MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN VISUAL STUDIES

Program Handbook 2024 / 2025

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: THE MFA PROGRAM

MISSION

MCAD's master of fine arts in visual studies program is a community of makers, thinkers, researchers, and creative professionals working in a mentor-based, interdisciplinary environment. Our four-semester curriculum is designed to expand your thinking, promote experimentation, and develop your practice as you take advantage of the Twin Cities' vibrant art and design scene. Students are invited to be strongly self-directed as they establish personalized goals and plans to guide each semester in collaboration with their mentor.

OVERVIEW

Our four-semester curriculum is designed to expand students' thinking while taking advantage of the Twin Cities' vibrant art and design scene. The diverse student body—one with a robust international presence—explores and fulfills social, cultural, and professional needs across practices.

Students in the program pursue creative work in a lively, interdisciplinary environment that includes graphic design, engaged and public arts, film/video, printmaking, paper and book arts, painting, photography, illustration, sculpture, drawing, animation, interactive media, comic arts, furniture design, and installation art.

The MCAD MFA program centers around a rigorous one-on-one mentor-based model. Mentors can be drawn from the local community, utilizing the expertise of regional world-class faculty and professionals. Mentors can also operate remotely, giving students access to a much wider network of possible creatives. For three semesters, this intensive experience is augmented by equally challenging critique seminars and theory courses. Midway through the process, students engage in a formal review with a committee of faculty and professionals who suggest, evaluate and guide students' projects. The final year culminates with a public exhibition of the thesis project and its review. A successful candidacy will allow students to join professional and/or academic life, having mastered at a high level their discipline as practitioners.

This handbook is developed by the MFA Program for graduate student use. The information found in this handbook is accurate to the best of our knowledge as of July 2023. The information and policies contained in this MFA student handbook are presented as a matter of information only and are not intended to create, nor is the handbook to be construed to constitute, a contract between MCAD and any student. MCAD has the right to alter, amend, modify, deviate from, or otherwise terminate any privileges, provisions, or obligations contained in this handbook at any time if it so chooses with or without notice to a student. Changes to this handbook will be announced via email. If you have any questions about the contents of this handbook, please contact the MFA Program Director.
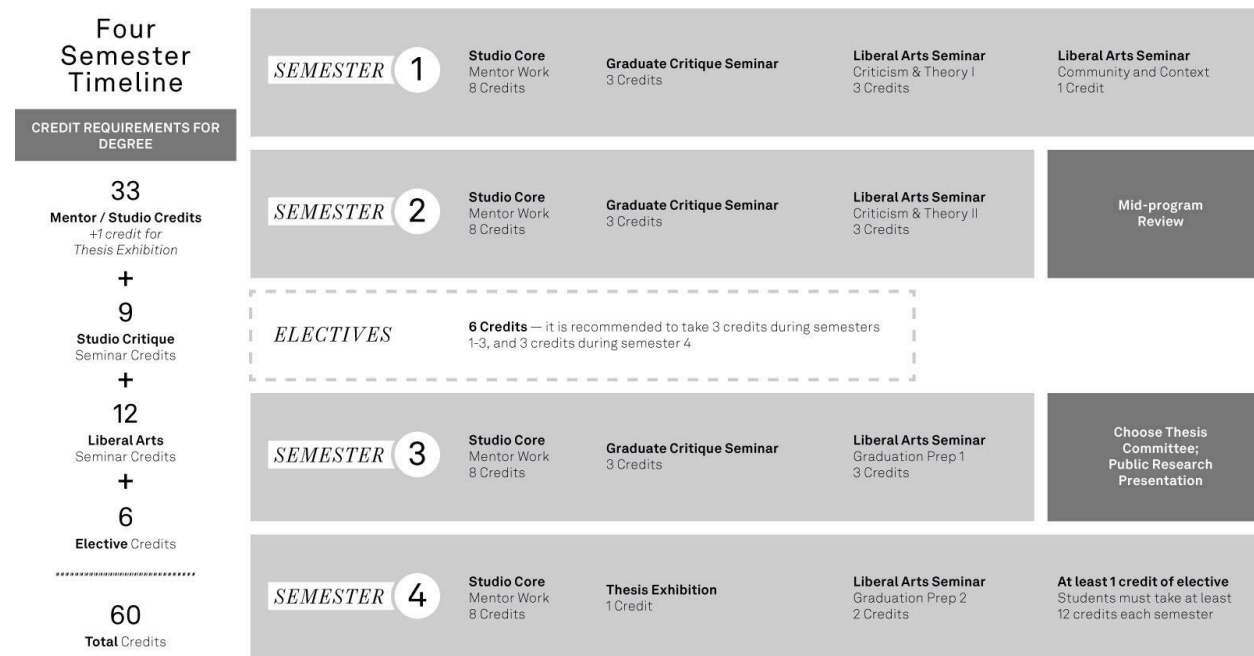
In addition to the MFA Student Handbook, students are subject to all MCAD policies found in the [MCAD student handbook](#).

Program Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Practice and apply discipline-specific expertise, including the ability to research within and through various media. This includes integration of technical skill, historical context, and purposeful application(s).

- Research the historical and contemporary issues of their creative field through library and internet research practices.

- Present and discuss ideas related to their creative work in written forms, which could include artist statements, statements of intent, multi-page research papers, exhibition reviews, essays, reflections, etc.

- Engage in oral communication of ideas and critical feedback through interdisciplinary group critiques, discussions, studio visits, informational interviews, and presentations.

- Apply creative critical thinking to combine subject, form, content, and context to create a creative body of work over multiple months

COURSES

Four Semester Timeline					
CREDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE	*SEMESTER* 1	**Studio Core** Mentor Work 8 Credits	**Graduate Critique Seminar** 3 Credits	**Liberal Arts Seminar** Criticism & Theory I 3 Credits	**Liberal Arts Seminar** Community and Context 1 Credit
33 Mentor / Studio Credits *+1 credit for Thesis Exhibition*	*SEMESTER* 2	**Studio Core** Mentor Work 8 Credits	**Graduate Critique Seminar** 3 Credits	**Liberal Arts Seminar** Criticism & Theory II 3 Credits	**Mid-program Review**
+					
9 Studio Critique Seminar Credits	*ELECTIVES*	**6 Credits** — it is recommended to take 3 credits during semesters 1-3, and 3 credits during semester 4			
+ **12** Liberal Arts Seminar Credits	*SEMESTER* 3	**Studio Core** Mentor Work 8 Credits	**Graduate Critique Seminar** 3 Credits	**Liberal Arts Seminar** Graduation Prep 1 3 Credits	**Choose Thesis Committee; Public Research Presentation**
+ **6** Elective Credits					
60 Total Credits	*SEMESTER* 4	**Studio Core** Mentor Work 8 Credits	**Thesis Exhibition** 1 Credit	**Liberal Arts Seminar** Graduation Prep 2 2 Credits	**At least 1 credit of elective** Students must take at least 12 credits each semester

GRST 7002, 7003, 7004
Graduate Critique Seminars, 3 Studio credits per semester

The Graduate Critique Seminar provides all graduate students structured group critiques of their work and that of their peers. Students develop a methodology of critique and the ability to discuss work across disciplines. A rotation of guest artists, designers, and critics visit throughout the semester. The visitors present their own work and discuss their practice and then participate in student critiques. Each student has a minimum of two formal critiques each semester with options for additional critiques throughout the semester as time permits. The seminar includes contemporary readings and conversations about contemporary art, successful critiquing strategies, and methods for describing intent, content, meaning, and form of presented artwork.

