The University of Arizona
School of Art
MFA Studio Art
Graduate Handbook
2021/2022
Overview
The Graduate College sets the guidelines for all graduate programs at the University of Arizona. Each graduate program sets additional program-specific guidelines. It is the student’s responsibility to understand both the University-wide Graduate College and MFA in Studio Art program guidelines.

Graduate College: grad.arizona.edu
General Catalog: http://catalog.arizona.edu/
Responsible Conduct of Research: https://rgw.arizona.edu/compliance/home
Academic Integrity: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity
Please take time to familiarize yourself with the various resources available for parents, for professional development, for health and wellness, etc.: https://grad.arizona.edu/new-and-current-students

Course Work Requirements
All students are required to complete 60 units of graduate level coursework. Graduate level courses are numbered 500 or higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITS</th>
<th>COURSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ART 696A, <em>Contemporary Art: Concepts and Issues</em> (taken in the 1st semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ART 642, <em>Graduate Interdisciplinary Critique</em> (taken 2x in the 1st 4 semesters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ARH 531, <em>Studio Introduction to Contemporary Art</em> (taken in the 2nd semester.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ART 596A, <em>Graduate Professional Practice</em> (taken in the 5th semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Studio Art units (as approved by the student’s faculty advisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Art History units (selected by the student). 6 of these units need to be ARH, 3 can be in another discipline (with the student’s faculty advisor’s approval), but cannot be an ART course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unrestricted elective units, (with the student’s faculty advisor’s approval)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students must be registered for ART 698 or ART 910 when working on the Thesis Exhibition. A written thesis is optional. If students opt to complete a written thesis they can choose to register for ART 910 the semester they are writing their thesis. If they are registered for ART 910 units, they are required to archive their thesis with the Graduate College through ProQuest. If students decide to archive their thesis with the Graduate College, it must include a written summary of the Thesis Exhibition project and the processes undertaken to create it. The document typically describes the author’s objectives, motivations, investigative procedures, and the results of the project in a manner that clarifies how the creative work represents a synthesis of knowledge. The written thesis should be approximately 20 pages long and requires the student’s Thesis Chair’s signature upon completion. Please see the Graduate College website for formatting instructions: https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses

Of the 60 units required, 30 must be taken for a regular grade of A or B; no more than 30 units may be Superior/Pass (S/P) courses.

Independent studies will only be granted to first year graduate students in exceptional cases.

Only courses designated repeatable in the Course Catalog may be repeated. Check the Course Catalog for all course restrictions.

A total of 12 units of graduate credits earned from other accredited institutions or as a non-degree seeking student at the University of Arizona may be applied for credit toward a Master of Fine Arts degree. Transferred credit must meet the following requirements:

- transfer no more than 20% of the total required units
- original transcripts must be on file
- must have received graduate credit
- must have received a grade of A or B
- must have completed units at an accredited institution
- Grades C, D, E, and Audit may not be used for credit towards the degree

All requirements for completion of a degree must be completed within a 6-year period, including transfer course work from other institutions. Any students wishing to transfer credits from another institution should do so within the first year of their program via the transfer evaluation form in GradPath forms. All students should meet with their faculty advisor each semester for academic advising. A Course Work Checklist will help assist in determining what requirements are needed.

**MFA Graduate Review Procedures**

**First Year Review**

The First Year Review is a review near the end of the first two semesters in the program conducted by a one-time Review Committee. The Review Committee is appointed by the School of Art and consists of one faculty member from the student’s program of study, who will serve as chair, (in the case of the Interdisciplinary
Practice Track (IP), the Chair will be appointed by the MFA Program Committee) and three other School of Art faculty. Students will receive ample notice about the exact review dates and the names of members of the Review Committee from the Graduate Coordinator. Students must provide each Review Committee member with a brief written artist statement one week prior to the review.

REVIEW PROTOCOL
During the First Year Reviews, students present their work in their studios to the Review Committee as follows.

1. Students should begin the discussion by briefly introducing themselves and their work, summarizing the underlying themes and concerns as detailed in their artist statement (see below).
2. Faculty will then critique and discuss the artwork and statement and ask the student questions about their work.
3. The conversation might address:
   a. Historical and theoretical precedents and issues that have been researched for the work.
   b. Conceptual development and future plans for the work.
   c. Technical challenges and accomplishments.
   d. Any other relevant lines of inquiry.
4. The Review Committee will assess the progress of the student and fill out forms that include any relevant recommendations. The forms are made available to the student after the reviews and become part of the student’s permanent file.

