

# MFA CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

The University of Texas at San Antonio School of Art

## PREFACE

Read and know your catalogue; it is your guide and contract with the University. You are ultimately responsible for your progress through the program here at UTSA.

## ENROLLMENT EXPECTATIONS

The MFA program requires student to reside in the San Antonio area and be immersed in his/her studies. MFA students are required to attend all classes in which they are enrolled in both studio and art history disciplines. Students are required to be full-time students, enrolling in a minimum of nine hours of credit each fall and spring semester. The majority of courses are weekday, daytime offerings. Students must produce their artwork on campus in the School of Art's instructional and graduate studio facilities. In rare cases, exceptions may be made, but this requires written authorization approved by both the GAR and the School Director. The community of working MFA students provides the rapport, support, and exchange that are essential to the learning process for this program.

## REVIEWS

### I. End of Semester Reviews:

At the end of each semester graduate students are reviewed on their current body of work. Most semesters, this will occur in the student's studio, or other agreed upon location, with a committee assigned by the GAR. Students will be expected to submit written answers to a provided list of questions. There are three benchmark reviews that will occur in addition to end of semester reviews: First Semester Reviews, Advancement to Candidacy, Oral Comprehensive Examination.

#### Semester Review Evaluations

At the conclusion of each Semester Review, participating faculty will determine whether the student's work falls in one of two categories: Student's work is progressing satisfactorily or Student's work is unsatisfactory. Important Note: Students who receive evaluations of unsatisfactory for two of the semester reviews will be immediately reevaluated by the entire graduate faculty, who will determine whether the student will be permitted to continue in the MFA

program. All MFA students must understand that they are expected to and required to produce new work each semester for each and every semester of their MFA program.

## **II. First Semester Reviews**

All new graduate students will be reviewed at the end of their first semester (Fall or Spring). The first semester review evaluates the relative strengths of, and possible new directions for, each of the new graduate students. It also familiarizes the graduate faculty with the student and his/her work.

This review takes place in a designated space suitable for exhibiting work and accommodating the graduate faculty. Students not under review, who occupy adjacent studios, should exercise the courtesy of vacating their spaces during reviews to assure appropriate privacy. Students must prepare a brief statement about the work presented, its relation to past work and its current direction. The statement should ground the work historically and compare/contrast it with contemporary art issues and concepts.

The main body of work shown and discussed in the first semester review should be current in the area of concentration, (e.g. printmaking, ceramics, new media). Work in other areas, from prior semesters, and/or work done prior to entering the program, may be shown if it is relevant to the main body of work.

The student should pay close attention to the remarks made by faculty during the review. These remarks are the response to and suggestions for the work.

Evaluation: A  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote is required to pass the first semester review. The recommendations of the first semester review will fall under the following three categories: *Passing*, *Rereview*, *Failing*. A finding of *Rereview* requires that the student will be evaluated at the end of the next semester as the First Semester Review. Students receiving an evaluation of *Rereview* three times will be asked to leave the program. Area Heads will inform each student of their results and any suggestions made by faculty during the discussion. If a student's work is assessed as needing to be Rereviewed, a formal letter will be written to the student suggesting remediation steps that might be necessary to elevate the level of the work, or suggesting termination of the student's enrollment in the MFA degree program. No further formal response will be made concerning the work following the review unless the Faculty decides the level of work is *Failing*, not satisfactory for successful performance in the MFA program. Students receiving evaluations of *Failing* will be asked to leave the program immediately. Questions concerning the results of the review should be addressed to the student's Area Head or to the GAR.

## **III. Advancement to Candidacy Review (Usually 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semester)**

At the beginning of the semester that follows the completion of 24 hours of graduate study, the student should make a formal application for Advancement to Candidacy by making an appointment with the GAR. Together with the GAR, a degree plan will be developed showing courses completed and those proposed to be taken. Prior to the actual review, the student will also receive a form containing questions, which should be considered and answered in writing.

These questions are designed to help the student speak in an articulate manner about his/her current work. These responses should be entered into the form and given to the GAR one week prior to the scheduled review. The advancement review generally takes place in the student's studio or another appropriate location. Students must send an email to the entire graduate faculty announcing when and specifically where your review will take place (building, room number, and time).

The student's task is to demonstrate his/her readiness to produce a consistent and competent body of work for the MFA exhibition. This readiness will be evaluated through the review of the current body of studio work and the student's ability to defend that body of work in a coherent, knowledgeable, and articulate manner.

The GAR will schedule the review and appoint a committee of three Graduate Faculty members:

- A. The Chairperson of the committee shall be the student's major instructor or major proponent.
- B. A Professor who has not worked with the student prior to the review.
- C. A Professor from another area (e.g. a sculptor if the student is a painter, etc.).

