

University of Waterloo
Master of Fine Arts

Handbook

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The MFA Program at the University of Waterloo

History and Reputation of the Program

The University of Waterloo Fine Arts Department Master of Fine Arts program in Studio Art was approved by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, without conditions, in March, 1993. The program was approved for funding by the Ontario Council on University Affairs in July, 1996. The first students were admitted in the Fall of 1993 and the program has proven to be extremely successful. Our increased recognition can be credited to the quality of the University of Waterloo's faculty, program innovations and the achievements of our graduates.

The Waterloo MFA program encourages students to pursue their strengths as an artist into a professional practice. It demands professional standards in both their commitment to and their awareness of contemporary issues and theory. The function of a university MFA program is to produce successful professional artists, and the University of Waterloo has a number of unique features that help us achieve this goal.

Overview of the Program

1.1 The Shantz International Research Scholarship

The most distinctive feature of our graduate program is the **Keith and Win Shantz International Research Scholarship**. This opportunity enables MFA students to travel and work with artists from anywhere in the world. Similar to an internship, they observe a professional artist at work and learn how they handle a variety of situations. They also gain first-hand knowledge of recent developments in contemporary art, making connections that will help them in their later careers. Each student participates in the selection of appropriate artists by proposing several artists during the first year of the program. The Associate Chair of Graduate Studies then initiates contact and works with both the artist and student to bring the program to fruition. These study periods/placements last a minimum of four to six weeks. During their travels, the student is expected to document the experience, producing a presentation for faculty and University Administrators in the 4th term (Fall).

1.2 University of Waterloo Art Gallery

The MFA program and UWAG have a unique relationship that facilitates not only the use of the gallery for 2-week solo thesis exhibitions, but also provides students with the professional situation of coordinating their shows with UWAG's gallery curator. This involves making gallery proposals, studio visits with the curator to develop the exhibitions, coordinating the installations, promotional material, assistance from the preparatory crew and catered openings. UWAG is a 3000 square foot space with one large gallery and a smaller space, accommodating a full range of exhibition possibilities.

1.3 Pedagogical Development

In concert with their professional growth, Waterloo students also develop their pedagogical skills. In two of their terms, graduate students are normally given paid Teaching Assistantships with faculty members in classroom situations. This experience introduces students to formal classroom teaching. By assisting an individual instructor in an undergraduate course, teaching assistants gain experience in devising and presenting studio assignments, critiquing in progress and completed assignments and learning methodologies for evaluation and grading. In either their second or fourth term, graduate students gain further experience through teaching a 6-week section of an introductory studio-based course.

1.4 Funding

Our program is one of the most generously funded MFAs in the country. Upon acceptance, students receive a letter of offer stating the total funding available through the University of Waterloo. This funding includes teaching assistantships, money for the Shantz program and scholarships. In addition to this funding, we have a strong success rate with our students receiving SSHRC scholarships, Ontario Graduate Scholarships, and President's scholarships. SSHRC scholarships can be applied for before beginning your studies at the University of Waterloo. These forms of funding are the student's responsibility, however our faculty will support your efforts by writing letters of recommendation and reviewing applications. Students pay fees for all five terms, so we encourage a careful review of funding while in the acceptance process. Other forms of funding (OSAP) are also the student's responsibility and should be well researched upon acceptance.

1.5 Coursework and Milestones

Coursework

The required coursework is as follows. The student has 4 Graduate Seminars, including terms 1,2,4, and 5. In terms 1,2, and 4 the student must take a total of 3 elective courses. These courses can be selected from any Fine Arts or other departments as long as they are at the 200 level and above. These courses must be selected with the approval of the professor and the Graduate Officer. There are also 5 Graduate Studios, 3 of which are graded by faculty (1, 2 and 3). 4 and 5 are considered milestones.

Milestones

Students must also pass a series of milestone critiques during the program. This includes participation in full-day group critiques at the end of the fall and winter semesters with faculty and invited guests (established artists, critics and/or curators). This occasion gives new students a chance to present their work orally to the department in a professional setting. In terms 4 and 5, the Graduate Studios are considered Milestones and are not subject to grading. The fifth term culminates in the thesis exhibition and defense in the presence of an outside examiner. This thesis exhibition and defense must hold a high professional standard, in which students work at a museum level standard in preparation and installation. In addition to group critiques, students hold regular meetings with their

committees, consisting of two full-time faculty. At anytime students may also seek input from faculty who are not on their committees.