PRESENTATION OF WORK
Students can present work produced within their courses or independently. Sharing work produced prior to entering the program with the committee is permitted for introductory context, but does not fulfill the requirements of the review.

Unless other arrangements have been made, reviews take place in the graduate studios. Studios should be clean and presentable with work displayed in a professional manner. Students are not expected to remove furniture or make their studio space look like a gallery, but may want to remove any work they do not wish to address. The Grad Gallery, Gray Door Gallery, and Rombach Gallery are not permissible for First Year Graduate Reviews. Whenever physically possible, the actual artwork should be available for review. In situations where that is not feasible (site specific work, performance art, etc.), good documentation is essential.

ARTIST STATEMENT
Students must provide each committee member with a brief written statement about the work being critiqued one week prior to the review. The statement should address the work’s conceptual underpinnings as well as the physical and material processes used to create the work. It might also address relevant historical and theoretical context, or any other sources for or influences informing the work.
MFA Candidacy Review

The Candidacy Review takes place after students complete 18 - 30 units in the graduate program (including units they are currently enrolled in.) This is most commonly during the third semester in the graduate program. The Candidacy Review is conducted by the current tenure or tenure-track faculty in the student’s program of study. In the case of IP, two members will be appointed by the MFA Program Committee and two will be from the student’s core program of study. If students don’t have a core program of study, all four of their Candidacy Committee will be appointed by the MFA Program Committee. Additionally, students will receive ample notice about the exact review dates and must provide each committee member with a written statement one week prior to the review.

REVIEW PROTOCOL

Candidacy Reviews will take place in the graduate studios. Studios should be clean and presentable with work displayed in a professional manner. Students are not expected to remove furniture or make their studio space look like a gallery, but may want to remove any work they do not wish to address. The Grad Gallery, Gray Door Gallery, and Rombach Gallery are not allowable for Candidacy Reviews. Whenever physically possible, the actual artwork should be available for review. In situations where that is not feasible (site specific work, performance art, etc.), good documentation is essential. In the Candidacy Review the students must:

1. Present completed bodies of work created while in the graduate program and address issues of interest and concern, including historical and theoretical precedents and conceptual and technical challenges and accomplishments.
2. Provide a current artist statement.
3. Be prepared to discuss directions and plans for work not yet begun which would lead to a cohesive body of work for the Thesis Exhibition.

The faculty will be looking for evidence that the student has demonstrated:

1. The ability to create a cohesive body of work.
2. The willingness to learn and evolve.
3. The ability to write about relevant concepts, processes and methods.
4. The capacity to understand their work within the context of contemporary practices.

Faculty will then ask the student to leave the room while they discuss their development in the program and likelihood for a successful completion of the program requirements and progression to the final Thesis Exhibition. When the discussion is finished the student will be invited back into the room to hear the verdict.

If the Candidacy Review Committee denies the student candidacy, ample explanation will be provided to the student and on a form submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator. A second Candidacy Review will be scheduled for the following semester with specific expectations of work needed to pass. The Committee at the second examination should be the same as those present at the first. If substitutions are made in committee composition, a written explanation should
accompany the second Completion of Degree Requirements form. The results of the second Candidacy Review are final.

**MFA Thesis Committee**

After passing the Candidacy Review, students select a Thesis Committee Chair and Committee Members.

**Composition and Selection of the Thesis Committee**

The Thesis Committee must consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of five committee members, one of whom will serve as the Committee Chair. The composition of the Thesis Committee must adhere to the following protocol:

- **The Committee Chair**
  - The Committee Chair must be a current tenure-track or tenured School of Art faculty member from the student’s program of study with the following exception:
    - Students in the IP track can select a Committee Chair from any program of study in the School of Art, but that faculty member should be a current tenure-track or tenured faculty, and that faculty member must attend the student’s Candidacy Review, by the student’s invitation.

