

# CATALOG

## The Artist Institute

Main campus:  
1104 S Wall St. Suite B  
Belton, TX 76513

MMA Satellite classroom:  
120 Penelope St.  
Belton, TX 76513

(254) 221-6868

**Volume 1**

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## **HISTORY & MISSION STATEMENT**

Alexandria (Lexi) Zinko followed the customary route in learning to tattoo—she sought out a tattoo artist under whom she could apprentice. Through this traditional apprenticeship, the fundamentals of tattooing were passed on to her, and she became competent in the style of her mentor. Although her apprenticeship was insightful, she wanted to learn different, more modern tattooing techniques and had to acquire that knowledge on her own. She thought, “There must be a better way,” and The Artist Institute (TAI) was born.

After several years of operation in College Station, Texas, TAI relocated to Belton, Texas, in the spring of 2026. With the move, the school expanded its programming beyond tattooing to include art, piercing, and MMA instruction.

TAI’s mission is to promote excellence in technical studies, in order to prepare students to enter the industry workforce, in a competitive manner.

## **ACCREDITATION AND APPROVALS**

TAI has been approved by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Career Schools and Colleges Section, Austin, as a trade school in Texas. TAI is also accredited by ACCET - Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training.

## **FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

TAI has a main campus and a satellite classroom. The tattooing, art and piercing are done at 1104 South Wall St., Belton TX. The MMA is taught at Grapplers Lair Gym, 120 Penelope St, Belton.

These campuses are designed to enhance learning and provide students with real-world experiences. A variety of different equipment is onsite so that students can get an opportunity to experience their future profession in different ways.

## **ADMINISTRATION & STAFF**

**School Director:** Robert Zinko, PhD.

Robert Zinko brings a combined background in higher education, business ownership, and workforce development, with experience designing curriculum, training professionals, and managing instructional programs. As Director, he oversees academic quality, instructor development, and compliance with regulatory standards, ensuring that programs align with industry expectations. His leadership emphasizes practical skill development, structured training, and preparing students for immediate entry into professional practice.

**Tattoo Instructor:** Alexandria Zinko.

Alexandria Zinko is a professional tattoo artist who has owned and operated two tattoo studios, where she trained and mentored numerous emerging artists. With years of hands-on experience in both fine art and tattooing, she brings a strong foundation in technical skill, design, and visual composition to her instruction. Alexandria’s work has been featured in multiple exhibitions, reflecting her continued engagement with the broader art community and her commitment to artistic development. Her teaching emphasizes discipline, creativity, and the practical application of artistic principles across mediums.

**Piercing Instructor:** Tabatha Ramirez

Tabatha Ramirez is a professional tattoo and beauty industry practitioner with a background in both formal training and business ownership. Since 2021, Tabatha has owned and operated Ink and Memories, where she has developed hands-on experience working with clients and managing daily studio operations. In addition to her practical work, she has continued her professional development through advanced training opportunities, including NK Masters Workshop and Villain Arts events. Her combined experience in beauty education, tattoo practice, and ongoing skill development supports her role in providing instruction grounded in real-world application and industry standards.

**MMA Instructor:** Anathony “TJ” Waldburger

TJ Waldburger has over 20 years of training and experience in martial arts and combat sports. He is a 3rd Degree Jiu-Jitsu Black Belt and a highly accomplished former professional fighter, holding the record for the most submission attempts in a UFC match. His competitive achievements include Fight of the Night winner, two-time Submission of the Night winner, and Submission of the Week in the UFC, as well as two-time Shark Fights Welterweight Champion. In addition to his competition career, TJ served as an assistant coach for the 2010 All Army combative winning team. He has also spent more than 20 years training and instructing athletes through his own gym, developing fighters and students with a focus on technical precision, discipline, and performance.

**Fiscal Officer:** Dr. Tyishia Goldsberry

## **OWNERSHIP**

The Artist Institute is owned by Zinko and Associates, LLC., a company owned by Alexandria and Robert Zinko.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Christopher Furner, Business Professor, East Carolina University  
Ashley Blaydes, Tattoo Artist, Sacred Sisters Tattoo  
Scott Moorehead, Retired Tattoo Artist

## **ADMISSIONS**

Individuals applying to TAI are required to:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Present proof of secondary education (high school diploma or GED certificate). TAI does not accept ability to benefit students.
3. Meet any requirements of the specific program.

For prospects with Foreign Transcripts: Transcripts of secondary education presented to the Artist Institute in a foreign language, must be evaluated by an independent third party recognized by the United States Department of Education for equivalency status as a high school diploma in the United States.

Individuals who meet the above standards are then required to fill out an application and will then be contacted for an interview. During this interview, the TAI representative will answer any questions the prospective student may have, as well as discuss the different programs as they relate to the student's current situation, and goals.

For special need students, all reasonable accommodation will be made, but the student will still need the necessary mental and motor functions to operate as a tattoo artist. If a student has special needs that may affect his or her ability to complete required trade school tasks (the interviewer will discuss these), he or she is required to disclose them during the time of the interview, and the interviewer will discuss necessary accommodations.

TAI does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic origin, or religion.

