GRADUATE HANDBOOK
2020-2021

MFA
SCHOOL OF ART
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
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Director’s Welcome

We welcome you to the School of Art’s nationally recognized and respected Master of Fine Arts program. We are proud of our program and believe the students who accept our invitation to study are well served by our committed faculty and staff.

The School of Art upholds the pursuit of excellence in the creation and study of art. We affirm the value of creative individual expression in the pursuit of knowledge, and the capacity of art to express beauty, evoke wonder, confront injustice, and test our values. We believe that art can be a catalyst for personal growth as well as social reform. We believe society can be transformed by artists who possess a sound foundation in the liberal arts, independence and inquisitiveness of mind, and practical working skills in the making and study of the arts.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, offers a NASAD accredited 60-credit, three-year MFA degree in Studio Art with concentrations in Ceramics, Time-Based Art, Painting + Drawing, Printmaking, and Sculpture. Our program is ranked 42nd nationally—22nd among MFA programs at public universities—by US News and World Report, and our printmaking concentration is ranked 4th nationally.

The school takes seriously its role of guiding students toward individual creative and educational fulfillment. Members of our faculty are internationally-recognized and actively engage in their research and creative practices. The Artist-in-Residence Program and the Visiting Artists and Scholars Program feature prominent individuals who further enhance our teaching environment and work with our students through a variety of venues.

The School of Art has an active exhibition program supported by the Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture and the University of Tennessee Downtown Gallery, both of which host major exhibitions of work by national and international artists. The school also maintains an off-campus gallery, Gallery 1010, which is a student run, non-profit exhibition space.

Christopher McNulty
Director + Professor
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, School of Art
Introduction

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students.

The School of Art Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies noted in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide to the Master of Fine Arts degree in the School of Art at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. It is directed specifically toward graduate students newly accepted and already enrolled in the program. It is presented in the belief that a thorough understanding of the responsibilities and options of graduate study in the School of Art will facilitate a smoother and more productive experience. Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Graduate Catalog represents the offerings and requirements in effect at the time of publication, but there is no guarantee that they will not be changed or revoked. The course offerings and requirements of the institution are continually under examination and revision. However, adequate and reasonable notice will be given to students affected by any change. This catalog is not intended to state contractual terms and should not be regarded as a contract between the student and the institution. The institution reserves the right to change any provision, offering, or requirement to be effective when determined by the institution. These changes will govern current and readmitted students. Enrollment of all students is subject to these conditions. The current catalog should be referred to during each year of study. The university further reserves the right to dismiss a student from the university for cause at any time.

Graduate students must assume full responsibility for knowledge of rules and regulations of the Graduate Council and departmental requirements for the chosen degree program. The Dean of the Graduate School must approve any exceptions to the policies stated in the Graduate Catalog. Individual colleges and departments may have requirements beyond the minimum established by the Graduate Council. A calendar of deadlines and policies and procedures for graduate programs is found on the Graduate School website. A statement of graduate students’ rights and responsibilities is included with the admission notification.

The Hilltopics Student Handbook details the general campus policies and procedures, standards of conduct, academic policies and procedures, and information about student support, services, and organizations. For questions regarding Hilltopics contact the Office of the Dean of Students at (865) 974-3179.

The Student Appeals Procedure and other resources are available on the Graduate School website.
School of Art Faculty & Staff

Administration

Christopher McNulty, Director
Timothy Hiles, Associate Director
Emily Bivens, Director of Graduate Studies
Sally Brogden, Director of Freshman Studies

Faculty

Joshua Bienko, Associate Professor -------------- Painting/Drawing
Emily Bivens, Professor ----------------------------- 4D/Time-Based Art + Cinema Studies
Sally Brogden, Professor ------------------------------- Ceramics
Jason Brown, Associate Professor ------------------ Sculpture
Mary Campbell, Associate Professor ---------------- Art History
Rubens Ghenov, Assistant Professor ------------------ Painting/Drawing
Paul Harrill, Professor ----------------------------- 4D/Time-Based Art + Cinema Studies
Timothy Hiles, Associate Professor ---------------- Art History
John C. Kelley, Assistant Professor ----------------- 4D/Time-Based Art + Cinema Studies
Mary Laube, Assistant Professor --------------------- Painting/Drawing
Baldwin Lee, Professor Emeritus -------------------- Photography
Paul Lee, Professor ------------------------------- Photography
Beauvais Lyons, Professor -------------------------- Printmaking
Frank Martin, Associate Professor ------------------ Ceramics
Althea Murphy-Price, Associate Professor ---------- Printmaking
John D. Powers, Associate Professor -------------- Sculpture + Time-Based Art
Elaine McMillion Sheldon, Assistant Professor ---- Cinema Studies + 4D/Time-Based Art
Jered Sprecher, Professor ----------------------- Painting/Drawing
David Wilson, Professor Emeritus ------------------ Painting/Drawing + Time-Based Art
Kelli Wood, Assistant Professor ------------------ Art History
Suzanne Wright, Associate Professor ---------------- Art History
Koichi Yamamoto, Professor ------------------------ Printmaking
Sam Yates, Professor ------------------------------ Ewing & Downtown Gallery Director
Lecturers

