



Utah State University
Caine College of the Arts

Art | Design

Graduate Handbook

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Master of Fine Arts Degree:

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Credit Hours

Students must earn a total of **60 credits**. All coursework is determined by the student in consultation with his/her Thesis Supervisory Committee.

The following coursework is **required**:

- 42 credits of graduate level studio, including 6 credits outside declared emphasis
- 3 credits of ART 6900: Graduate Seminar: Professional Practices
- 3 credits of ARTH 6900: Graduate Seminar: Issues in Contemporary Art
- 3 credits of ART 6910: Graduate Interdisciplinary Critique;
- 3 credits of ART 6970: Research and Thesis;
- 6 credits outside the Department of Art and Design as specified by the supervisory committee

Forms and Fees

All forms must be kept up-to-date; changes must be approved and submitted to the department graduate program coordinator.

- Supervisory Committee Form: due end of second semester
- Program of Study Form: due end of second semester
- Master of Fine Arts First-year Candidacy Review Form: following review in second semester
- Appointment for Examination Form: due 10 working days before final examination
- Record of Exam Completion Form: signed and submitted by the Supervisory Committee to the Graduate School; available from the Graduate School
- Graduation Forms: fees paid and forms returned to the Graduate School:
 - Diploma Fee Payment Form
 - Commencement Data Card
 - Alumni File Card
 - Student Survey
- Letter of Completion: signed by Department Head; submitted by Department of Art and Design
- Plan B Binding Receipt: available from the library, returned to the Graduate School

Timeline

Year One		Year Two		Year Three	
Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Enroll in ART 6900 (3 cr)	Enroll in ARTH 6900 (3 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (3-6 cr)	Enroll in ART 6910 (3 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (3-9 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (3-6 cr) if necessary
Enroll in Grad Studio (3-9 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (3-9 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio outside area of emphasis (3-6 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (3-9 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio outside area of emphasis (3-6 cr)	Enroll in ART 6970 (3 cr)
Complete Supervisory Committee Form online and email to department Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC)	Complete Program of Study online and email to GPC		Enroll in approved course outside of Department of Art and Design – course should be approved by supervisory committee (3 cr)	Enroll in approved course outside of Department of Art and Design – course should be approved by supervisory committee (3 cr)	10 weeks prior to Thesis Exhibition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art work should be substantially completed and approved by thesis committee • Complete first draft of any written materials included in documentation approved by thesis committee • Receive written approval and schedule exhibition
Meet with Supervisory Committee at least once – turn in notes from meeting to GPC	Meet with Supervisory and perform first year candidacy review – turn in notes from meeting to GPC	Meet with Supervisory Committee at least once – turn in notes from meeting to GPC	Meet with Supervisory Committee at least once – turn in notes from meeting to GPC	Meet with Supervisory Committee at least once – turn in notes from meeting to GPC	
					4 weeks prior to oral defense: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of written documentary materials should be given to committee members • Promotional materials should be given to committee members for approval
					10 days prior to oral defense: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Appointment for Examination form and submit to GPC • Submit CD and other documentation to the GPC and the university library • Complete MFA Graduation Requirement checklist with committee chair



Residency and Status

- Students must complete a minimum of four semesters in residence as full-time students
- For students not serving as graduate assistants or otherwise employed on campus, nine credits per semester is the minimum for full-time status (12 credits is considered the maximum)
- For students employed on campus, full-time status is dependent upon the number of hours worked per week. A graduate student employed on campus 20 hours per week (.50 FTE), six credits is considered full time
- Students in their last semester, who require fewer credits to complete their Program of Study may also be considered full-time

Residency for Tuition Purposes

Graduate students have the opportunity to achieve Utah residency within one year. See appendix for residency application checklist, also available online at: www.usu.edu/admissions/docs/residencyFlyer.pdf

Graduate Student Insurance

Utah State University is pleased to offer an injury and sickness insurance plan for graduate students through First Student. The plan is underwritten by the United Healthcare Insurance Company.

An insurance brochure is available at www.firststudent.com. You can contact the company directly, toll free at 1-800-505-4160. If you have additional questions, you can also contact the Student Health & Wellness Center, 797-3505 or email to katelyn.richins@usu.edu.

Subsidized Graduate Students

Full-time graduate assistants working 20 or more hours per week and graduate students receiving \$10,000 or more from Utah State University are required to purchase this student insurance coverage at an 80% subsidized rate (or show proof of qualifying comparable coverage each semester in order to waive out).