## TUITION & FEES

**Application:** there are no application fees at TAI.

**Enrollment Period:** Enrollment is rolling.

**Registration:** There are no registration fees at TAI

**Books & Supplies:** See specific programs.

**Tuition rates:** Tuition is \$28.33 per contact hour. So, for a 1056-hour program (typically 2 semesters) the tuition is \$29,920. Tuition payment distribution is as follows:

Programs of 1,584 hours (e.g., Tattooing):  
0–450 hours: 28.41% of total tuition  
451–900 hours: 28.41% of total tuition  
901–1,350 hours: 28.41% of total tuition  
1,351–1,584 hours: 14.77% of total tuition

Programs of 1,056 hours (e.g., Art, MMA 1, MMA 2, MMA 3):  
0–450 hours: 42.61% of total tuition  
451–900 hours: 42.61% of total tuition  
901–1,056 hours: 14.78% of total tuition

Programs of 528 hours (e.g., Piercing):  
0–450 hours: 85.23% of total tuition  
451–528 hours: 14.77% of total tuition

We do accept GI Bill for all programs. There are no additional fees.

Failure to pay tuition by due dates will result in a student being withdrawn from the program.

The institution does not prohibit attendance or impose penalties while waiting on VA Payments, per 38 U.S.C. § 3679(e)(1)A&B.

\*In certain situations, students may be granted special disposition regarding tuition payments, being allowed to do a monthly ‘pay as you go’ program. To be eligible for this program, students must 1) demonstrate a need to be on the monthly payment program, and 2) present documentation that shows they will be able to make such payments in a timely fashion. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, and the students must apply for the special disposition, in writing, before the start of their program.

Money owed will be collected via check, cash or credit card, by the Director. If monies are not paid on time, the student will be dropped from the program.

Transcripts are provided to students at no cost, and are maintained for 5 years.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

**Need based:** dependent upon the expected family contribution, a limited number of needs-based scholarships are available. Students will be responsible for documentation of their financial situation, to include supporting evidence. Determination is based upon an assessment by the school to the student's situation, as well as available funds of the school at the time.

**Merit based:** dependent upon the student's past performance (such as grades, life experience, and exhibited artistic ability), a limited number of scholarships are available. Students will be responsible for documentation of their experience, to include supporting evidence. Determination is based upon an assessment by the school to the student's past work, as well as available funds of the school at the time.

Terms and conditions of awards: As a scholarship recipient, the student meets Satisfactory Academic progress requirements, remain continuously enrolled, Enroll full time (22 hours) during each semester. If a student fails to meet the academic progress requirements (i.e., resulting in their being on probation) and does not correct the situation the following semester (i.e., raises their performance, resulting in them successfully coming off probation) or chooses not to continuously remain enroll in TAI, the scholarship will be revoked. The scholarship is used only for tuition. It does not cover any other related costs.

Source of funding, and student notification: Funding is provided at the discretion of the Director and comes from the school account.

Application procedures and deadlines:

1. Director examines school finances, in the context of the 1 and 3 yr. plans, and determines adequacy of funds available for scholarships.
2. Prospective students are notified (currently, via conversation, but as the school size increases, this method will change) of scholarship award.
3. Students are instructed to write up a document, including a) what scholarship they are applying for (i.e., merit based or need based), and b) why they feel the award is appropriate for their situation. Students are then required to include any supporting documentation (e.g., art portfolio). All documentation should be given to the Director (currently, in person, but as the school size increases, this method will change). A student is not eligible to apply for a scholarship until they have been accepted into the program (i.e., the application does not have a fee). The deadline for applying is 1 week before the start of the semester that the student has applied for.

Criteria used to select award recipients: When possible, all identifying information is removed by the Director and the head instructor assesses the packages. The Director will assess the need-based scholarships (i.e., based upon the financial needs of the student, considering costs of

living, potential family contribution, etc.). The head instructor will assess the merit-based scholarships, reviewing the submitted art portfolio, in light of her experience in assessing potential tattoo artists. Specifically, she will be considering the level of artistic skill, in considerations as to how their current level of ability will translate into the necessary skills for tattoo artists.

Number of awards available: There are no minimum or maximum number of awards granted. As TAI currently only allows a single student to enroll at a time, if finances allow, a single award will be available.

For more information regarding scholarships, contact TAI.

## REFUNDS & CANCELATIONS

**Cancellation Policy:** A full refund will be made to any student who cancels the enrollment contract within 72 hours (until midnight of the third day excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) after the enrollment contract is signed. A full refund will also be made to any student who cancels enrollment within the student's first three scheduled class days (or never shows up for any class).

**Refund Policy:** Refund computations will be based on scheduled course time of classes through the last documented day of an academically related activity. Leaves of absence, suspensions and school holidays will not be counted as part of the scheduled class attendance.

The effective date of termination for refund purposes will be the last date of attendance (regardless of reason for termination).

If tuition and fees are collected in advance of entrance, and if after expiration of the 72-hour cancellation privilege the student does not enter school, no fees charged shall be retained by the school for the entire residence program.