GRST 7005
Community and Context, 1 credit

This five-week course will occur at the start of the first semester in the MFA Program. Students will take field trips focused on different groups of people living in the Twin Cities who have influenced and shaped our current cultural and social circumstances. These could include Indigenous, Black, immigrant, and hyper-local/neighborhood-level perspectives. Artists, designers, curators, writers, or other cultural workers/thinkers can be invited to help illuminate relationships to creative practice. Students will be prompted to reflect on personal and situational context, privilege and difference, intentions versus results, and intended audience

for their creative practices. The course will establish a framework for sustained commitment to antiracism in practice and community life by introducing related vocabulary and concepts.

GRST GM99
Mentored Credits, 6–9 Studio credits

Mentorship is regarded as the core of the MCAD graduate curriculum. Each semester the student and mentor determine its content, which is summarized in a Learning Contract in context with the student Long-Range Learning Plan. Students work one-on-one with their mentor in the advancement of studio work, studio research, and professional practice. Mentor Credits coursework is structured to facilitate discussions and assess goals on a weekly basis. Credits may also include attending visiting-artist/designer lectures, exhibitions and workshops, audited courses, seminars, and internship and externship opportunities.

GRLA 7011
Criticism and Theory I, 3 Liberal Arts credits

This is one of two courses that exposes students to contemporary visual criticism and theory in art and design. This course brings together reading, discussion, writing, oral presentations, and at least three site-visits (museums, galleries, agencies, conventions, studios, etc.), to help students expand their art and design vocabulary. Students will practice verbally analyzing and articulating their practices in relationship to various histories and cultures. Via individual studio visits with the instructor early in the semester, this course becomes highly tailored to reflect the areas of foci of the enrolled students. Early in this course, students will examine concepts of privilege and difference in relationship to systems of power, both in and outside the art and design worlds. Also early in the course, students will be briefly introduced to basic popular lenses for examining art and design work, including selected identity issues (race, gender, sexuality), iconography/semiotics, Marxism, and cultural studies/post-colonialism. Topics for the remainder of the course will be determined by the students' practices, and the instructor will provide appropriate historical context as necessary.

GRLA 7012
Criticism and Theory II, 3 Liberal Arts credits

This is the second of two courses that expose students to contemporary visual criticism and theory, along with corresponding historical context. Students gain exposure to artists, designers, systems, curators, critics, and visual/textual methods influencing current practices in art and design, building beyond content/topics covered in the first course. This course brings together reading, discussion, writing, oral presentations, and at least three site-visits (museums, galleries, agencies, conventions, studios, etc.), to help students expand their art and design vocabulary. Students will practice verbally analyzing and articulating their practices in relationship to various histories and cultures. Via individual studio visits with the instructor early in the semester, this course becomes highly tailored to reflect the areas of foci of the

enrolled students. With instructor guidance and classmate feedback, students draw connections between their personal practice and course materials, honing the ability to narrate, analyze, and discuss the contexts of their work using new vocabulary. There is particular focus on preparing for the Mid-Program Review's oral presentation, written statement of intent, and a list of research sources.

GRLA 7013
Graduation Preparation 1, 3 Liberal Arts credits

This course is designed to help students articulate the theoretical basis of their work in relation to acknowledged contemporary works and culture. Students research, outline, and write the first three-quarters of their position paper on the nature of the student's current practice. The semester concludes with public research presentations based on the student's work over the course of the semester.

GRLA 7014
Graduation Preparation 2, 2 Liberal Arts credits

This course is designed to guide students through the process of final thesis development. Students will meet throughout the semester to ensure work is moving forward according to various requirements and deadlines. There will be a writing intensive component at the end of the semester to complete the required final quarter of the thesis paper. The instructor will submit the final grade for the paper as a part of this course. This course also guides students through the process of finalizing the thesis paper for submission to the college.

GRST 7019
Graduate Thesis Exhibition, 1 Studio credit

This capstone project is the completion of the student's required studio work for the Thesis Exhibition under the guidance of his or her mentor in preparation for the final thesis review. Graduate candidates navigate this process in consultation with their mentor and the Thesis Committee. The final grade is submitted by the MFA program director upon receiving the signed completion form from the Thesis Committee.

GRLA 7021
Professional Practices, 3 Liberal Arts credit

This course addresses skills and knowledge useful for succeeding post-graduation. Students will further develop their communication skills in both written and oral forms. Via individual studio visits with the instructor early in the semester, this course becomes highly tailored to reflect the areas of foci of the enrolled students that builds upon their prior professional understanding gained through undergraduate study and/or previous professional experience. Topics can include goal setting and planning, informational interviews, job/internship searching/

applications, writing for professional opportunities and applications, the documenting and marketing of work, tax issues, and studio/business startup concerns. By the end of this course the students will be expected to produce a portfolio of documents or artifacts related to their professional goals.

GRLA 7022
Teaching in Higher Education Seminar, 3 Liberal Arts credits

This course introduces graduate students to general teaching pedagogy, course planning resources, as well as classroom and course management. It exposes students to teaching and learning theories as they develop skills in the higher education classroom. Students in this course will be assigned a teaching assistantship position simultaneous with this course. The cohort will reflect together on their weekly experiences in varied classrooms. The course will also introduce professional documents and strategies for teaching job applications and interviews.

GRLA 7030
Responsive Topics, 1 Liberal Arts credit

A course or seminar on a selected topic responsive to a current issue that is not otherwise represented in the curriculum.

CSLA 6051
Teaching Art and Design Online: Essentials of Online Course Design, 1 credit

This course is designed as a short introduction to essentials of online course design through reading, writing, discussion, and micro-course design. We will be introduced to objective writing, alignment maps, accessibility, interactivity, universal design for learning, faculty presence, communication tactics, and discussion boards. We'll practice designing one week of an online course with the topic of your choosing.

CSLA 6052
Teaching Art and Design Online: Facilitating the Creative Process, 1 credit

This course is designed as a short introduction to facilitating the creative process online through reading, writing, discussion, and micro-teaching (assignment design). We will be introduced to scaffolding, chunking, rubrics, universal design for learning, online tools for interactivity, online demonstrations, and assignment design. We'll practice designing an assignment for an online course with the topic of your choosing.

CSLA 6053
Teaching Art and Design Online: Online Critique, 1 credit

This course is designed as a survey of some approaches to teaching art and design online, with focus on critique approaches for online and blended environments. We will read, watch, and discuss perspectives on online teaching as it relates to the creative process. Using this information as a springboard, we will complete exercises, and execute our own micro-teaching projects. Topics will include group agreements, community building, understanding bias/blindspots/growth mindset, giving and receiving feedback, in-process versus final critiques, and documenting work. Students can expect to read, reflect, discuss, take notes, and develop portions of an online class. Between sessions, students will be asked to homework assignments in preparation for the next meeting.

Additional Elective Options:

- For-credit internships. Note: International students should consult with the program director before pursuing any paid opportunities.

- Online courses from the MA in Graphic and Web Design or the MA in Sustainable Design – please ask the MFA Director for access to their current registration guide to determine which classes are being offered in the upcoming semesters, and which courses do not have prerequisites.