1.6 Visiting Artist Program

The Department hosts a program of visiting artists, curators, critics and scholars, providing fresh perspectives for graduate student critiques and valuable personal contacts. Visitors often meet for formal one-on-one studio critiques with students.

1.7 Studios and Department Resources

Each MFA student receives a studio housed in East Campus Hall (ECH). MFA students have 24-hour access to their personal studios with the exception of times that the University is officially closed (for example during the December holiday break, or due to inclement weather). Our MFA program is relatively small and the studios are in close proximity. This encourages a sense of community—a feature that students, past and present, consider a resounding strength. Being located close to (but separate from) the activities of ECH, there is opportunity for interaction between graduate and undergraduate students, as well as members of the fine arts faculty. Such interaction happens daily, resulting in a creative community that cannot be achieved otherwise.

Digital Lab: The lab is overseen by the Fine Arts Media and Studios Manager. Each term the area is staffed by student monitors. Access to the digital lab is during posted monitored times.

Special Requests: Studio-based access to equipment or space outside of regular business hours are accommodated on a case-by-case basis. Students should bring requests to the Manager of Media and Studios and the faculty member that works in that area. Other points of contact are the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. If a request is more involved, a written proposal outlining your request needs to be given to the Manager of Media and Studios with a lead time of at least two weeks.

Storage: The department does not provide additional storage for grad students beyond the assigned MFA studios.

Shipping: MFA students can have materials shipped directly to the school. If you are doing so, please let the Administrator Coordinator know (the person who sits in the front office), and/or one of the technicians in the woodshop if appropriate.

Address: University of Waterloo
Fine Arts Department (attention: student's name)
East Campus Hall
263 Phillip St.
Waterloo, ON
N2L 3W8

Use of materials: All of the studios in East Campus Hall, including the MFA studios are shared. MFA students are expected to adhere to health and safety guidelines in terms of material use. Questions regarding this can be directed to a member of the Health and Safety Committee within Fine Arts.

1.8 Exhibition Spaces

The Department has two gallery spaces: University of Waterloo Art Gallery (UWAG) and the Artery. UWAG is run by its curator who is a staff member of the department and is involved in the MFA program on levels associated with professional development. There is also a regular program of UWAG exhibitions by professional artists and the artists are often invited to speak about their work and to participate in individual or group critiques with graduate and senior undergraduate students. The Artery focuses more on our undergraduate students, but it is also used for end of term critiques and other MFA related exhibitions.

1.9 Professional Connections

In addition to the Shantz and the visiting artists programs, students also acquire valuable contacts and professional standing through the end of term critiques, the open house, visiting artist studio visits and thesis defenses. Members of the faculty carefully consider the selection of external examiners (filled by artists, curators and/or critics). We also host an MFA Open House in conjunction with a major lecture or opening at UWAG. This event attracts the local community, curators, galleries and professional artists alike.

Applying for the Program

2.1 Objectives of the Program

The objective of the Master's program is to foster an environment of focused research and experimentation within which students excel in their chosen area of artistic specializations. This focus is extremely important as the Master of Fine Arts is normally considered a terminal degree for practice-based research. The aim of the program is to lead students to a mastery of both materials and conceptual skills, guaranteeing a high level of professional competence in the visual arts—first as practitioners and second, as educators.

To achieve these goals, the program encompasses two distinct activities: the active, engaged and rigorous development of the artist's practice-based research afforded within an academic environment along with the development of the more public skills required of a working artist, and the training and experience required for teaching at the post-secondary level. Both activities require research, critical analysis, written and verbal communication, organization, and interpersonal skills. Graduates are expected to develop a complete professional command of their chosen medium/media as well as a thorough grounding in art history, and an understanding of contemporary theory and critical issues.

