

GRADUATE INFORMATION

Graduate admission

Admission procedures

Application forms and instructions for applying to all graduate programs in the School of the Arts are available on the School of the Arts website (<http://arts.vcu.edu/>).

General information about admission to graduate study and application procedures can be found in the Graduate School section of this bulletin or on the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu>).

Admission requirements

For Ph.D. degree, see Ph.D. in Art History section.

For all other degrees (M.A., M.A.E., M.F.A. and M.M.):

- Applicants should hold the baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
- It is expected that applicants will have a 3.0 (B) average on the last 60 semester hours of undergraduate work.

The prospective student should consult the appropriate section of this bulletin for additional admission requirements for a particular degree program. Such requirements include:

- The Graduate Record Examination for applicants to art history
- An audition and examination for music applicants, as described in the program description for the M.M. degree
- An audition or presentation of portfolio, as well as a personal interview, for applicants for the M.F.A. in Theatre
- A portfolio review for all applicants to the visual arts M.F.A. degrees (a personal interview is encouraged)

Graduate student status

The School of the Arts has two categories of graduate students – full-time or part-time. Full- or part-time graduate students are accepted either provisionally or as students with full standing into the graduate degree programs of the various departmental areas. These students may matriculate full time or part time except for the residence limitation discussed elsewhere in this bulletin.

Most graduate programs in the school require full-time status, including the concentrations in the Master of Fine Arts in Fine Arts degree (photography and film, painting and printmaking, sculpture, kinetic imaging, and ceramics, fibers, furniture design, glassworking and jewelry/metalworking) and the visual communication track of the M.F.A. in Design. Check with the individual departments to confirm whether full-time status is required or part-time status is permitted.

Holders of the baccalaureate degree from recognized institutions may enroll in graduate courses as nondegree-seeking (special) graduate students, but such courses are not applicable toward a graduate degree from this institution unless the student is accepted into a graduate degree program prior to the conclusion of the semester in which the student registered as a nondegree-seeking graduate student.

A nondegree-seeking student who is later admitted as a degree-seeking student will not be allowed to apply more than six credits earned as a nondegree-seeking student toward a degree.

The second type of nondegree-seeking graduate student is the student who holds a baccalaureate degree, who wishes to take graduate courses for personal enrichment and who does not intend to work toward a graduate degree. There is no limit to the number of credits that students in this category may take, as long as the academic performance is credible.

All nondegree-seeking (special) graduate students must have written permission from the chair of the appropriate department in order to enroll in classes.

Registration for graduate students

Graduate art students are urged to plan their schedules and register during advanced registration. Registration materials for students accepted into advanced degree programs are available in the department during the advanced registration and registration periods. The advantage of advanced registration is that of securing places in classes before they are closed and of obtaining proper counsel from advisers. All graduate students must see their assigned advisers for schedule planning and signature approval. New nondegree-seeking graduate students, or those contemplating registration as such, must secure written permission to register from the departmental chair.

Continuous enrollment policy for graduate students

Graduate students in the School of the Arts must observe the university's continuous enrollment policy (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/registration-policies/>) as explained elsewhere in this bulletin.

Candidates for all advanced degree programs, after completing all formal course work, must register for at least one semester hour of credit each semester, except summer, until the culminating graduate project (dissertation, thesis, creative project, exhibition, recital, etc.) is completed and the student is ready to graduate. Also, if candidates intend to graduate in August, they must be enrolled for at least one semester hour in the summer session.

Transfer credit and graduate study

A maximum of nine graduate credits may be transferred from other accredited institutions and applied to any of the graduate degree programs in the School of the Arts. However, transfer credit is not typically granted to incoming students and is approved at the discretion of the department chair.

Graduate advising

All students accepted into advanced degree programs must make an appointment with the chair of the department or the graduate adviser prior to registration for their first semester of course work. Normally, the student's initial adviser will be the chair of the department; but students may be assigned an adviser more directly related to their areas of concentration.

Students also are encouraged to consult faculty members outside their major area and arrange with the appropriate departmental chair to use facilities and equipment available in other departments.

Finances for graduate students

Special charges

All degree-seeking graduate students are charged an art comprehensive fee. The art comprehensive fee is not charged to students who are

registered only in course work to complete a dissertation/thesis/creative project or who are enrolled in order to satisfy the one-credit requirement for continuous enrollment. Nondegree-seeking graduate students enrolled in any of the courses that require an additional outlay for materials will be billed for those individual fees by the Student Accounting Department.

In addition to the comprehensive fee for all majors in the School of the Arts, all students registering for private music lessons pay an applied music fee.

Financial support

The School of the Arts awards a limited number of graduate assistantships and scholarships to full-time students. Please see the specific program requirements for more information and application deadlines.

Advanced degree candidacy

Students seeking an advanced degree in all programs must apply for advanced degree candidacy. Those seeking the M.A.E. and the M.M. must submit the application during or after the completion of the first nine semester credits of graduate work and prior to the completion of 18 semester credits. Students pursuing the M.F.A. degree must submit the application during or after the completion of the first 15 semester credits of graduate work and prior to the completion of 30 semester credits. Applications for candidacy are available in the departmental offices and the Office of Graduate Studies of the School of the Arts.

Admission to a degree program does not constitute candidacy, and admission to degree candidacy is not an automatic process. Departments carefully review applicants for candidacy on such basis as examination or review of creative work or performance. Upon certification by the department that the applicant has met all departmental expectations, including the minimum 3.0 GPA and is adequately prepared to continue pursuing the degree program, the School of the Arts will admit the applicant to degree candidacy.

Students who are found to be inadequately prepared to continue their graduate programs, but who demonstrate the potential to ultimately fulfill degree requirements will be advised as to what additional work will be needed in order to meet departmental expectations. Candidacy, in such instances, will be postponed until departmental expectations are satisfied; postponement of candidacy may result in termination of financial assistance. Students whose academic or creative work demonstrates no likelihood of successful completion of a graduate program will be denied candidacy by the School of the Arts.

Advanced degree requirements

- Students must achieve candidacy (with the exception of art history students).
- Students must complete all formal course work.
- Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA. No grade below B will count toward graduation for students in the art history and the visual communications degree programs. For all students in the theatre program, any grade below B in any course will result in termination from the degree program. Students in all programs in the Department of Music must not have more than six hours or 20 percent of semester hours attempted – whichever is greater – with a grade of C. For all other degree programs in the School of the Arts, no grade below B is acceptable for any course within the student's major

department, and a grade below B in a course in the student's major department will result in termination from the degree program.

- All students must complete the culminating project (dissertation, thesis, final examination, creative project, recital, etc.) as outlined in departmental guidelines. The thesis, or other written documentation related to the culminating project, must be done in a form that can be retained by the university and in accordance with departmental guidelines. Students preparing a thesis must use the guidelines set forth in the "Preparation of Thesis," available in departmental offices or the Office of Graduate Studies, School of the Arts.

Residency requirements for graduate study

Candidates for the Master of Fine Arts degree in the fine arts and theatre must complete a minimum of one-third of their degree program semester-hour credits within one calendar year.

Candidates for all master's degrees in the School of the Arts have five years plus two possible extensions of one year each to complete all degree requirements. The above limitations apply to both full-time and part-time students. A petition for an extension is initiated with the academic or thesis adviser.