MASTER of FINE ARTS (MFA) PROGRAM

1) Admissions Requirements

Admission to the M.F.A. program in Art Studio requires:
- An undergraduate degree in any field or discipline.
- Demonstrated skill in the field of studio arts: a comprehensive body of individual and self-directed, ambitious, thoughtful, creative artwork that exhibits the promise of development and growth.
- Satisfaction of the campus-wide graduate admissions requirements, as described in the Policy on the Implementation of Admission Requirements and Exceptions.

Application Requirements
- A completed Graduate Studies application
- Transcripts for all previously attended universities
- A statement of purpose
- A statement of personal history
- Three letters of recommendation
- A portfolio of 20 images or video segments not to exceed four minutes, uploaded at the time of application

The deadline for application is January 5 for the class entering in Fall of the same calendar year.

a) Prerequisites: NOT APPLICABLE
b) Deficiencies. NOT APPLICABLE

2) Master’s Plan I. This plan requires 72 units of graduate and upper division courses, of which at least 64 units must be core graduate courses in the major field, as described herein, and the remaining 8 units can be elective courses. In the second quarter of their first year, and again in the fourth quarter of the program, students must orally present their artwork and research to the satisfaction of a faculty review committee. After advancing to candidacy, the student must complete a thesis in the form of an exhibition of a comprehensive project in Art Studio, along with a written component. This Plan requires more than the UC Davis minimum for the M.F.A., which is 48 units of graduate and upper division courses including no fewer than 12 units of graduate level courses in the major field.

3) Course Requirements - Core and Electives (72 units required)

a) Core Courses (64 units total):
- ART 290A Critical Discourse in Contemporary Art (4 units)
- ART 290B Critical Discourse in Studio Practice (4 units)
- ART 290C Critical Discourse in Materiality (4 units)
- ART 290D Critical Discourse in Context of Social Issues (4 units)
- ART 290E Critical Discourse on Digital Media (4 units)
- ART 290F Critical Discourse in Performance (4 units)
- ART 220 Research Methods for Artists (4 units)
• ART 221A/B  Critical Exploration & Collaboration/Advanced (8 units total)
• ART 223 Concepts and Critiques (4 units)
• ART 224 Theory & Concepts on Critical Issues in Contemporary Art (4 units)
• ART 225 Professional Practice in Contemporary Art (4 units)
• ART 226 Exhibition Strategy & Thesis Seminar (4 units)
• ART 227 Collaboration & Interdisciplinary (4 units)
• ART 299D Comprehensive Project  (8 units total)

b) Elective Courses (8 units total): Any two upper division or graduate classes (4 units) in any subject on campus for a total of 8 units.

c) Summary: This program requires 72 units of graduate and upper division courses, of which at least 64 units must be core graduate courses in the major field, and the remaining 8 units can be elective courses. A minimum course load is 12 units each academic quarter. Per UC regulations, students cannot enroll in more than 12 units of graduate level courses (200) or more than 16 units of combined undergraduate and graduate level (100, 200, 300) courses per quarter. Foreign language and art history courses are not required for this degree.

4) Special requirements:

I) First-Year Review

During the second quarter of the first year, students orally present their artwork and research to their faculty Review Committee. The oral presentation by each candidate is followed by a question-and-answer session conducted by the Review Committee. Satisfactory completion of this review indicates that the student is ready for the second year of the program. If the first attempt is not considered to be satisfactory, then a second attempt is scheduled to occur approximately four weeks later. In the second attempt, the student must also provide new work or extensions of the existing work. If a student fails the second attempt, the Review Committee will vote on whether to schedule a third attempt or recommend the student for disqualification. After each attempt, the Review Committee will provide oral feedback to the student. The Graduate Advisor will inform Graduate Studies of the outcome through appropriate means, such as submitting a marginal or unsatisfactory student progress assessment describing the feedback given to the student and the expectations for the student’s subsequent attempt. Each student must receive a passing outcome on the First-Year Review in order to continue in the program.