2.2 Admission Standards

Admission to the MFA program requires an Honours degree in Visual Arts or its equivalent from a recognized university or art college, with a minimum average of 75%. Applicants submit 20 images/video (digital format with list of works) of recent work to the Department of Fine Arts. This is in addition to the material required in the online application of the Office of Graduate Studies. Students who completed fewer than five term courses in art history at the undergraduate level may be required to complete them in a qualifying year. Artists lacking the formal academic qualifications but showing exceptional promise and accomplishment through their portfolio presentation may be recommended for admission at the discretion of the department and the University Graduate Office. He or she may also be asked to complete a qualifying year prior to admission. The Selection Committee seeks potential students whose work shows a mature, well-defined, personal vision as well as a strong academic record.

2.3 Residency Requirement

It is expected that students reside in the Waterloo area during their period of active enrolment, making regular use of the studios provided.

Academic Requirements of the Program

3.1 Responsibility of the Student

It must be made clear that the MFA student is responsible for the completion of all requirements in the program and adherence to all standards described in this handbook. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of its contents is assumed upon the beginning of Term 1. Once accepted into the program, it is also assumed that the student will be aware of all funding aspects involved over the course of their tenure in the Department of Fine Arts. The faculty and department will do their best to encourage application for additional funding, but cannot be responsible for any financial shortcomings.

Graduate students in Fine Arts are required to complete the following online training modules with the University before commencing with their art practices:

- [Employee Safety Orientation \(SO1001\)](#)
- [WHMIS 2015 \(SO2017\)](#)
- [Workplace Violence Awareness \(SO1081\)](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)
- [Electrical Awareness \(SO2033\)](#)

Other training modules may be required for some individuals as determined by the Fine Arts Health and Safety Coordinator or Fine Arts Graduate Faculty supervisors on a case by case basis.

3.2 Course Requirements

The specific course requirements are outlined below. The Department may add other requirements if it feels that an otherwise well-qualified student needs upgrading in

particular areas (e.g. art history). Full-time students normally complete their requirements in five consecutive terms, beginning in the Fall term. Students can take no more than one elective under an undergraduate number in the courses that count toward their degree. However, undergraduate courses taken as an elective can be assigned a graduate level course number through consultation with the professor of the course and the Graduate Officer.

Recommended Plan of Study (Full Time Program)

Course descriptions can be found online at:

<http://www.ucalendar.uwaterloo.ca/SA/GRAD/test/GRDcourse-FINE.html>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to ensure that s/he is properly enrolled in the required courses before each semester begins.

Term One (Fall)

FINE 690 Graduate Studio (1.0)

Individual studio work supervised by all faculty—final critique and marking at the end of term to be held in conjunction with an exhibition in the front gallery.

FINE 680 Issues in Contemporary Art 1 (0.5)

Seminar involving presentations, readings, critiques and research papers.

Elective (0.5)

To be chosen in consultation with the Associate Chair, this course is selected from the Fine Arts Department course offerings, other departments within the university, or an external equivalent post-secondary institution.

Pedagogy Elective (0.5) (see page 9)

A series of workshops lead by one or more faculty members to assist in the preparation of course outlines, assignments and marking for a 6-week section of a 100 level studio-based class. This class is lead by students in term 2 or 4.

Term Two (Winter)

FINE 691 Graduate Studio 2 (1.0)

Continued development of studio work with regular meetings with Faculty committee members. A full faculty critique with external critic will be held at the end of the term.

FINE 681 Issues in Contemporary Art 2 (0.5)

Continuation of FINE 680

Graduate seminar including presentations, critiques, readings and research paper.

Elective (0.5)

Chosen in consultation with Graduate Officer as in Term One

Term Three (Spring)

FINE 692 Graduate Summer Studio (1.0)

The Shantz International Research Scholarship comprises the first half of this term. This involves six weeks at thirty hours a week, working as an assistant to a professional artist as described in the section: 'Details on the Shantz Scholarship'. The second half of this term is continued development of independent studio work. Evaluation of this work will take place in conjunction with an exhibition of this work in September in the departmental gallery, or an agreed alternative.

Term Four (Fall)

Milestone. Fine 699: Graduate Thesis Exhibition (2.0)

Studio work under supervision of committee, directed towards the Thesis Exhibition and Support Document.

FINE 682 Graduate Senior Seminar 1 (0.5)

Presentations, critiques, readings and development of Support Document.

Elective (0.5)

Chosen in consultation with Graduate Coordinator

Note: students choosing the pedagogy elective do not need to take this elective.

