomores are well versed in the basics.

The part-time faculty are selected not only for their teaching skills and dedication to learning, but also for their expertise in particular areas. Graphic design, photography, and studio

instructors are professionals working in Washington, D. C., and Baltimore who are concerned with education as a means of supplying well-qualified personnel for the workplace. These professionals usually teach the junior and senior level courses which demand a sound command of the discipline. The professional part-time faculty insure that our students are prepared for the rapidly-changing trends in the marketplace of graphic design, photography, and studio art.

At Shepherd College the full-time faculty and the professional experts (part-time faculty) work together to prepare students for the rigors of graduate school and/or professional careers. The diverse experience for our students created by Shepherd's art faculty is supplemented with regularly scheduled field trips to professional studios and businesses in Washington, D. C., and New York; seminars, lectures, and workshops sponsored by the American Institute of Graphic Arts and the Smithsonian; and campus exhibits and lectures by professional artists.

3. Does Shepherd College require an entrance portfolio?

If you are entering Shepherd College as a freshman with no previous college experience the answer is NO. After several years of requiring portfolios, the faculty have learned that portfolios are not an accurate measure of how well a student will perform. Desire and work ethic are more important than entry skills. Students who have never had the benefit of art in high school can exceed those who have had years of art training if they are sufficiently motivated. Students with highly-refined skills are often resistant to new methods and new ideas. Because of this they do not do as well initially. Success in any art program demands the student be open to new ideas and new ways of doing, excited about exploration of media and processes, and eager to learn a different approach or solution. An artist must, by nature, be an explorer - one who is eager to find a new path.

If you are entering Shepherd College as a transfer student with studio credits from other institutions the answer is YES. Transfer students must submit a portfolio for review by the faculty prior to receiving any transfer credit for studio classes. This is necessary to insure each student has had a similar kind of instruction prior to taking upper division art courses at Shepherd College. We have learned that by granting credit without a portfolio we are often dooming the student to failure in our program. We believe it is important to succeed!

If you are interested in applying for one of our art scholarships the answer is YES. A limited number of scholarships are available to West Virginia residents only. If you are interested in one of these scholarships, it will be necessary to submit a letter of application, portfolio, and transcripts after you have been admitted to Shepherd and prior to March 20. Please contact the chair of the Art Department for additional information. Other scholarships based on academic achievement and/or financial need are also available. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for this information.

4. If I have a style, will I be encouraged to develop my personal technique?

Many students have worked hard to develop a personal style prior to entering college. They take great pride in this accomplishment (as they should). However, it is part of the learning process for students to learn new skills, techniques, and mastery of new and different methods and media. At Shepherd College the art faculty respect your individual style and will

work with you to improve and expand that style further. Our purpose is to give you more information and tools. Your job is to continue to develop old skills along with new ones into a personal expression and technique.

5. How much will it cost per semester at Shepherd College?

Beyond tuition, the cost for an art major will vary depending on the major, particular classes, and the nature of the individual student. Art is expensive. A typical art student can go through over \$800 worth of supplies in an academic year. Some will exceed this; still others will manage well under that amount. Photography and graphic design are the most expensive majors. This is due in part to the technology required in both fields. The cost escalates each year and the student progresses and demands more and better technology to render an improved product.

Faculty will distribute supply lists for each class on the first day of classes, and often will recommend the cheapest places to make purchases. Many classes require a lab fee of \$25 which covers the costs of expendable materials utilized by the class and provided by the department at a reduced rate.

6. Are there job opportunities once I graduate?

Yes, the Shepherd College Art Department has an excellent placement record. Shepherd College utilizes the region more effectively than any other institution in this area. We have made it our business to connect with firms and professionals so that our students can move easily from an educational experience to a professional career. Internships, co-ops, and professional teaching in the program offer a direct line to future employment for Shepherd College graduates. Students may elect to complete the requirements of their major through internships or co-op programs in Washington, D. C., or Baltimore which will greatly enhance their ability to locate jobs after graduation.

7. How is the Shepherd College program different from other liberal arts colleges?

The major difference is that we ask our freshman to take 12 credit hours (or four art classes) their first semester. Most liberal arts colleges require only one or two art classes. Why is the program at Shepherd so different? The art faculty have observed that most freshman do not fully comprehend the amount of work, dedication, and time required to succeed as an art student. Students genuinely interested in being artists want more art.