Bruce Cole ------------------------------------ Photography
Eleanor Conover ---------------------------- Painting + Drawing
Robert Darby -------------------------------- Art History
Heather Coker Hawkins ------------------ Time-Based Art + Cinema Studies
Sean Roberts ------------------------------- Art History

Staff

Mike Berry ------------------------------------ UT Downtown Gallery Manager
Eric Cagley ----------------------------------- Ewing Gallery Staff
Casey Fletcher ------------------------------ 3D Technician
Shelley Gentry ------------------------------- Accounting Coordinator
Sarah McFalls -------------------------------- Ewing Gallery Staff
Lindsey Owen ------------------------------- Communications Specialist
Stephanie Phillips --------------------------- Administrative Specialist
Baxter Stults ---------------------------------- Media Pool & Web Specialist
Whitney Caruthers -------------------------- School Media Technician
TBA---------------------------------------------- Print Shop Technician

Gallery 1010

Conor McGrann ------------------------------- Student Gallery Director
Ashley Ekstrum ------------------------------- Student Gallery Associate Director
Duties & Responsibilities

**Director of Graduate Studies**

The School of Art Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is a full-time member of the faculty who is a liaison between the Graduate School, the graduate faculty, and graduate students in the School of Art. The DGS is available to advise and supervise graduate students in matters (other than professional development in the student’s concentration) including but not limited to:

- Graduate Catalog rules and regulations
- Graduate School and School of Art regulations
- New Graduate Student Exhibition and Reception
- Graduate Student Steering Committee

**Graduate Committee**

The Graduate Committee is composed of faculty members and a non-voting graduate student representative from the School of Art. One faculty member serves as chairperson. The DGS serves as a non-voting member and advisor. The Committee’s duties include advising the faculty on academic program changes, implementing school academic policy, coordinating the graduate application process and awarding of assistantships, and generally overseeing graduate study in the school. The Graduate Committee also reviews student grievances, concerns, and petitions regarding School of Art policy.

If a student has a concern that cannot be resolved in the student’s concentration area, or if a student wishes to deviate in any way from established School of Art policy regarding graduate study, they should petition the Graduate Committee. The Committee will then decide the issue or recommend a decision for a vote of the full faculty.

**Graduate Student Steering Committee**

The Graduate Student Steering Committee (GSSC) is composed of at least 5 graduate students and the DGS, who will be an ex-officio, non-voting member. All graduate students in the School of Art are welcome to become members. The GSSC will elect officers for the committee in the fall semester at the all graduate student meeting. Officers are eligible for successive terms. Members of the GSSC can elect non-voting representatives to the School of Art faculty standing committees: the Graduate Committee; the Diversity Committee; Programing Committee and a representative who can attend faculty meetings. The GSSC representative at the faculty standing committees acts as a voice for the graduate students. As a student, the GSSC representative may not be privy to all the content at faculty standing committee meetings and may be asked to leave during executive session.
Admission Requirements

Graduate School

Admission to graduate study requires a bachelor’s degree with a satisfactory grade point average from a college or university accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting agency or foreign equivalent. The Graduate Council requires a minimum grade point average of 2.7 out of a possible 4.0, or a 3.0 during the senior year of undergraduate study. Applicants with previous graduate work must have a grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or equivalent on all graduate work. Some programs require a higher average. Applicants with work experience or who are entering graduate study after a number of years away from an educational institution, usually five years, will be given consideration with greater flexibility relative to GPA. An international student graduating from a United States institution must meet the same requirements as those for domestic students. An applicant whose GPA falls between 2.5 and 2.7 may be admitted on probation, upon recommendation of an academic unit. The probationary status will be removed after completion of 9 or more hours of graduate credit with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Failure to maintain a 3.0 while in this status will result in dismissal. An international student may not be admitted on probation. The stated criteria are the minimums. The actual averages required for admission may be higher, depending on the number and the qualifications of applicants.