If a student enters an education program and withdraws or is otherwise terminated, the minimum refund of the remaining tuition and fees will be the pro rata portion of tuition, fees, and other charges that the number of hours remaining in the portion of the course or program for which the student has been charged after the effective date of termination bears to the total number of hours in the portion of the course or program for which the student has been charged, except that a student may not collect a refund if the student has completed 75% or more of the total number of hours in the portion of the program for which the student has been charged on the effective date of termination (more simply, the refund is based on the precise number of course time hours the student has paid for, but not yet used, at the point of termination, up to the 75% completion mark, after which no refund is due).

Refunds for items of extra expense to the student, such as books, tools, or other supplies are to be handled separately from refund of tuition and other academic fees. The student will not be required to purchase instructional supplies, books and tools until such time as these materials are required. Once these materials are purchased, no refund will be made. For full refunds, the school can withhold costs for these types of items from the refund as long as they were necessary for the portion of the program attended and separately stated in the enrollment agreement. Any such items not required for the portion of the program attended must be included in the refund.

A student who withdraws for a reason unrelated to the student's academic status after the 75 percent completion mark and requests a grade at the time of withdrawal shall be given a grade of "incomplete" and permitted to re-enroll in the course or program during the 12-month period following the date the student withdrew without payment of additional tuition for that portion of the course or program.

A full refund of all tuition and fees is due and refundable in each of the following cases:

- a) an enrollee is not accepted by the school;
- b) if the course of instruction is discontinued by the school and this prevents the student from completing the course; or
- c) if the student's enrollment was procured as a result of any misrepresentation in advertising, promotional materials of the school, or representations by the owner or representatives of the school.

A full or partial refund may also be due in other circumstances of program deficiencies or violations of requirements for career schools and colleges.

The payment of refunds will be totally completed such that the refund instrument has been negotiated or credited into the proper account(s), within 45 days after the effective date of termination.

### ***Refund Policy for Students Called to Active Military Service***

A student at the school who withdraws from the school as a result of the student being called to active duty in a military service of the United States or the Texas National Guard may elect one of the following options for each program in which the student is enrolled:

- a. if tuition and fees are collected in advance of the withdrawal, a pro rata refund of any tuition, fees, or other charges paid by the student for the program and a cancellation of any unpaid tuition, fees, or other charges owed by the student for the portion of the program the student does not complete following withdrawal;
- b. a grade of incomplete with the designation "withdrawn-military" for the courses in the program, other than courses for which the student has previously received a grade on the student's transcript, and the right to re-enroll in the program, or a substantially equivalent program if that program is no longer available, not later than the first anniversary of the date the student is discharged from active military duty without payment of additional tuition, fees, or

other charges for the program other than any previously unpaid balance of the original tuition, fees, and charges for books for the program; or

c. the assignment of an appropriate final grade or credit for the courses in the program, but only if the instructor or instructors of the program determine that the student has:

1. satisfactorily completed at least 90 percent of the required coursework for the program; and
2. demonstrated sufficient mastery of the program material to receive credit for completing the program.

The payment of refunds will be totally completed such that the refund instrument has been negotiated or credited into the proper account(s), within 45 days after the effective date of termination.

## **STUDY DISRUPTION**

**Withdrawal Policy:** If a student should elect to withdraw from his/her program for any reason before the completion of his/her training, the student is expected to inform TAI. Whenever possible, the notification shall be either in written or in-person format. Withdrawal notifications by telephone, e-mail, or other communications method are deemed an “official withdrawal” based upon the credibility of the communication in the judgment of an appropriate school official. In some cases, the school may also accept third-party notifications, particularly when the student may be incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate with the school.

Under Texas Education code, Section 132.061(f): A student who is obligated for the full tuition may request a grade of “Incomplete” if the student withdraws for an appropriate reason unrelated to the student’s academic status. A student who receives a grade of incomplete may reenroll in the program during the 12-month period following the date the student withdraws and complete those incomplete subjects without payment of additional tuition for that portion of the course or program.

**Drop & Termination / Re-Admittance:** Students who have dropped from the school or have been terminated for violation of the school policies and standards, attendance or academic issues may request consideration for re-admittance by writing a letter to the School Director specifically explaining the following:

- What variables prevented them from maintaining satisfactory attendance, academic requirements or adhering to the TAI policies and standards?
- What has been done to correct the issue(s)?
- What can the school expect from the individual if allowed to return?

In addition, the student must be able to demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to complete the program.

**Leave of Absence:** The school Director may grant a leave of absence after determining that good cause is shown (e.g., for emergency situations such as a serious illness, debilitating injury,

or death in the immediate family). A student must submit a written request for a leave of absence in advance of the beginning date of the leave of absence, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing. The student must sign and date the leave of absence request and specify a reason for the leave (the reason must be identified in order for the institution to have a reasonable expectation of the student's return within the timeframe of the leave of absence as requested). The written request must include the student's understanding the procedures and implications for returning or failing to return to his/her course of study (e.g., I am requesting a 1 week leave of absence as my mother died. I understand that I am responsible for contacting my instructor, to make up the hours. Furthermore, I understand that failure to do so, or return at the end of my requested leave time, will result in a withdraw).

The Director will acknowledge the leave of absence, in writing.

The student will not be assessed student any additional charges as a result of the leave of absence.