International and Voluntary Graduate Students

Sample rates for international or voluntary graduate students are available on the student health services web site. www.usu.edu/health/healthinsurance/rates.cfm

Title IX

USU is committed to maintaining an educational and working environment free from discrimination and harassment, including maintaining an environment in which no student, faculty or staff member is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of its programs and activities as a result of one's gender. The university has an obligation to take immediate and effective steps to eliminate gender discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. An individual who has questions or concerns regarding possible discrimination based on sex should contact the Title IX Coordinator.

Stacy Sturgeon (435)797-0291
stacy.sturgeon@usu.edu



Important Contact Information

Laura Gelfand, Department Head	797-3425	laura.gelfand@usu.edu
Becky Winstead, Graduate Program Coordinator	797-1560	becky.winstead@usu.edu
Janet Hancock, Staff Assistant	797-3421	janet.hancock@usu.edu
Tori Moss, Staff Assistant	797-3460	tori.moss@usu.edu
Graduate School	797-1189	graduateschool@usu.edu
Office of Global Engagement (International Students)	797-1124	global.engagement@usu.edu
Stacy Sturgeon, Title IX Coordinator	797-1266	stacy.sturgeon@usu.edu
Katelyn Richins (Graduate Student Insurance)	797-3505	katelyn.richins@usu.edu

The Basics

The MFA is the terminal degree in studio art. It is a research-centered degree with the primary focus on practice in a particular specialization. The Department of Art and Design at USU offers the MFA with a specialization in ceramics, graphic design, interior design, painting and drawing, photography, printmaking, and sculpture. The MFA requires a minimum of five semesters of intensive study and the successful completion of 60 semester credit hours.

Thesis Supervisory Committee

a. Committee Chair

The Chair of the Thesis Supervisory Committee is appointed upon a student's acceptance into the program. Students should meet with the Chair regularly and consult with them when selecting committee members.

b. Forming a Thesis Supervisory Committee

Prior to completion of the first semester in the program students must form a three-person Thesis Supervisory Committee consisting of a chair who is faculty in the student's area of specialization and at least two graduate faculty members. One committee member may be from a department other than Art and Design pending approval by the committee chair.

Students are responsible for asking faculty to serve on the committee and they must complete and submit an electronic copy of the completed Supervisory Committee Approval form to the department graduate program coordinator.

If the committee membership changes for any reason, even temporarily, this must be reported to the department graduate program coordinator. Changes are not allowed during the final six weeks before the oral examination.



The Basics, continued

c. Committee Meetings

Students are required to meet with their committee at least once every semester. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for the meeting and to send reminders to each member of the committee. Students are to keep a record of each committee meeting and to give a copy of this record to the department graduate program coordinator.

d. First Year Candidacy Review

Students must schedule and complete the first year candidacy review before the end of their second semester. All members of the Thesis Supervisory Committee must be present for this review. There are three possible outcomes: continuation, probation, or dismissal. Students on probation must successfully complete a follow-up review the semester after the failed review or they will be subject to dismissal.

Thesis Exhibition

The MFA thesis is a visual presentation: it is the equivalent of a written dissertation in other disciplines. The thesis exhibition is the single most important requirement of the MFA program. It is the culmination of at least two, and often more years of intensive study in a single discipline. Work included in the MFA thesis must be approved by the Thesis Committee before the exhibition is scheduled. The thesis exhibition must be authorized by the Head of the Department of Art and Design and scheduled in the department office.

A minimum of ten weeks before the anticipated exhibition the following steps **must** be taken:

- Artwork for the exhibition should be substantially complete and approved by the Thesis Supervisory Committee
- A completed first draft of any written materials to be included must be approved by the Thesis Supervisory Committee

A minimum of four weeks before the anticipated exhibition, the following steps **must** be taken:

- Copies of written documentary materials should be given to faculty members
- Publicity materials (posters, postcards, etc.) must be submitted for approval to the Thesis Supervisory Committee

At least ten days prior to the anticipated exhibition:

- Complete Appointment for Examination form and submit to department graduate program coordinator



Thesis Exhibition, continued

Students must be registered for a minimum of three semester hours at the time of the exhibit. This usually includes ART 6970: Research and Thesis. Students are responsible for the design and execution of the exhibition and any associated tasks including announcements, posters, labeling, opening reception, etc., as well as closing the exhibit. All announcements and posters must conform to College guidelines and be approved **before** printing.

There are a limited number of exhibition spaces so exhibitions by two or three MFA students are encouraged. All students involved, as well as their committees, must be consulted before a joint exhibit is scheduled

a. Program of Study

A Program of Study form with the title of the thesis project must be completed by the student, approved and signed by all members of the Committee, and submitted to the Department graduate program coordinator by the end of the second semester.

b. Oral Defense

The University requires that students complete a final oral examination. Oral examinations will be held in the venue where the MFA exhibition is on display unless extenuating circumstances prevent it. Students must collect and complete an Appointment for Examination form and email it to the department graduate program coordinator. This must be done at least ten working days before the exam. Copies of written documentary materials must be given to your Thesis Supervisory Committee at least four weeks prior to the defense.