Term Five (Winter)

Milestone. Fine 699: Graduate Thesis Exhibition (2.0)

Studio work under supervision of committee directed toward Thesis Exhibition and Support Document.

FINE 683 Graduate Senior Seminar 2 (0.5)

Presentations, critiques, readings and completion of Support Document.

Elective Courses

MFA students must complete three half credit (0.5) elective courses as part of their degree requirements. Of the three courses, one may be taken at the undergraduate level. Students can choose from the Fine Arts course offerings, or from other departments within the university. If the latter option is chosen, the course must be approved before registration for appropriateness and relevance by the Associate Chair. Similarly, a student can choose to take a course from another institution with departmental approval. In all cases where a student chooses an elective from outside UW Fine Arts, s/he must provide the Associate Chair with a full course description and a letter from the instructor confirming that the course will be taken by the MFA student at the graduate level.

3.3 Required Milestones

WHMIS

WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) training is a milestone requirement in the MFA Program. Students cannot use the ECH studios without WHMIS certification. WHMIS workshops are offered online through UW-LEARN. To take the online WHMIS course you must first "self-enroll" in the WHMIS course. To access the workshop see: <https://uwaterloo.ca/safety-office/training/training-programs/workplace-hazardous-materials-information-system-training>

MFA students must take WHMIS training in the first term of their program.

GRADUATE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY WORKSHOP

As with WHMIS, this is a required workshop for all students enrolled in graduate programs at UW. The workshop typically takes place in September.

699 Studio

In the 4th and 5th terms of second year, the studio course is a milestone, meaning that students are automatically registered in it by the Graduate Studies Office (GSO); it shows up as Fine 699 on your schedule.

MFA Thesis Exhibition and Defense

The physical exhibition of work is considered the thesis and is a required milestone for an MFA degree at the University of Waterloo. This thesis work is accompanied by a Support Document described in section 3.7. Both of these must be defended at a date specified by the Associate Chair, following a specified structure. An external examiner is invited to be on the defense committee, which includes the student's 2 faculty advisors.

3.4 Pedagogy elective

Each MFA student has the option of completing a teaching portfolio while in the program. This option gives the students the opportunity to gain experience that will be an asset when applying for teaching positions at the post-secondary level. If they choose this option, the third Pedagogy elective will include a series of teaching workshops lead by one or more faculty members and/or the Centre for Teaching Excellence. These workshops will help the student prepare a course outline, assignments and discuss marking for a 6-week section of a course that the student will teach in either Term 2 or 4. Workshops throughout Term 2 and 4 will also assist the student in preparing a teaching philosophy and other issues related to teaching at this level. Pedagogical theory will be covered through readings, presentations and seminar discussions as part of the course.

Teaching certificate

In combination with the students' practical teaching assignments, they can use their classroom work towards a Certificate in University Teaching from UW's Centre for Teaching Excellence. Under this voluntary program (which is considered in addition to our MFA program), students receive feedback from qualified teacher trainers. Graduate

students are encouraged to take advantage of this unique opportunity to develop their pedagogical skills, especially if they plan to teach at the post-secondary level.

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/support-graduate-students>

3.5 Details of the The Keith and Win Shantz Scholarship

The Keith and Win Shantz International Research Scholarship is funded by a generous donation from Win Shantz, a prominent Waterloo supporter of the arts. Each year, four second-year MFA students spend four to six weeks of the summer months working as assistants in a professional artist's studio. Each student receives a stipend to cover accommodation, living and travel expenses.

On completion of their travel, students devote the balance of the semester to developing their work in their own studios.

To our knowledge, the Keith and Win Shantz International Research Scholarship is the only one of its kind. This innovative program provides students with the unique opportunity to travel, to experience the wide range of activities of professional artists, and to gain some valuable insight into the "business" of making art along the way. The Keith and Win Shantz Scholarship program has proven to be mutually beneficial to our students and the participating artists alike.