- **The Thesis Committee**
  - A minimum of three committee members should be current tenure-track or tenured School of Art faculty members from any School of Art program. When it is beneficial for the student’s research to add a committee member who does not fit the above criteria, exceptions can be requested for the fourth or fifth Committee Member (see Graduate College criteria (link) and “Requesting a Special Member” below).
  - While there are regulations regarding who can serve as the Committee Chair, the student retains the autonomy to invite any current tenure-track or tenured School of Art faculty member to serve as a committee member—so long as the student selects them before the first formal meeting of the Thesis Committee. Any concerns or issues the student might have about thesis committee composition can be discussed with the Thesis Committee Chair.
  - After the first formal meeting of the Thesis Committee, changes to the composition of the Thesis Committee (adding or subtracting committee members or changing your Committee Chair) can be made, but *only with approval* (see “Changes to the Composition of the Thesis Committee“ below). It is not uncommon that the addition of a fourth or fifth Committee Member will occur later in the timeline.

- **Selecting the Thesis Committee / Thesis Committee Agreement Form**
  - After a student decides which School of Art Committee Members they would like to invite to serve on their Committee, they inquire about their willingness to do so. Each member of the MFA Thesis Committee must sign the “Thesis Committee Agreement Form.”
  - A minimum of three Committee Members (including the Committee Chair) must be selected by the end of the semester in which the Candidacy Review is completed. If the student desires a fourth or fifth Committee Member they can also be added at this time.
• **Requesting a Special Member**: Professionals in a field of research relevant to the student’s thesis pursuits—that are not a current tenure-track or tenured School of Art faculty member—may receive special consideration to serve as a committee member. A request for a “Special Member” must be submitted to the Graduate College. This can include School of Art faculty and staff who are not current tenure-track or tenured faculty, faculty from other areas of study at the University of Arizona who are not tenure or tenure-track, faculty from other Universities, or people with the appropriate experience from outside of the University. To complete this, the student must first collect a current electronic copy of your Special Member’s CV or Resume. Complete the Special Member form available on the School of Art website http://art.arizona.edu/ under Students > Advising > Graduate Advising. Submit the Special Member form and CV to their Thesis Committee Chair. The Committee Chair will poll the rest of the thesis committee members. With a majority vote, the Committee Chair will approve the member. The student will submit this form to the Graduate Program Coordinator for final approval and submission to the Graduate College.

• **Changes to the Composition of the Thesis Committee**: After the first formal meeting of the committee, any changes to that initial composition of the committee must be approved by a majority of the members of the initial committee who are current tenure-track or tenured School of Art faculty members.

• **Non-Voting Members**: The School of Art does not allow the addition of Non-Voting Members.

**Officially Declaring Your Committee**
Students must submit the Plan of Study and Master's Committee Appointment Form at the beginning of their third year. The Plan of Study and Master's Committee Appointment Form are available in UAccess Student Center though GradPath Forms. Students should see the Graduate Program Coordinator for questions about completing GradPath forms.

**Required Thesis Committee Meetings**
In the semesters between passing Candidacy Review and the Thesis Exhibition, students must have a minimum of two meetings per semester with their entire Thesis Committee. These mandatory meetings are scheduled by the Graduate Program Coordinator on specific dates during the semester. **A week before each meeting, students send a statement of thesis progress to all their committee members.**

**Thesis Exhibition**
All MFA Candidates are required to present a final Thesis Exhibition during the last semester of their studio work. The nature, size, and scope of this exhibition is determined by the candidate and their MFA Thesis Committee. The thesis work must be of high quality, reflecting a well-defined direction of cohesive study completed in the program. The exhibition is normally scheduled in April and installed in two campus venues: The University of Arizona Museum of Art (UAMA), and the
Joseph Gross Gallery. Those students completing their thesis requirements during the fall semester will need to make arrangements for their exhibition in consultation with their Thesis Committee.

Students are responsible for executing a successful Thesis Exhibition. In cooperation with all members of the graduating cohort and the Museum and Gallery curator and/or preparator, students will install and de-install their own thesis work following all Museum and/or Gallery guidelines.

**Thesis Exhibition Examination**

The Thesis Exhibition Examination will be scheduled by the Graduate Program Coordinator to take place during the time of the exhibition. Students MUST be registered for 698 Graduate Studio or 910 Thesis during the semester in which the final Thesis Exhibition Examination is administered. 