- Study abroad options during the summer (optional, added cost)

- Transfer credit from other programs offering graduate study. For example, Ox-Bow offers 2-week graduate courses (3 credits each) over winter break. These transfer credits are generally an extra cost, similar to counting study abroad as an elective (Ox-Bow offers some competitive scholarships).
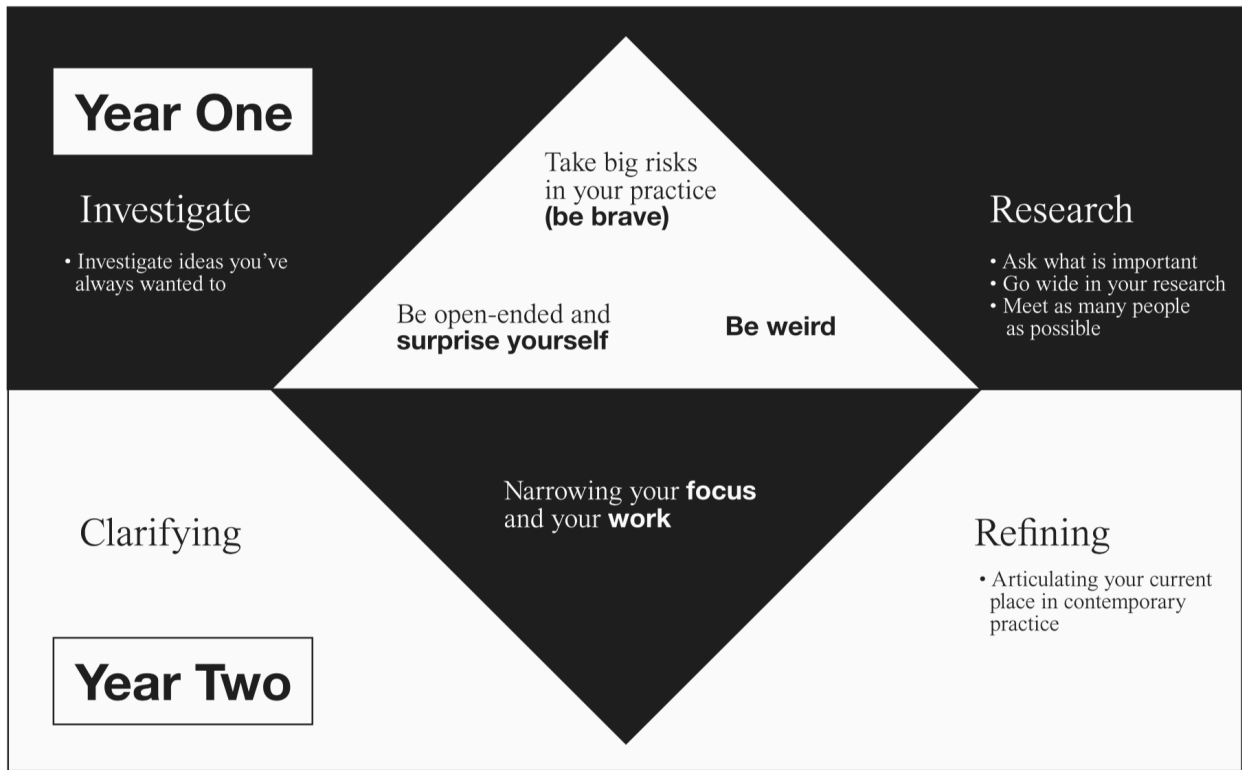
Pictured above: Diamond Planning

Program Overview of the Master of Fine Arts in Visual Studies

CREDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MFA DEGREE

Type of Course	Credit Count
Mentor/Studio Credits (+1 credit for Thesis Exhibition)	33 credits
Graduate Critique Seminars	9 credits
Liberal Arts Seminars	12 credits
Electives	6 credits
TOTAL	**60 credits**

First Semester - 15 credits

Studio Core/Mentored Credits - 8 credits
Graduate Critique Seminar - 3 credits
Criticism and Theory I - 3 credits
Community and Context - 1 credit

Second Semester - 14 credits

Studio Core/Mentored Credits - 8 credits
Graduate Critique Seminar - 3 credits
Criticism and Theory II - 3 credits

Third Semester - 14 credits

Studio Core/Mentored Credits - 8 credits
Grad Critique Seminar - 3 credits
Graduation Preparation I - 3 credits

+   3 credits of electives can be taken at any time during semesters 1-3

Fourth Semester - 14 credits

Studio Core/Mentored Credits - 8 credits
Graduation Preparation II - 2 credits
Thesis Exhibition - 1 credit
Last elective - 1 or 3 credits (must take at least 1 credit of electives this semester to qualify as full-time student)

There are six credits dedicated to electives. Three of those credits can be taken at any time during semesters 1-3. It is recommended that the second three elective credits must be taken during the fourth semester to ensure full-time status. Students must take at least one credit of elective in the fourth semester to be considered a full-time student. The MFA Program offers a 1-credit elective course for five weeks each spring semester that is broadly applicable to all MFA students so that students who have otherwise completed their electives can take this course to remain full-time students.

Full-Time and Part-Time MFA candidate status

- The recommended course load for full time MFA candidates is 15 credits each semester.
- A course load of 12 or more credits indicates full-time status and access to a studio.
- All MFA candidates must take a minimum of 6 Studio Core / Mentor credits per semester.

Considerations for Part-Time Students

- Students may take up to five years to complete the program. However, in order to be eligible for financial aid, students must register for a minimum number of credits. Students should check with the Student Financial Services office for specifics related to their situation.
- In order to be eligible for a Mentorship Contract, students must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 Studio Core/Mentor Credits.
- Exceptions to any program requirements must be approved by the MFA Program Director and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The Mentorship

See appendix for Mentor and Mentee Handbook contents.

NOTE: The MFA Director may also reserve the right to assign a mentor to a graduate student on a case-by-case basis.

Year-Round Learning Opportunities

MCAD has a lively, active summer session with multiple opportunities for MFA candidates. Graduate students are encouraged to continue working in their studio during the summer. Students are also encouraged to pursue summer internships and residencies appropriate to their chosen area of study. The College offers workshops throughout the academic year and some special weekend workshops through Continuing Studies, all of which may enhance program plans. In order to facilitate effective study throughout the duration of the MFA curriculum, each graduate student is required to submit a Summer Learning Plan to the MFA Director and their mentor.

Internships

MFA candidates may do internships as a useful part of graduate study, and are credited as a part of mentorship. Many MFA students land internships through MCAD Career Services, personal contacts, or their mentor. All MCAD students applying for internships must work through MCAD Career Development. The MCAD Career Development Of ce provides assistance with locating and applying for internships. For comprehensive assistance, students should schedule an appointment with the Director of Career Development.

SECTION 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Note: Information below does not include all policies and procedures. Please also refer to the [MCAD Student Handbook](#).

Registration and Advising

MFA candidates register through the Records of ce after advising with the MFA Director. The Semester Learning Contract must be read and signed by the student, mentor, and the MFA Program Director before it is submitted to the Records Office. This occurs at the end of the semester after the semester evaluation is complete. Continuing graduate students may register before undergraduates.

Credits and Grades

MCAD employs a Pass/Fail grading system at the graduate level. In practice, successful completion of a semester of study is recorded on the candidate's official transcript as "Pass." Criterion for grading will be established at the beginning of each class by the instructor and by the mentor for mentorship credits. Failure to meet course requirements will be recorded as "Fail" and credit hours will not be granted. All course requirements, including all class assignments, must be completed and deemed satisfactory by the instructor or mentor in order to earn a grade of "Pass".

"Incomplete" and "Withdrawal" will be recorded in appropriate instances. Reasons for requesting an incomplete grade include medical emergencies or other events outside of the student's control. In the event that an "Incomplete" is recorded, the coursework must be completed by the fifth week of the subsequent semester or a permanent grade of "Fail" will be recorded for the semester. Incompletes are not granted for unfinished work.

