Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements.

Other information

The MATX student handbook (http://www.matx.vcu.edu/program/handbook) is available online.

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://www.granduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry</th>
<th>Deadline dates</th>
<th>Test requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Jan 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), the following requirements represent the minimum acceptable standards for admission.

1. Applicants must hold a master’s degree (M.A., M.F.A., M.S.) in a relevant field.

2. Applicants must submit the following, in the formats indicated via VCU’s online application portal.
   a. Writing sample demonstrating the ability to write clearly, analyze effectively and conduct original research in advanced doctoral-level seminars – This may be a master’s thesis, a graduate-level seminar paper or a published essay. Submit as a PDF.
   b. Statement of purpose describing the applicant’s interest, motivation and goals in pursuing this degree – The statement should specifically address the importance of interdisciplinarity to the applicant’s academic goals, and it should also offer evidence of preparation for the study of media, art, and text. The applicant should indicate the specific area of study and research interests.
to be pursued at VCU and identify faculty who might potentially
direct dissertation research. Submit as a PDF.
c. Academic curriculum vitae or professional resume – List all
colleges and universities attended and degrees earned, all
professional and academic positions held, all publications and/or
exhibitions, technical skills, and any other relevant information.
Include URLs for personal and/or professional websites. Submit
as PDF.
d. Letters of recommendation – Provide letters from three present
or former instructors or other individuals qualified to evaluate
the applicant’s ability to engage in interdisciplinary study at the
doctoral level. Have recommenders submit their letters via the
online application portal.

3. Applicants who wish to pursue creative work at VCU must also
submit a portfolio. Those with an M.F.A. who do not wish to continue
creative work should consult with the MATX director about this
requirement. Materials submitted should demonstrate excellence in
studio or professional practice and the potential to do graduate-level
work in media, art, and text. Portfolios will be reviewed by the MATX
admissions committee as well as relevant faculty in the School of
the Arts and the Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture.
Please observe the following guidelines:

   a. Those working in 2-D or 3-D mediums should provide 20 images
      of representative work arranged chronologically, beginning with
      the most recent.
   b. Those working in sound and time-based media, as well as those
      in the performing arts, should provide clips totaling no more than
      10 minutes.
   c. Those working across media may submit a combination of the
      above.
   d. The portfolio should include title, date, media and dimensions of
each work, as well as a brief statement or other information that
will help the admissions committee in its evaluation.

Small files illustrating 2-D or 3-D work should be submitted in a
single PDF. Sound or video files should be posted to Vimeo or
Sound Cloud with a functioning link submitted in a PDF with the
required information posted to the portal. Portfolio materials may
also be posted to a personal or professional website and the link
submitted in a PDF posted to the portal.

Degree requirements
In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements
(http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academicRegs/Grad/Graduation-Info), students
are required to complete course work in core and elective courses and to
conduct significant research.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students in the MATX program are
required to earn a minimum of 42 graduate-level credit hours beyond
the master’s. At least one-half of the credit hours presented for
graduation must be at the 600 level or higher. The 42-hour curriculum
comprises 36 hours of course work and a minimum of six hours of
dissertation research. Course work includes a core of four required
courses taken during the first two semesters by all incoming
students. Three doctoral seminars provide a shared historical and
theoretical foundation for the study of media, art, and text, while a
workshop offers the opportunity to develop and expand professional
and/or creative skills relevant to the student’s career goals and
research focus. In addition, all students will take a research methods
course in a field relevant to their anticipated area of dissertation
research. Beyond the core, students select 21 hours of elective credit
hours from course offerings in disciplines relevant to their research
interests and career goals. The program offers a topics seminar
focused on the history, theory or practice of media, art, and text.
Independent study and internships are also available as electives.
While enrollment in courses with the MATX prefix is guaranteed to
matriculated MATX students, enrollment in other graduate courses
is subject to the conditions established by individual units. Together
the core and the electives support the interdisciplinary work of the
dissertation, which is an original scholarly examination of some
aspect of media, art, and/or text. It is supervised by a committee consisting of four or five
members drawn from disciplines relevant to the research topic.

2. Grade requirements: To graduate, degree applicants must achieve an
overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) on a 4.0 scale with a grade of C
in no more than two courses. The GPA for graduation will be based on
all graduate courses attempted after acceptance into the program.

3. Requirements for admission to candidacy: Before beginning
formal dissertation research, students must complete all 36 hours of
required course work, both stages of the e-portfolio and the
requirements described below. Upon completion of these, the student
will apply for degree candidacy.

4. Dissertation committee: The dissertation committee consists of
the director (who must hold a Ph.D.) and three or four additional
members whose scholarly knowledge and interests are relevant to
the project. The committee must have at least one member from
each of the sponsoring units (Department of English, School of
the Arts, Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture). All must
be members of VCU's graduate faculty. Appropriate faculty from
outside VCU may serve on committees (but not as director) with
the approval of the MATX director and the graduate dean. It is the
student's responsibility to assemble the committee, in consultation
with the dissertation director. Committees will not be appointed by
the program.