During the oral examination students must be prepared for questions on their thesis and be prepared to defend their work. The results of the examination are recorded on the Record of Examination Completion form. Four additional forms must be completed by the student and submitted to the Graduate School.

If a student fails the oral exam it is the responsibility of the Thesis Supervisory Committee chair to alert the Graduate School. Students who fail the oral exam are to work with the Thesis Supervisory Committee to decide on the appropriate course of action.

c. Written work:

The Thesis Supervisory Committee may require written work in addition to the artwork exhibited in the MFA show. If a written requirement is requested a first draft must be approved by the Thesis Supervisory Committee before a date for the MFA thesis exhibit is established. Grades for ART 6970: Research & Thesis will not be assigned until the written component of the degree is complete at which time the committee chair will submit the final grade.

d. Documentation:

Students in the Department of Art and Design complete degrees under what the Graduate School terms Plan B. Plan B requires a written paper or the creation of a work of art. The Department of Art and Design requires this “work of art” to be a thesis exhibition.

After the Thesis Supervisory Committee approves the artwork in the MFA exhibition and the written work (if required), students complete the MFA Graduation Requirement Check List (available in the department office) with guidance from the committee Chair.



Thesis Exhibition, continued

All Plan B students must submit a copy of their visual documentation and/or Plan B written work to the Department of Art and Design and to the current periodicals desk on the second floor of the Merrill-Cazier Library. Library staff supplies and signs a Plan B Binding Receipt that must be returned to the School of Graduate Studies before the degree is considered complete.

When all requirements on the check-list have been verified, a Letter of Completion will be prepared and signed by the Department Head and sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

For questions about style for written requirements refer to, K. L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, seventh edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Students are encouraged to consult the Graduate School Publication Guide, available at the USU Bookstore.

Graduate Classes

a. Graduate Seminars

Students must take ART 6900: Professional Practices during the fall semester and ARTH 6900: Issues in Contemporary Art in the spring semester their first year in the program. Students beginning their program of study in a year when the seminar sequence is not offered must complete it in the following year. These seminar requirements should be fulfilled before completion of the Program of Study form.

b. Graduate Interdisciplinary Critique

Students must complete one semester of ART 6910: Graduate Interdisciplinary Critique. It is recommended that students complete this during the second year of their program of study. Students should not enroll in ART 6910 concurrently with ART 6900: Graduate Seminar.

c. Credits outside of the Department of Art and Design

Students must complete at least six credit hours of classes in departments other than the Department of Art and Design. Classes should be selected in consultation with the Thesis Supervisory Committee and they should facilitate and inform the student's thesis. Normally the classes should be at the graduate level, but in exceptional cases up to three credit hours at the undergraduate level (3000 and above) may be accepted.

Program of Study

Students must finalize their Program of Study form after their Thesis Proposal Form is approved. Program of Study is available online and must be completed by the end of the second semester. Email the Graduate Program Coordinator upon completion so that the form may be submitted.



Financial Aid

Financial aid for graduate students in the Department of Art and Design is extremely competitive. All materials for application must be completed and submitted before February 1 to be eligible for consideration for funding the following year. In addition to applying through the Department of Art and Design, students are encouraged to contact the University Financial Aid Office and make a separate application.

a. Department of Art and Design Scholarships

Faculty may recommend students in various areas of specialization for funding from these scholarship funds.

b. Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of assistantships are available each year in various disciplines. These are awarded on the recommendation of the faculty.

c. College Awards

The Department of Art and Design annually nominates candidates for several fellowships and scholarships funded by the Caine College of the Arts.

d. Graduate Research and Creative Opportunities (GRCO) Grant

Graduate Research and Creative Opportunity (GRCO) grants provide a \$1,000 grant to support original research, scholarship, or creative work by USU graduate students with the guidance of a faculty member. Proposals include requests for funds to cover the costs of equipment, supplies, and project-related travel.

For more information go to grco.usu.usu

e. Work Study

Students receiving Federal Work Study money have several opportunities for employment in the department. Apply for work study through the University Financial Aid Office by mailing your application the first week of February.

For more information on graduate scholarships, please consult with the Financial Aid Office.

Financial Aid Office
Taggart Student Center 106
Logan, UT 84322-1800
Tel. (435) 797-0173
web: www.usu.edu/finaid/

Studio Space

Each area of specialization has studio space allocated for graduate students. Studio space is assigned by faculty in the emphasis area. Students who are given studio space should maintain the space and respect the working habits of those around them.

Keys

Apply in the Department of Art and Design office for building and studio keys.