Transfer Credit

MFA students may transfer in graduate credits towards graduation at MCAD. The MFA Director reviews the transcript to determine fit. Students should have an official copy of their graduate transcript sent to the MFA Director, who will determine how and if the credits can be applied towards graduation.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes and mentor meetings. Teaching faculty sets policy for their classes. Students who do not comply with the attendance policy may be subject to a

grade of "Fail" or disciplinary action based on consultation with the teaching faculty and the MFA Committee with advice from the Director of the MFA program.

Studio Core Semester Evaluation

The Semester Learning Contract and Long Range Learning Plan are evaluated each semester in a meeting between the student and mentor. Together they review goals, overall plans for the semester, and assess the achievement of the semester's work. Students who have worked with other instructors as part of their contract will request a written evaluation from their instructors that will be given to the mentor for use when completing the Semester Evaluation. The student, mentor and MFA Program Director sign a Semester Evaluation form that acknowledges this meeting and includes a comprehensive evaluation of the semester's work. The mentor is responsible for recording a grade of Pass or Fail with the Records Of ce.

Progress to Degree

In addition to course grades and Semester Evaluations completed by mentors and students there are two required reviews for candidates that assess and determine a student's status in progress toward the MFA degree: the Mid-Program Review (see section 3) and the Final Thesis Exhibition Review (see section 4). Any student failing the Mid-Program Review or Thesis Exhibition will automatically be placed on Academic Probation. Students who do not meet a level of creative and/or academic performance established by the MFA Committee may be asked to leave the program. Criteria on which this decision is based may include a failure to meet expectations of a substantial level of academic work, and/or a lack of professional and timely installation of their creative undertaking, and/or a lack of engagement in the MFA programs activities.

Student Alert Notices

The Student Alert Notice allows chairs and the Dean of Student Affairs to a wide range of concerns about a student at the first signs of concern. The Student Alert Notice helps the college mobilize appropriate support as quickly as possible. Students are also encouraged to contact the faculty and take steps to remedy the issue.

The alert form is sent to Records, who notices by email the student and Student Affairs. If a student receives two or more alert notices the student will be contacted by the Dean of Student Affairs. A subsequent meeting will be scheduled to help the student analyze the problem and make realistic plans to remedy the situation and succeed at the college.

Employment with Faculty/Staff Not Allowed

MCAD has both a conflict of interest policy and a faculty/staff employment policy that prohibits employment of a current student by a faculty/staff member who grades/oversees that student. If you have questions, please contact the MFA Program Director.

Academic Probation

According to College policy, if a mentor or instructor submits a "Fail" grade, and the MFA Committee confirms the "Fail" grade, the candidate is placed on probation for the subsequent semester. Any student failing the Mid-Program Review or Thesis Exhibition will automatically be placed on Academic Probation. The student, mentor, and MFA Director prepare a plan for academic improvement that is submitted to the MFA Committee for approval. At the end of the following semester the MFA Committee reviews the student's progress and the student may either be removed from probation or dismissed from the program. A student may appeal to return, in writing to the MFA Director, following the dismissal. Readmission following dismissal may be granted upon recommendation of the MFA Committee after a period of at least one semester, and will be reviewed by the MFA Committee on a case by case basis. The student will submit a portfolio of work that includes work completed during the program as well work completed during the time away from the program. This work should represent a significant amount of development, and include a statement outlining a plan for how to continue to make progress in the program if readmitted.

English Language Competency

For students that are not native English language speakers there is an expectation of continued improvement in comprehension, written, and spoken language skills throughout the MFA program. Language assessment at the point of admissions is considered only adequate for entry to the program. All Students who are not fully able to participate in the English language spoken and written requirements of the program will be required to participate in mandatory English language programs offered by the Learning Center. Students who are not able to improve their language skills to an acceptable level will be asked to leave the program for a period of time to improve their skills. The decision will be made following a formal review and assessment by the MFA Committee.

General Student Concerns

Within the MFA Program, there are a variety of steps a student can take to resolve concerns or conflicts most effectively and efficiently. See the Conflict Resolution Guide in the Appendix.

The first step is to try resolving the issue directly with the person, whether that's another student, professor, mentor, a support area/office on campus, a committee member, etc. If you have tried direct communication and it's not working, or you don't feel safe talking to the person, please contact the MFA Director. If you are struggling with a response from the MFA Director, please reach out to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If a student has tried these avenues and still needs to pursue a solution, MCAD also provides an online form called "Student Complaint Policy and Processes" located on the MCAD Student Affairs intranet resource page.

Student Academic Appeals and Grievances

All graduate student academic appeals and grievances should be brought to the MFA Director. Each appeal and grievance will be treated on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the MFA Committee who will decide on appropriate action.

Withdrawal

Students who wish to withdraw from the college during a semester are required to schedule an appointment with the MFA Program Director and the Dean of Student Affairs and complete a Notification of Student Withdrawal form. Grades of Pass, Fail, Incomplete, or Withdrawal will appear on each student's transcript for all credits attempted.

Prohibited Behaviors

The following are defined as disciplinary offenses actionable by the college. Consequences for prohibited behaviors may include failing an assignment or course, loss of mentored credits, academic probation, or dismissal from the program. The MFA Director and the MFA Committee will determine consequences for prohibited behaviors, with counsel from the Vice President of Academic Affairs and/or the Dean of Student Affairs. A student may appeal any of the disciplinary actions in writing to the MFA Director for committee review.

> Academic Dishonesty

Submission of false records of academic achievement; cheating on assignments or examinations; altering, forging or misusing a College academic record, document or funds; taking, acquiring or using test materials without faculty permission; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records to obtain grades, honors, awards or professional endorsement in a dishonest manner; plagiarizing.

> Plagiarizing

Quoting un-cited materials, visual, written, or coded; presenting the work of others as your own; using the work of other MCAD students without their express permission. This includes submission of work for MCAD courses, exhibitions, or sales.

> Using the Same Work in Different Courses

Students may not submit the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all faculty.

Note:
- Consequences for plagiarizing and double submissions may include removal of work from exhibition or sale, failing the assignment or the course, or academic probation.

- These policies also apply to work submitted to the MCAD Art Sale, MCAD Auction, MCAD award competitions, and MCAD on or off-campus exhibitions. All submitted work should not infringe on another artist's work.

Alcoholic Beverages Policy

Alcoholic beverages may not be sold, served, or consumed on the MCAD campus, including the MCAD MFA Studios, except in conformance with all applicable state laws. Alcohol may not be served at receptions. The only exceptions to this policy are events approved by the President of the college. Selling alcoholic beverages in College apartments in any way (including price-for-admission basis) is against state law and MCAD Policy. In no case may alcoholic beverages be served to individuals who are not of legal age or who appear to be intoxicated. Since the majority of students who live in College apartments are not of legal drinking age, all consumption of alcohol in College apartments is discouraged. If an individual appears to be intoxicated while on campus, Public Safety should be notified immediately. Rules and sanctions regarding alcohol in on-campus housing are listed in the Housing Handbook and can include eviction.

Chemical Dependency

MCAD is a drug-free campus. Students who are concerned about their own chemical use or the chemical use of family members, friends or other students are strongly encouraged to seek help from the Counseling Psychologist or the Dean of Student Affairs. Students who possess or abuse drugs on-campus may not just face disciplinary action, but legal action as well.

Damage/ Theft/ Invasion of Privacy in Studio Spaces

Any damage, vandalism, loss, or concerns about personal safety should be reported to Public Safety and the MFA Director. Theft or damage caused in any buildings or studios to artwork or property, and/or entering another student's studio will not be tolerated and may lead to dismissal or disciplinary action based on consultation with the MFA Committee with advice from the Director of the MFA program.