Graduate Faculty may be present and participate in the review if invited by the student, but only appointed Graduate Faculty Committee members shall vote. A majority vote is required for successful advancement.

Evaluation: The student will be advised in writing by the GAR as to the outcome of the review. In the event that the student should not be advanced to candidacy, one of the following may be requested by the Advancement Committee:

1. During the next semester, the student is to continue with a specifically formulated schedule of study and must, by the conclusion of this semester, pass the Advancement Review. A new review committee may be chosen.
2. The student withdraws from future enrollment in the MFA program.
3. The student requests a leave of absence from the MFA program.

In the case that a student does not pass a second Advancement Review, the entire faculty will review the work at the end of that same semester. Failing this 3rd review will result in the student being asked to leave the MFA program.

A student may not, in any case, register for ART 6843 MFA Exhibition without first having been Advanced to Candidacy.

#### **IV. MFA Oral Comprehensive Examination**

This review takes place during, and is a major component of, the course work for the ART 6843 MFA Exhibition. It occurs in the presence of the artwork, selected by the student in concurrence with the major instructor, normally at an exhibition or in the studio of the candidate. The student will be asked to give an oral presentation which explains the nature of the work being reviewed in terms of its historical precedents and its current viability in the greater world of art. The committee

will then ask questions of the student concerning the work (form and content) and/or the student's statements concerning the work. To be successful the student must be able to orally defend both the work and his/her philosophy concerning it.

Evaluation: A majority vote by the committee is necessary for the student to pass the examination. Failure to pass will defer the examination until the following semester and result in an "RP" grade for the course. The MFA Candidate must receive a passing grade (B or higher) in Art 6843 MFA Exhibition in order to complete the MFA degree. Failure to pass the Oral Examination after **3 attempts** will result in the letter grade "F" for this course and termination of the program.

## PROCEDURES

### **Selection of the MFA Committee**

At least six weeks prior to registering for the MFA Oral Comprehensive Examination, the MFA candidate will submit to the GAR a requested list of faculty he or she desires to serve as his/her MFA Program committee. The committee should consist of at least 3 and not more than 4 graduate faculty members from the School of Art, and should include at least two studio faculty members. The MFA student informs the GAR of their committee request by email.

The Chairperson of the MFA Committee should be from the candidate's area of concentration. Exceptions to the assignment of the committee Chairperson must be approved by the GAR and the School Director. This committee supervises the candidate's progress during the Comprehensive Exam semester and administers the Oral Comprehensive Examination on the specified date.

### **Removal of incomplete grades prior to registration for the MFA Oral Comprehensive Examination.**

Except in extraordinary circumstances all incompletes that the MFA candidate expects to count towards graduation should be resolved before registration for ART 6843 MFA Exhibition. Waiver of this requirement should be obtained in writing from the GAR and the Chairperson of the Candidate's MFA Committee prior to registration for Art 6843 MFA Exhibition.

### **Application for MFA Exhibition**

An exhibition of the MFA candidates work completed after their advancement is required for the completions of the MFA degree. The department provides a venue for these exhibitions via the Russell Hill Rogers Gallery on the Southwest campus Downtown. Students must submit an application to Scott Sherer early during the semester of their proposed exhibition.

### **Documentation of MFA Exhibition**

Documentation of the required MFA Exhibition in the form of digital images labeled with artist's name, dates, materials, and dimensions of works; and a short explanatory statement shall be

submitted to the GAR and to the Visual Resource Center Manager prior to graduation.

### **Practicum in Teaching**

This course is enrolled as ART 6013. A Practicum is a method by which the graduate student receives training to **become eligible** for assignment as a graduate instructor of record (Teaching Assistantship\*). To enroll, a student must have completed 15 credit hours toward their MFA. Students must enroll under the practicum coordinator and will work directly with graduate faculty and assigned instructors in the appropriate lower division course that they have an interest in teaching. This Practicum in Teaching is an enrolled course and is counted toward the Emphasis Area credits in the 60-credit program of study for the MFA.

\*TAs operate under marginal supervision of the area head in which they teach. By university policy, TAs are only permitted to teach lower division courses (1000 & 2000 levels).

### **Internships**

Internships and practica (ART 6013) provide UTSA students with a unique educational experience and exposure to a variety of preapproved art institutions, organizations and professional artists. It is hoped that the intern, the cooperating entity, and the UTSA School of Art faculty will work together to create and experience that is mutually beneficial. In some cases, an internship will also prepare the student for future employment with an arts institution in San Antonio, or elsewhere.