A leave of absence must be limited to a maximum of 180 calendar days in any 12-month period or one-half the published program length, whichever is shorter. Multiple leaves of absence may be permitted provided the total of the leaves does not exceed this limit. An approved leave of absence may be extended for an additional period of time provided that the extension request meets all of the above requirements, and the total length of the leave of absence does not exceed the specified limit.

**Incomplete:** An "I" for Incomplete is assigned when all the work of a subject class cannot be completed due to circumstances beyond the control of the student. The student may complete the work by the end of the term, or the student can notify the school for readmission for one opportunity to complete the work in a subsequent term beginning no later than 12 calendar months after the end of the term in which the student was assigned the "I". If the class has been discontinued, either a) a comparable course will be provided, or b) the student will fulfill the obligations of the class working an independent study with an instructor.

## ATTENDANCE

Proper attendance is important, because tattooing is not a skill that an individual can effectively learn, without proper supervision. As such, TAI requires students to attend at least 80% of the classes. Furthermore, those receiving GI Bill must not miss more than 10 consecutive days, without being on an approved leave of absence. Failure to do so will result in the student being placed on academic probation (see satisfactory progress and academic probation section of the catalogue).

Tardiness and early departures are defined as any time a student comes late or leaves before the class has completed. If a student is tardy or has an early departure of more than 15 minutes, accumulative, over a week, the time needs to be made up.

Students are eligible, under the late work policy (see late work section of the catalogue) to turn in work they missed for lecture and lab classes.

A student's enrollment will be terminated if the student's participation in an academically related activity cannot be documented:

- (1) at the end of the first week of enrollment;
- (2) at the end of the first month of enrollment;
- (3) over a period of two weeks.

## **OPERATING TIMES**

**Observed Holidays:** TAI follows the Texas A&M system holiday schedule. As such, the school is closed the following holidays: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Additionally, the school is closed for the first 2 weeks of August. This results in 48 weeks of instruction, each year.

### **Hours of Operation:**

**SCHOOL HOURS OF OPERATION:** This varies by program. See program syllabus, for specific hours.

**SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS OF OPERATION:** By appointment.

## **CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS EDUCATION, TRAINING, OR EXPERIENCE**

### **Transfer Credit**

Credit from a previous enrollment from any institution, including a program from TAI, for a student enrolling with TAI is subject to approval by the Director.

The minimum acceptable grade for transfer classes is 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

Types of courses that will be considered: this includes any courses offered outside of an institutional setting, such as those offered by the military, in the workplace, through apprenticeship and/or training programs, or other such programs recognized by the American Council on Education's (ACE) Center for Adult Learning and Education Credentials programs. These are noted in the following ACE publications: The National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs and The Guide to the Evaluation of Education Experiences in the Armed Services.

As the program is 'hands on' there is no option for earning credit through examination.

No more than 50% of a TAI program may be fulfilled by transfer credits.

The student is responsible for submitting an official transcript from their previous institution. The student is also responsible for presenting evidence of equivalency (this can typically be done by producing a syllabus for the class in question, from the previous institution and showing how the material presented relates to the information on the TAI syllabus). At least 80% of the objectives in the TAI syllabus must be addressed in the syllabus from the external institution.

Official transcripts need to be mailed directly to TAI at 809 University Dr, East, Suite 100B College Station TX, 77840.

Supporting documentation should be emailed to the Director (s5876director@gmail.com). This email should include a point-by-point comparison of the TAI and external syllabus, showing the similarity (specifically how the objectives are met).

The student will receive a reply within two weeks of receiving all documentation, regarding the transfer classes.

Students are able to appeal the transfer of credit decisions, in writing, within 30 days of receiving the decision. Each point of the decision response must be addressed. The student will receive a reply within two weeks of the appeal. The student is required to email the Head Instructor at Alexandria.Zinko@gmail.com for the appeal.

If a student has recognized transfer hours from another school, the student will be charged a prorated portion of the program tuition. This prorated amount will be calculated by dividing the total number of hours the student needs for completion by the total amount of hours for the full program. This percentage will then be multiplied by the total amount of tuition for the full program.

The only financial aid associated with TAI is the scholarship program. If a student is offered a scholarship, it is also prorated (using the same foundations for the tuition formula).

There are no fees related to evaluation or granting transfer of credit.

Life experience credit process:

- 1) The student, in writing, must request that life experience credits be considered.
- 2) Upon receiving the request, the instructor for their program will meet with the student. The student will bring their portfolio of work (or, in the case of MMA instruction, their resume).

- 3) During the above meeting, the student may be required to perform specific tasks (e.g., for tattooing, proper client positioning, and sterilization skills cannot be assessed via portfolio viewing).
- 4) The Head Instructor will make an assessment of the life experience of the student, filling out a life experience credit form,
- 5) In order to add a layer of validity to the assessment, the instructor will then meet with the Director and give the reasons that the student should receive credit.
- 6) The Director will make the final decision on life experience credit
- 7) The student will be notified by writing, within 2 weeks of the meeting with the instructor, of the outcome.

There is no appeal for the decision made by the Director.

No more than 50% of the program may be waived in place of life experience credit.