5. E-portfolio: Work on the e-portfolio will begin in MATX 604 in the
spring of the first year. There are no technical specifications, and
content will include, but is not limited to, work done in the first two
years in the program. It will take the form of a website and must
demonstrate the technical skills (Web design, audio, video, etc.)
relevant to the student's work on the dissertation and the career
sought after VCU. Submission is a two-stage process:

   a. Stage 1 (August of the second year): a three- to five-page design
      rationale for the portfolio site along with a mock-up or rough
      structure
   b. Stage 2 (April of the second year): a finished, live site
      accompanied by a five-page statement relating it to the student's
      work inside and outside the program and outlining how it uses
      media techniques to promote a specific professional and/or
      creative identity (Note: Each submission is graded pass/fail and
      may be repeated once. A second failure results in automatic
      termination from the program.)

6. Competency: Candidates must demonstrate competency in a
skill or technique relevant to the dissertation research or planned
professional career. The dissertation committee approves and
administers the competency portion. Graded pass/fail, the test may
be repeated once.

7. Bibliography exam: Candidates will complete an exam on a reading
list of 20 to 30 sources relevant to or supportive of the dissertation
topic. The dissertation committee approves and administers the
bibliography exam. Graded pass/fail, the test may be repeated once.
8. Dissertation prospectus and prospectus defense: The prospectus is a 15- to 20-page document that indicates the significance of the proposed research, gives a short review of relevant literature, states the research question, specifies the proposed methodology and indicates how the project lays the foundation for the anticipated academic or professional career. It also includes a work plan for the completion of research and writing, as well as a complete bibliography. The prospectus is defended orally before the dissertation committee, which may accept, reject or require revisions. The defense may be repeated once.

9. Dissertation and dissertation defense: The dissertation is an original, interdisciplinary and scholarly examination of a topic relevant to an aspect of media, art, and/or text. It may include work in media other than text. Given the varied nature of doctoral research, there is no set time frame for completion of a dissertation. It is expected, however, that the dissertation will take about two years after attaining candidacy, but it must be defended within the eight-year time limit for completion of the doctoral degree. The dissertation will be defended orally before the dissertation committee. Successful defense of the dissertation completes the requirements for the degree.

**Curriculum requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MATX 601</td>
<td>Texts and Textuality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATX 602</td>
<td>History of Media, Art, and Text</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATX 603</td>
<td>Mass Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATX 604</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Workshop</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATX 897</td>
<td>Dissertation Project</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select one methods course from list 1 below</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select elective courses from list 2 below 1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elective courses other than those listed may be taken with approval of the MATX program director and the offering department.

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 42.

**List 1: Methods courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 690</td>
<td>Historiography and Methodology of Art History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 605</td>
<td>Introduction to Scholarship in English Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSWS 602</td>
<td>Feminist Research Epistemology and Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 611</td>
<td>Research Methods in Mass Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List 2: Recommended electives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 591</td>
<td>Special Topics in Art History</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 690</td>
<td>Historiography and Methodology of Art History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 722</td>
<td>Seminar in 19th-century Art</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 723</td>
<td>Seminar in 20th-century Art</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 741</td>
<td>Seminar in Art and Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 742</td>
<td>Seminar in Trans-millennial Art and Ideas</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 743</td>
<td>Seminar in Art and Representation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTH 791</td>
<td>Special Topics in Art History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 560</td>
<td>Studies in British Literature and History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 570</td>
<td>Special Topics in American Literature and History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 605</td>
<td>Introduction to Scholarship in English Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 611</td>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 614</td>
<td>Cultural Discourses</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 620</td>
<td>Intertextuality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 624</td>
<td>Texts and Contexts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 627</td>
<td>Genres</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 629</td>
<td>Form and Theory of Poetry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 630</td>
<td>Form and Theory of Fiction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 631</td>
<td>Form and Theory of Creative Nonfiction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 661</td>
<td>Themes in Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSWS 501</td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSWS 602</td>
<td>Feminist Research Epistemology and Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSWS 620</td>
<td>Theorizing Sexuality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSWS 624</td>
<td>Gender and Cultural Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSWS 691</td>
<td>Topics in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINE 591</td>
<td>Topics in Contemporary Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINE 690</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINE 695</td>
<td>Advanced Sound</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 611</td>
<td>Research Methods in Mass Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 645</td>
<td>Visual Journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 684</td>
<td>Multiplatform Storytelling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 688</td>
<td>Converged Media Applications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 691</td>
<td>Topics in Mass Communications</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATX 690</td>
<td>Seminar in Media, Art, and Text</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATX 696</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATX 791</td>
<td>Directed Study (may be taken for a maximum of 12 credit hours)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduate program director**

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**Program website:** matx.vcu.edu (http://matx.vcu.edu)