II) Second-Year Review

In the student’s fourth quarter (which is the first quarter of the second year in the program), the graduate student presents a new body of artwork and research before a faculty Review Committee. Passing the Second-Year Review indicates that the student is ready to undertake the production of a comprehensive body of work that will constitute the Thesis Exhibition. If the student fails at the first attempt of the Second-Year Review, then a second attempt is scheduled to occur approximately four weeks later, and the student has the opportunity to present a new body of work or complete the work from the first attempt in a way that meets the satisfaction of the Review Committee. If the second attempt is not passed, the Review Committee will vote on whether to schedule a third attempt or to recommend the student for disqualification from the program, in accordance with the Graduate Studies Policy on Disqualification and Appeal. After each attempt, the Review Committee will provide oral feedback to the student. The Graduate Advisor will then inform Graduate Studies of the outcome through appropriate means, such as submitting a marginal or unsatisfactory student progress assessment describing the feedback given to the student and the expectations for the student’s subsequent attempt. A student must receive a passing outcome on the Second-Year Review in order to continue in the program, and in order to enroll in ART 299D.
5) Committees

a) **Admission Committee**

Once the completed application, all supporting material, and the application fee have been received, the applications are reviewed by the Admissions Committee, consisting of the Art Studio faculty as a whole. Based on a review of the entire application that focuses initially on the portfolio submitted, a recommendation is made to accept or decline the applicant’s request for admission. That recommendation is forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Notification of admissions decisions are sent by Graduate Studies.

b) **GPFA, Fellowship and Funding Committee**

This committee is made up of the Department Chair and the Graduate Advisor, and occasionally another faculty member if needed. This committee distributes funding to support continuing and incoming students as available.

c) **First-Year Review Committee**

For each first-year graduate student, there is a Review Committee created by the Graduate Advisor in consultation with the student. This committee is made up of Art Studio faculty. Committee members provide guidance to the student as needed, attend the student’s presentation and collectively decide whether the student has passed the review.

d) **Second-Year Review Committee**

For each second-year graduate student, there is a Review Committee created by the Graduate Advisor in consultation with the student. This committee is made up of Art Studio faculty. Committee members provide guidance to the student as needed, attend the student’s presentation and collectively decide whether the student has passed the review.

e) **Thesis Committee**

The student works with the Graduate Advisor to recommend three faculty for the Thesis Committee. Once approved by Graduate Studies, this committee is responsible for providing guidance to the student, and ultimately deciding whether the student’s Thesis Exhibition is satisfactory. This committee is composed of three faculty from the program. The Thesis Committee makes the final determination as to whether the student has presented an acceptable thesis, and submits the MFA Report Form for Plan I to Graduate Studies. The Thesis Committee has the responsibility for accepting or not accepting the Thesis Exhibition.

6) Advising Structure and Mentoring

The **Graduate Advisor**, appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies, is a resource for information on academic requirements, policies and procedures. The Graduate Advisor along with the Department Chair, mentor and help familiarize each MFA student with the expectations on their performance within the studio environment. The Graduate Advisor serves as each student’s Major Professor, serving on every review committee, meeting with and advising each student, and completing the annual online student progress assessments. In practice, however, all faculty members participate in guiding students.

The **Mentoring Guidelines** can be found online in the MFA Handbook at [https://artstudio.ucdavis.edu/general-information/requirements-mfa-art-studio](https://artstudio.ucdavis.edu/general-information/requirements-mfa-art-studio).
7) **Advancement to Candidacy**

M.F.A. students must complete the Advancement to Candidacy process after the Second-Year Review and prior to the quarter in which they will present their Thesis Exhibition. Typically, the form is submitted to Graduate Studies at the end of January in the student’s second year of study. All MFA students must pass the First- and Second-Year Reviews in order to be advanced to candidacy.

8) **Thesis Requirements**

During quarters five and six, the MFA candidate completes a body of independent artwork known as the Thesis Exhibition by presenting their work in the annual UC Davis MFA Thesis Exhibition. Work from previous quarters is not generally accepted; a new body of work and significant development is expected to be presented at the MFA Exhibition. It is an original body of work developed in the ART 299D course. The work is required to show involvement and commitment of the highest quality. It should be of the depth and quality of a solo exhibition in a reputable commercial or public gallery or, in the case of site-specific works, of a similar professional quality in consideration of setting, process, and fabrication. The student will place this artwork in one of the galleries either on campus or in the City of Davis. This annual UC Davis MFA Exhibition usually takes place in the month of June. To accompany the artwork, the student is required to submit a professional dossier containing a résumé, an artist's statement, 20 images of work or video with accompanying image index and a detailed work description. This dossier becomes part of the Manetti Shrem Art Museum and serves as the written component of the thesis work.