Additional Prohibited Behaviors

Other policies regarding prohibited behaviors are found in the MCAD Student Handbook and apply to all graduate students.

SECTION 3. MID-PROGRAM REVIEW

What is it?

The Mid-Program Review is a conversational check-in for the student to demonstrate their progress in the program, and receive feedback to help produce a cohesive, accomplished, and successful Thesis Review the following year.

Why are we doing this?

The Mid-Program review provides a forum in which students are expected to demonstrate and discuss how they participate in their field of creative production. It is an opportunity to receive written and oral feedback, which can be digested over the spring and summer, resulting in reflection and preparation for the thesis project in the second year.

How are we doing this?

The review is scheduled for the semester during which the student is completing 28 credits (Spring of the first year, in most cases). The MFA program director sets dates and deadlines each semester for Mid-Program Reviews; typically they fall near midterm of spring semester.

Students are required to install their work (usually in-person in the MFA Gallery, and rarely digitally/online, based on their field of creative practice), and then present their work in a committee review. This includes delivering a brief verbal introduction (see Rubric in Appendix for guidelines), providing a written statement of intent, and a research summary document for review by their committee. Student performance in Mid-Program Review is measured, and written feedback is provided, using the Rubric linked in the Appendix.

The committee consists of two members of the MFA Faculty Committee, one professional related to the student's field of study, and the MFA Director; the student may also invite their mentor to be present if they choose. If present, the mentor is welcome to ask questions and participate in discussion, but the mentor is asked specifically not to answer any questions that are posed to the mentee, or defend/explain the mentee's choices, as this is a time for the mentee to showcase their expertise. If the mentor is present for the review, this will count as the 1-hour meeting with the student for that week.

The review consists of 4 components:

Please see the most current Mid-Program Review Rubric linked in the Appendix.

1. Creative work presented* (documentation of installation, uploaded to your "Mid-Program Review" Google folder)
2. Research Summary Document* (fill out the Google doc in your "Mid-Program Review" Google folder)

3. The 1-2 page written Statement of Intent* (use the Google doc in your "Mid-Program Review" Google folder)
4. Candidate's verbal presentation and response to committee questions

* All of the above must also be accessible as online documentation for committee members screening the work before the review takes place (MFA administration sets dates and deadlines - all are usually due in the students' online "Mid-Program Review" folders by 1pm on the Friday before Mid-Program Review begins).

Creative Work

Typically, students showcase recent work, although it is also acceptable to include some work from the first semester. All work must be completed while enrolled in the MFA program at MCAD (no work from prior to the program will be accepted). The work on display is thoughtfully selected (often around 2-3 works depending on the medium and scale/duration of the works); it is not a comprehensive display of every work created since entering the program. A more comprehensive view of the student's creative practice can be included in the research summary document using photographs, video/audio links, and writing.

This presentation is almost always a gallery exhibition (generally for contemporary artists), but can sometimes be an online presentation (if client-based work, film, or artists working specifically online). We encourage students to consult with their mentor and the MFA program director if they need to propose an online presentation instead of a gallery exhibition. [Any pre-approved non-installed virtual presentations must include a presentation of the work as it's meant to be seen (e.g, a video of a gallery walkthrough rather than just photographs of the work)].

Physical work must be installed according to the time constraints for installation set by the MFA program. Committee members will have a short period of time to spend with the work in the space before the review. All installation spaces are shared spaces. During installation, students must exercise professional considerations for other students who are installing work.

If work is not professionally installed (physically in the MFA Gallery, or, if approved in advance, online) before the specified deadlines, the student is subject to disciplinary measures and may be prohibited from taking part in the Mid-Program Review. This includes the full completion of the Research Summary Document and the written Statement of Intent by the specified deadlines. Disciplinary measures are determined by the MFA Faculty Committee with advice from the MFA program director.

Research Summary Document

In addition to the creative work, students complete a Research Summary as a Google Doc, which is distributed by the administrative coordinator in the student "Mid-Program Review" Google folder. The research summary is built using the Research Summary Template. **Follow the directions in the template carefully.**

The research summary document is a collection of photos, sketches, links, writings, ideas, and notes that will help the committee to understand the scope of the candidate's explorations during the first year in the program. It is an opportunity to showcase your research and process. The thumbnail photos included in the Research Summary document should NOT be of the work installed and documented in your Mid-Program Review installation - rather, you are sharing in this document Additional work NOT shown in your Mid-Program Review installation that you want your committee to see so that they know what else you have made in the MFA program so far.

Statement of Intent

Students also complete a Statement of Intent as a Google Doc, which is distributed by the administrative coordinator in the student "Mid-Program Review" Google folder. The Statement of Intent is one page (preferred) or two pages maximum, 12pt font, double spaced, 1-inch margins. The statement discusses the subject (i.e., the specific topic or focus of the work), form, technical aspects, content (i.e., the concerns, ideas, or interests underlying the work, the work's themes and meanings), and context of the work installed for the Mid-Program Review; the statement is NOT simply an artist biography or generalized discussion of your practice, though you may briefly include such information. You will work on this document during *Criticism & Theory II* class. Please see rubric in the appendix for further details and guidelines.

Verbal Presentation / Response to Committee Questions

The verbal presentation is 2-3 minutes, and at most five minutes long, at the start of the review. *It should not be a live reading of the Statement of Intent.*

If the student is nervous about speaking for 2-3 minutes, it is recommended that the student and mentor arrange a mock review, prior to the official review, to help prepare (please count this as part of your weekly mentor meeting time). The student can also practice answering a variety of questions. Please see rubric in the appendix for further details and guidelines.

The Review Process

Note: Candidates and reviewers are required to be present and ready 5 minutes prior to their scheduled review time.

1) The graduate student's work is installed/distributed at a predetermined time (set by the MFA Program) before the review so that committee members can individually review the work in advance and see it in person (as appropriate). Talk with the MFA program director about exhibition standards if you have concerns.

2) Whether the work is installed in person or (rarely, and if approved in advance) presented online, documentation of the work is uploaded by students into their "Mid_Program Review" Google folder and then shared to the student's Mid-Program Review Committee. This deadline is set by the MFA Program, and is usually 1PM the Friday before the week of Mid-Program Review. See below for items that are required to be submitted:

a) This includes all types of work: 2D, 3D, 4D (time-based media), lengthy comics, film, video, or internet-based work, etc. Again, we recommend approximately 2-3 works for your Mid-Program installation, depending on the medium and scale/duration.

b) A Statement of Intent via Google Document (See above)

c) A Research Summary via a provided Google Doc template (See above)

3) The Mid-Program Review Committee meets with the student to review the work at a predetermined time (set by the MFA Program) after everyone has had time to review the preparatory documentation online in the student's "Mid-Program Review" Google folder. The MFA Director (or an MFA committee member if necessary) makes an audio recording of the meeting that is shared with the student afterward, and will introduce the event with a script like:

a) *"First, I invite everyone to turn off their phones and devices. Next, hello and welcome everyone to the spring 20XX MFA Mid-Program Review for [STUDENT NAME]. Today, we will be creating a private audio-only recording for student use after this review, so we'll be listing everyone present for this meeting. When I gesture to you, please state your name and pronouns for the recording. Today we are gathered with _____, _____, and _____. After introductions, we will start with no more than a 5-minute presentation of the work from the student, followed by comments, questions, critique, and discussion from the committee. In total, this process will last no more than 35 minutes, and we will be keeping time. After the formal review, the student will be invited to exit this meeting, and the committee will debrief for 10 minutes. Committee members should fill out the Mid Program Review rubric within 48 hours of the review. The resulting rubrics will be conveyed to the student at a later time. The student will have a follow-up mid-program review meeting as part of their Spring advising session with the MFA Director."*

4) After the introduction, the student speaks for <u>2-3 minutes (no more than five minutes)</u> about their work. Then, the committee asks questions, provides feedback, and discusses for up to 35 minutes. The student should use this time to ask the committee prepared questions about their work, as well.