Bachelor’s degree from a college or university accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting agency. A foreign degree must be equivalent to a US Bachelor’s degree and must be accredited by its regional or national accreditation agency.

US degree holders must have earned a 2.7 out of a possible 4.0 GPA or a minimum of 3.0 during the senior year of undergraduate study. Foreign degree holders must have earned a minimum of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or other equivalent to a ‘B’ average. If you have completed previous graduate coursework, you must have a grade point average of 3.0 on a 4-point scale or equivalent.

When a student is admitted to graduate study prior to having received the baccalaureate degree, that degree must be awarded before the date of first registration in graduate courses.

The Office of Graduate and International Admissions must be notified of any change in the entering date after admission has been granted. Individual departments and colleges may have further restrictions on admission dates. For this information, students should contact the department they wish to enter. If a student does not enroll within one year after the requested admission, the application process must be repeated.

Enrollment in graduate programs is a privilege, which may be withdrawn by the university, or any area of graduate study, if it is deemed necessary by the Dean of the Graduate School to safeguard the university’s standards.

According to the Graduate School’s application procedures, anyone with a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution or foreign equivalent who wishes to take courses for graduate credit, whether or not the person desires to become a candidate for a degree, must submit a formal application for admission to graduate study or apply for transient status. No action is taken until a file is complete. The applicant will be notified by email of the action taken.
To apply for admission, the following materials must be sent to the Graduate and International Admissions.

- The completed Graduate Application for Admission (http://admissions.utk.edu/graduate).
- A $60 non-refundable application fee.
- One official transcript from all colleges and universities attended.
- Scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) if native language is not English (refer to the section on English Language Certification).
- Additional departmental/program requirements may include Departmental application. Contact the program office for forms. *Admission to the program is through the Office of Graduate Admissions. To register for the IELTS, please contact IELTS.

To register for the GRE, GMAT and TOEFL please contact the Educational Testing Service. The UT code is 1843. Test results reach the university in approximately three weeks. All documents submitted become the property of the university and will not be returned. For international graduate student application procedures, see Admission of International Students.

English Language Certification

An applicant requesting admission to the Graduate School may be required to submit results of the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Minimum score requirements for admission to the Graduate School are:

- a total score of 80 on the internet-based TOEFL (iBT),
- a 6.5 overall band score on the IELTS.

The scores will be considered valid if submitted with the application within two (2) years of the test date. An applicant may be exempted from the English Certification requirement if:

- English is an official language in the applicant’s country of citizenship, according to standards published by the Graduate School. Applicant is exempted when indicating citizenship is in a country in which English is an official language.
Or
- English is the primary language of instruction at the institution in which the applicant received an undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree. Applicant submits evidence of qualifying for exemption by uploading a transcript in the online application with conferred equivalent to U.S. bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate, or professional degree from an accredited college or university where English is the language of instruction in higher education.

After taking your exam, have your scores sent to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. If you have taken the TOEFL, please use the institution code of 1843. For the IELTS, you will need to provide the mailing address for the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Find out how to register for the TOEFL or the IELTS.

School of Art Application Procedures
It is very important to complete the Graduate School application process either before or as close as possible to the School of Art application deadline. Both the Graduate School (through Graduate and International Admissions) and the School of Art have specific requirements and application procedures that must be satisfied by the applicant. In order to become a candidate in a degree program, the School of Art must recommend the applicant to be admitted by the Graduate School. January 15 is the deadline for GTA and fellowship consideration.

School of Art admission requirements: In addition to the requirements of the Graduate School, the School of Art requires an undergraduate major in art or equivalent proficiency as demonstrated in the portfolio and other application materials.

**School of Art Application Requirements**

- Portfolio: 20 images and/or other media (video, sound, etc.)
- Resume
- Artist statement – discuss the content of your work.
- Statement of Purpose – What you hope to accomplish in graduate school and what you want the committee to recognize, and consider when making a decision (education, life experience, etc.).

Application Questions: Stephanie Phillips, (865) 974-3407 / sphill36@utk.edu.

