

GSA APPLICANT GUIDE

Visual Art



I. Program Description

GSA's Visual Art program includes studio classes in three areas of concentration: (1) drawing and painting, (2) sculpture and ceramics and (3) traditional printmaking. Students attend studios in all three areas throughout the program. Special workshops are conducted by distinguished visiting artists. Students view and learn about the work of these artists, as well as that of their own GSA faculty. Instructors and students critique and reflect on their works-in-progress individually and in groups, both in oral and written formats. Studio sessions are augmented by field trips and slide presentations. Students learn about writing artist statements, art professions and careers, and portfolio preparation for college applications. A juried gallery exhibition of student work is displayed on the final day of the program and other student work is presented in an open house format in the rest of the studios.

II. Preliminary Round Application Requirements (due January 10th)

Applicants must submit the materials in this section through the online platform [Accepted](#) no later than January 10th. NOTE: Applicants will be prompted to pay a \$30 application fee when submitting their materials (or \$35 if applying in two artforms). Students on free/reduced lunch may opt to have this fee waived when payment is requested.

For the Preliminary Round, you must submit the following (see *below for more detail*):

- a. Two Recommendation Forms
- b. Personal Short Essay
- c. Personal Question Video
- d. Artform-Specific Questions
- e. Portfolio Images
- f. Portfolio cover sheet
- g. Images of sketchbook pages and/or 3D experiments

a. Recommendation Forms (do this first!)

Identify two people to fill out the following recommendation forms (each person will complete one of the following options: your application must include one of each form):

1. School Administrator Recommendation Form: in this form we ask the recommender about your role as a member of your learning community as displayed through items such as attendance, disciplinary record, and general achievement. As such, this form should be completed by a school administrator (e.g. counselor, principal, etc.), or if you are homeschooled, a non-family member who can speak on behalf of your accountability and/or

character (i.e. staff at an organization you volunteer for, youth minister, coach, etc.). This recommender is not directly asked about your artistic skill or potential.

2. Teacher Recommendation Form: in this form we ask the recommender about your abilities as a student and young artist. As such, we encourage you to select a teacher who instructs you in your artform, if possible. We understand not everyone has a teacher in their artform, in which case you may select a teacher in another subject who knows you well. The person completing this form can teach any subject and may be someone who teaches you privately and/or outside of school (if they are not a family member). If you are homeschooled and taught only by family members, you may select a recommender who fits the profile referenced in the school administrator section.

You will enter the names and email addresses of each recommender in your online application, and those individuals will receive emails instructing them on how to complete the recommendation form, which will take about five minutes.

Before submitting your recommenders' information, we strongly encourage the following:

1. Inform them you are applying for GSA and would like to list them as a recommender. Tell them they will complete a short form via email, and that their responses are confidential (you will not have access to them). Ask if they have any questions about GSA and/or your desire to apply.
2. Confirm what email address you should list for them; double check that you have the correct spelling.

Submit your recommenders' information as soon as possible so they have plenty of time to complete the forms prior to January 10th. After you have submitted their information, we strongly encourage the following:

1. Tell your recommenders to check their email. The email will come from Accepted (not GSA) with a subject line that begins with "Documentation Request."
2. Ask them to confirm with you when they have submitted the form – and then tell them thank you! If they have not received the form, ask them to check their junk folder and ensure you entered their email address correctly in the application. Contact GSA if you need to correct an email address.

Note: Once you submit your recommenders' information, you will have to click back into your profile to access the remainder of the application ; Accepted will refer to this next section as "Application Part 2."

Additional information about recommendations:

- No letters of recommendation are needed, nor should you submit any. Recommenders simply need to complete the form they receive via email.
- Applicants are not be able to review the contents of their recommendations.
- Applicants' parents/immediate family may not fill out their recommendation forms.
- While we encourage you to secure the best recommenders possible within the guidelines listed, know that we rely on your personal application materials (essays, artistic work, etc.) as the primary tools to assess your fit for GSA. Recommenders have the option to choose "unknown" if they are not aware of the answer to a question, and this will not be held against you as an applicant.
- If you are applying for two artforms and using the same recommender(s), they must complete two forms (one for each artform), even if their answers are identical.
- Recommendation forms include your name, but not the artform you are applying for. Ensure your teacher recommender understands your area of interest. If you are applying in two artforms AND using the same person for the teacher recommendation in both applications, keep track of which artform application you fill out first so the recommender knows which email is for which artform (the first email they receive will be for the first artform application in which you listed their info).

b. Personal Short Essay (250-word max)

Provide an answer to the following question in essay form:

Describe your personal connection to your artform or creative practice. Why and how is it important to you on a personal level?

Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you. Upload this essay response as a document file; type out the question at the top of your response, so the question and answer are both in the document (the question restatement does not count toward the word count limit). When uploading your essay, title the file "Personal Short Essay."

c. Personal Question Video (90-second max)

Provide an answer to the following question in video form:

Describe your vision for how your individual artistic work/creative practice can impact others. How do you want to affect others through art, and/or what response do you hope others have to your work?

- Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you. While you are encouraged to prepare your thoughts before shooting the video and you may consult notes as you speak, please do not just read off a transcript. We want to get a sense of your personality.
- Record your answer in an interior space that is free from interruptions, noise, etc. Do not edit or splice the video. You do not need to include an introductory frame or any effects such as fades, etc.
- Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location. Review the video to ensure you can be seen AND heard. Ensure the video plays all the way to the end.
- When uploading your Personal Question Video, title the file "Personal Question Video."

d. Artform-Specific Questions

Applicants will be asked questions about their specific interests in their artform and their level of access to training/classes/lessons in their artform. Applicants can review the specific questions for their artform once they have submitted their recommender information. There are no right or wrong answers for these questions, nor are we looking for one profile of a student over another – rather, we ask these questions to understand the applicant in the fullest context possible.

e. Portfolio Images/Files

Your Visual Art portfolio should consist of **9 total works**.

Upload your portfolio pieces into the application under "Upload Portfolio."

Three Required Portfolio Pieces

Every applicant's portfolio must include the following **three required portfolio pieces**:

- an object study (still life)
- a self-portrait
- an environment (landscape)

For these three required pieces:

- **ONE** of these required works must be in graphite pencil only.
- Any variety of wet or dry media (i.e. charcoal, pen & ink, colored pencils, paint, mixed media, etc.) can be used to complete the other two required pieces.
- The self-portrait can be 3D as long as it is still done from direct observation.

- Drawing from photographs may not be substituted for any of these three required submissions; they must be created from direct observation of yourself and your surroundings.
- Digital illustrations and photographs may NOT be submitted for the three required drawings but may be submitted as part of the six remaining portfolio pieces.

Six Remaining Portfolio Pieces

The remaining pieces can be selected by the applicant, but please try to include a variety of mediums and subject matter, including 3D work if possible. If any of your remaining six portfolio pieces are derived from another work or photograph, please also submit an image of the reference material, crediting the original artist (when applicable).

FOR ALL PORTFOLIO PIECES:

- If your work is not already digital, digitize it by taking a digital photo or scanning it. Upload the file into the application.
- If submitting images of 3D work, please submit up to three images (per portfolio piece) from different angles.
- Photographing your work next to a ruler or yardstick is encouraged to help us appreciate the scale of your work. If submitting multiple images of 3D work, you only need to include the ruler in one photo.
- Verify all images are upright (not sideways).
- Save and name your files individually so they correspond to the pieces and titles as listed on your portfolio cover sheet (see below). The first piece listed on your cover sheet should be saved as "01_title", your second piece as "02_title" and so on. For multiple image files detailing one work or idea (e.g. multiple angles of a 3D piece), title images as "01_title; 01_title_2; 01_title_3" and so on.

f. Portfolio Cover Sheet

This one document should outline all portfolio pieces uploaded as part of your application (note file naming instructions above so your uploaded images correspond with the pieces listed on this sheet). For each work, please include the following:

- Title of Work
- Year of Completion
- Approximate Dimensions
- Medium
- A very brief description of your process for creating this work (if the work is a collaboration, describe your role in the project).

Save this as a document file and upload it into your application.

g. Images of sketchbook pages and/or 3D experiments

Submit five photos of pages from your sketchbook and/or 3D experiments that are an important aspect of your creative output. These items:

- should be a current reflection of your creative journey; a visual documentation of your brainstorming and creative process.
- can consist of in-process drawings, experiments, photographs, collages, cut outs, written personal reflections, and other kinds of writing/creative responses.
- do not count toward the total number of portfolio pieces you present. These five images are in addition to the nine required portfolio pieces.
- do not need to be included on the Portfolio Cover Sheet.
- Please title each image "Sketchbook_1", "Sketchbook_2" and so on.