The Shantz program is taken in the third (summer) term, and it is therefore considered to be a partial requirement of the full time MFA Program. In order to partake in the program students must be in good academic standing (75% average) and be healthy—physically, mentally and emotionally. The Shantz Scholarship should therefore be seen as a privilege to be earned, rather than a right. The Graduate Officer and the student's co-supervisors decide collectively on a student's eligibility for this program

Students must remember that when traveling abroad they are representatives of the University of Waterloo. Accordingly, they must conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism at all times while respecting the customs and laws of their host country. The Graduate Officer is in contact with mentor artists and reports of improper behavior could result in termination of the Scholarship. Similarly, reports of unlawful activity will result in immediate disciplinary measures from the University as defined in Policy 71: Student Academic Discipline Policy.

<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>

Both the Department and the student have responsibilities to uphold and roles to play in ensuring the success of the Shantz program. The Department will use its status as well as the influence that faculty may provide to establish initial contact with an appropriate mentor artist with the objective of providing a dynamic and safe learning environment. The student will provide preliminary suggestions of artists they wish to work with, along with their current contact information to the Graduate Officer by the beginning of January (a more firm date will be set annually by the Associate Chair), so that faculty can begin the process of contacting artists. If this information is not received by assigned date the student's participation in the program cannot be guaranteed. Students are not to initiate contact him/herself. Once an artist has expressed interest in participating, the Associate

Chair will introduce the student to the artist via telephone or email and together the student and artist will agree on final details such as expectations, duties, dates and duration.

Do not plan to depart for your internship before May 1. The University cannot release your Shantz Scholarship funds before May 1.

Plan to be home from your travels by the end of the first week of September to install your summer studio work in the ECH Front Gallery (room 1207) for evaluation by the Fine Arts Faculty after classes resume in September.

Also in the fall semester following, you will deliver a short (approximately 15 minute) presentation on your travels. Students, faculty and University administration will be invited to attend. Your presentation should therefore be a sensitive, professional account of your activities and learning experience. and be well documented with visual material.

Before Departure:

Secure your Internship funds from the Fine Arts Department. Please review the information and advice about traveling abroad on Waterloo International: <https://uwaterloo.ca/international/travel-safety-and-security>

Each student must complete the online pre-departure course in Learn & the International Mobility Program (Non-Co-op) Acknowledgement, Release and Waiver forms. It is important that you complete the Acknowledgement as well as the on-line predeparture course. You should also leave copies of all documents with the Fine Arts Department.

Develop a Risk Management Plan on the advice of the International Programs Office. Finally, please use Quest to register for Fine 692 before you leave for your Shantz. If Quest asks for a permission number, it is available from the Departmental Administrative Assistant. Important: You must keep original receipts of your incurred expenses to be submitted to the Office of Research upon your return.

3.6 Graduate Committees

In the first term, first year MFA students are evaluated by the collective members of the Fine Arts faculty, giving students and faculty an opportunity to introduce their interests and viewpoints to each other. Group critiques are scheduled during the term for this purpose, and we encourage both students and faculty to arrange mutually suitable individual critiques as well.

At the end of the fall term, first year MFA students will be assigned an appropriate studio committee comprised of two faculty members. These two advisors will supervise and evaluate the progress of the student's studio work commencing in the first year winter term until the completion of the student's program (unless otherwise interrupted by Faculty sabbaticals/leaves). Students and their advisors will agree on a critique schedule of a minimum three, one-hour meetings per term to discuss and critique the student's studio work. Both advisors will be part of the student's Thesis Examining Committee, along with an Associate Chair (from the faculty of the UW Fine Arts Department) and an External Examiner (an acknowledged expert in the field).

Responsibilities of the Committee

The Committee assigned to each MFA student at the beginning of their second term is responsible for giving appropriate critical feedback, support, and guidance towards the creation of a body of work for the MFA thesis exhibition and support document. Both need to conform to a standard deemed appropriate by the Program as established by the Faculty as a whole and the Graduate Studies Office. As each student has the potential to develop very different work with different research interests, the Committee seeks to find an approach appropriate to each student's ambitions. This includes meeting with the student a minimum of 3 times in each of terms 2,4 and 5. During these meetings the faculty gives critical feedback and suggestions towards the work with the goal of producing original, technically sound outcomes that contribute to contemporary artistic discourses.

In term 5, there are two important tasks taken on by the committee: taking charge of supervising the content of the Support Document and coming to a decision if the student is ready to move forward with her/his defense at the end of term 5. While the Support Document is developed during the Graduate Seminars in terms 4 and 5, as of the beginning of term 5 the committee takes more responsibility for supervising the content of the document. As the committee is most familiar with the work of their student and responsible for taking the student towards the successful defense of the thesis exhibition, it is appropriate that they are central in the completion of this document. Thus, the committee, along with the seminar leader, must read drafts and provide a collective consensus as to the content of the paper.