**Evaluation and Acceptance**

The faculty of the applicant’s designated concentration area evaluates the application materials listed above. Acceptance to the School of Art is based on the quality of the applicant’s portfolio, academic success, resume, and letters of recommendation. Notification of School of Art action will be sent as soon after this evaluation as possible.

**Transfers**

The Department will consider transfer graduate students with the same procedures as outlined above. Specific regulations of the Graduate School limit the number of credits that will be accepted. The School of Art will not necessarily, and seldom does, accept this maximum. Actual credit hours to be applied to the degree will be determined by the Graduate Committee and area faculty in which the student has applied.
Assistantships, Financial Assistance, Awards, and Scholarships

There are several forms of assistantships, financial aid, loans, and fellowships available through the School of Art, the Graduate School, and the Financial Aid Office. Students are encouraged to apply for all available funding.

Graduate Assistantships in the School of Art

The university has assigned the School of Art a set number of Graduate Assistantships to be awarded to students. Each graduate teaching area is allotted a specific number of assistantships which are awarded by the area faculty. The school also has additional at-large assistantships that are awarded on a competitive basis primarily to incoming students and typically assigned to assist the foundations program.

Assistantships are generally awarded for a nine-month academic year, but GTA and academic performance is evaluated every semester. Appointment to a second or third-year assistantship is not automatic. Once an assistantship has been awarded, the area faculty in the student’s concentration will be responsible for deciding whether the student will continue the assistantship for a second or third year.

Graduate assistantships in the School of Art are 1/4 time appointments and require 10 hours of activity per week. A tuition waiver, excluding the program services and technology fees, is granted with an assistantship.

Assistantships involve a full nine-month period of responsibility between the dates of August 1st to May 31st. The specifics of the assignments and schedule are determined by the area or director of Freshman Studies. Pay is amortized over the twelve-month calendar year.

The School of Art awards two types of assistantships: a Graduate Teaching Assistant and a Graduate Teaching Associate. The two types of assistantships are also known by GTAs. The Graduate Teaching Assistant works directly under the supervision of a regular faculty member in the preparation and/or teaching of a class. The Graduate Teaching Assistant may be assigned duties that do not involve teaching, such as shop maintenance or lab supervision. It is likely a graduate student with an assistantship will have duties in more than one of these categories, in which case the higher title designation is used. The Graduate Teaching Associate has met the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirement of at least 18 graduate semester hours in their teaching discipline (or comparable experience according to university regulations) and can be assigned primary responsibility for teaching an undergraduate course.

Graduate Teaching Assistants and Associates are assigned responsibilities prior to the beginning of the semester. Usually for the first year (university and SACS regulations apply), Graduate Teaching Assistants are assigned to assist a faculty member and are usually assigned to assist in a course that is the same as or similar to one that they will be teaching in the future. Only after teaching competency or comparable experience has been established will Graduate Teaching Assistants be assigned their own section and assume primary responsibility. This assignment is usually an
introductory class in foundations and when possible a lower level class in the Graduate Teaching Associate’s area of concentration. Graduate students are not permitted to teach upper level classes.

A faculty member from each area is responsible for supervising the graduate assistants in that area. The Director of Freshman Studies (DFS) supervises teaching in foundations. Each August, the Graduate School facilitates an orientation for all new GTAs. The School of Art requires all new GTAs to take the Theory and Practice of Art Fundamentals, ART 503 course. Taught by the DFS, the course covers the goals and objectives of foundation-level studio courses and provides GTAs with concepts, techniques and resources for teaching.

Graduate Assistants may be assigned to duties or tasks that do not involve teaching. Examples include shop or area maintenance, monitoring of facilities, assisting in departmental business, and exhibition preparation in the Ewing Gallery.

Graduate students can be hired to do additional work for additional pay by their area or by the department. Additional hours are optional, and at the discretion of the graduate student. Students may not work more than 20 hours per week for the university. Working over 20 hours per week must be first approved by the Director of the School of Art and then forwarded to the Graduate School for approval.

Graduate Teaching Associates and Assistants who, in the opinion of the Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Freshman Studies or the area faculty supervisor, fail to demonstrate competency in a teaching role will be assigned to other duties. GTAs are also revoked if the student’s academic or studio performance falls below expected levels. Any graduate student who falls below a “B” average can, at the discretion of the Graduate Committee, be removed from their assistantship. One may re-apply upon re-establishment of a “B” average. Assistants or associates unable to fulfill their duties for an entire semester will be paid only for the actual time they work.

