

# Graduate Handbook



Caine  
College of the Arts  
UtahStateUniversity

Revised 2022

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# MFA

## Important Contact Information

Dan Murphy, Graduate Committee Co-Chair (Ceramics)	797-7372	dan.murphy@usu.edu
Kathy Puzey, Graduate Committee Co-Chair (Dept Head/Printmaking)	797-0261	kathy.puzey@usu.edu
Janet Wilhelm, Graduate Program Coordinator	797-3421	janet.wilhelm@usu.edu
Mike Daines, Graduate Committee (Graphic Design)	797-1309	mike.daines@usu.edu
Woody Shepherd, Graduate Committee (Drawing/Painting)		woody.shepherd@usu.edu
Darrin Brooks, Graduate Committee (IA&D)		darrin.brooks@usu.edu
Marissa Vigneault, Graduate Committee (Art History)		marissa.vigneault@usu.edu
John Neely, Graduate Committee (Ceramics)		john.neely@usu.edu
Tori Moss, Staff Assistant (keys)	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
Title IX Office	797-1266	titleix@usu.edu
Katelyn Richins (Graduate Student Insurance)	797-3505	katelyn.richins@usu.edu
Erika Beckstrand (USU 7920 Instructor)	797-3741	erika.beckstrand@usu.edu

## The Basics

The MFA is the terminal degree in studio art and design. 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 architecture & 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.

## Program of Study

A Program of Study planner must be completed by the student, approved by all members of the Committee, and submitted to the department Graduate Program Coordinator by the end of the second semester. The GPC will enter it into Degreeworks and ServiceNow for approval by the committee and graduate school. The POS Planner can be found here: <https://cca.usu.edu/art/students/apply#graduate>

## Faculty advisor

A faculty advisor is appointed upon student's acceptance into the program. They are a resource for answering questions and providing guidance.

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## Credit Hours

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

The following coursework is required:

- 42 credits of graduate level studio, including 6 credits outside declared emphasis (***students must consult with their committee chair and the professor they are interested in taking hours with before registering***)
- 3 credits of ART 6900: Graduate Seminar: Professional Practices (required for studio arts disciplines; optional for graphic design and interior architecture & design students in the case that a related course, more specific to their area of study, be taken in its place at the recommendation of the students Thesis Advisory Committee)
- 3 credits of ARTH 6755: Contemporary Art 1989- present or as specified by the supervisory committee
- 3 credits of additional Art History (6000 level), area specific theory, or theory-related credits outside the department as advised by the Thesis Supervisory Committee
- 3 credits of ART 6910: Graduate Interdisciplinary Critique
- 3 credits of ART 6970: Research and Thesis
- 3 credits outside the Department of Art and Design as specified by the supervisory committee

Coursework below the 5000 level should be outside the students degree field and must be approved by the students supervisory committee as appropriate for the students individual degree program. Courses below the 3000 level are not acceptable. **Only one class below the 5000 level is allowed.**

Students must maintain an institutional GPA of 3.0 or higher.

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## 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 (SCAF): due end of second semester <https://usu.service-now.com/aggies>
- Program of Study (POS): due end of second semester
- Master of Fine Arts First and Second Year **Candidacy Review Forms**: due following your reviews at the end of your 2nd and 4th semesters.  
This form can be found online: <https://cca.usu.edu/art/students/apply#graduate>
- Appointment for Examination (AOE): due 10 business days before final examination <https://usu.service-now.com/aggies>
- Record of Exam Completion (ROE): After your defense, your major professor should inform your GPC of the results, and your GPC will submit the Record of Examination in ServiceNow.
- Graduation Forms - fees paid and forms returned to the Graduate School:
  - Diploma Fee Payment Form
  - Commencement Data Card
  - Alumni File Card
  - Student Survey
- Thesis uploaded to Digital Commons <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports/>

# Timeline

Year One		Year Two		Year Three	
Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Enroll in ART 6900 (3 cr)	Enroll in ARTH 6755 (3 cr) or ARTH as advised by your Supervisory Committee	Enroll in Grad Studio (6 cr)	Enroll in ART 6910 (3 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (6 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (6 cr) <b>for a grand total of 36 Grad Studio Credits</b>
Enroll in Grad Studio (6 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (6 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio outside area of emphasis (3 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio (6 cr)	Enroll in Grad Studio outside area of emphasis (3 cr)	Enroll in ART 6970 (3 cr)
	If you are from out of state apply for <b>residency</b> by August 1...before fall of year two	Enroll in additional ARTH or area specific theory or theory-related credits – 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)		<b>10 weeks prior to Thesis Exhibition:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art work should be substantially completed and approved by thesis committee</li> <li>• Complete first draft of any written materials included in documentation approved by thesis committee</li> <li>• Receive written approval and schedule exhibition</li> </ul>
Meet with potential committee members and begin forming your Supervisory Committee	Complete Supervisory Committee Approval Form (SCAF) in ServiceNow			Review MFA Graduation Requirement checklist with committee chair	
	Meet with Supervisory Committee and perform first year candidacy review – submit signed MFA 1st year Candidacy Review Form to GPC	Meet with Supervisory Committee at least once	Meet with Supervisory Committee at least once – submit signed MFA 2nd year Candidacy Review Form to GPC	Meet with Supervisory Committee at least once	<b>4 weeks prior to oral defense:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of written documentary materials should be given to committee members</li> <li>• Promotional materials should be given to committee members for approval</li> </ul>
If you are receiving a TA, you must take <b>USU 7920</b> before the semester starts. International students must also take IELI 7920. You only need to take this/these class(es) once. They are both 0 credit and 0 tuition courses. E-mail Erika. Beckstrand@usu.edu for more information on the courses.	Complete Program of Study (POS) planner and e-mail to GPC				<b>10 business days prior to oral defense:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Appointment for Examination form and submit to GPC</li> <li>• Submit digital copy of thesis and other documentation to the GPC and the university library</li> </ul>

# MFA

## Thesis Supervisory Committee

### a. Forming a Thesis Supervisory Committee

Prior to completion of the second semester in the program students must form a 3-4 person Thesis Supervisory Committee consisting of a chair who is faculty in the student's area of specialization and at least two additional faculty members. At least one member must represent the student's area of specialization, **and at least one must be from outside the specialization area**. One committee member may be from a department other than Art + 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 in ServiceNow (<https://usu.servicenow.com/aggies Home>Graduate Studies>Supervisory Committee Initial>). The department Graduate Program Coordinator will audit and approve it before sending it on for committee signatures. Due by the end of the second semester.