## **PROGRAMS OF STUDY**

### Art / Body Arts Programs

Art (1056 hours, typically 2 Semesters)

The Art program is designed to teach the fundamental principles of art to individuals who wish to become professional illustrative artists. The curriculum emphasizes the development of both technical and creative skills, including drawing, composition, perspective, color theory, figure studies, digital art, and portfolio development. Students also gain hands-on experience with Procreate and other industry-relevant tools to prepare for modern illustration and design workflows.

The Art program provides training for the following positions:

- Tattoo Artist Apprentice (or fulfill the art prerequisite to enter TAI's Tattooing program).
- Studio Artist / Fine Artist
- Illustrator
- Freelance Digital Artist
- Concept Artist (entry-level)
- Muralist / Decorative Artist
- Gallery Assistant
- Creative Production Assistant
- Mixed Media Artist
- Community / Youth Art Instructor

Tattooing (1584 hours---typically 3 semesters)

The Tattooing Program prepares students to become professional tattoo artists. A working knowledge of art and proficiency in Procreate are required for admission—most students meet this requirement by completing the Illustration Program or equivalent experience.

The program begins with a detailed introduction to tattoo equipment, machine assembly and maintenance, stencil creation, and sterilization procedures to ensure a safe and sanitary work environment. Students then progress to tattooing on synthetic practice skin, where they refine their line work, shading, and technique under instructor supervision.

In the final stage, students tattoo live clients in a supervised studio environment, gaining real-world experience and developing a personal artistic specialization (e.g., fine line, neo-traditional, realism, Japanese, or geometric). Each student builds a professional portfolio showcasing a range of completed tattoos.

Upon graduation, students will possess the skills and experience necessary to work as professional tattoo artists in established studios or to begin building their own clientele.

#### Piercing (528 hours---typically 1semester)

The Body Piercing Program provides comprehensive training in safe and professional body piercing techniques, preparing students for immediate employment in licensed studios. The curriculum emphasizes both technical proficiency and public safety, ensuring students understand all aspects of hygienic practice and client care.

Course topics include:

- Anatomy and placement of common piercings (ears, nose, lips, navel, etc.)
- Sterilization procedures and use of autoclaves and single-use instruments
- Jewelry selection, sizing, and material compatibility
- Client communication, consent, and aftercare instruction
- Infection control and bloodborne pathogen training
- Studio setup, documentation, and regulatory compliance

Students gain hands-on experience under supervision, practicing placement techniques on training models before working with live clients in a controlled, hygienic environment.

Upon completion, graduates will be qualified to begin work as professional body piercers, understanding both the artistry and responsibility required to perform piercings safely and effectively within state and local regulations.

#### Mixed Martial Arts Instruction

The martial arts programs at The Artist Institute are designed to develop skilled and effective Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) instructors. While students naturally strengthen their own martial arts abilities through training, the primary goal of every course in this sequence is to prepare students to teach others.

As in most sports, only a small number of practitioners earn a living as professional fighters. The majority find long-term success as instructors, coaches, and program leaders. However, knowing a discipline is not the same as being able to teach it. These programs therefore emphasize teaching methodology, communication, safety, and class management alongside technical martial arts skills.

The head instructor at The Artist Institute brings direct experience from competing in the UFC, offering professional-level insight into proper training, instruction, and gym operations.

#### MMA 1 – Core Training and Instructional Principals (1056 hours, typically 2 Semesters)

The Artist Institute partners with Grappler’s Lair to provide expert instruction. These professionals have been active in MMA instruction for more than twenty-five years. Through their own experience and extensive network of gyms, they have identified a consistent shortage of qualified introductory (adult) and youth MMA instructors.

This shortage often arises because many skilled martial artists have never been trained in how to teach or how to work with youth, including understanding behavioral differences, maintaining safety, and managing liability.

Accordingly, this course focuses heavily on the pedagogy of MMA instruction—how to structure lessons, explain techniques, and adapt instruction to different learning styles and age groups. Students also gain a strong foundation in MMA fundamentals to support accurate and safe teaching.

Graduates will have the confidence and skills necessary to begin teaching fundamental or youth MMA classes, or to advance into the Intermediate MMA Instructor Program (MMA 2).

MMA 1- Core Training and Instructional Principals, provides training for the following positions:

- Assistant MMA Coach
- Assistant Jiu-Jitsu Coach
- Assistant Striking Coach (Kickboxing, Boxing, Muay Thai)
- Youth Martial Arts Instructor
- Assistant Youth Martial Arts Instructor
- Pad Holder / Technical Assistant
- Training Floor Supervisor
- Class Operations Assistant
- Event Day Staff (In-House Events)

- New Student Onboarding and Relations
- Summer Camp Martial Arts Instructor

### MMA 2 – Integrated MMA Systems (1056 hours, typically 2 Semesters)

The Integrated MMA Systems Program builds upon the skills developed in MMA 1 or is open to individuals with equivalent real-world experience teaching beginner and youth classes.

While the program continues to refine teaching methodology, the emphasis shifts toward helping instructors teach more advanced techniques and manage higher-level classes. Students deepen their technical understanding of MMA transitions, striking, and grappling so they can break these movements down clearly for intermediate learners.

Graduates of MMA 2 are qualified to instruct at the intermediate level, assist in advanced classes, and advance to the Advanced MMA Instructor Program (MMA 3).