Consult the Graduate Catalog (Policy for the Administration of Graduate Assistantships) for detailed information on university and SACS regulations and guidelines.

**School of Art Scholarships**

The Ewing and the Burnett Scholarships are awarded every year to graduate students in the School of Art. The Ewing Scholarship is given for outstanding achievement and the Burnett Scholarship for outstanding achievement with consideration also given to the student’s financial need. Applications are submitted to the Scholarship Committee during the spring semester and include an application form, a statement, and a portfolio of current artwork. Evaluation is by the entire faculty. Questions regarding application procedures should be directed to the Chair of the Scholarship Committee.

Other scholarships/awards available to graduate students in the Spring scholarship review include the Dorothy Dille Materials Grant, Terry Burnett Memorial Residency/Internship Award, Orin B. & Emma G. Graf Study Abroad Scholarship, and the Graduate Travel Award. Visit the School of Art graduate scholarships page for more information and to apply.

**Arrowmont**
Arrowmont, located in Gatlinburg, is an arts and crafts school with close ties to the School of Art. The School of Art Scholarship Committee awards funding for summer workshops at Arrowmont. Additional work-study opportunities can be found on Arrowmont’s website.

**Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards**

The Graduate Student Senate Travel Award is administered by the Dean of the Graduate School in coordination by the Graduate Student Senate. Allocations from this fund provide travel awards for University of Tennessee graduate students attending professional meetings to present original research. The awards, distributed three times a year, are made on the basis of both need and merit, and allow for partial reimbursement of transportation, lodging, and conference expenses.

The mission of the Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards is to advance the interests of UT graduate and professional students and promote the research created at UT by easing the student’s financial burden of travel.

The following criteria must be met for award consideration:

- The applicant must be an enrolled graduate student (masters, specialist, professional, or doctoral) in good academic standing.
- The applicant must not have received Award funding during the academic year (September 1 through August 31) for which funding is being sought.
- The applicant’s travel must be for the documented purpose of delivering a scholarly presentation or participating in comparable activity (e.g., presenting original art, performance pieces, etc.) at a professional meeting, with preference being given to those presenting at national and international meetings.
- The applicant should only submit an application for the next upcoming travel period, i.e., if the applicant is applying for fall travel then the applicant should submit an application in the summer. Applications for the GSS Travel Awards are due to the Director of the School of Art two weeks prior to the College of Arts and Sciences deadline stated on the GSS website.

**Registration and Advising**

**New Student Course Registration**

New graduate students first need to consult the designated faculty advisor in their area of concentration before registering for the first semester of coursework. The faculty member explains and clarifies the curriculum, helps plan a schedule, and advises on art history/non-studio requirements. The course timetable and registration is online at MyUTK. Once new students receive their university ID number (9 digits) and Net ID they can register on MyUTK.

New students are assigned a studio space and new Graduate Teaching Assistants are informed of their assignment and directed to their graduate teaching supervisor(s).
Advising and Class Registration

Each student must consult with their concentration area faculty advisor prior to registering for classes. The concentration area faculty reviews each student’s progress in their course work and advises them accordingly as to specific courses and course load. Students are urged to register as soon as class schedules are available so that teaching assignments can be confirmed. The DGS and DFS facilitate the coordination of GTA assignments in consultation with area representatives.
MFA Degree Requirements

Master of Fine Arts Requirements

A minimum of 60 hours to include the following.

- A minimum of 16 hours of studio courses in a concentration
- A minimum of 9 hours of graduate-level academic (non-studio) courses of which at least 6 hours are to be in art history.
- 1 hour of First-Semester Graduate Seminar.
- A minimum of 14 hours of electives consisting of any combination of courses offered by the university for graduate credit.
- Students with a GTA are required to successfully complete 3 hours of Art 503, Theory and Practice of Art Fundamentals. These hours are considered to be elective. A concentration area may have course requirements that reduce the number of elective
- 20 hours of Art 599, Project in Lieu of Thesis. A third year of semi-independent study. Students must have completed all required coursework prior to commencement of Art 599.

Four semesters (normally the first 40 hours) beyond the bachelor’s degree are required in residence. Residence is defined by the School of Art as a minimum enrollment of 6 hours per semester and use of School of Art facilities so that students are available for discussion and criticism.

