



Graphic Design

Criticality Survey 2026

CONTENT STANDARD 1.0: PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Performance Standard 1.1: Effective Leadership and Participation in Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) and Professional Associations

1.1.1	Explore the role of professional organizations and/or associations in the Graphic Design Industry.	1.72
1.1.2	Define the value, role, and opportunities provided through career technical student organizations.	1.50
1.1.3	Engage in career exploration and leadership development.	2.06

CONTENT STANDARD 2.0: THE GRAPHIC DESIGN INDUSTRY

Performance Standard 2.1: History and Influence of Graphic Design

2.1.1	Describe the history and evolution of technology, art movements, and societal trends and how they impact graphic design/visual communication.	1.72
2.1.2	Describe the importance of visual/digital media on today's society and culture.	2.39

CONTENT STANDARD 3.0: FOUNDATIONS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

Performance Standard 3.1: Elements of Design

3.1.1	Describe the concepts and terminology related to color theory.	2.33
3.1.2	Identify deliberate applications of color, line, shape, texture, size, and value in graphic works.	2.50

Performance Standard 3.2: Principles of Design

3.2.1	Identify the principles of design (e.g., balance, contrast, alignment, rhythm, repetition, proximity, movement, harmony, emphasis, unity) in graphic works.	2.50
3.2.2	Interpret how the principles of design work in a variety of design techniques.	2.67

Performance Standard 3.3: Typography

3.3.1	Identify anatomical components and qualities of type (e.g., point size, x-height, ascenders, descenders, counters, baseline).	2.28
3.3.2	Apply formatting to type (e.g., kerning, tracking, leading) to achieve deliberate graphic effects.	2.61
3.3.3	Construct graphic works, using a variety of font families and pairing concepts.	2.72

Performance Standard 3.4: Layout

3.4.1	Describe the effective use of negative space, composition, message structure, and graphics, as applied to graphic works.	2.56
3.4.2	Manipulate layout settings (e.g., measurement, grids, columns, rule of thirds, bleed) to create graphic works.	2.72
3.4.3	Compare layout techniques and specifications for print format (e.g., magazines, yearbooks) to digital media format (e.g., mobile devices, tablets).	2.67

3.4.4	Describe the importance, components, and goals of creating a user interface (UI) (e.g., layouts, buttons, icons, typography, colors, menus) in order to craft a positive user experience (UX) (e.g., usability, functionality, emotional impact, accessibility).	2.17
3.4.5	Describe visual hierarchy and its effective use to direct the viewer's eyes in graphic design compositions.	2.56
CONTENT STANDARD 4.0: GRAPHIC DESIGN PRODUCTION		
Performance Standard 4.1: Pre-production-Concept Development		
4.1.1	Generate project ideas through creative techniques (e.g., brainstorming, sketching, thumbnails, roughs, mock-ups, wireframes, storyboards).	2.39
4.1.2	Describe the importance of developing a message for a specific audience.	2.56
4.1.3	Define the elements of a project (e.g., size, format, software, deadline).	2.72
4.1.4	Compare the features of vector artwork versus raster images and the situations in which one is more effective than the other.	2.83
Performance Standard 4.2: Production-Creation and Manipulation		
4.2.1	Collect and organize digital media content (e.g., photos, graphics, video), using a variety of devices and sources.	2.44
4.2.2	Apply nondestructive image editing techniques, including the use of selection tools, layering and masking to manipulate images.	2.56
4.2.3	Apply techniques of image composition, cropping, use of vector paths, and raster channels to intended effect.	2.78
Performance Standard 4.3: Post-Production		
4.3.1	Describe the process and benefits of proofreading, editing, preflighting, and using proper prepress techniques to create graphic works shared with different audiences.	2.67
4.3.2	Maximize production values by adjusting resolution, aspect ratio, compression, and file formats for various media outputs including web, video, audio, motion graphics, and print to intended effect.	2.78
4.3.3	Apply current industry standard color modes in graphic works, using color systems and tools (e.g., RGB, HEX, LAB, CMYK, HSB, color books) to intended effect.	2.72
4.3.4	Ensure accurate color reproduction in both digital and print media through the effective application of grayscale, spot color, and process color, according to project specifications.	2.67
4.3.5	Manage project organization, formats, and deliverables to ensure that it is technically sound, reproducible, and aligned with client or platform expectations.	2.89
CONTENT STANDARD 5.0: CONTENT STRATEGY		
Performance Standard 5.1: Branding and Corporate Identity		
5.1.1	Analyze the link between branding and corporate identity, including the purpose of branding and its importance for both a business and its constituents.	2.39
5.1.2	Create visuals that consistently represent brand identity across multiple media formats.	2.72

Performance Standard 5.2: Social Media		
5.2.1	Describe the positive and negative effects of social media.	1.67
5.2.2	Compare a variety of social media platforms in relation to target audiences.	2.00
5.2.3	Define key terms and metrics (e.g., engagement, analytics, influencers) of social media.	2.06
CONTENT STANDARD 6.0: ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO GRAPHIC DESIGN		
Performance Standard 6.1: Copyright and Intellectual Property Law		
6.1.1	Describe laws governing intellectual property (e.g., copyrights, trademarks) and software licensing.	2.56
6.1.2	Describe consequences of violating copyright, privacy, and data security laws.	2.67
6.1.3	Describe fair use factors and applications.	2.44
6.1.4	Describe Creative Commons (CC) licenses and the importance of using a release form.	2.61
6.1.5	Discuss artificial intelligence's (AI's) emerging impact on the field of graphic design (e.g., content creation, image and audio generation, streamlining workflow).	2.33
CONTENT STANDARD 7.0: CREATIVE PORTFOLIO		
Performance Standard 7.1: Portfolio Development		
7.1.1	Describe the importance, strategies, and goals of developing a creative portfolio.	2.67
7.1.2	Define the elements of a creative portfolio based on industry standards.	2.56
7.1.3	Create a portfolio that is dynamic and includes variety.	2.72
Performance Standard 7.2: Evaluating Portfolios		
7.2.1	Describe the elements of the critique process, including demonstrating respect for peer work and the ability to give and receive professional and constructive criticism.	2.67
7.2.2	Conduct peer-evaluations and self-evaluations, using a rubric or formulating verbal responses to discuss design choices.	2.56
CONTENT STANDARD 8.0: COMMUNICATION SKILLS		
Performance Standard 8.1: Communication Skills for Visual Communications		
8.1.1	Demonstrate professionalism in all client interactions (e.g., communication, appearance, social media, online platforms).	2.89
8.1.2	Create a design presentation for a graphic design project that includes design rationale (i.e., explanation of choices), using industry terminology.	2.72