In addition to being qualified for all the jobs listed in MMA 1- Core Training and Instructional Principals, MMA 2 – Integrated MMA Systems provides training for the following positions:

- MMA Coach
- Jiu-Jitsu Coach
- Striking Coach (Kickboxing, Boxing, Muay Thai)
- Program Coach
- Assistant Program Coach
- Competition Coach
- Assistant Competition Coach
- Class Operations (Lead)
- In-House Event Coordinator

### MMA 3 – Professional MMA Instruction & Operations (1056 hours, typically 2 Semesters)

The Professional MMA Instruction & Operations Program is designed for those who will train and coach others for competition in full contact mixed martial arts. This course does not prepare students to compete themselves but rather to understand and teach the standards, strategies, and responsibilities required to coach safely and effectively.

Students learn about competition rules, scoring systems, athlete preparation, safety protocols, concussion awareness, and event logistics. Technical instruction focuses on advanced MMA movements and strategies, coupled with guidance on how to teach and supervise them responsibly.

Upon completion, graduates will be qualified to serve as advanced-level instructors, competition coaches, and program directors, capable of safely guiding fighters through all phases of MMA training and competition preparation.

In addition to being qualified for all the jobs listed in MMA 1- Core Training and Instructional Principals and MMA 2 – Integrated MMA Systems, MMA 3 – Professional MMA Instruction & Operations provides training for the following positions:

- Head MMA Coach
- Head Martial Arts Instructor
- Pro Competition Coach
- Pro Fighter Coach
- Referring (Jiu-Jitsu Tournaments)
- Judging (Eligible to Test for License)

### **GRADING AND MARKING SYSTEM**

Students must pass all classes in a program to graduate from that program. All classes use Pass/Fail on assignments. For assignments that have multiple portions (e.g., a written test), the syllabus for that class will explain the percentages needed to pass.

**Late work policy:** Unless otherwise noted in the class syllabus, all classes at TAI will follow the policy that late work is accepted at a penalty of 10% per day. Modifications to this policy are acceptable for medical, emergency, or exceptional personal circumstances.

**Makeup work:** No more than 5% of the total course time hours for a course may be made up. Make-up work shall:

- (1) be supervised by an instructor approved for the class being made up;
- (2) require the student to demonstrate substantially the same level of knowledge or competence expected of a student who attended the scheduled class session;
- (3) be completed within two weeks of the end of the grading period during which the absence occurred;
- (4) be documented by the school as being completed, recording the date, time, duration of the make-up session, and the name of the supervising instructor; and
- (5) be signed and dated by the student to acknowledge the make-up session.

Instructor to student ratio: As tattooing needs close supervision, at first, TAI maintains a 4 to 1 student/instructor ration (this includes associate instructors, who are overseen by primary instructors).

## **SATISFACTORY PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC PROBATION**

Progress is evaluated every semester.

### **Purpose**

In accordance with federal regulations under 34 CFR 668.16(e) and 668.34, The Artist Institute has established this Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy to ensure that students receiving Title IV federal financial aid maintain acceptable academic performance and progress toward completion of their chosen clock-hour program in a timely manner.

### **Overview**

Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is a requirement for students to receive Title IV federal financial aid. This policy defines the standards students must meet, which include a qualitative measure (grades), a quantitative measure (pace of completion), and completion within a maximum timeframe. SAP is evaluated at the end of each payment period to ensure students are progressing toward program completion. This policy applies consistently to all students enrolled in Title IV-eligible programs within the same category (e.g., full-time), regardless of whether they received Title IV aid in prior periods.

#### **1. General Requirements**

To receive and maintain eligibility for Title IV federal financial aid, students must meet all three SAP standards as detailed below. Evaluations are cumulative, considering all periods of enrollment.

#### **2. Evaluation Periods for SAP**

- SAP is evaluated at the end of each payment period. A payment period for Title IV purposes is defined by the successful completion of both clock hours and weeks of instructional time.
- For The Artist Institute's programs, the payment periods are defined as follows:
  - Payment Period 1: Completion of the first 450 clock hours AND 15 weeks of instruction.
  - Payment Period 2: Completion of 900 clock hours AND 30 weeks of instruction (marks the academic year midpoint).
  - Subsequent payment periods follow this pattern until program completion.
- Evaluations measure the student's cumulative progress as of the end of the completed payment period. This frequency meets federal requirements [34 CFR 668.34(a)(3)].
- Instructors inform students of their progress through the following methods:

- Students are given verbal feedback on a regular basis. Also, the classes have ongoing assignments that receive pass/fail grades. Finally, students are given a completed satisfactory progress form at the end of each semester.

### 3. Qualitative Standard (Academic Performance)

- Students must pass all assignments. If they fail one, they are expected to retake it.
- Courses graded on a pass/fail basis are considered passing for this measure if a "Pass" grade is achieved, but do not impact the cumulative percentage average calculation; OR state how they are assessed.

