

FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL: DEGREE OPTIONS

Many factors will come into play when looking for the right fit in an arts education. Location, access to other academic areas, career outcomes, and financial support offered will likely loom large, but it's also a good idea to start by thinking about what degree path best meets a student's needs. Here's a quick guide to some of the most common degrees offered.

BFA (Bachelor of Fine Art)

A BFA is a 4-year degree that divides students' time between hands-on studio work and liberal arts courses. Students will build a set of skills specifically designed to translate into creative industry careers, and also receive a well-rounded liberal arts education and the kinds of essential skills that will support them in any career path.

- Curriculum is 2/3 studio art and 1/3 other academic areas
- Students spend a significant amount of their time learning hands-on skills in the studio
- Students gain essential skills – like critical thinking, communication, and examining issues from multiple perspectives – that will empower them to innovate and make meaningful change in the world!

BA (Bachelor of Art) in Studio Art

A BA degree flips the proportion of hands-on studio time to time spent in the classroom studying other academic areas, placing a greater emphasis on the study of history or theory in the arts.

Curriculum is 1/3 studio art and 2/3 other academic areas

- Students have the option to dive deeper into another academic area of interest, possibly even double majoring.
- For a student who's a little less focused on the hands-on part of art-making, but is looking forward to a career in the arts, this might be a great fit!

BA or BS (Bachelor of Science) with Art Minor

BA and BS degrees aren't as different as their names might lead you to believe. Many schools offer a BA or BS option in the same area of study (like Psychology for instance) drawing on many of the same classes.

- BA emphasizes a broad core of liberal arts classes—Humanities, Social Sciences, English, History, Foreign Language, and Math or Science.
- BS degree narrows the focus of those core classes to emphasize Math and Science.
- For a student who sees their artmaking as a hobby, but not necessarily a career path, a minor (or studio electives) might provide enough support while allowing them to pursue courses that inform their academic focus.

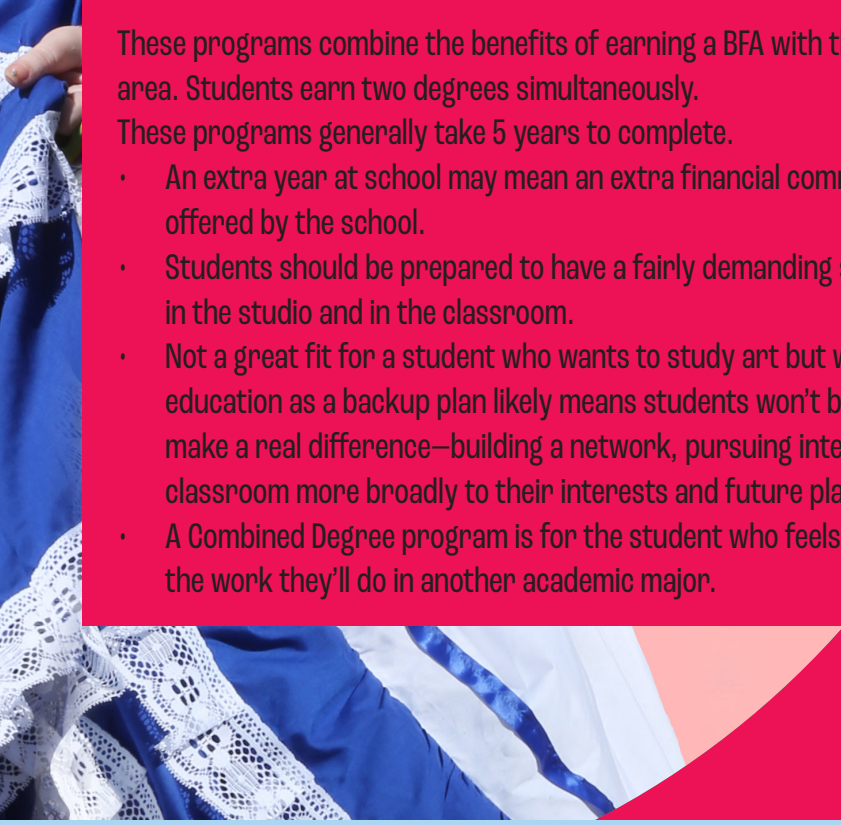


Other Specialized Art Degrees

Some degrees build in specific training and preparation for licensure in a pre-determined field. These degrees are naturally less flexible than a BFA or BA degree, but keep a student focused on a single career path and emphasize skills tailored to that career.

- Includes specialized degrees like a Bachelor of Architecture (and its variations—BA in Architectural Studies, B.A.Arch, and B.S.Arch) or a Bachelor of Art Education.
- Some of these programs last 5 years and are essentially condensed versions of an undergraduate and graduate degree.
- Students may want to do a little research to determine if a broader undergraduate degree followed by a professional graduate degree is the right fit, or if they are ready to commit early and stick to the plan.

Combined Degree BFA + BA or BS



These programs combine the benefits of earning a BFA with the benefits of earning a BA or a BS in another academic area. Students earn two degrees simultaneously.

These programs generally take 5 years to complete.

- An extra year at school may mean an extra financial commitment depending on the type of financial assistance offered by the school.
- Students should be prepared to have a fairly demanding schedule and to engage in specialized coursework both in the studio and in the classroom.
- Not a great fit for a student who wants to study art but wants a 'backup plan.' Treating any part of their education as a backup plan likely means students won't be engaging in the parts beyond the classroom that make a real difference—building a network, pursuing internships, connecting what they're learning in the classroom more broadly to their interests and future plans.
- A Combined Degree program is for the student who feels equally passionate about their studio art practice and the work they'll do in another academic major.

Once students have thought about the degree path that sounds best for them, they may want to consider the many different ways that art programs are organized. Check out Finding the Right School: Types of Art Programs to read about the differences between Foundation Year programs, Direct Entry programs, and Interdisciplinary Studies programs.