

KU Visual Art Education Program

FAQ

Do I need to major in VAE to teach art or design in K-12 public, private, or community centers?

To teach art in K-12 public schools and most private schools, a state issued teaching license is required. Teaching licensure can only be obtained by completing an accredited program like that of KU VAE. Some schools hire graphic designers, especially those with “experience” (what counts varies) as Career Technical Education teachers (similar to auto repair, business management, etc.). In rare cases, private schools hire unlicensed applicants. A teaching license is not required for most community arts centers.

Does VAE have scholarships available?

Yes, and we hope you apply! In addition to scholarships from other sources (including the Department of Visual Art, KU, national competitions, and needs-based scholarships), the VAE area has its own generous pool of endowment money (renewable) reserved just for VAE student scholarships. Most VAE scholarships are merit-based, while some are needs-based. The application process is in the spring, and all VAE majors are invited to apply. Historically, the majority of applicants, especially those in the professional sequence, have been awarded scholarships.

What is the VAE Professional Sequence Application, and how does that work?

In the first three semesters, VAE students take prerequisite (and other) courses as outlined on the BAE Check Sheet and Sample 4 Year Plan. By March 1 of the sophomore year (alt. Oct 1), VAE students fill out and submit the typed PDF Application to the Visual Art front office, even if they are enrolled in 1 or 2 prerequisite courses. Materials include the application form, print copies of the DPR + Advising Report, and copies of all transcripts (transfer students). The application involves calculating GPAs, answering standard questions, and distributing PDF recommendation forms to three past professors of any subject. Acceptance is granted to students meeting minimal requirements: “C” or higher in all prerequisite courses; prerequisite GPA ≥ 2.75 ; cumulative GPA ≥ 2.75 . The major code is then changed, permitting students to advance in the program and enroll in VAE and School of Ed courses.

What is the order of classes taken in the major, especially VAE courses?

See the Sample 4 Year Plan, including when to take VAE classes. Of note, prerequisite courses are taken first. VAE 320 should be taken in spring of the sophomore year, and a student could take 395 along with it, although that is not the recommended plan. VAE 410 and 420 must follow 320. Most School of Education courses are JR (300) and SR (400) level—SOE does change its courses frequently and this is beyond our control—consult your VAE advisor. All courses on the Check Sheet must be completed before the final semester, which = VAE 500 (student teaching) and VAE 520 (technology).

For the KU Core, when must I take a specific course instead of any qualifying course?

Technically any KU Core course satisfies the KU Core, but students should double up and take courses that fulfill both the KU Core and KSDE teaching licensure requirements whenever possible—in most cases, certain Core courses will cover KSDE standards too. The Check Sheet covers this, but it may be tricky to understand. If the Check Sheet lists only one course (e.g., PSYC 104) or several courses, then those (and only those) courses will satisfy both. If the sheet does not indicate specific courses, or if it says “others” (e.g., Goal 1, LO 1), additional courses will work. Consult your VAE advisor in such cases.

What is the area of emphasis?

This is like a condensed version of concentrating on a specific studio area (medium) to earn a BFA. In consultation with your VAE advisor, chose an emphasis and take 3 courses at the 300+ level beyond the others listed on the Check Sheet. It can be any one art studio area, or design, or history of art—typically we recommend a studio area or design, since these will directly benefit students’ professional teaching portfolios (i.e., more images of your art work; marketable job skills).

What are the PRAXIS tests; which ones do I take and when?

Candidates for art teaching licensure in Kansas are required to pass the PRAXIS series, an ETS test, for their area. For Kansas licensure in art, there are two parts: (1) “Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades 7-12” (test code 5624); and (2) “Art: Content Knowledge” (test code 5134). Note that you may not take a lower grade level version of the PLT, even if you plan to teach elementary or middle school, because the Art license is Pre K-12 and students must pass the PLT for the highest grade level of their license. The qualifying score for both tests is 160. The ETS website contains this information, and it’s fairly easy to find. The test is electronic and is offered in “windows.” Students should take the PRAXIS tests in the fall before student teaching (register in August, take in October), not while student teaching.

What is the process leading up to student teaching?

The School of Education has “Student Teaching FAQ,” and “Request Placement” links to facilitate the student teaching application process. Both are listed under School of Education > Students > Field Experience; then they are in the left menu under Student Teaching. Here are the URLs:

<http://soe.ku.edu/students/field-experience/student-teaching/student-teaching-faq>

<http://soe.ku.edu/students/field-experience/student-teaching/request-placement>

Prior to student teaching, students must be accepted into the professional sequence and have successfully completed all coursework on the BAE Check Sheet, excluding VAE 500 “Student Teaching in Art” and VAE 520 “Instructional Technology in Art Education,” which are taken together during the final Spring semester. To qualify for student teaching, candidates need a cumulative GPA of 2.75, grades of “C” or higher in all VAE and School of Education courses, a favorable professional disposition [concerns are reported for most VAE and SOE courses, per SOE policy], and a clean legal record (e.g., no felonies; crimes involving a child, theft, drugs; certain sanctions while working at/with schools; etc.)

Candidates attend an “Intent to Student Teach” meeting in February of the year prior to student teaching, which they are reminded about in an email before January 1. Candidates complete some forms from this meeting about their legal record, etc., and they apply to student teach online (the application is linked on the Request Placement page. Candidates may request environments (e.g., urban, suburban; KC or Lawrence area; etc.), but there are no guarantees. Student teaching is arranged through the SOE Field Placement Office (Melissa Robinson mherm@ku.edu, Director), not through schools.

What happens during student teaching?

Students teach for 8 weeks under one licensed art teacher at either the elementary or secondary level (MS or HS), then another 8 weeks under a different teacher at the other level. Students are observed by a university supervisor as well as their cooperating teachers. VAE Students also take VAE 520, which focuses on developing a professional teaching portfolio. In each placement, students teach at least 4 consecutive weeks of full-duty teaching of their own lesson plans. Additionally, students take care of several logistical things for licensure and complete the KPTP portfolio.

How, when, what, and where will I be licensed to teach?

After successful completion of student teaching and all associated requirements, KU recommends candidates to the State of Kansas for licensure. Licensure is then granted by the State of Kansas, and graduates receive their licenses sometime in the summer. Successful students will be licensed to teach Pre K-12 Art, which effectively encompasses the vast majority of public school art teaching position in Kansas. It is generally easy to then become licensed in most other U.S. states. If you are considering moving, contact that state’s department of education to find out how to become licensed there once you possess a new Kansas art teaching license. Be sure to get detailed information.

Applying for jobs during the student teaching semester (in any state) is commonplace—students should start applying for jobs early in the year—the fact that students do not have a license at that point shall not be held against them, as all aspiring teachers are in the same boat.