### 4. Quantitative Standard (Pace of Progression)

- Students must successfully complete (pass) 100% of the cumulative clock hours they have attempted to ensure program completion within the maximum timeframe. This standard meets or exceeds the minimum federal requirement of 67%.
- Pace is calculated as:  $(\text{Cumulative Clock Hours Successfully Completed}) / (\text{Cumulative Clock Hours Attempted})$ .
- "Attempted" clock hours are defined as all hours the student was scheduled to attend in the program up to the evaluation point, including hours for repeated courses, withdrawn courses (after attendance began), and incomplete courses, but excluding hours for courses dropped during an official add/drop period and accepted transfer hours (which are handled separately, see section 7).
- Clock hours are not rounded up; only actual hours completed and attended count toward successful completion.
- TAI requires students to attend at least 80% of the classes.

### 5. Maximum Time Frame (MTF)

- Students must complete their educational program within a timeframe no longer than 150% of the published length of the program, measured in cumulative clock hours attempted [34 CFR 668.34(b)].
- Example: For a program published at 1,584 clock hours, the maximum timeframe is 2,376 attempted clock hours ( $1584 \times 1.5$ ).
- Students become ineligible for Title IV aid once it becomes mathematically impossible for them to complete the program within the 150% MTF limit. MTF is measured cumulatively, including all attempted periods, regardless of aid receipt.

6. Treatment of Grades, Withdrawals, Repeats, and Transfer Hours The following affect SAP calculations [34 CFR 668.34(a)(6)]:

- Incomplete Grades: Count as attempted but not completed hours for pace calculation until resolved. They do not initially impact the qualitative measure but must be completed according to institutional policy by the next evaluation point or will be treated as a failing grade.
- Withdrawals (W): Hours for courses from which a student withdraws after beginning attendance count as attempted hours but not completed hours for the pace calculation. They do not impact the qualitative (grade) measure.
- Repeated Coursework: Students may repeat a failed course according to institutional policy [Specify limits or reference policy, e.g., once]. All attempts count as attempted hours for pace and MTF calculations. Only the most recent grade earned counts toward the cumulative qualitative (grade) measure.
- Transfer Hours: Clock hours from another institution that are accepted toward the student's current program at The Artist Institute count as both attempted and completed hours for the quantitative (pace) and maximum timeframe calculations. They are excluded from the qualitative (grade) calculation.

7. Failure to Maintain SAP: Warning, Probation, and Suspension

- Financial Aid Warning: A student who fails to meet either the qualitative or quantitative SAP standard at the end of an evaluation period will be automatically placed on Financial Aid Warning for the *next* payment period.
  - Warning status lasts for one payment period only.
  - Students may continue to receive Title IV aid during the warning period.
  - No appeal is required for the warning period [34 CFR 668.34(c)(2)].
- Financial Aid Suspension: If the student fails to meet *both* the cumulative qualitative and quantitative SAP standards by the end of the warning period, the student will lose eligibility for future Title IV aid (Financial Aid Suspension).
- Appeal Process: Students placed on Financial Aid Suspension may appeal based on documented mitigating circumstances (e.g., injury or illness of the student, death of a relative, other special circumstances) [34 CFR 668.34(a)(9)].
  - Appeals must be submitted in writing to Director Zinko within 10 business days of suspension notification.

- Appeals must explain why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow them to make SAP by the next evaluation point or according to an academic plan. Supporting documentation is required.
- Financial Aid Probation & Academic Plans: If an appeal is approved, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation for one payment period.
  - Students on probation may receive Title IV aid for that one probationary period.
  - Probation may require adherence to an Academic Plan developed with the institution. The Academic Plan must outline specific requirements (e.g., attendance rate, grades) and define a specific point in time by which the student must meet regular SAP standards [34 CFR 668.34(a)(9)(iii)(B)].
  - At the end of the probationary period, the student must either meet the institution's regular cumulative SAP standards or meet the specific requirements of their Academic Plan to continue receiving Title IV aid in subsequent periods. Failure to do so results in Financial Aid Suspension (appeal rights may be limited after failing probation/plan).

8. Regaining Eligibility A student on Financial Aid Suspension may regain Title IV eligibility by:

- Taking action that brings them back into compliance with the cumulative qualitative and quantitative SAP standards (e.g., completing coursework without Title IV aid) and being successfully re-evaluated at the next payment period evaluation point, OR
- Having an appeal approved and successfully meeting the terms of their probation or academic plan.

#### 9. Communication of SAP Status

Students are notified in writing (via email to their institutional address and/or postal mail) of their SAP status after each evaluation, including placement on Financial Aid Warning, Suspension, Probation, or approval/denial of appeals. Copies of notifications and appeal documents are maintained in the student's financial aid file by The Artist Institute in accordance with federal record retention requirements.

#### 10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Title IV Administrative Contact and updated as necessary to reflect regulatory changes or operational improvements.

#### Readmission

Students who are readmitted will be required to show a performance that is appropriate for their level (see e2100 syllabus, for more information regarding levels). If the instructor assesses that the student is not at the same level at which they left, an appropriate level will be assigned.

### Probation

If a student fails to meet the cumulative 80% attendance or 70% grade average (or pass) for any evaluation period, or both, he or she will be placed on probation for the next evaluation period. Failure to achieve an 80% attendance or a 70% grade average (or passing), or both, at the end of the warning period will result in the administrative withdrawal of the student.

