Introduction

This is the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Master of Fine Arts Handbook. It is a guide to the policies, procedures and requirements of the Department of Art for the MFA degree program. For additional information or clarification, students should consult with faculty and staff of the Department of Art and with other university personnel who are available to assist them.

Graduate Assistant Handbook

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Program Description
The Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art is a comprehensive three-year program designed to guide students toward expertise in studio art practices, aesthetics and scholarly inquiry while expanding proficiency in art history, criticism and theory. In addition, students have opportunities to acquire experience in classroom instruction and pedagogy, and gallery practices.

The MFA is a distinguished terminal degree that prepares students to excel as professional practicing artists in a global context and in careers in higher education.

MFA Students will:

- Demonstrate depth and breadth of knowledge of the key critical and theoretical frameworks that pertain to their discipline(s) and area(s) of concentration and research;
- Engage with and analyze their own work within these frameworks;
- Demonstrate knowledge of theory, methodologies, and discursive vocabularies in a disciplinary or interdisciplinary context relative to their proposed thesis exhibition or project;
- Apply their knowledge in the discipline and concentration(s) of choice, media, and techniques to create a thesis project or exhibition that explores the contextual framework as related to their research and creative scholarship;
- Articulate ways in which the combination of their scholarly inquiry, practice, and thesis project or exhibition and written thesis are a part of and contribute to the fields of contemporary Studio Art and Design during applicable critiques, public presentation, and oral defense.

Degree Requirements
Students must complete a total of 60 semester hours with a cumulative 3.0 graduate GPA. No more than two grades of "C" earned at this university will be accepted as credit for this degree. A second “C” may result in dismissal from the program.

- Students with a concentration in Studio Art will complete up to 24 credit hours in an area of concentration including Painting/Drawing, Printmaking, Photography, Ceramics, Graphic Design or Sculpture.
- Students may choose up to 9-12 hours of elective credits in cross-disciplinary media that can serve as a parallel area of concentration.

The distribution of course requirements is as follows*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Semester Hours</th>
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A. 1) Courses in Area of Concentration:
   Studio Art Courses in one area chosen from among those offered 30
   MFA Exhibition (exhibit requirement ARTS 5398) 6

B. Art Seminar 3
Program Sequence
MFA Students are required to follow the program sequence outlined in the Matriculation Guide provided by the Graduate Coordinator. Exceptions will be considered pending approval from the student’s Area of Concentration head or Thesis Committee.

MFA students are required to demonstrate outstanding progress in their creative research throughout the program and must meet with Area of Concentration head and faculty advisory committee, or thesis committee at the end of each semester.

18 Credit Hour Review and 36 Credit Hour Review
The Department of Art Faculty will review each student’s studio work following completion of 18 semester hours and again at 36 hours before permitting advancement toward completion of an MFA Project.

- **18 Credit Hour Review:** Students must present their work in a professional manner before the entire Department of Art Faculty, accompanied by a current transcript, current CV, and artist statement. Upon conclusion, the Faculty will confer privately as to determine whether the student passed or failed the review.

  If the student fails the review, they must re-present their work at the conclusion of the following Fall term. A second failure results in dismissal from the program.

- **36 Credit Hour Review:** Students must present their work in a professional manner before the entire Department of Art Faculty, accompanied by a current transcript and CV, and a complete MFA Exhibition Proposal Form. Upon conclusion, the Faculty will confer privately regarding whether the student passes onto their MFA Project.

  Upon passing, students will complete a [Masters Thesis Advisory Committee Appointment Form](#) (Form A). If a student feels the need to request a change, a [Thesis Committee Member Change Request Form](#) (Form D) may be submitted.

  If the student fails the review, they must re-present at the beginning of the following Fall term. A second failure results in dismissal from the program.
Exit Requirements

For all MFA Candidates with a concentration in Studio Art i.e. Sculpture, Painting, Drawing, Printmaking, Ceramics and Photography:

Each student must create and present a professional MFA Project at the conclusion of 60 credit hours, including:

