

**QEP Executive summary – Memphis College of Art – Remy Miller, Dean/VPAA,
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Professional Practices

The constituent groups of Memphis College of Art chose to pursue the topic of Professional Practices as its Quality Enhancement Plan because they believe in the value of a studio art education. However, they also think it is indefensible for an art college to prepare students to make art, but not prepare them to make a living from what they create. The constituents of the college are deeply invested in improving the opportunities available to MCA graduates in finding meaningful employment in the field that they love.

MCA's QEP is designed to greatly expand the preparation of students for the working world. The college is moving from a single elective Professional Practices course to a fully integrated curriculum that embeds essential skills and knowledge throughout the four years of study. MCA hopes to instill in students from the very start of its BFA programs a mind set for success as well as the requisite skills and knowledge to pursue a career in a field of their choice.

The MCA Professional Practices QEP began with a list of outcomes generated by alumni, faculty, and students of MCA that all agreed were essential. These outcomes reflected the work and life experiences of the alumni and faculty, and the current academic experiences of the students. This list of outcomes provided the focus and objectives of the entire plan. Implementation of this plan began in the Spring 2012 semester in a limited number of "spearhead" programs.

The last major aspect of the MCA QEP plan will be instituted in the Fall semester of 2014. This is a stand-alone, compulsory class in the third year of study that will cover a set of outcomes outside the reach of the expertise of the MCA faculty. These outcomes involve subjects such as conducting job searches, personal and professional budgets, networking, and State and Federal taxes. A full-time faculty member will organize the class and oversee a series of expert guest instructors who will deliver the material. In combination with the outcomes added to the programs this course will greatly expand MCA's ability to cover a tremendous breadth of Professional Practices content.

From the very first meeting of the QEP Committee, program content and outcomes were conceived in a way that they could be measured by a comprehensive assessment system directly connected to the college's existing assessment model. Measurement began in May of 2012 and occurs on a continuous end of semester basis.