PORTFOLIO ADVICE
The most frequent question we receive is what should be included in the entrance portfolio. Below, are listed a few things to think about as you edit your work for submission to the Graphic Design Program in the School of Art and Design at Western Carolina University.

Am I meeting the requirements asked for in the application?
This may seem simple, but you might be surprised by how many applications and portfolios we receive that do not follow the directions laid out in the application instructions. Read the instructions closely before beginning and check them again after you have finished preparing everything for submission.

Am I submitting enough work?
Sending five pieces of work is not enough to see the scope of your work. Sending fifty pieces indicates a lack of ability to edit your work.

Am I showing some form of the observational process?
With very few exceptions, work from observation is required in some form for all specialized art and design schools. The School of Art and Design/Graphic Design is no exception. The observational process is the foundation for almost every discipline within the School of Art and Design. It refers to the visual and psychological process of looking at the world around you, making decisions about how you want to interpret what you see, and then replicating that which you observe. This process is fundamental to creating and understanding all things visual.

Working from observation means that you are drawing what you see. For the portfolio requirements, demonstrate that you are able to go through this observational process. The medium you use and subject to which you choose to apply the observational process is up to you. Technical studies in various media are adequate but try to move beyond technical studies and use the observational process to express something that is connected to who you are and what you are thinking about. Some examples of subjects for work from observation are still life, figure, landscape, and an interior space.

What does my work say about me?
Is the work you are submitting telling us about who you are, what you've been doing, what your opinion is, where you want to go? Many applicants limit addressing these questions to the required essay. However, use your creativity and skills to address these questions visually. We want to see that you are willing to take some risks, go beyond what is asked of you, and that you are asking big questions.

Am I showing a range of skills and approaches?
Diversity of work is a very important part of the portfolio. It can include, but is not limited to, using different types of media, various visual styles or making work about different subjects. It also includes visually approaching a single question 100 different ways and then showing us the three that you thought were the most, or sometimes least, successful in answering that question. Show us that you are open to all kinds of creative solutions to all kinds of questions. Do not make work specifically for the admissions portfolio. Just make work, and lots of it. When it is time to apply, it is simply a matter of editing what you have made to show us what you might accomplish while you are here at Western Carolina University.

For additional advice on your work or the portfolio submission process, please contact our Graphic Design entrance portfolio coordinator, John Seefeldt jseefeldt@email.wcu.edu .