Interns should be advised of the purpose and operation of any cooperating institution or organization as well as the expectations of the supervising professional(s). The intern's duties, whether administrative, archival, curatorial, technical, or involving preparation and installation, should be clearly outlined by the supervising professional at the beginning of the internship. A brief description in writing that states the schedule and project(s) on which the intern will be working should be provided.

Interns are required to complete 150 hours of work over the semester to earn credit for their degree plan. Interns are expected to work on their internship or practicum for approximately 10 hours per week throughout the 15-week semester. Hours may be flexible to allow shorter or longer work weeks, depending on the cooperating entity's needs and the student's schedule, but should average out to 10 hours per week.

Intern's responsibilities: Interns are expected to perform their duties efficiently and to completion. They should take an active role in the internship by carrying out all assigned tasks to the best of their abilities, discussing with supervisors any difficulties or lack of understanding. Interns should double-check instruction to make sure they understand precisely what they are being asked to do, taking notes if necessary. If the intern has any special knowledge or skill that would benefit

the art entity, the supervising professional should be informed so that these skills can be put to use.

Off-campus supervisor's responsibilities: The supervising professional should remember that the intern is not an employee but a student who is learning about the operations and programs of the cooperating individual or institution by helping with a variety of tasks. In exchange for the volunteered services of the intern, the cooperating entity is asked to contribute to the student's education by assigning constructive tasks that are within the student's abilities and offering guidance and constructive criticism that will help the student complete the assigned work successfully. Duties assigned should be worthy of three semester hours of college credit and appropriate to the elected discipline (Studio Art [ART] or Art History and Criticism [AHC]).

If the supervisor professional is dissatisfied with any aspect of the intern's performance, he or she should first discuss the problem and a solution with the intern. Un-resolvable conflicts should be addressed to the intern's instructor at UTSA.

It is required that the intern keep a journal documenting activities, tasks and assignments. The journal should be submitted periodically to the intern's instructor at UTSA. Instructors may require alternative or supplemental assignments. The completed journal must be turned in at the close of the internship.

It is recommended that the supervising professional file a midterm and a final report with the intern's instructor. Grades will be determined by the instructor in consultation with the supervising professional.

\*AHC Internships may only be used for the completion of Art History degree programs Bachelor's of Art in Art History and Masters of Arts. Rare exceptions to this rule require Graduate Advisor of Record and Chair approval.

### **Transfer Credits**

As determined by the Graduate school, Graduate students may transfer a total of six credit hours toward the completion of the program of study for the MFA. Please note: this includes prior graduate coursework from an outside institution including study abroad institutions.

# MFA CANDIDATE TIPS

The University of Texas at San Antonio School of Art

1. Read your Graduate Catalog and understand it! If you don't understand it, ASK. It is your contract with the University.
2. Your 60 hours of Graduate study for MFA should be taken as:
  - a. **30 hours** in your major area of concentration (either Ceramics, Drawing, Digital/New Media, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, or Sculpture) This can also include up to 2 Practicums, in which you act as a teaching assistant for a professor to learn what is expected of a teacher of record, and an internship that you can set up with an arts organization in San Antonio. Prior approval is necessary.
  - b. **15 hours** in electives (12 outside your major area of concentration)
  - c. **12 hours** of graduate level Art History classes including AHC 5123 Research Methods (usually taken during your first semester at UTSA)
  - d. **3 hours** of ART 6843 MFA Thesis Exhibition

Please keep up with your progress and if you have questions concerning which courses count for what, contact the GAR.

3. Enrollment in the MFA Program is full time only. (9 plus graduate hours per semester) Summer, and sometimes your last semester, are the exceptions.
4. You will also be required to pass at least three oral reviews as you work towards your MFA. They are explained in your Graduate Handbook. If you have any questions or special needs about these please notify the GAR
  - a. First semester Review
  - b. Advancement to Candidacy Review
  - c. MFA Oral Examination
5. If you have any conflicts or problems with your teachers or your fellow students, try first to resolve it directly with them. If that is not sufficient, then see the GAR. If after speaking with the GAR the student feels the conflict is not resolved, students may choose to contact the School of Art Director and the COLFA Dean where the process gets very formal.
6. Studios are assigned based on your emphasis area and availability. You will be assigned a semi-private studio though your graduate program. You should have access to your studio 24/7. It is your responsibility to keep it secure, safe, and reasonably clean for yourself and your fellow students. The use of radios, CD players, solvents, and other potentially harmful substances will be addressed by your professor. **TO MAINTAIN SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE STUDIOS, DO NOT GIVE THE LOCK COMBINATION TO OTHER PEOPLE. THIS IS FOR THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY!**
7. Work with the staff in the art office. They are on your side. You will have a mailbox in the Art Office. Check it regularly.