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.*  
*\*If you are receiving a STEM or XSTEM award, a STEM faculty member **MUST** be on your committee.*

### b. Committee Meetings

Students are required to meet with their committee **at least once every semester**. It is the *students responsibility to arrange for the meeting* and to send reminders to each member of the committee.

### c. First and Second 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.

The MFA Candidacy Review Form can be found at: <https://cca.usu.edu/art/students/apply#graduate>

## 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 Department Head of Art and Design and scheduled in the department office.

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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
- Training for installation and deinstallation must be completed with the Gallery Coordinator

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. Please send approved digital copies to GPC.

At least ten business days prior to the anticipated exhibition:

- Complete Appointment for Examination form in ServiceNow (Home>Service Catalog>Graduate Studies>Degree Requirements>Appointment for Examination)

Students must be registered for a minimum of three semester hours at the time of their exhibition. These hours must include 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 by production services **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. 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 submit an Appointment for Examination form in ServiceNow. 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. Chair of committee will notify GPC on the results of the examination. GPC will complete the Record of Examination Completion form based on those results.

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.



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## **b. 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.

## **c. 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 from the graduate school) with guidance from the committee Chair.

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 upload the approved thesis to Digital Commons.

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).

<http://jcs.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/A-manual-for-writers-of-research-papers-theses-and-dissertations.pdf>

Students are encouraged to consult the Graduate School Publication Guide, available by clicking on the link “Publication Guide for Graduate Students” on this page:

<https://www.usu.edu/cs/students/graduate/thesis-style>

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## 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.

### 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. Assistantships are considered 20 hours per week. Additional employment at USU must be approved via the Petition to Work Greater than 20hrs ([https://usu.service-now.com Home>Services>Graduate Studies>Financial>Petition to Work Greater than 20hrs](https://usu.service-now.com/Home>Services>Graduate%20Studies>Financial>Petition%20to%20Work%20Greater%20than%2020hrs)).

Students must stay under 30 hours/week between their assistantship and additional USU positions, which means they can only work an additional 9 hours/week maximum in any other USU position.

### 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 <https://research.usu.edu/grco/>

### 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. <https://www.usu.edu/financialaid/aid/work-study>

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/financialaid/](http://www.usu.edu/financialaid/)

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## 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

Building and studio keys can be ordered by staff in the Art + Design office.

## Research Resources

### Graduate Training Series

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies fosters the success of USU's graduate students by providing valuable opportunities that promote individual capacity development, interdisciplinary integration and student engagement. The Graduate Training Series (GrTS) is one of those opportunities.

GrTS workshops are structured around graduate students' needs. Topics are chosen with input from graduate students through surveys and focus groups.

USU departments and colleges provide unique resources to enrich their students' graduate school experiences. GrTS workshops tap into some of those resources, making them available to any USU graduate student, regardless of discipline or degree.

<https://gradschool.usu.edu/trainings/index>

### Office of Research Workshops and Seminars

The graduate student grant writing seminar is a modification of the faculty grant writing seminar and is tailored to the needs of graduate students and those who have little to no grant writing experience. Attendees will leave the seminar understanding the why as well as the how of grant writing. This seminar will help demystify the process and emphasize how the approaches taught can also be applied to planning and writing a thesis project or paper for publication.

<https://gradschool.usu.edu/trainings/index>

### Graduate Student Funding for Research

<https://research.usu.edu/rd/grad-funding/>

### Arts and Humanities Proposal Writing Seminar

<https://research.usu.edu/rd/arts-humanities-gw-seminar/>

# MFA

## 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. Students should apply for residence 12 months after their arrival in Utah. See appendix for residency application checklist, also available online at: <https://www.usu.edu/admissions/residency/>

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](https://www.usu.edu/health/healthinsurance/rates.cfm)

## Title IX

Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Employees have the duty to report incidents of sexual violence or other student misconduct to the University by filling out the forms located at <https://aaeo.usu.edu/index>. Your information will be kept as confidential as possible and shared only with university employees who need to know in order to assist in the assessment, investigation and resolution of the report.

USU Title IX Coordinator: (435)797-1266  
[titleix@usu.edu](mailto:titleix@usu.edu)  
<https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator>



## **Notice of Non-discrimination**

In its programs and activities, including in admissions and employment, Utah State University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by University policy, Title IX, or any other federal, state, or local law. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations and/or USU's non-discrimination policies:

### **Executive Director of the Office of Equity**

Alison Adams-Perlac  
alison.adams-perlac@usu.edu  
Old Main Rm. 161  
435-797-1266

### **Title IX Coordinator**

Hilary Renshaw  
hilary.renshaw@usu.edu  
Old Main Rm. 161  
435-797-1266

For further information regarding non-discrimination, please visit <https://equity.usu.edu/>, or contact:

U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
800-421-3481  
OCR@ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education  
Denver Regional Office  
303-844-5695  
OCR.Denver@ed.gov