Course Load

A graduate teaching assistant or associate cannot register for more than 13 credit hours during any semester without prior approval of the Director of the School of Art. The maximum load for a graduate student is 15 credit hours per semester, and 9 to 12 credit hours are considered full-time. A 1/4 time graduate assistant/associate normally should take 9 to 13 credit hours to graduate in three years. Exceptions must have prior approval of the Director of the School of Art. Registration for more than 15 credit hours during any semester is not permissible without prior approval of The Graduate School.

Variable Credit Courses

Graduate students have the option of enrolling for variable credit in courses. It is the graduate student’s responsibility to consult with the professor to determine the appropriate number of credit hours for the course. 2 hours credit might be appropriate for limited investigation; 4 hours credit is normal for studio courses; and 6 hours would constitute an exceptionally intense investigation into a particular area.

Alternative Courses
Study abroad, Off-Campus Study and Independent Study are available for students wishing to complete alternative coursework particular to the student’s interest or creative research. Interested students should consult with their faculty advisor to formulate a proposal, which then may be implemented by enrolling in the following courses:

ART 591 – Foreign Study
ART 592 – Off-Campus Study
ART 593 – Independent Study

Each fall semester there is an academic job hunting workshop for all 3rd year graduate students. The workshop is non-credit, and is managed in 2 three-hour sessions. A memo is sent to all 3rd year graduate students regarding the time/place of the workshop.

**Project in Lieu of Thesis (PILOT)**

Project in Lieu of Thesis, Art 599, requires 20 hours of concentrated, semi-independent study culminating in the MFA exhibition/presentation. Students must have completed all required coursework prior to commencement of Art 599. The candidate registers for Project in Lieu of Thesis credit with their thesis committee chairperson (if the chairperson is unavailable due to academic leave, another committee member may be substituted). During this period, the candidate and their committee chair maintain close consultation. The other committee members are also available for periodic consultation. At the end of the first semester of Project in Lieu of Thesis credit, the committee reviews the candidate’s progress. At this time it is decided whether the candidate’s progress is satisfactory and if they should proceed with candidacy. If progress is not deemed satisfactory, a no-credit grade can be given at this time, and the candidate will have to repeat the credit hours.

In the semester prior to the semester of graduation the candidate must apply for Admission to Candidacy with The Graduate School. The Admission to Candidacy acts as a notification of intent and an audit of academic coursework. Consult with the School of Art Steps to Graduation for forms and deadlines.

**Project in Lieu of Thesis (PILOT) Committee**

Prior to registration for Project in Lieu of Thesis, each graduate student selects a PILOT committee chair and, in consultation with the PILOT committee chair, the graduate students selects a committee. The student completes the PILOT Committee form and delivers it to the mailbox of the DGS. The committee’s purpose is to assess the graduate student’s performance and work completed during the Project in Lieu of Thesis period as criteria for awarding an MFA degree.

The candidate’s committee will consist of a minimum of three members and a maximum of five members and will be appointed prior to registration for Art 599. The committee must consist of one faculty member from the candidate’s concentration area designated as chairperson. The inclusion of
an art history faculty member and a faculty member from outside the concentration area is encouraged. The committee chairperson must be consulted regarding the composition of the committee. The committee chairperson assigns periodic reviews of the student’s progress. The student must satisfactorily complete an MFA exhibition, the written project defense, MFA exhibition statement, an oral examination and the MFA PILOT documentation.

**Master of Fine Arts Exhibition**

All graduate students are required to present an exhibition or other public presentation of their work during the semester of graduation. It is the responsibility of the student, in consultation with their project committee, to schedule this exhibition/presentation. Depending on the number of students graduating, Ewing and the UT Downtown Galleries offer exhibition space for limited periods of time. It is required that an exhibition/presentation off campus be at a location and time readily available to all faculty members.

**Written Project Defense**

The following requirements were developed by the graduate committee to guide graduate students in completing their written project defense. It is important to work with the chair of your committee and to note that the written form can take a creative format including but not limited to poetry, prose, and graphic design.

Your written project defense is a comprehensive essay that expands on the conceptual framework of your project, explains the formal decision-making used in creating your work, places your work in a historical and contemporary context and discusses the influences and sources used to develop your work. You must include a bibliography.

Create a written project defense that is between 2500-5000 words, not including bibliography. Make your bibliography a minimum of one-page. Use the Chicago Style for your citations. [For help with citation style consult the library site.](#)

By the end of your fifth semester, submit a rough draft of your written project defense to your MFA PILOT Committee. Submit your final draft two weeks before your exhibition opening.