5) After the review, the student is asked to exit while the committee talks for 10 minutes to debrief. All feedback is captured on rubrics from the reviewers.

6) After the review is complete, committee members have 48 hours to complete the online rubrics. Then, students are provided a completed rubric by each committee member at a later time. Students are encouraged to take the feedback into consideration as they work over the spring, summer, and prepare for thesis work the following year. Final rubrics will be sent to the Records office for filing.

7) The student will have a follow-up mid-program review meeting (set by the MFA program) as part of their spring advising session with the MFA Director.

SECTION 4: THESIS PROJECT PREPARATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Thesis Project Preparation

The Thesis Project is the capstone of the MFA program and an indication of the candidate's development as a creative practitioner as a result of the graduate experience. MFA candidates work closely with their mentors and thesis committees to plan and implement the Thesis Project and verbal review. Students will be asked to discuss their practice at their Thesis Review. The position paper, (formerly known as the thesis paper) is completed in class.

MFA Public Research Presentation

What is it?

Each student will make a public research presentation at the end of the third semester, building on the research and writing they have completed during the third semester. This presentation will be included as part of the requirements for the *Graduation Preparation I* course.

Why are we doing this?

It is important for MFA students to practice public presentation skills, and presenting is a part of nearly every career after graduation. It also provides opportunities for practicing live Q&A, and provides practice in summarizing their work in clear and concise ways.

How are we doing this?

Public research presentations will not exceed 10 minutes in length.

IMPORTANT: The presentation does not attempt to summarize future actions. ***You are not describing your thesis body of work*** as it is currently in-process. This is a view of your work from the start of the MFA Program to the end of the third semester.

These presentations are arranged under the supervision of the instructor of the course, and include the following areas:

1) **Introduction:** Who are you and what is your background relative to your graduate work?
2) **Content and subject matter:** What themes/ issues/ concepts/ questions does your work engage with? What is the importance/ relevance of this content to your experience? How does the subject matter within the work relate to this content?
3) **Formal/ experiential description**
   a) **Formal choices:** What are the formal choices you make in your work that support its content?

      b) **Studio Methodology:** What kind of work do you do? What disciplines do you work within/ between? What processes, activities, do you include in your work?

4) **Context**
      a) **Historic creative context:** How does your work relate to the historical and contemporary context/ lineage of other creative practitioners?
      b) **Audience/ Experience:** How is your work experienced? What is the audience/ social context for your work? This can include identities, positionalities, power relationships, place issues, etc. What is the importance/ relevance of your work to your audience?

5) **Conclusion:** Summarize and re-iterate main points. Remind us why your work matters and what it does are important and relevant.

Position Paper Preparation (Formerly the Thesis Paper)

What is it?

The Position Paper is a 10-page paper (*8 pages will be due before the end of Graduation Preparation 1, and two pages will be an addendum reflection after the Thesis review)* situating your work within an historical and contemporary creative context. It will include an extended formal description of your work/ process and will hone in on the theoretical or conceptual questions that guide or inform your practice. The paper will include Chicago Manual citations and a bibliography containing at least 7-10 sources.

Why are we doing this?

It is important for MFA students to practice writing skills because clear writing and articulation of one's practice is vital to success after graduation.

How are we doing this?

Graduation Preparation 1

This course in the third semester is designed to foster independent research, writing, and discussion of ideas toward the development of the position paper. The outcome of this semester is an 8-page position paper. Candidates write a 2-page reflective addendum paper in *Graduation Preparation 2*. The finished product is a 10-page writing project, which is submitted to the MCAD library. While students may consult with their mentor and others for additional feedback, grades (pass/ fail) are assigned by the instructor(s) of *Graduation Preparation 1 & 2*.

IMPORTANT: The **first eight pages** of the paper do not attempt to summarize anything about your Thesis body of work. This portion of the paper is written while the Thesis body of work is in-process, so it would be inappropriate to try to write about it at the same time you are creating it. The first eight pages are a view of your work from the start of the MFA Program to the end of the third semester. You will write about your work in such a way that you will use

your own work as examples of the larger points you are making in your paper, so be prepared to write about 3 or 4 of your best, most exemplary projects.

Graduation Preparation 2

In the final semester, this course will consist of group meetings, which can include prep for writing the 1-page Statement of Intent/Thesis Statement that accompanies the Thesis Review, prep for the oral Thesis Review, prep and/or reflection for committee meetings, and individual meetings or in-process group critiques as check-ins leading up to the Thesis Review. Additionally, students will be refining their position papers in advance of them being turned in to the MCAD Library on the final day of the semester, including formatting, titling, completing the paper's bibliography, etc.

At the end of the semester, there will be a writing intensive in which students write **a 2-page addendum paper** that reflects on their thesis exhibition work. They work to reflect on the thesis review conversation, reflect on written feedback from the rubrics, and possibly answer questions posed by committee members. For many students, it will be helpful to start these last two pages by adapting and building upon the 1-page Statement of Intent/Thesis Statement. If the work has strayed significantly from the research completed in semester three, the student should briefly re-address the questions/elements of the semester three position paper (although, it is likely the student has already done so in the 1-page Statement of Intent/Thesis Statement).

Example Outline

(Your paper does not need to replicate this exactly but should touch on the topics mentioned.):

1. **Introduction:** This paragraph introduces the major topics of your paper. Who are you and what is your background relative to your graduate work?
2. **Content and subject matter:** What themes/ issues/ concepts/ questions does your work engage with? What is the importance/ relevance of this content to your experience? How does the subject matter within the work relate to this content/ message?
3. **Formal/ experiential description**
   a. **Formal choices:** What are the formal/ experiential choices you make in your work that support its content?
   b. **Studio Methodology:** What kind of work do you do? What disciplines do you work within/ between? What processes, activities, do you include in your work? What is your awareness of technical explorations or processes?
4. **Context**
   a. **Historic creative context:** How does your work relate to the historical and contemporary context/ lineage of other creative practitioners?
   b. *Audience/ Experience:* How is your work experienced? What is the audience/ social context for your work? This can include identities, positionalities, power relationships, place issues, etc. What is the importance/ relevance of your work to your audience?
5. **Conclusion:** Summarize and re-iterate main points. Remind us why your work matters and what it does are important and relevant.

Note: Digital versions of Position Papers and images documenting the Thesis Exhibition/ creative work will be submitted to and archived by the MCAD Library. Students will not receive diplomas until all required thesis documentation is submitted.

MFA Thesis Committee Members, Schedule, & Responsibilities

The Thesis Committee is the body that evaluates and makes the recommendation for awarding of the degree. Each MFA candidate works with their mentor and their Thesis Committee throughout their final semester to advance the capstone Thesis project and verbal review of the MFA thesis work.

The committee consists of the MFA mentor, an MCAD faculty member (either full-time or adjunct) and a third member who can be an outside-MCAD Advisor. The MFA program director approves all committees. In all cases, the overall strength of the committee will be the guiding criteria for approval, meaning that a committee member's contribution to the thesis conversation takes precedence over their perceived institutional relationship to the college.