- A Solo Exhibition
- An Artist Statement
- A Written Paper: 5000-7500 words in length – exclusive of apparatus – which supports the MFA exhibition by discussing the work and its place within its theoretical, historical and contemporary contexts. Papers must discuss techniques used, subject matter/content and include a bibliography. The paper must be formatted according to The Chicago Manual of Style. It must be completed prior to the Oral Defense. Failure to do so will warrant a grade of “Incomplete.” Students have until the end of the following term to complete the paper. The paper must be uploaded to ProQuest (5) business days prior to graduation.
- A Public Presentation: 40-45 minutes in length, discussing components of the exhibition and written paper.
- A Comprehensive Oral Defense: Administered by the Thesis Committee, must be performed over the course of the exhibition. Student must complete a Preliminary Agreement to Schedule the Thesis Defense (Form B) five days prior. The student will answer a series of questions based on the exhibition and written paper. Upon conclusion, the committee will confer privately as to whether the student passed or failed. A failing defense may be repeated once. A second failure will result in dismissal from the program.
- Only upon passing all above listed Exit Requirement criteria will the committee sign the Thesis Defense & Written Thesis Report (Form C). It must be submitted to the College of Graduate studies the Friday prior to graduation.
- A bound copy of the written paper for the Graduate Coordinator including a thumb drive containing photographic documentation of individual works and the Solo Exhibition.
For all Master in Fine Arts in Studio Art with an emphasis in Graphic Design candidates:

- **A Written Paper**: 15-20-pages in length is to serve as the foundational context for the student’s multi-media campaign to be developed for their client of choice. It will discuss applicable research that supports their proposed design solutions, considers the client’s market and category competitive analyses, reviews target audience behaviors and demographics and defends technical and conceptual methodologies of the proposed campaign touchpoints. It must be completed prior to the Project Defense. Failure to do so will warrant a grade of “Incomplete.” Students have until the end of the following term to complete the paper. The paper must be uploaded to ProQuest (S) business days prior to graduation.

- **A Multi-media Campaign Project**: for a client of choice to be presented in professional format, either bound printed deck or digital website.

- **Project Defense**: A comprehensive oral defense of the student’s final project and paper is administered by the Graduate Faculty before the degree may be conferred. Student must complete a Preliminary Agreement to Schedule the Thesis Defense (Form B) five days prior. The student will answer a series of questions based on the campaign project and written paper. Upon conclusion, the committee will confer privately as to whether the student passed or failed. A failing defense may be repeated once. A second failure will result in dismissal from the program.

- Only upon passing all above listed Exit Requirement criteria will the committee sign the Thesis Defense & Written Thesis Report (Form C). It must be submitted to the College of Graduate studies the Friday prior to graduation.

For all Master in Fine Arts in Studio Art with an emphasis in Graphic Design candidates pursuing careers in higher education:

- **Additional Capstone Requirements**: Under the department’s MFA Portfolio and Professional Practices Course, the student will tailor their self-promotional collateral for application to positions in higher education and include a Teaching Philosophy, Statement of Research, and Student Work samples.

**Exit Requirement Forms**

- MFA Exhibition Proposal Form
- MFA Thesis Forms
- Thesis Formatting Guidelines
- Thesis Submission Guidelines
Graduate Assistantships and Teaching

Graduate Assistant Handbook

MFA applicants receiving assistantships will be assigned Assistantship Duties that may include Building Monitor hours, assisting full-time faculty with research or studio duties, or a position with the University Galleries pending an interview with the Director of University Galleries.

First year MFA students are required to assist a faculty member for two semesters before becoming a Graduate Teaching Assistant (of Record).

Graduate Teaching Assistants (of Record) are required to work five documented hours per week to fulfill assistantship requirements.

Students must be present in Corpus Christi and available by August 15th of each academic year and until the end of finals week each semester. See Academic Calendar

Studios

Studio space for the MFA Graduate Program is currently divided among four separate buildings, including one off-campus. A Graduate Studio Contract form must be completed and signed before spaces and keys are assigned.

- Center for Arts – on-campus
  A select area is currently available for graduate students in ceramics.

- Photo Building – on-campus
  This facility houses graduate studios for Photography, as well as access to space for the documentation of work.

- Classroom West (CESS) – on-campus
  The first and second floors have dedicated private and shared spaces for MFA students and faculty as well as the Creative Engineering Laboratory (CEL).

- Hamlin Center – off-campus at 4024 Weber Road
  This is a large, open space with semi-private individual studios utilized by, but not limited to, painting and drawing students.

Galleries

The University Galleries at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi include the Weil Gallery, Islander Art Gallery and Gallery 3. The Weil Gallery is located on campus in the Center for Arts on the first floor while the Islander Art Gallery and Gallery 3 is an off-campus facility located at the intersection of Staples and Weber Roads. They are traditional gallery spaces used for the exhibition of work by TAMU-CC graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and visiting artists from the local, national, and international contexts. Exhibitions held at these venues serve the immediate TAMU-CC campus as well as the greater Corpus Christi community and beyond.
These spaces also provide an important pedagogical component of the fine arts curriculum at TAMU-CC. Qualifying MFA candidates are offered opportunities for part-time employment with the University Galleries as part of their degree program and gain valuable experience as Graduate Gallery Assistants. The Graduate Gallery Assistant is selected through a formal interview process with the Galleries Director and Graduate Coordinator. This position fulfills requirements for a Graduate Assistantship. Duties include, but are not limited to, exhibition installations, supervision of undergraduate staff, and overseeing of general gallery maintenance. This provides TAMU-CC MFA candidates with valuable professional experience in the field of gallery practice and museum standards.