III. Final Round Requirements

Some applicants will be invited to participate in the Final Round of GSA Auditions/Reviews, which will consist of the elements described below.

Visual Art will include:

- a. Questionnaire
- b. Portfolio
- c. Finalist Art Prompt Project
- d. Sketchbook/3D experiments
- e. Portfolio Review and Interview

a. Questionnaire

When you arrive at the main registration table for your auditions/reviews, you will receive and complete a one to two-page questionnaire. This questionnaire may cover a range of topics, including your previous experience in your artform, your favorite artists, and/or your college and career goals. The questionnaire is not a quiz and is not scored, but it is a way for adjudicators to get to know you. The questionnaire may be used to customize questions in your interview.

b. Portfolio

Please bring your portfolio to present. You will receive specific instructions for set-up of your work in the review space upon arriving and will have **two minutes** to complete set up. There is no need to bring easels, pedestals or other presentation stands. A long table will be provided in the review space for your use.

Required Pieces

You are required to bring a total of **nine portfolio pieces**:

- the same three required works from the Preliminary Round (still life, self-portrait, and landscape)
- six additional portfolio pieces, as described in the requirements for the Preliminary Round

You may present the exact same six discretionary pieces from the Preliminary Round. If you have new work you would like to show, you may also substitute some/all of the six “remaining” portfolio pieces, but you may NOT substitute the three required works. The adjudicators have no preference over whether you introduce new work; rather, you should show work that you think is most representational of your artistic voice. **You may not present more than nine total portfolio pieces.**

Labels For Art Work

Label each piece included in the portfolio with your name, school and approximate date of completion.

Labels for both 2D and 3D work can be placed on the back of each work. If not placed on the back, use paper, card stock or foam core to create a label that can be displayed beside your work(s).

Matting

While it was not necessary to mat your works for the Preliminary Round, works presented during the Final Round will need to be matted or mounted on a support.

- 2D work: traditional matting is NOT required. Seek help from an art instructor or your local frame or hobby/craft shop. If you don't choose to mat your work traditionally, it must still be mounted to a support. A support of contrasting color works best. Some examples of usable materials include: recycled cardboard, construction paper, card stock, poster board or foam core.
- Canvases and 3D work: it is not required or recommended that 3D work or paintings on canvas be framed, matted or mounted in any way.

Reference Materials/Images

Just as in the Preliminary Round, if any of your works are derived from the work of another or from a photograph, the original image must be included. You can place a printed version of the reference image next to the work or you may choose to present the images on an electronic device such as a tablet, laptop or other mobile device.

Large Work Or Work You No Longer Possess

You may submit either digital or printed color (un-matted) photographs only when a work is not available to you or if it is impractical or difficult to transport. If bringing digital photos, you will need to provide a mechanism to showcase your photos (tablet, laptop or other mobile device).

c. Finalist Art Prompt Project

All applicants identified as Finalists for Visual Art will receive the same art prompt, from which they will create a new piece of art to be brought to the Finalist Review.

This new piece is in addition to their portfolio pieces detailed above. The piece made from the prompt will be constructed from simple and/or common recycled found materials. Applicants do not have to access specific art supplies for the project (i.e. you will not need to buy a canvas, specific types of paint, etc.). Like all materials/portfolio pieces presented, this piece will be judged against the Visual Art criteria listed in Section IV.

This prompt for this project will be posted online at the GSA website on February 19, 2021.

d. Sketchbook or 3D experiments

Please bring a current sketchbook or 3D experiments that are an important aspect of your creative output. You should set up your sketch book with your portfolio. Your current sketchbook:

- should be a current reflection of your creative journey; a visual documentation of your brainstorming and creative process.
- can consist of in-process drawings, experiments, photographs, collages, cut outs, written personal reflections and other kinds of writing/creative responses.
- do not count toward the total number of portfolio pieces you present. These are in addition to the nine required portfolio pieces

e. Portfolio Review/Interview

Adjudicators will lead a brief conversation with each applicant about their portfolio and artistic motivations. This is an opportunity for the student to verbally express the qualities of their visual work as well as their personal artistic perspective. The duration of the review + interview will vary at the adjudicators' discretion but will likely last approximately ten minutes.