**MFA Exhibition Statement**

A project statement is a short statement, a paragraph to a page that accompanies the exhibition and can be placed on the wall or on additional provided materials. Past examples include books, vinyl wall lettering, letterpress cards etc. The MFA exhibition statement is included in the MFA exhibition catalog alongside your images.

It is important to work with the chair of your committee and to note that the MFA exhibition statement can take a creative format including but not limited to poetry, prose, and graphic design.

Send your MFA exhibition statement to your MFA PILOT committee two weeks before the exhibition.
Oral Examination

The MFA oral examination is the final review that a graduating student must complete satisfactorily. The candidate’s project committee conducts a pre-oral without the candidate after the MFA exhibition has been installed and the final statement presented. The pre-oral stands for a coordination of questions and agenda by the committee. At the discretion of the committee chair the candidate receives all, part, or none of these questions prior to the oral examination. The oral examination takes place at the MFA exhibition with the candidate and all project committee members present. The Graduate School must approve exceptions. It is the responsibility of the candidate to schedule the oral exam at a time that ensures all committee members can be present. The oral examination must be coordinated and scheduled through the PILOT Committee, the Ewing Gallery or other exhibition/presentation venue, and the School of Art at least one month in advance. The committee chair presides over the oral exam. Participation in the oral exam is open to any University faculty member. At the conclusion of the exam the candidate is excused from the room while their candidacy is discussed. The decision to pass or fail rests solely with the committee.

MFA PILOT Documentation

Following successful completion of the Project in Lieu of Thesis exhibition oral examination, all students completing the MFA degree in Studio Art must submit the following materials to the chair of their PILOT Committee by the last day of classes of the semester of graduation. Failure to submit these materials by the due date will result in an incomplete grade for the semester and possible postponement of awarding of the degree. After approving the PILOT documentation the committee chair turns the materials in to the Graduate Coordinator, Stephanie Phillips.

Consult the [Steps to Graduation and Documentation Guidelines](#) for specific requirements.
Academic Standards, Evaluations, and Appeals

A student’s progress in the graduate program is subject to several kinds of continuing evaluation: grades given in individual courses by the instructor; periodic reviews by the faculty; and informal evaluations through dialogue between student and instructor and an annual written evaluation. All these evaluations determine a student’s success and continuation in the program.

The annual written evaluation is conducted during the final Spring reviews in the first and second year of the graduate program for each concentration area. All faculty in an area are required to provide input for the written form, which is signed by the area advisor/s and the student, and maintained in department files in the School of Art office. The evaluation provides direct assessment of a student’s knowledge of theoretical, historical and practical issues in relation to their studio practice. GTA’s will also receive feedback regarding their teaching responsibilities and performance. This written evaluation is discussed in a face-to-face meeting between graduate students and their advisor/s when needed or requested. By signing the letter, the student does not indicate agreement with each point of feedback. Instead the student signature indicates that they have read the evaluation, understands the feedback they have received and has been given an opportunity to ask questions.

The Graduate School requires that a student maintain a “B” grade point average. Failure to do so will result in being placed on academic probation by the Graduate School or dismissal from the program at the discretion of the faculty. If a student on probation is allowed to proceed academically, it is critical that progress is made each successive semester to achieve at least a “B” average or the student will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

At the end of each of the first four semesters, the student must present their work during the end of the semester area review for evaluation by the area faculty and receive permission to continue in the program. With the completion of all coursework, including satisfying all incompletes (which must be completed within one calendar year) and conditional grades, at the end of the second year the student must present a portfolio for evaluation by the area faculty and receive permission to register for Art 599, Project in Lieu of Thesis.

If, in an end of the semester area review by the student’s (concentration) area faculty, the student’s progress is deemed insufficient, the faculty may terminate the student’s program, place the student on probation with stipulations for continuation in the program, or effect a pause in continuation during which work is continued without advancement in credits accumulated. These steps may also be applied if a student fails the final examination (Orals) during their project exhibition/presentation. The School of Art will notify the student in writing if any of these conditions arise.

If any action is taken against a student by the School of Art (as listed above) that the student feels is unfair, the student has the right to appeal the decision first to the area of concentration or the committee chairperson, then to the School of Art Director, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate Council Appeals Committee through the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, and ultimately to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Appeals may involve the interpretation of and adherence to university, college, and department policies and procedures as they apply to graduate education and the issuance of grades based on specific allowable reasons stipulated in the Graduate Council Appeal Procedure.
Appeal procedures in regard to allegations of misconduct or academic dishonesty are presented in Hilltopics under “Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures.” Students with grievances related to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or veteran status should file a formal complaint with the Office of Equity and Diversity. See Appendices for contact information.