The committee must come to a decision, at a date set by the Associate Chair (normally the end of January of term 5), as to whether the student is ready to move forward to defend at the end of term 5. This decision is based on the progress of both the studio work and the Support Document to a level at which the committee can feel fully confident that the student will pass the defense. If the committee feels the student is ready to defend, they will inform the Associate Chair who will then proceed with the process of organizing the defense. If the committee feels the student is not ready to defend there are a number of options.

The most likely is that the student will defend at a date in the Spring or Summer of the same year. Again, the decision of the Committee is an important one as they must assure the readiness of the work to pass the rigorous standard expected by the Department of Fine Arts and the Graduate Studies Office.

3.7 Details of the The MFA Thesis

Description: The Master of Fine Arts Program is directed towards the successful completion of the Graduate Thesis, which is comprised of three equally important and interrelated components:

The Graduate Thesis Exhibition
The Thesis Support Document
The Oral Thesis Defense

In the full-time University of Waterloo MFA Program it is expected that students will complete their thesis requirements and be prepared to defend in their fifth consecutive term (winter). Depending on the defense date, this may or may not make it possible to graduate with the June Convocation. If that is not the case, a Fall Convocation is most likely and has very few if any repercussions on the student. Also, if a student must make minor or major revisions after their defense, this may also make it difficult to finish for June Convocation. Depending on the dates set by the defense committee and the student's completion of the required changes, a Fall Convocation may occur. In rare cases, the student may have to register for the Spring term, in which case they may complete their requirement and be able to withdraw for a full refund.

Thesis Exhibition

The Graduate Thesis Exhibition represents the sum of the student's achievements in studio practice. It should be a cohesive body of work that conveys a deep involvement with, and understanding of, the technical, theoretical and aesthetic issues pertinent to the thesis. Examiners also pay close attention to how the student has responded to the exigencies of the exhibition space.

The work towards the Thesis Exhibition is supervised by the student's assigned Committee. Students have the opportunity to exhibit their MFA thesis work in the University of Waterloo Gallery (this can occur through an application procedure and/or in consultation with the gallery curator), or students may make other arrangements for their Thesis Exhibition venue. This latter option must occur well in advance of the examination deadline date and in consultation with their Committee and the Graduate Officer. Any alternate exhibition venues must be confirmed with the Committee by December 5th. Students take all responsibility for confirmation and use of any alternate thesis exhibition space. Students are responsible for all costs associated with the production and installation/strike, as well as the opening/closing reception of their. This includes transportation, rental of specialized equipment, signage, publicity, refreshments and gallery sitting during visiting hours. Students are similarly responsible for ensuring that the physical space is maintained and returned to the condition in which it was initially occupied.

Thesis Support Paper

The Thesis Exhibition is accompanied by a Thesis Support Document; an illustrated, written document that is expected to be an insightful and scholarly sound explication of the visual work under scrutiny. The problems associated with the relationship between written and visual language are thoroughly understood by the faculty and expert examiners of the thesis. The Thesis Support Document is accordingly seen as the student's perspective on the technical, historical, conceptual and theoretical aspects of the development of their work during the program. The Thesis Support Paper is supervised by the faculty responsible for the series of Graduate Seminar courses and in consultation with the student's Committee. The faculty member responsible for the graduate seminar will provide constructive feedback relating to the grammar, sentence structure, flow, content and general editing of your written statement. Your Committee will

also provide assistance in these areas. You must provide your Committee and the faculty responsible for the graduate seminar with copies of your thesis support paper at least two weeks prior to the submission deadline for your external examiner. You must also have approval from your committee members before you send the support paper to the external assessor.

Thesis Examiners expect to read evidence of an appropriate acknowledgement of the historical precedents of the candidate's work, and an understanding of relevant theoretical issues in a document that is formally well-structured and grammatically correct with all secondary sources properly documented in footnotes and a Bibliography. These must be in accordance with the standards set out by the Graduate studies Office. Students should thoroughly familiarize themselves with UW Thesis Regulations on the GSO website at: <https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/thesis/thesis-regulations>

The Support Document has a list of required content. How and in what order these are addressed is discussed between the student, Committee and Seminar leader.