The galleries are supported by University Facilities, are outfitted with current equipment and hardware, and are staffed by TAMU-CC faculty and students.

**Visiting Artists**

Attendance at scheduled public lectures and exhibitions with visiting artists is required for all MFA Candidates. Studio visits with participating artists will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis.

**Safety**

*This document is a general summary and cannot be viewed as a complete safety guide to the Center for the Arts.*

It is critical that all activities in the Center for the Arts, CESS and the Hamlin Studios be performed safely. Proper use of tools and materials is critical to your safety and that of others. In addition, graduate students must set an example that undergraduate students follow. All graduate instructors are required to provide students with a tour of studio procedures and safety on the first day of class, followed by [Safety Training in Blackboard](#).

Graduate students must know how to use a tool or material safely before using it. Questions about safe use of tools should be directed to the supervisor(s) of the studios to which they belong or the Building Supervisor.

The campus emergency number is 4444 from any campus phone, otherwise 361-825-4444 may be dialed. The safety office number is 5555.

**Specific rules**

Hazardous materials brought into a studio should be accompanied by approval of the studio area faculty or Center for Arts Building Supervisor.

When hazardous materials are purchased for use in the Center for the Arts, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must be obtained and stored in each area of concentration. A copy must be given to the Center for Arts Building Supervisor.

Flammable liquids, strong acids, strong bases and other chemically reactive or particularly hazardous materials may not be stored in student lockers.

Whenever possible, graduate students must use wet cleanup techniques to eliminate dust. Sweeping of many of the materials used in ceramics and sculpture creates airborne hazards. Wet cleaning minimizes these hazards.
It is expected that graduate students will need access to materials and tools in areas other than their concentration. They must first confer with Area Faculty.

Undergraduate students are not granted after-hours privileges unless accompanied by a full-time faculty member.

Improper and unsafe use of materials and tools, especially willful, may result in removal of access to materials, tools and space. Serious violations may result in removal from the program. Appeals to these decisions must be made through the Dean of Students and the Campus Safety Officer.

**Advisement**
Advisement of graduate students in the MFA program occurs on several levels. The most important advisor is the Faculty Mentor in your area of concentration. Additionally, faculty mentors provide information regarding career opportunities as well as topics relevant to the student’s major area of concentration. Additional advisors include the Graduate Coordinator, Department of Art faculty, Administrative Assistant and Department Chair.

The Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Art assists the College of Graduate Studies advisor in matters of specific program administration, resolving scheduling conflicts and other issues that are program related.

**Graduate Scholarships**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi offers a number of academic scholarships based on academic achievement, educational objectives, evidence of leadership and service. [On-Line Applications](#)

**Transfer of Credit**
In addition to the University’s general policy on transfer of credit, the following regulations will apply to the MFA in Studio Art. Subject to the recommendation of the graduate faculty and a portfolio review, Candidates may have up to 15 semester hours (not including Exhibition or Thesis Project) of graduate credit applied to the Master of Fine Arts program. No grades less than a “B” and no courses earned toward another completed graduate degree will be accepted as transfer credit. Credit more than seven years old will not be counted toward the MFA degree.

**Graduation Deadlines**
While attendance at graduation is not required, attendance by terminal degree candidates does increase the stature of the department in the University and is therefore recommended. Students must submit a completed application for graduation online through their [S.A.I.L.](http://www.sail.tamu.edu) account by the posted deadline. Graduation deadlines and pricing are posted by the [Office of the Registrar](http://www.registrar.tamu.edu). Graduation application fees are non-refundable.
Commencement

**Dates, times and location of the commencement ceremonies**

Regalia – Graduates must wear official regalia to the commencement ceremony. These items can be rented or purchased at the [Campus Store](#).

- Diplomas will be made available to the students once an audit has confirmed completion of all requirements. This process may take several weeks following graduation. Once complete, diplomas may be picked-up in person or are mailed by the Registrar’s Office. For more information, contact 361-825-2624 and press option 2 to be connected.

**FACULTY**

Meg Aubrey, Assistant Professor
BFA, Rhode Island School of Design; MFA, Savannah College of Art and Design.

Leticia Bajuyo, Assistant Professor
BFA, University of Notre Dame; MFA, University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

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BA, University of Texas-Austin; MFA University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Jennifer Garza-Cuen, Assistant Professor
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BFA, University of South Alabama; MFA, University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

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