*Students will send the committee the final thesis artist statement one week prior to the final thesis exhibition examination.*

**Final Documentation Requirements**

Students are required to submit a minimum of three and a maximum of 10 images of their thesis exhibition, a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 images of other work completed in the program, an image list, and an artist statement to the Visual Resource Center (VRC). The Graduate Program Coordinator will verify that all images and paperwork have been received by the VRC before any graduation paperwork will be processed. The requirements for images and image list are available on the School of Art website.

At the time of the Thesis Exhibition Examination, students must also present a Completion of Degree Requirements form (downloaded from the School of Art website) to their committee. All members of the committee must sign the Completion of Degree Requirements form. If the student has a three-member committee, the decision to pass must be unanimous. If there are more than three members there may only be one dissenting vote for the student to pass. The student must turn in the Completion of Degree Requirements form to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

**Second Thesis Exhibition Examination**

Should an MFA Candidate fail the Final Thesis Exhibition Examination, a Completion of Degree Requirements form noting the failure is submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator. When the time date, place has been set for a second examination (within six months of the original exam), students must present a second Completion of Degree Requirements form (downloaded from the School of Art website) to their committee. All members of the committee must sign the Completion of Degree Requirements form. The committee members at the second examination should be the same as those present at the first. If substitutions are made in committee composition, a written explanation should accompany the second Completion of Degree Requirements form. The results of the second thesis examination are final.

Students are encouraged to make audio-recordings in all of the meetings and reviews.
Grading Policy
All students must receive a “B” or better in graduate courses in order for these courses to count toward their degree. A grade of “C” or below will affect your overall GPA, but not advance progress toward the MFA degree. Incompletes will only be granted under the most extenuating circumstances. The student and instructor should complete an Incomplete Grade Report. Failure to make up incompletes by the end of the following semester will lead to a negative evaluation of the student. Failure to make up an incomplete by the end of a calendar year will result in a failing grade (“E”) for the course. In a significant extenuating circumstance, the student has the option to request an extension before the incomplete becomes an “E.” Final thesis exhibition examinations may not be taken until all incomplete coursework has been completed.

MFA Graduate Studios
The School of Art has approximately 37 graduate studio spaces for assignment to MFA students. Graduate studio space is provided for the express purpose of the production of art objects and scholarly work. It is expected that the student will use the space for this purpose only, and lack of proper use will terminate studio privileges. Studio space is assigned to a specific person and is not to be used or shared by any other person without approval of the School of Art Director. The person to whom the space is assigned is responsible for the care and condition of the studio space. Any violation of this agreement will result in the studio privilege being revoked. MFA students may have a space in the studios for no longer than three years. If a student takes more than three years to complete their degree, the studio space will be relinquished at the end of three years. Please see the Graduate Program Coordinator for all general studio information. Students must complete and turn in the studio contract forms to the Graduate Program Coordinator before receiving cabinet locker keys and access codes, and must pay the $200.00 studio deposit fee to the Business Office, Rm 11, upon moving into the studio.

Graduate Teaching Assistants
The School of Art offers a limited number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) to qualified MFA students. Assistantships are awarded upon faculty recommendation and/or application submission. On rare occasions, GTAs may be awarded to an incoming graduate student. These assignments are made on an academic semester basis and may be renewed. Each Graduate Teaching Assistant needs to sign a hiring contract and complete a series of online trainings before the beginning of each semester they teach. A student must be registered for a minimum of six units of graduate credit during a teaching semester. International students have additional English speaking proficiency requirements to be a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

Practicum
Students must complete a practicum before they are eligible to be Graduate Teaching Assistants. A practicum allows students the opportunity to shadow a professor and assist in teaching a class in order to better understand how to structure and manage a class of their own. To register for a practicum, students must complete a Graduate Independent Coursework Form available on the School of Art website.
Independent Study & Internships
Grading for Independent Study and Internships is Superior/Pass (S/P).

Independent Study
Independent Studies are for students working on a project on an individual basis with a faculty member. Students participating in independent studies must complete a Graduate Independent Coursework Form, available on the School of Art website. The student and faculty member directing the Independent Study must sign this form. The student must have a specific purpose for the project, as well as a specific outline of work to be completed. Independent studies will only be granted to first year graduate students in exceptional cases.