Required Content:

Length: **3,000 minimum to 6,500 words maximum.**

Abstract based on the essay that follows (functions as a preface to the text).

Body of Support Document

- 1) Analysis of the work in visual terms (what does it look like and why, why those materials, why those titles etc.).
- 2) Process of how the work is constructed and why.
- 3) Theoretical influences that serve as points of departure (not explanation or interpretation).
- 4) Conceptual underpinnings of the work. (What is the nature of the enquiry?)
- 5) The works relation to contemporary art practice/contemporary culture.

Complete MLA style Bibliography

Thesis Defense

A Thesis Defense is an oral examination that takes place in the Thesis Exhibition space, before an Examining Committee comprised of two faculty committee members, the Associate Chair and an External Examiner. The candidate's two committee members and the External Examiner vote on the outcome of the candidate's defense at its conclusion, while the Graduate Officer acts as a non-voting Chair of the committee. If the Associate Chair happens to also be a committee member of an MFA candidate, another full-time Fine Arts faculty member is appointed to Chair the defense. The External Examiner is an appropriate expert from the field who will vote on the candidate's defense; the recommendations that he or she makes will be taken into consideration and overseen by

the department faculty. The Associate Chair is responsible for selecting External Examiners and setting and confirming Thesis Defense dates.

Each MFA candidate must deliver a hardcopy of his or her Thesis Support Paper, along with twenty (20) digital images to the External Examiner two weeks prior to the defense date. Each candidate must also deliver hardcopies of their Thesis Support Paper to both of their committee members and the assigned defense chair. MFA candidates are responsible for all mailing and delivery of their Thesis Support Papers to their Examining Committees. Failure to deliver the appropriate material to the Examining Committee by the deadline could result in cancellation of the defense and the candidate's consequent failure in the program.

Defense Structure:

It must be noted that the work in the exhibition is considered as the thesis that is being defended.

1. The student will briefly introduce the thesis exhibition. This should include some reference to the most relevant topics discussed in the Support Document.
2. The external will respond to the candidate in terms of the thesis exhibition, the Support Document and the verbal presentation of the work.
3. A discussion by the two faculty members of the committee of the same areas.
4. A discussion amongst the defense committee (student, external, and faculty) until each member feels that his or her questions have been clarified.
5. The student will be asked to leave the gallery while the Defence committee discusses the outcome of the defence.
6. There are 4 possible outcomes from the defence:
 - Pass Thesis Exhibition and Support Document with no revisions.
 - Pass Thesis Exhibition or Support Document with minor revisions to one or both.
 - Pass Thesis Exhibition or Support Documents with major revisions to one or both.
 - Fail due irresolvable inadequacies in either the Thesis Exhibition or Support Document.

When the committee is able to come to a unanimous decision about the status of the Defense, deadlines for revisions will be set if necessary. The student will then be called back into the gallery and given the conclusion by the Chair of the Defense. The Defense will adjourn at this point.

3.8 Regulations for the Evaluation of Theses

The MFA Thesis Defense Committee includes: the Associate Chair, both members of the candidate's Committee and an external examiner who is a recognized professional in the field. The Associate Chair is responsible for appointing the external examiner and the Associate Chair is chair of the Defense Committee. All internal examiners must be members of the graduate faculty (and, therefore, core faculty in their respective programs).

All graduate courses are evaluated by percentages. In addition, the Fine Arts Faculty and the two-person Committees assess progress, offering advice and critiques throughout the terms. The Graduate Thesis Exhibition (Fine 699) is evaluated according to the regulations stated below. The Thesis Exhibition also involves an oral defense, which takes place in an exhibition space agreed to by the student and the committee. For the Graduate Thesis Exhibition the students must curate the exhibition. This includes discussions with gallery personnel, the installation of the work and publicity for the show. The Thesis Exhibition is accompanied by a written Support Document.