Students trying to decide whether they have what it takes need enough art courses to accurately gauge and make a decision. At the end of the freshman year at Shepherd, most students who started in art will have had sufficient experience to make some sound decisions about their academic future. In other liberal arts schools, a student could reach his or her junior year before having taken enough art classes to determine if art is the correct major. The faculty want each student to discover what is best for him or her before too much time or money is spent.

The other difference in our programs are the introductory classes. The faculty at Shepherd teach skills and techniques while developing problem-solving skills and generating creative

thought processes. Successful competition in graduate school and art careers demands not only proficiency in manual technology but more importantly requires individuals to be self-motivated, effective problem solvers, and developers of creative or unusual solutions to situations and limitations. At Shepherd College you will learn to think.

8. What classes do I have to take?

This question can best be addressed by looking at the College Catalog. Each art major is required to take the same general studies requirements. (Look under the Program of General Studies in the Catalog to learn more about these specific requirements.) If you are interested in pursuing a BFA or BA degree in art, look under Art in the College Catalog. If you are interested in the AA in visual communication, look under Visual Communication. A description of each course can be found at the back of the Catalog under Section VIII Courses of Instruction. Each course offered at Shepherd will have a brief description after the number and title of the course.

9. Do I have to know what I want to major in when I start, or do I have some time to decide?

No, you do not need to know your major when you start. Many students opt to change their majors once they begin college. If you know you want to be in art but are unsure which area of concentration would be best for you, don't worry. You will have ample opportunity in the first two years to investigate a variety of options before you decide. If you are not completely sure if art is right for you, we recommend that you devote your first semester to exploring our program. Students who are not convinced they should be in art usually discover very quickly if they have the dedication and determination it takes to succeed as an artist. It is best to find out soon, so you do not waste time and money.

10. Who do I contact for more information about specific areas like graphic design or photography?

Dow Benedict, Currently the Chair of the Division of Arts & Humanities, professor in Sculptor and past Chair of the Art Department, can answer most art-related questions; however, if you would like to know specific information about individual concentrations, it is best to contact the coordinator of that program.

K. B. Basseches, Coordinator of Art Education: 304-876-5265

Rick Bruner, Coordinator of Photography: 304-876-5372

Sonya Evanisko, Coordinator of Painting: 304-876-5254

Dianne Roman, Coordinator of Graphic Design: 304-876-5186

Rhonda Smith, Chair and Coordinator of Printmaking: 304-876-5294

TEN MOST ASKED QUESTIONS: ABOUT ART IN GENERAL

1. What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a representative sample of the best art work that can be produced by an individual. Many schools request portfolios as a means of limiting enrollment or selecting students who demonstrate skills or aptitudes which that school believes it can mold. Many schools, like Shepherd, utilize the portfolio as one of the criteria for awarding scholarships. A portfolio may be presented in the form of original works or slides. In either case each art work or slide should have a description of the media, as well as when and why the work was produced, for example: pencil drawing completed in September 1996 as part of a class assignment to draw a realistic still-life. Slides should include the size of the original.

2. What is the difference between a university and a college or big vs. small?

Besides the size difference in the campus, or the location of urban vs. rural, the other important considerations are the number of students in classes and the contact between faculty and students.

In a large university, undergraduates often never meet the full-time faculty in their major before the junior year. In large institutions with graduate programs, the freshman and sophomore classes are often taught by teaching assistants, graduate students, or part-time faculty. Although the teaching assistants and part-time faculty may be excellent instructors, they rarely have the time or opportunity to devote attention to students outside of class.

Studio classes in universities are often larger, with 20 or more students per class, making it difficult for the instructor to converse one on one with individual students.

In a small college, such as Shepherd, freshmen get to know the full-time faculty immediately. By the end of their freshman year, students will have had a class with at least three of the full-time instructors. Because all freshmen take the same Foundations of Design class, the students quickly get to know the other freshmen art majors. There is a strong sense of community and sharing within the department. Upperclassmen are encouraged to help the freshmen, and freshmen are encouraged to seek assistance from faculty and upperclassmen. Classes are small with no more than 20 students in all studio areas. The faculty strive to insure that one-on-one instruction is given to each student in each studio class.

3. What is the difference between an art school and a liberal arts college?

Generally speaking, art schools are more expensive than colleges or universities. The curriculum of an art school will tend to focus on a variety of art-related courses, whereas a liberal arts college, like Shepherd, will require students to also take a selection of general studies courses such as English, history, and science.

Potential artists sometimes find the notion of general studies boring and the concept of all art seems exciting. It is important to realize that as artists, graphic designers, and photographers, the broader your knowledge base, the greater potential you have to succeed. It is often knowledge and appreciation of subjects other than art which spur the creative juices and lead to creative solutions and collaborations.