In the student’s sixth quarter, the entire Art Studio faculty meets with the MFA candidate in the appropriate gallery for the MFA thesis review. The review consists of an oral presentation by the candidate followed by a question-and-answer session. After this review period, the entire Art Studio faculty meets to discuss the work; the entire faculty comments on the thesis work and votes on whether to recommend that the thesis be accepted. If a majority of the faculty vote to accept the Thesis, then the student is recommended to receive the Master of Fine Arts degree. If there is not a majority of the faculty voting to accept the Thesis Exhibition, then the Thesis Committee makes the final determination as to whether the student has presented an acceptable Thesis Exhibition. The Thesis Committee’s determination is made by simple majority. If deemed acceptable by the Thesis Committee, then the student is recommended to receive the Master of Fine Arts degree.

A candidate who receives a majority of “not pass” votes from the Thesis Committee will be provided with a written evaluation from the committee with clear instructions on what is expected in preparation for a second exhibit. The Graduate Advisor will provide an interim student progress assessment which outlines the expectations for the student’s subsequent attempt. The second exhibit will be reviewed in the same manner as the first exhibit (by both the entire Art Studio faculty and the Thesis Committee). This second attempt at the MFA Thesis Exhibition is most commonly scheduled for the following fall, although the program typically allows up to a one year. The work must be presented on campus or within the city of Davis. Should a student’s work not be accepted by the Thesis Committee on the second attempt, a recommendation for disqualification from the program will be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies in accordance with the [Graduate Studies Policy on Disqualification and Appeal](#).

9) **Normative Time to Degree**

The normative time to degree for the M.F.A. program in Studio Art is six quarters (two years).
10) Typical Time Line and Sequence of Events

**FIRST YEAR**

**Fall**
- 221A Critical Exploration & Collaboration - 4 units
- 290A Critical Discourse in Contemporary Art - 4 units
- 220 Research Methods for Artists – 4 units

**Winter**
- 290B Critical Discourse in Studio Practice - 4 units
- 223 Concepts and Critiques - 4 units
- Elective (Graduate or Upper Division level) – 4 units
  (First Year Review)

**Spring**
- 224 Theory & Concepts on Critical Issues in Contemporary Art - 4 units
- 290C Critical Discourse in Materiality - 4 units
- 225 Professional Practice in Contemporary Art - 4 units

**SECOND YEAR**

**Fall**
- 221B Adv Critical Exploration & Collaboration - 4 units
- 290D Critical Discourse in Context of Social Issues – 4 units
- 227 Collaboration & Interdisciplinary – 4 units
  (2nd Year Review)

**Winter**
- 226 Exhibition Strategy & Thesis Seminar- 4 units
- 290E Critical Discourse on Digital Media - 4 units
- Elective (Graduate or Upper Division level) – 4 units

**Spring**
- 299D Comprehensive Project - 8 units
- 290F Critical Discourse in Performance - 4 units
- THESIS EXHIBITION
- Commencement

11) **Sources of funding.** Students are funded with Teaching Assistantship and Associate Instructor appointments as well as GPFA funding through the Office of Graduate Studies. Substantial additional funding at the department level, awarded by vote of the faculty, comes from endowments honoring the memory of Robert Arneson, Freemond E. "Pete" Gadberry, Faye Nelson, Mary Lou Osborne and Manetti Shrem Purchase Award. Graduate students regularly apply for university travel grants, fellowships, and residency awards.

12) **PELP, In Absentia and Filing Fee status.** Information about PELP (Planned Educational Leave), In Absentia (reduced fees when researching out of state), and Filing Fee status can be found on the Graduate Studies webpage: [https://grad.ucdavis.edu/forms](https://grad.ucdavis.edu/forms)