IV. Criteria

The work of each student will be given an objective review by the adjudicators as to how they fulfill each of the following criteria:

Use of Formal Art Elements

An ideal applicant exhibits successful use of art elements such as line, value, shapes, forms, space, color, and texture. The applicant uses these elements to create structure and meaning and can speak to how they have done so.

Use of Design Principles and Sense of Composition

An ideal applicant utilizes design principles such as balance, contrast, movement, emphasis, and proportion in their work to guide their use of the formal art elements and the organization of the picture plane or three-dimensional form. The applicant uses these principles to create visual impact and meaning and can speak to how they have done so.

Technical Skill

An ideal applicant demonstrates practiced skill and developed technique, as well as an awareness of the specific tools, processes, and approaches required by the specific media being used. This does not necessarily mean each piece requires an extremely detailed finished quality, but rather that each piece is crafted in a way that is connected to ideas and materials.

Craftsmanship and Sensitivity to Materials/Media

The ideal applicant demonstrates a keen sensitivity to a variety of materials, a strong awareness of their intrinsic properties and limitations, and makes deliberate and intentional choices in crafting their work.

Originality and Creative Voice

An ideal applicant's work is consistently approached from a personalized viewpoint, background, or experience; even if the work is the product of an assignment, it reveals an individual or unique point of view or desire. The applicant can identify and explain how their individuality and perspective are evident across the portfolio.

Dedication to Artform, Growth, and Community

An ideal applicant demonstrates a commitment to and passion for their artform, as well as a desire and ability to grow as an artist. The applicant can thoughtfully and authentically explain why they want to attend GSA and how they are uniquely qualified to contribute to a robust, diverse community of artists.

V. Tips

These tips are suggestions. They are NOT eligibility requirements for admittance to GSA.

- Include **work completed outside of school** (as opposed to school projects) when possible. By showing your motivation to create work outside of what you're told/required to by a teacher, you can better reveal your personal voice and dedication to growth in your artform.
- Incorporate **recent work** in your portfolio.
- Be sure to **pay attention to the presentation** of your pieces. Include only finished work in your portfolio. Avoid presenting work with distracting blemishes like fingerprints, torn edges, folded corners, etc. This will exhibit your respect for your own work, and your ability to fully commit to making your pieces "show-ready."
- **Diversify** your portfolio with a mix of mediums.
- Be prepared to show and a talk about **your process**, and present materials that represent a variety and depth of processes. By showing multiple ways of solving visual or conceptual problems, you exhibit your ability to develop ideas.
- If you haven't already, begin to think about **what makes your work distinctly yours**.
- **Pay close attention to the adjudication criteria.** While GSA students are accepted based on their holistic identity as a young artist, the criteria are the foundation of how your materials are being scored.
- **Remember the adjudicators are very excited to see your work and they want you to do well!** We know it takes hard work to submit this application, and that it can be scary to "put yourself out there." We have faith in you, so put your best foot forward and don't be afraid to show us the wonderful artist you are. You prove a level of dedication just by submitting your application, and you should be proud of yourself.

VI. Application Timeline/Deadlines

January 10, 2021 - GSA Application Due

All applicant materials must be submitted via Acceptd by 11:59 p.m. We encourage you to submit early and not to wait until the last minute, as the application portal runs slowly when many people try to upload at once.

February 19, 2021 – GSA Finalists Announced

All applicants will be notified of whether they have advanced to the final round of adjudication.



March 19 & 20, 2021 – Final Round Auditions/Reviews

All finalists attend an in-person audition/review at the University of Kentucky in Lexington (if health guidelines allow). If auditions must shift to a virtual model, more information will be sent to applicants.

Friday, April 16, 2021 – Announcement of GSA 2021 Accepted Students and Alternates

All Finalists will be notified of whether they have been accepted into the summer program. A list of alternates will also be announced.

June 27 – July 17, 2021 – GSA 2021 Summer Program

For technical support with the application, contact Acceptd

Email: support@getacceptd.com

Phone: 1.888.725.2122, press 2

**For questions about Summer Program, the content and/or requirements of the application,
contact GSA**

Email (preferred): gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org

Phone: 502.566.5192