8. Faculty and office staff use the email associated with your ASAP profile. Please update your information regularly with your preferred phone number and email address.
9. In all dealings with Financial Aid, get instructions in writing. Keep the name of the person you work with.
10. There are State Laws and strict University regulations on parking, against the use of alcohol, and illegal drugs on campus. This is part of your relationship to the State of Texas.
11. As of August 1, 2016 it is legal to carry a concealed weapon on the UTSA campus. Students who plan to carry a concealed weapon should follow all provisions of the law, obtain the required License to Carry a Concealed weapon, and know and observe all rules for excluded areas.



# MFA CANDIDATE DEGREE PLAN

The University of Texas at San Antonio School of Art

## 2.5 Year Plan:

Students should plan to take more than the 9 required credits per semester and course work during the two summer sessions. It is recommended that students contact financial aid to understand coverage during summer terms. Some aid is available for graduate students planning to take summer credit, but students need to apply for this funding in advance.

Year 1	<b>FALL 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Semester Hours: 9</p>	<b>SPR 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Semester Hours: 12</p>
	<b>SUM 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Seminar _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Semester Hours: 3</p>	
Year 2	<b>FALL 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Practicum or Seminar _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Semester Hours: 12</p>	<b>SPR 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Semester Hours: 12</p>
	<b>SUM 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Semester Hours: 3</p>	
Year 3	<b>FALL 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____ <input type="checkbox"/> MFA Thesis Exhibition _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Semester Hours: 9</p>	
10 Concentration Area (CA), 4 Art History, 5 Elective, 1 MFA Thesis Exhibition		<b>60 Degree Hours</b>

# MFA CANDIDATE DEGREE PLAN

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## 3 Year Plan:

Students can plan to take the 9 required credits per semester with course work during the two summer sessions or take 12 credits in two of their six semesters. It is recommended that students contact financial aid to understand coverage during summer terms. Some aid is available for graduate students planning to take summer credit, but students need to apply for this funding in advance.

Year 1	<b>FALL 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____  Semester Hours: 9	<b>SPR 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____  Semester Hours: 9
	<b>SUM 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____  Semester Hours: 3	
Year 2	<b>FALL 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Practicum or Seminar _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____  Semester Hours: 12	<b>SPR 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Art History _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Internship or Seminar _____  Semester Hours: 9
	<b>SUM 20__</b>  Semester Hours: 0	
Year 3	<b>FALL 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Seminar _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____  Semester Hours: 9	<b>SPR 20__</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration Area _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____ <input type="checkbox"/> MFA Thesis Exhibition _____  Semester Hours: 9
	10 Concentration Area (CA), 4 Art History, 5 Elective, 1 MFA Thesis Exhibition  Semester Hours: 60 Degree Hours	

## SAMPLE MFA DEGREE PLAN

Below is an order of classes to fulfill MFA degree requirements along a two and a half year timeline. Not taking classes during summer will make the degree plan span six semesters at three years. Students should take a class in their area of concentration every semester. It is recommended that students space their art history courses across four semesters.

<b>FALL</b>	<b>First Semester</b>
AHC 5123	Research Methods (Art History)
ART 5953	New Media (Concentration Studio)
ART 5353	Printmaking (Elective Studio)
<b>SPRING</b>	<b>Second Semester</b>
AHC 5863	Topics in Contemporary U.S. Art (Art History)
ART 5953	New Media (Concentration Studio)
ART 6023	Graduate Studio Seminar (Concentration Area Requirement)
ART 5553	Sculpture (Elective Studio)
<b>SUMMER</b>	
ART 6023	Graduate Studio Seminar (Concentration Area Requirement)
<b>FALL</b>	<b>Third Semester</b>
AHC 5853	Topics in Contemporary Latin American Art (Art History)
ART 5953	New Media (Concentration Studio)
ART 6023	Graduate Studio Seminar (Concentration Area Requirement)
ART 5453	Photography (Elective Studio)
<b>SPRING</b>	<b>Fourth Semester</b>
AHC 5813	Topics in Art History (Art History)
ART 5953	New Media (Concentration Studio)

ART 5553	Sculpture (Elective Studio)
ART 6013	Practicum (Concentration Area Requirement)
<b>SUMMER</b>	
ART 6023	Graduate Studio Seminar (Concentration Area Requirement)
<b>FALL</b>	<b>Fifth Semester</b>
ART 5153	Painting & Drawing (Elective Studio)
ART 5953	New Media (Concentration Area Studio)
ART 6843	MFA Thesis Exhibition
<b>Totals</b>	
4	Art History
5	Elective
10	Concentration Area
1	MFA Thesis Exhibition
<b>20 Classes at 3 hours each = 60 Total Degree Hours</b>	