The third, "outside" thesis committee member could be someone that would further the student's professional development. Students are encouraged to think strategically about selection. The outside thesis member cannot be currently enrolled as a student at an institution of higher education. When in doubt, check with the MFA program director. It is important to have some idea of your thesis project before approaching potential committee members. The more material you can present (in terms of concept, studio work in progress, written description), the better you can gauge a potential committee member's contribution. Thesis outside advisors receive an honorarium after the Thesis review has been completed in the semester of a candidate's graduation.

In order to provide potential committee members with a brief overview of their potential duties, you may include this information in communications with them:

"The MFA Thesis Committee commitment is for three, 1-hour, in-person meetings (scheduled approximately in December, late February/early March, and finally during the Thesis Review week, usually in late April/early May, all arranged by the MFA candidate), plus viewing the MFA candidate's December Public Research Presentation (either live or recorded), being available for scheduling purposes via email, and finally filling out a written rubric after the final Thesis Review meeting in late April/early May. It's approximately a four-to-five hour commitment in total. Any Thesis committee members who are Not full-time MCAD faculty receive an honorarium ($312 as of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement) after the final Thesis Review and paperwork is complete in May."

Schedule

MFA students begin discussing their committee with mentors during the fall semester of the year they plan to graduate. Students will select and have their committee members confirmed

via approval form no later than November 1. Students are welcome to recruit committee members earlier in the semester.

Students should schedule their first committee meeting during December after their Public Research Presentations. Sending committee members a [Doodle Poll](#) in order to arrange a time that works for all is highly recommended. It is recommended to invite the committee members to attend the Public Research Presentation (although attendance is not required - they can view the video recording afterward), and then simply hold the meeting after the presentations have concluded. If that arrangement doesn't work for committee members, please make other plans to meet before the December break.

Students must schedule the second committee meeting to happen no later than the last Friday before Spring Break to allow time for students to apply constructive feedback before the final review meeting.

Responsibilities

It is crucial that students' thesis committees meet and discuss thesis projects as a group. The dynamic interplay of ideas is vital, but equally important is agreement among committee members and MFA students regarding direction and completion of work. MCAD requires that the Thesis Committee meet three times, which includes the Thesis Exhibition Review as the third and final meeting.

After meetings one and two, the mentor is required to submit a Thesis Committee Meeting Report (see appendix for sample) to the MFA Director within 48 hours of each meeting. If appropriate, feel free to complete the form together as a committee and with the student present before ending each meeting. The purpose of this form is to provide some concrete feedback and guidance to the student as they work towards the final review. While this form may be brought up in the final review, this report is not considered a full, complete, or definitive list of all the work that must be done to pass the Thesis Review. Instead, it is a tool for ensuring some specific feedback is provided to students as they work through the thesis process.

Committee Meeting Protocols

It is strongly advised that the committee meet as a group for the first meeting. This request comes from the need for the committee to fill out a meeting report, in which the members give feedback on the strengths, concerns, and recommendations for the student after meetings one and two. If this is not possible, the mentor and student will devise a strategy for the committee members to communicate with the student and share information (again, try to avoid substituting individual meetings for a committee meeting - this can lead to confusion and miscommunication).

Meeting 1. Introductory Session

This meeting should occur in December after the student's Public Research Presentation. The student should aim to keep this first meeting around 1 hour to be respectful of the committee members' time. At this meeting, the student introduces everyone to each other, and if the

student wants, they may also provide a copy of the paper written during *Graduation Preparation I* to inform their understanding of the work during semester four. The committee can give feedback on the paper; however the student is not beholden to incorporate any of the feedback. [The faculty member(s) teaching *Graduation Preparation I & II* submits the grades for the paper's various stages.] The student is also strongly advised to share the video recording of their Public Research Presentation in advance of the first committee meeting (or as soon as that recording becomes available).

During this meeting, the student is expected to communicate plans for their work during this semester. The student should also outline any particular feedback they are hoping to receive (keeping in mind clear communication is a key to success), while still being flexible and open to feedback and change. Questions the committee might discuss include: Where was the student at with their practice when they started at MCAD? How has the student's practice evolved? What does the student want their capstone Thesis project to be, to do, or to look like? Students should collect as much feedback as possible, and decide what tasks and steps to accomplish before the next meeting with the committee.

By the end of Meeting 1, the student and committee should confirm the date/time of their second meeting. The second meeting can happen no later than the Friday before Spring Break. [The third meeting (the final review) will occur during set dates to be published at the end of the third semester. The student is responsible for arranging the exact date and time of their Thesis Review meeting with their committee in their final semester, and must communicate this day/time to the MFA Senior Administrative Assistant.]

At the conclusion of meeting one, the mentor must submit a Thesis Committee Meeting Report to the MFA program director within 48 hours of the meeting.

Meeting 2. In-Progress Review

This meeting will happen no later than the Friday before Spring Break to allow time for students to apply constructive feedback before the final Thesis review meeting. Meeting 2 allows committee members to track any changes in the initial project plan. It is the mentor and the Thesis Committee's responsibility to approve of the content, conceptual orientation, and formal structure of the student's creative thesis work by the end of the second meeting in order to prepare for final evaluation of the work for the thesis exhibition at the final review. The student should aim to keep this meeting around 1 hour to be respectful of the committee members' time. A reminder: if the student is producing a lengthy comic or videos longer than 3 minutes, reviewers should generally have at least one week to experience these works before meeting two.

At the conclusion of meeting two, the mentor must submit a Thesis Committee Meeting Report to the MFA program director within 48 hours of the meeting.

Meeting 3. Thesis Exhibition Review

This meeting is held after work has been installed in the thesis exhibition. The MFA program director will set the time and date for all work to be installed and complete, and the time and date for the Thesis Exhibition Review to take place, usually during week twelve or thirteen of

the semester. It is the student's responsibility to negotiate and communicate the time and date of the Thesis Review to their mentor and the committee members, and to resolve any scheduling conflicts. It is a requirement that all three committee members be present at the time of the review; Online participation is ONLY permitted if approved in advance, and may not be possible in all cases. See below for a detailed explanation of the Thesis Review.

Further Guidelines

- Any student who does not meet all criteria as outlined above will not be allowed to proceed in the program and will be placed on academic probation.
- Work that is not installed before the deadline for installation may subject the student to disciplinary measures and may prohibit the student from taking part in the Thesis Exhibition Review and Commencement Ceremony.
- Students are to be present and ready for their reviews 15 minutes prior to the review.
- Disciplinary measures are determined by the MFA Faculty Committee with advice from the MFA program director.
- It is recommended that students and mentors arrange a mock review, preferably in the exhibition space, prior to the official review to help prepare for their review of the work.

Thesis Exhibition

Didactic information must be submitted via an online form at least two weeks before the exhibition to allow time for Exhibition Studio Services to print/cut didactics in time for installation. Alternatively, some cohorts prefer an exhibition binder with a map in place of wall didactics. If this is the case, all binder materials must be submitted via an online form at least two weeks before the exhibition to allow time for binder assembly and proofing. Installation of work must be complete by the deadline provided by the MFA Program each year.

In the event that the class is particularly large (more than 15 students), the group will discuss the option of having one large exhibition with less space per person, or two exhibitions with more space per person (more work is required in terms of install/deinstall turnover and promotions/catering/etc for the latter, and is not possible in some years). Students may petition to have their Thesis exhibition work in an alternative space (i.e., not the MFA Gallery).