Students will be notified in writing when they are placed on probation and the steps necessary to be removed from warning status. Students will also receive attendance or academic counseling, from the School Director, as appropriate, when they are placed on probation.

The institution will notify a student by certified mail if he or she is being administratively withdrawn for unsatisfactory academic progress.

### Appeal Process

The student may submit a written appeal of her dismissal within five calendar days of her receipt of the dismissal notice. The appeal must be accompanied by documentation of the mitigating circumstances that have prevented the student from attaining satisfactory academic progress. Only extraordinary circumstances will be considered, such as death or severe illness in the immediate family. Before an appeal may be granted, a written academic plan must be provided to the student which clearly identifies a viable plan for the student to successfully complete the program within the maximum timeframe allowed.

The School Director will assess all appeals, and determine whether the student may be permitted to continue in school on a warning status, despite not meeting the satisfactory progress requirements. The student will be sent the written decision within ten days of the Institute's receipt of the appeal. The decision of the School Director is final.

Students reinstated upon appeal are on a probationary status for the next evaluation period, during which time they must meet the terms and conditions set out in the School Director's letter granting the appeal. At the end of the evaluation period, and at the end of every evaluation period thereafter, the student's academic status will be reviewed. The student may continue on probation as long as he or she meets the terms of the academic plan approved at the time the student's appeal was granted, until such time as satisfactory academic progress status is regained. The student reinstated after dismissal and appeal is not eligible for financial aid until he or she regains satisfactory progress status by meeting the minimum SAP standards.

### Maximum Time Frame

All program requirements must be completed within a maximum time frame of 1.5 times the

normal program length, as measured in calendar time. The Art of Tattooing program, 2 years in length, must be completed within 3 years. Time spent on an approved leave of absence is not counted against the maximum time frame. Students exceeding the maximum time frame will be administratively withdrawn.

#### Transfer and Readmitted Students

Transfer students from outside the institution will be evaluated qualitatively only on the work completed while at the Institute. If the student is readmitting or transferring into 1200, the level assigned will be based on the student's current, demonstratable skills (i.e., not the level they were on in the past).

The maximum time frame is reduced for transfer students, based upon the remaining length of the program in which they enroll. If the student transfers in 300 hours, and therefore must complete 1284 hours at the Institute (1584-300).

#### Reinstatement of Financial Aid

N/A

### **RIGHT TO ACCESS RECORDS**

The institution guarantees the students' right to access their records and its policy for releasing information about an individual student, in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). A written request is required.

### **REMEDIAL WORK AND REPEATING COURSES**

TAI does not offer remedial work. When a subject class is repeated, the higher grade for the repeated subject class will be considered in the determination of the student's grade average for the course of study.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT**

Large portions of class time for some of the programs in the school involve the use of needles. As such, school-wide policy places safety as paramount. Students on the TAI campus are expected to behave in a manner that will create a safe and orderly academic environment for themselves and others.

Each program has its own list of minor and major offences. See the syllabus of your specific program for more information.

Students accused of a minor offence will be verbally counseled by an instructor. Those accused of a major offence will instantly be sent home, and will not be allowed to return to campus until the issue has been reviewed by a panel consisting of faculty/staff. The student may be asked to defend/explain their actions, at the bequest of the panel. The panel may either 1) dismiss the charged, 2) suspend the student, 3) require additional actions by the student (e.g., drug concealing) or 4) remove the student from the program. There is no appeal to the panel's decision. Additionally, in certain situations, the police may be called (e.g., fighting and drugs).

Students will be subject to copyright infringement civil/criminal liabilities for unauthorized use/distribution of materials.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION**

A Certificate of Completion in the program will be awarded to a student who completes all the subjects of the course of study and maintains at least a minimum grade point average of 2.00 and has passed every class in that program. Students are required to complete all courses within 3 years.

A student who has completed the course of study but does not meet course completion requirements can contact the registrar for one opportunity to repeat subject classes with unsatisfactory grades in a subsequent term. This term begins no later than 12 calendar months after the end of the term in which the student was originally enrolled.

### **PLACEMENT SERVICES**

For those who graduate from the program, they are able to enter the workforce in Texas, for their field. TAI aids them by following online message boards, as well as general networking within the community. Any potential openings found, are then forwarded to students who request to be notified of such positions. TAI does not guarantee job placement.

### **STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

Complaints are defined as, 'any student concern regarding the school programs, services, or staff'. A student who has a concern about a school-related issue is encouraged to schedule a conference with the school Director to find resolution. If an issue is not resolved to a student's satisfaction through the conference, the student can file a formal complaint in writing with the school Director who will formally investigate the complaint, take appropriate action, and provide a written response to the student by the 10th business day after the day the formal written complaint is received by member of the school faculty or staff.

Note: a conference with the Director is not required before a student files a formal written complaint

If, after filing a complaint with the Director, the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, then the student may file a grievance with TWC:

Texas Workforce Commission  
Career Schools and Colleges, Room 226T  
101 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78778-0001  
Phone: (512) 936-6959  
career.schools@twc.texas.gov  
<http://csc.twc.state.tx.us/>

I hereby certify that the statements and information in this catalog are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Robert Zinko, School Director