Internships
An internship is for students working in outside agencies (i.e., Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona Museum of Art). Students participating in an Internship must complete a Graduate Internship Contract, available on the School of Art website. This packet must be signed by the student, the School of Art faculty member, and by the Internship Supervisor. The student must have a specific purpose for the internship, as well as a specific outline of activities and responsibilities.

Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy
The University of Arizona is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. In support of this commitment, the University prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on a protected classification, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information. The University encourages anyone who believes they have been the subject of discrimination to report the matter immediately as described in these links.
https://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy

All members of the University community are responsible for participating in creating a campus environment free from all forms of prohibited discrimination and for cooperating with University officials who investigate allegations of policy violations.

Grievances
Excluding instances of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, graduate students who feel they have been treated unfairly, or have unresolved differences or difficulties with someone should follow the below steps to resolve the issue. With few exceptions, students should first attempt to resolve difficulties informally by bringing those concerns directly to the person responsible for the action. If the problem cannot be resolved informally with the person responsible, then the student would bring the issue to the Graduate Program Coordinator, who will help the student find the appropriate next step. If the problem cannot be resolved
informally, the student may be able to file a formal grievance. Please see the complete grievance policy and other resources on the Grad College website: https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/grievance-policy

A summary of the grievance types and responsible parties is available here: https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/summary-grievance-types-and-responsible-parties

Petition
Students can formally petition for an exception to be made to the policies established by the School of Art in the handbook by submitting a SOA Petition, available on the School of Art website. Students can formally petition policies established by the Graduate College by completing a Graduate Petition.

Appeal
If a student disagrees with a decision made by the program or School, they may appeal the decision using the SOA Appeal form, available on the School of Art website.

Email
A university email account is required for all students. Email is the official form of communication of the University of Arizona and will be the primary form of communication from the School of Art. Students must also have a university email account to be included on the listserv for all School of Art and University correspondence.

Graduate Council
The School of Art Graduate Council is an opportunity for graduate students to participate in shared governance and is charged with serving as liaison between the School of Art administration, faculty, and fellow graduate students. Some topics that Graduate Council could address include: graduate curriculum, graduate facilities and equipment, visiting artists, graduate student policies, research opportunities and activities, as well as the School of Art’s vision and direction. The graduate council often coordinates and provides input in various efforts among graduate students and the community — for example, open studio days and graduate gallery programming.

Graduate students in each program (Art History, AVCE, 2D, 3DXM, PVI, I+D) will nominate one representative.

1. MA from ARH
2. PhD from ARH
3. MA from AVCE
4. PhD from AVCE
5. MFA from 2D
6. MFA from 3DXM
7. MFA from PVI
8. MFA from I+D
These eight representatives will make up the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council will nominate one chair who will attend one School Executive Committee (SEC) meeting each semester and coordinate the Council meetings. The Graduate Council will also nominate representatives to be full non-voting members of the School of Art Curriculum, Facilities, VASE and College of Fine Arts Student Advisory Committees.

Program representatives are invited to attend one program meeting yearly, preferably in the beginning of the academic year. At program meetings when the Graduate Council representative is in attendance, faculty will not discuss matters regarding fellow students. If attending a program meeting is not possible, the Graduate Council representative could also meet with the program chair. If additional attendance or meetings with the program are desired, that will be determined by the Graduate Council representative and Program Chair.

Graduate Council can request a maximum of $150 per event for up to two Grad Council events each academic year. Unused funds from one year cannot be banked for future years.

Election Process: Each spring, all graduate students will be asked to email the Graduate Program Coordinator to nominate a representative from their program to serve on the following year’s Graduate Council. The Graduate Program Coordinator will compile the results. If the student nominated does not wish to serve on the Graduate Council, the next person will be asked, and so on. The Graduate Program Coordinator will schedule the Graduate Council’s first meeting of the year.

Financial Assistance
SCHOOL OF ART SCHOLARSHIPS – spring deadline for fall awards
75,000 + awarded yearly

MEDICI SCHOLARSHIPS, COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS - April deadline for written proposals for domestic and international summer travel research.


THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM – application dates throughout the semester, September / November / February / April / June.