The Thesis Exhibition Review

Once a student's exhibition is installed, the committee meets with the student for a formal review facilitated by the MFA program director. The review will last approximately one hour and will evaluate the candidate on the quality of creative work presented and the candidate's verbal review. The Thesis Committee is responsible for assigning a grade for the verbal final review, the 1-page Statement of Intent/Thesis Statement about the installed work, and the work in the Thesis Exhibition (the MFA program director enters this grade upon receiving the signed paperwork after the review).

The Thesis Committee will be given the 1-page Statement of Intent/Thesis Statement at least one week before the final review. The 1-page Statement should clearly and succinctly address the following aspects of the candidate's work, and will be placed in a binder at the public exhibition:

1) **Description/ methodology:** Describe the work presented in the thesis exhibition. What are the materials, processes, activities, you engage with?
2) **Content/ subject matter/ formal decisions:** Provide a synopsis of the issues/ themes/ concepts related to your work. How do the subject matter and formal decisions within the work and its presentation support this content?
3) **Audience/ context:** If there are specific aspects of the audience's engagement with the work or the situational context that are important and/ or different from previous work, describe these.
4) Address how the thesis work departs from, or represents a culmination of, your research and/or prior work in the program.

The review is one hour long. The MFA candidate will make a presentation of the work (5 minutes or less), and each committee member will have an opportunity to respond to and ask questions about the thesis work. The verbal presentation is a good place to briefly restate some main themes before opening it up to feedback from the committee. There is no need to read the 1-page statement aloud, as the committee will have received the statement a week in advance of the event.

Committee members will question and discuss the work with the student. The MFA program director keeps time, indicating when it is time to reiterate, emphasize, and encapsulate points. To help conversation, students are encouraged to bring prepared questions for their committee members as part of the final thesis review.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the student will be asked to leave briefly while the committee discusses their recommendation, after which the committee will report its decision to the student verbally and in writing. The committee uses the Thesis Review Rubric to evaluate the student's work (see Appendix).

The Thesis Committee recommends to the MFA faculty that the degree of Master of Fine Arts:
1) Be awarded
2) Be conditionally awarded
3) Not be awarded

The MFA program's goal is to put student improvement at the core of our evaluation process. Conditionally awarded simply means that there are specific improvements that need to be made, and can conceivably be done within a week. "Not be awarded" means that improvements are needed that cannot conceivably be made within a week. Neither indicates shame or punishment; both are useful tools for ensuring all our graduates meet rigorous standards of an MFA program.

Should the Thesis Exhibition Committee recommend the MFA not be awarded, the candidate is placed on academic probation and may appeal the decision to the MFA faculty committee through the MFA program director. The MFA faculty committee will determine a plan for the student to complete their degree and address the Thesis Committee's concerns (most often over the summer semester).

Upon completion of the recommendations of the committee, the graduate faculty, through the MFA program director, recommends to the President and the Board of Trustees that the MFA be awarded.

After the thesis review, the MFA program director will give the student a digital copy of the audio recording from the review. Also, the Thesis Committee members will have 24 hours to send the student 3-5 questions about the work via the Thesis Review rubric. The student can use these questions to help guide writing the last portion of the paper during the writing intensive portion of the *Graduation Preparation II* course. These questions are just a tool; the student is not beholden to address all of them. The student's *Graduation Preparation II* instructor will also receive a copy of the questions from the committee to help guide development of the 2-page reflection paper.

Communication and Challenges

If at any time during work with the Thesis Committee, *the student* finds timing and communication are breaking down, it is the student's responsibility to report these complications immediately to the MFA director to get the process back on track in time for the review. The student's success is the program's top priority, and communication must stay open and clear through the entire process. Delay in reporting communication problems will complicate the program's ability to serve the student's best interests.

If at any time during the process *the Thesis Committee* feels that timing and communication are breaking down (they have tried to address the breakdown and the situation is not improving), they are encouraged to discuss the challenges with the MFA director, and issue a Student Alert in order to quickly and efficiently resolve any issues.

Documenting the Thesis Exhibition, Valuation and Submission

Students should plan to document their own installations at the highest quality possible (20-30 images, walk-through videos, etc), either on their own or with others' assistance. This is important documentation for the future of each student after graduation.

The instructor of the *Graduation Preparation II* course is tasked with coordinating submission of all digital versions of papers and images documenting the Thesis Exhibition and creative work to the MCAD Library for archival purposes. Students will not receive diplomas until all required thesis documentation is submitted.

SECTION 5. ADDITIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Financial Aid, Scholarships and Work Opportunities

Students may be able to apply for Graduate Assistantships (GAs). GAs are a special opportunity for the Graduate Program, designed to provide MFA candidates with meaningful extracurricular experience and to help offset the expense of tuition. Some examples are GAs in the Printmaking Studio, Liberal Arts Teaching Assistant, Media Center, Learning Center, Computer Support, Academic Services, 3D Shop, Online Learning, and MCAD Gallery.

The College has a scholarship program, including MCAD Trustee Scholarships for distinguished students and a merit scholarship for continuing students. See the Director of Financial Aid for information about these scholarships.

A full listing of current opportunities for the MFA Program can be found on our "Opportunities" webpage.

To be eligible for MCAD grants and assistantships, students must be full-time (at least 12 credits per semester). Students can retain their federal loans if they choose to attend part-time for a few semesters, but would want to talk about that course planning with the MFA director to address any concerns. You can view our course grid. Please note that the classes listed in semesters 1 and 3 occur only in the fall, and the classes listed in semesters 2 and 4 occur only in the spring.

APPENDIX 1: MFA Students Auditing Courses

MFA Auditing Directions

MFA Candidates may audit an undergraduate course to learn new concepts, techniques or technologies beneficial to the development of their work, or to gain use of limited-access pieces of equipment from the Media Center. Audits are taken as part of the mentored studio credits and should be listed in the Semester Learning Contract.

As an auditor, an MFA candidate is an observer of the class. Audits do not appear on the transcript. No credit will be earned and no grade will be assigned by the professor teaching the audited class. Students who wish to have full participation in a course, have it recorded on their transcript, and be guaranteed a workstation must take the course for credit.

The MFA Director will email the instructor on behalf of the student to request an audit; alternatively, MFA students may also email instructors after first consulting with the MFA Director. Specific requirements and expectations are arranged by the faculty and the student. In general, tests, critiques, and papers are not required. The decision to audit a class must be made by the end of the Add/Drop period. *The instructor must email Records to indicate that the student is auditing. If the auditor needs access to the online learning management system (Canvas), the professor should indicate this fact in the email to Records.*

Classes are offered on a space-available basis after degree-seeking students are registered for the semester. A computer station (or other institutionally provided equipment) is not necessarily required to audit the class if the graduate student is able/willing to provide their own laptop and/or access institutional equipment after class hours. Auditors are not allowed if the number of people in the classroom/studio violates fire codes or poses a safety concern.

See **MFA Auditing Directions** for full procedure.

APPENDIX 2: Rubrics and Report

[Rubrics and Report Examples available online on MCAD MFA intranet page](#)

- Spring 2024 Mid-Program Review Rubric - midterm of semester two
- Position Paper for *Graduation Preparation 1* - end of semester three
- Public Research Presentations - end of semester three
- Spring 2024 Thesis Reviews - end of semester four
- Thesis Committee Meeting Report (located in student folders)

APPENDIX 3: Mentor/ Mentee Handbooks

☆ [MENTOR HANDBOOK](#)

☆ [MENTEE HANDBOOK](#)

Appendix 4: Conflict Resolution Guide

☆ **[See full Conflict Resolution Guide.](#)**