University appeals procedure, located on the Graduate School website: tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations.

Buildings, Facilities, and Studios

The Art and Architecture Building is a multi-use facility that houses the School of Art, the College of Architecture & Design, Ewing Gallery, and the University Art Supply Store. Most of the School of Art activities take place within the building. All students have twenty-four hour access. There are other School of Art facilities throughout the campus that house personal studio space for faculty and students.

If possible, personal studio space is assigned to each graduate student. Each area assigns studios according to its own criteria. University regulations apply to space use. The assignment of a studio space is a privilege that can be revoked or denied by the faculty. There can be no permanent alterations, no unsafe or hazardous practices, and spaces may not be used as living quarters. Negligence may result in the loss of studio space and revoking of key access. Students are responsible for fixing any damages and making repairs as needed.

Studio spaces must be completely cleared of all materials and painted to the white paint provided by the studio by June 1st of the year you graduate. If returning students are moving to a vacated studio, move out of your studio and into your new one by July 1. **All students must sign and adhere to the studio contract.**

Within the school, there are facilities and equipment available for graduate student use with approval of the area responsible. These include: Computer Lab (rm 345), Print Shop (rm 241), the Photo Lab (rm 239), Metal Shop (rm 131), Wood Shop (rm 121), the 3D Printing Lab and vinyl cutter room (450) and Documentation Room (rm 435a). Check with the faculty or staff in charge of these areas for approval and operating procedures. The Media Pool (rm 343) has a wide array of a/v equipment available for check out. The studio in Hodges Library also has a/v equipment checkout.
Appendices

Pertinent Graduate Student Web Pages:

- College of Arts & Sciences: artsci.utk.edu
- Graduate School: gradschool.utk.edu
- Graduate Catalog: catalog.utk.edu/index.php
- Academic Policies and Requirements for Graduate Students: catalog.utk.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=3506
- Policies governing student conduct and academic integrity in Hilltopics Student Handbook: hilltopics.utk.edu/student-code-of-conduct
- Graduate Student Appeals Procedure: gradschool.utk.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-council
- Graduate Student Senate: gss.utk.edu
  - Funding, Fellowships, Assistantships for Graduate Students: gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding
- Graduate and International Admissions: graduateadmissions.utk.edu
- International House: ihouse.utk.edu
- Student Conduct & Community Standards: web.utk.edu/~osja
- Office of Equity and Diversity: oed.utk.edu
- Best Practices in Teaching: gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life
- Center for International Education: international.utk.edu
- Counseling Center: counselingcenter.utk.edu/
- Office of Minority Student Affairs/Black Cultural Center: multicultural.utk.edu
- Research Compliance/Research with Human Subjects: research.utk.edu/compliance
- ITA Testing Program: gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program
- Library Website for Graduate Students: lib.utk.edu/info/grad
- OIT: https://oit.utk.edu/Pages/default.aspx
- Housing: housing.utk.edu
- Office of Graduate Training and Mentoring: gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship
- UT Libraries Information for Graduate Students: libguides.utk.edu/graduate
- Center for Career Development: career.utk.edu
- Tennessee Teaching and Learning Innovation: teaching.utk.edu
- UT CIRTL: teaching.utk.edu/utcirt
- Experience Learning: experiencelearning.utk.edu
- Costs and Funding opportunities: tiny.utk.edu/grad-funding

Forms and Additional Resources

- Graduate Student Deadline Dates: gradschool.utk.edu/graduation/graduation-deadlines
- Admission to Candidacy Application – Master’s Degree: gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central
- Graduate Student Travel Award Forms: gss.utk.edu/travel-awards/information
- Graduate School Forms: gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central
Equal Opportunity Statement

All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admission without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, and parental status, or any other characteristic protected by federal or state law. In accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the University of Tennessee affirmatively states that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or disability in its education programs and activities, and this policy extends to employment by the university. Inquiries and charges of violation of Title VI (race, color, and national origin), Title IX (sex), Section 504 (disability), the ADA (disability), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (age), sexual orientation, or veteran status should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity, 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996-3560, telephone 865-974-2498. Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the Office of Equity and Diversity.

Steps to Graduation: MFA in Studio Art