4. What are the different degree abbreviations and what do they mean?

The Shepherd College Art Department offers three degrees. Each degree has very specific requirements. (Please see the College Catalog for additional information.)

AA (Associate of Arts) in Visual Communication is a two-year degree with concentration areas in graphic design, photography, and studio art. The AA program in visual communication is designed to provide students with a diversified experience in art and an in-depth experience in one major concentration area. Although the AA degree has been conceived as a two-year degree, the program allows for continuation into one of the BFA programs or the BA in art education. More specifically the degree and the department concentrate on providing opportunities for the student's self-discovery and research within the various areas of the visual arts.

BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) is a professional four-year degree. This is the only recognized degree for those who wish to compete for professional positions in studio art or to enter graduate school for an MFA (Master of Fine Art). Students select a major in one of the following areas: graphic design, painting, photography, printmaking, or sculpture. (Please refer to the College Catalog for detailed class requirements for each concentration area within the BFA program). After graduation graphic design and photography students will be on a first-name basis with contacts in Washington, D. C. and Baltimore and will be able to compete successfully for positions. Painting, printmaking, and sculpture students may elect to continue toward a master's degree at a major university.

BA (Bachelor of Arts) in Art Education is a four-year degree program which allows students to teach art in levels K-12. The program is designed to provide the graduate with the skills and technical knowledge in art combined with an understanding and experience in the educational process. Graduates may receive certification to teach art at three educational levels, K-4, 5-8, 9-12, and K-12.

5. How do I know if this school offers what I want? How do I find out what kinds of programs or classes are available?

First, do you know what it is you want? This may sound like an odd question, but often students are not sure exactly what they want to do. "I want to be a cartoonist," may really mean "I have developed some skill at cartooning and I think I might want to pursue this as a career." Go to your local library and check out some art career guides. These books offer descriptions of various kinds of art careers and will help you narrow down the field.

Unless you have known from birth that you would like to be a cartoonist, chances are you really have not gathered enough information to know if this is the best choice for you. If, after reading these books, you have narrowed down the field to graphic design or illustration, then you can begin the process of gathering information about particular schools which offer degrees in graphic design or illustration.

Ask your guidance counselor for assistance in locating these schools or go to the local library. Looking through college guides will help you narrow your search to only those schools which offer degrees in graphic design or illustration. Write each of the schools and request a college catalog or view book. The catalog will outline the degree programs of that institution and tell you more about the specific classes required at that institution. The final step is to make an appointment with the chair of the art department. Go and see the school, meet the

faculty, and ask them to explain their particular program.

6. How do I find out about financial aid and/or scholarship opportunities?

Request a college catalog or view book. The information for how to apply and to some extent the type and kind of aid available is listed in the catalog.

Contact the financial aid office and make an appointment to discuss with a counselor the possibilities for loans, grants, scholarships, or other assistance which might be available.

Shepherd College has a limited number of art scholarships available to West Virginia residents. If you are interested in one of these scholarships, it will be necessary to submit a letter of application, portfolio, and transcripts after you have been admitted to Shepherd and prior to April 16. Please contact the chair of the Art Department.

7. When should I begin the process of selecting a school?

We recommend you start gathering information during the junior year of high school. By the fall of the senior year, you should be making on-campus visits to those institutions which you have identified as possible candidates. The deadlines for submitting applications for most institutions is February.

8. Do I need a certain grade point or test score to get into school?

Shepherd requires a 2.0 grade point average during the sixth semester of high school and an ACT score of 17 or equivalent SAT score. Refer to the College Catalog for more information regarding admissions standards.

9. Should I go first to a community college and then transfer?

If you plan to attend Shepherd after two years at a community college, we recommend that you start at Shepherd rather than a community college. The Art Department curriculum has been established to allow a student to move easily through a four-year program. Students who enter having completed all their general studies requirements find that they cannot complete their BFA in two years because they cannot complete the prerequisites for upper division courses in less than four. In addition, few art courses successfully transfer from community colleges.

Students often attend community college as a means of saving money, but if it takes six years to complete a four-year degree you have not saved money. We recommend that you enroll in Shepherd and take courses at your local community college during the summer.

10. Who can answer my questions?

If you have questions about -

The Art Department: Rick Bruner, Chair, 304-876-5372

If you have questions about - Admissions: Karl Wolf, Director, 304-876-5212

If you have questions about - Financial Aid: 304-876-5283