Qualifications
In order to apply to the Graphic Design Emphasis program you should have completed, or be in the process of completing, the required First-Year Studio Art courses (ART 2200, 2250, 2300, 2350, and 2400). A minimum C- must be earned in each of these courses.

Transfer Students
If you have had previous art/design courses at another university, and you have already been accepted into the University of Utah, you MAY be able transfer directly into the Graphic Design program. However, you will still be required to submit your portfolio according to these guidelines. A copy of your transcripts must accompany your portfolio submission. Upon review of your portfolio, you will either be accepted into the Graphic Design program or be given a recommendation to take certain First-Year Studio Art courses before re-applying.

Portfolio Review
All students applying to the Graphic Design program must submit a portfolio. Portfolios are reviewed once a year near the end of the academic year. This date is generally after the Spring break in late March or April, and will be announced at the beginning of the Spring semester.

All portfolios are reviewed by full-time Graphic Design faculty. Other Graphic Design faculty may also be invited to participate. Under no circumstances will these faculty “pre-screen” portfolios before submission.

Portfolio Format Requirements
- Submit NO MORE THAN 12 pieces.
- Include original works whenever possible (as opposed to reproductions), unless the actual size is prohibitive.
- 3D work may be included. These pieces should be photographed and submitted in 2D print form.

Although the work in your portfolio should be organized and assembled with care, it is NOT necessary to purchase an expensive portfolio case or create a “book” of unified pages. A predominance of work that has been photographed and printed at a reduced size tends to obscure the work, and therefore this approach is discouraged.

It is also not necessary to include titles and/or descriptions of the work, since the reviewers are familiar with the assignments and exercises done in the First-Year Studio Art courses.

What to Include in Your Portfolio
The majority of the work submitted should consist of traditional mediums of fine art, and accurately reflect the work you have done in First-Year Studio Art courses. Some students incorrectly assume that they should submit primarily graphic design examples for review. This is NOT the case.

Your portfolio should include a diverse sampling of work that includes (but is not limited to):
- perspective drawing
- line drawing
- figure and life drawing
- compositions that address 2D and/or 3D spatial issues
- basic design and color exercises

There is no “magic formula.” The faculty reviewers look for a broad range of talent and skill that can be transposed to the discipline of graphic design. We are looking for students with strong technical ability, but more importantly, we are looking for students who demonstrate high levels of creativity and understanding of the basic principles and elements of art.

The following criteria will be carefully considered when reviewing your portfolio:
- confidence in the use of drawing instruments and media
- line quality that demonstrates competent drawing agility
- understanding of perspective drawing
- attention to formal composition (arrangement of elements in space)
- understanding of the basic elements of design (line, shape, volume, pattern, texture, etc.)
- understanding of proportion and scale as it relates to anatomy and still life drawing
- the level of thought and professionalism put into selection and preparation of work
- craftsmanship

What NOT to Include in Your Portfolio
While one of the primary tools of graphic design is the computer, it is not the focus of our program. Success in the program depends on the student’s ability to think and solve visual problems, not on demonstrations of computer “gymnastics.” Please do not include work that exhibits computer gimmickry (Photoshop filters, effects, etc.) Knowledge of software does not necessarily ensure or increase chances of acceptance.

Even if you think a piece of artwork is well-executed technically, work which includes immature content or sentimental themes (i.e. cute animals, children, inspirational quotes, superheroes, wedding portraiture, celebrities, drawings copied from photos) is strongly discouraged. It is best to submit work addressing more mature themes, subject matter.

If you have done professional design work, include ONLY one or two examples. Professional experience does not necessarily ensure or increase chances of acceptance.
Evaluation Criteria

All applicants will be evaluated based upon 1) portfolio work; and 2) grades from first-year Studio Art courses.

Student applicants should understand that faculty reviewers are looking for students who clearly exhibit the talent, maturity, and work ethic to succeed in the Graphic Design program. There are no “quotas” nor are there a limited number of “spaces” in the program.

Acceptance into the Graphic Design program is contingent upon completion (and earning the minimum C- toward the BFA degree) of ALL first-year (Foundations) Studio Art courses. Since final grades for Spring courses aren’t available at the time of portfolio review, the grades of all accepted students will be reviewed again once available.

If a student who is initially accepted into the Graphic Design program doesn’t earn a minimum C- in any Spring first-year (Foundations) Studio Art course, that student is subject to dismissal from the Graphic Design program until that class can be repeated and the minimum C- is earned.

Notification

At the conclusion of the review process, a letter will be placed into your portfolio indicating acceptance or non-acceptance into the Graphic Design Program.

If You Are Not Accepted into the Graphic Design Program

If you are not accepted, you may apply again at the end of the following academic year. You are only allowed to do this one time.

Non-accepted students should obtain feedback from their first-year Studio Art instructors in regards to how their portfolio might be improved for re-submission. These instructors can best evaluate weaknesses in skills and overall performance.

Students are also encouraged to re-evaluate their own portfolios to determine whether they contained inappropriate submissions (i.e. not enough foundation studio work submitted, or too much professional work submitted).

If You Are Accepted into the Graphic Design Program

If you are accepted there will be a list of courses placed into your portfolio accompanying your acceptance letter. These classes are to be taken sequentially, and six full semesters are necessary to finish the required work for Graphic Design. Courses are offered once in an academic year (in either the Fall or Spring semesters). If you do not register for a required class during the semester that it is offered, you will not be able to take it until the following academic year. None of the required Graphic Design courses are offered in the Summer semester.

Minimum Grades

Students must pass ART 3610: Visual Communication I with a minimum C grade in order to continue in the Graphic Design program. Each of the other required courses require a C- minimum grade in order to continue to the next level and graduate.

Sophomore Review for Continuation in the Graphic Design Program

At the culmination of the Spring semester, all Sophomore Graphic Design students will undergo a review that will determine continuance into the Junior level of the program.

In order to be eligible for continuation into the Junior year of the program, students are required to:

1. Earn an average 2.7 grade (B-) among these required courses:
   - ART 3600 Graphic Design History (3 credits)
   - ART 3610 Visual Communication I (4 credits)
   - ART 3620 Visual Communication II (4 credits)
   - ART 3630 Digital Studio (3 credits)
   - ART 3640 Design Process (4 credits)

Grade points earned from these courses will be multiplied by the number of credits for each course. These scores will be added together, and divided by the total number of credits (18). This will determine the average grade.

2. Attend an in-person review with the full-time Graphic Design faculty. In this short meeting (generally 10-15 minutes) students will present a portfolio comprised of projects completed in the Sophomore-level studio courses (this may include ART 3130 Drawing I). This review is an opportunity for the student and faculty to get an overview of the student’s work, and to discuss strengths and weaknesses in regards to professionalism, work ethic and diligence, creativity, technical skills, comprehension, and overall progress.

3. Complete a self-evaluation form in advance of the above review with faculty.

If a student fails to meet the minimum grade requirement, or fails to attend the in-person interview, they will not be allowed to continue into the Junior level Graphic Design courses. A follow-up conference will be arranged in which the student and full-time faculty will together devise a plan for the student to repeat certain Sophomore-level courses in order to improve their grade average.

If a student fails to pass Sophomore Review a second time, they are subject to dismissal from the program.