



GSA Applicant Guide: Film + Photography

I. Program Description

GSA's Film + Photography program focuses on visual communication through photography and videography. Students in the program learn a wide variety of technical material and approaches, with a documentary focus for photography balanced by writing, directing, and producing their own films. In addition to instruction and studio time split between still photography and video production, students participate in workshops and demonstrations conducted by guest artists and take field trips to put their knowledge to work. Students discuss and critique their works-in-progress and that of their classmates as part of the studio experience. Faculty members also discuss professional careers in the field and coach students in the preparation of portfolios for college applications. Student work is displayed in a public exhibition on the final day of the program.

II. Preliminary Round Application Requirements (due January 11th)

Applicants must submit the materials in this section through the online platform [Acceptd](#) no later than January 11th. NOTE: Applicants will be prompted to pay a \$30 application fee when submitting their materials (or \$35 if applying in two art forms). 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 details*):

- a. Two Recommendation Forms
- b. Personal Short Essay
- c. Personal Question Video
- d. Portfolio Images and Videos
- e. Portfolio Cover Sheet

a. Recommendation Forms (*do this first!*)

You will identify two people to fill out recommendation forms for you: a school administrator (e.g. counselor) and a teacher/instructor (see below if those do not apply). You will enter their names and email addresses in your online application, and the individuals will receive emails instructing them on how to complete the recommendation process.

- Please [login into Acceptd](https://app.getacceptd.com/kentuckycentergsa) (<https://app.getacceptd.com/kentuckycentergsa>) to initiate this process as soon as possible so your recommenders have time to complete the forms before the application deadline.

- You do not need to submit letters of recommendation. Recommenders will receive an online form to fill out, which will serve as their recommendation for you.
- If you are home schooled, and/or you otherwise do not have a school administrator or teacher/instructor who can fill out your recommendation forms, please seek out another adult who can speak to your qualities/character/abilities in one way or another; this could include a mentor, a youth minister, a coach, etc.
- Applicants' parents/immediate family may not fill out their recommendation forms.

b. Personal Short Essay (250-word max)

You will provide an answer to the following question in essay form:

As you envision yourself attending GSA, describe to us one thing you will bring to/offer the community, and one thing that you know will challenge you.

Be open, honest, and authentic in your response. You will upload this essay response as a document (as opposed to typing it in a text box, as was done in previous years). Please type out the question at the top of your response, so the question and answer are both in the document. When uploading your essay, title the file "Personal Short Essay."

c. Personal Question Video (90-second max)

You will provide an answer to the following question in video form:

Artists play a vital role in society, ranging from sparking large cultural movements, to facilitating meaningful interpersonal connections. What impact do you seek to make on your community/world as an artist, and why is that an important impact to make? How will GSA help you achieve this?

- **Be open, honest, and authentic in your response.** 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.
- 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.
- Do not edit or splice the video. You do not need to include an introductory frame or any effects such as fades, etc.
- When uploading your Personal Question Video, title the file "Personal Question Video."

d. Portfolio Files

Your Film + Photography portfolio must contain **10 total works**.

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

Two Required Works

Your submission must include:

- one photograph (without extreme Photoshop alterations)
- one film of any length or genre. *If you have not created a film before*, remember your submission can be short, simple, and shot with readily available equipment such as a smart phone, etc. Use your artistic perspective to create something you find interesting and include elements of the criteria (listed later in this document) in your work. We would rather see someone's first film they've ever made than not see them apply at all. You may submit films that are collaborations with others, but you must explain your role in the film (i.e. camera operator, director, etc.) on your Portfolio Cover Sheet (described below).

Eight Remaining Works

The remaining eight works can consist of a variety of media, including:

- Additional film/video work (documentary, narrative, music video, shorts, etc.)
- Additional still photography (without extreme Photoshop alterations)
- Scripts for movies and/or storyboards
- Audio files
- Any relevant digital art (this includes, but is not limited to, computer generated music, altered images, or designs)
- **No more than two non-photographic prints, drawings, paintings, and/or 3D works** that reflect your approach to film and/or photography.

For all submitted work:

When uploading, verify each image is upright (not sideways), and if film, that it plays smoothly and through to the end.

If your work is not already digital, digitize it by taking a digital photo or scanning it. Upload the file into the application.

Save and name your files individually so they correspond to the pieces and titles as listed on your portfolio cover sheet. 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.

e. 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
- Medium (please specify if a work is audio only)

- Length (if film or audio)
- 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.

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. All applicants will be notified on February 27th of whether they are invited to the Final Round. If you are selected to participate in the Final Round, you will be required to attend in-person on March 22nd or 23rd in Danville, KY as scheduled by GSA.

The Final Round for Film + Photography will include:

- Questionnaire
- 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 art form, 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 Review and 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 work as well as their personal artistic perspective. Finalists do not need to bring the portfolio submitted for the preliminary round application; adjudicators will access and utilize Accepted for the conversation. The duration of portfolio reviews/ interviews will vary at the adjudicators' discretion but will likely last approximately 15 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 Elements

An ideal applicant exhibits successful use of art elements such as line, value, shapes, forms, space, color, texture, as well as sound and time (if work is video or audio). 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, rule of thirds, orientation, perspective, pattern and framing in their work to guide their use of the formal elements and

organization of the piece. The applicant uses these principles to create 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 (e.g. shutter speed, sound editing, image manipulation, etc.). 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, equipment, and/media.

Artistic Voice & Originality

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.

Storytelling & Narrative Choices

An ideal applicant tells a constructed story through their work; the applicant can express how the story supports and conveys their artistic intentions.

Dedication to Art Form, Growth, and Community

An ideal applicant demonstrates a commitment to and passion for their art form, as well as a desire and ability to grow as an artist. The applicant can thoughtfully 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** and school projects.
- **Diversify** your portfolio with a mix of mediums. We want to know your interest and involvement in various mediums.
- Include **recent work** in your portfolio.
- Be prepared to **talk about the ideas** that went into a particular work.
- Be prepared to **discuss the process of making** your art piece and **why you made certain choices**.
- Be prepared to talk about **why you are interested in Film + Photography**, and why you are interested in attending GSA.
- Be prepared to discuss what you wish to get out of GSA, and your **strengths and challenges** in your art form.

- **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.

**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: gsainfo@kentuckycenter.org

Phone: 502.566.5192