Uploading your Support Document with the Graduate Studies Office:

While faculty can offer advice about Thesis Regulations, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure that his or her Thesis Support Paper adheres to GSO formatting regulations. Accordingly students should make an appointment with GSO's Audrey Sloboda to ensure that their papers meet GSO formatting standards before April 30th (ext. 36035; email: asloboda@uwaterloo.ca; link: <https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/about/people/asloboda>)

The following sites help you in preparing your thesis support paper for the GSO:

For info on word-processing and formatting using Microsoft Word:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/information-systems-technology/services/electronic-thesis-preparation-and-submission-support/ethesis-guide/managing-theses-using-microsoft-word-windows-and-mac/techniques-managing-theses-using-microsoft-word-2010>

For info on Thesis Regulations:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/thesis/thesis-regulations>

For info on Preparing your thesis:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/thesis/preparing-your-thesis>

For info on Submitting your thesis:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/thesis/submitting-your-thesis>

For info on Binding your thesis:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/thesis/preparing-your-thesis/printing-and-binding-paper-copies>

Once the Thesis Support Paper has been approved by the Thesis Examining Committee (including any required revisions outlined during the defense), the student must have the GSO approve the paper for format. After the GSO approves this final version, the student must bind a copy for our in-house fine arts library. As of January 2007, the GSO will only accept electronic thesis submissions. Full instructions about how to submit your thesis electronically can be found at:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/thesis/submitting-your-thesis>

The Fine Arts Department requires one bound hard copy of your Thesis Support Paper and twenty (20) properly labeled jpegs (300 dpi at roughly 6 inches, plus artist name, title of work, date, & medium). These images document the visual aspects of your Thesis Exhibition.

Deliver the hard-copy of your Thesis Support Paper and twenty slides to Jean Stevenson in the Department of Fine Arts Research Centre.

3.9 Convocation

Graduating MFA students are encouraged to attend convocation to celebrate their achievements and as a means of showing support Fine Arts. Our faculty look forward to celebrating with you at convocation. For info on convocation:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/registrar/convocation/ceremony-details-dates-and-times>

Administrative Requirements

4.1 Departmental Fees

The Fine Arts Department collects a \$200 fee (\$50/term) from each full time MFA student in their first term to cover the cost of communal materials and consumables during their program.

4.2 Program Regulations

The Department of Fine Arts (and all other graduate programs) must follow all regulations of the University of Waterloo's Graduate Studies Office. These are outlined in the Graduate Studies Calendar which is available through the Graduate Studies Office and via the Graduate Studies home page, www.grad.uwaterloo.ca. Departments are free to set more stringent regulations; however, once such regulations have been approved and published, the Graduate Studies Office requires that the Department adhere to them.

4.3 Policy 71 (academic offences)

All students should familiarize themselves with the provisions of Policy 71, the Student Academic Discipline Policy. It sets out a listing of academic offences and penalties. The Department of Fine Arts takes this policy very seriously. Academic offences include the violation of safety standards and plagiarism. Plagiarism is "the act of presenting the ideas, words, or other intellectual property of another as one's own...the properly acknowledged use of sources is an accepted and important part of scholarship. Use of such material without complete and unambiguous acknowledgement, however, is an offence under this policy." (Policy 71, University of Waterloo).

"Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When

the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy 71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy 71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar...If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.”

<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>

Students are also encouraged to read the following description, which is included on all fine arts syllabi:

Information on Plagiarism Detection

Fine Arts, Plagiarism & Copyright: The offence of plagiarism as defined by Policy 71 (Student Discipline) includes visual and aural plagiarism of works of art (drawings, photographs, graphics, video, sound, ideas, etc. conceived/made by other artists). The rules of conduct that apply to text-based work at the University of Waterloo also apply to work completed for studio-based assignments and research. There are two issues to consider with visual and aural plagiarism: ethics, i.e. expectations related to academic integrity as outlined in Policy 71; and copyright infringement, for which you could also be legally liable. Plagiarism and copyright infringement occur when you create an artwork that is substantially similar to the original source. For example, making a drawing in pencil based on a photograph that you find in a magazine may constitute plagiarism and be an infringement of copyright.

Please take note of the following points:

- All work submitted for evaluation must be your own. If submitted work is determined not to be your own, the Academic Discipline Procedure of Policy 71 will be invoked.
- If you use any visual or aural material, such as images from the internet, magazines, books, websites of other artists, or from any source that can be cited, you must acknowledge/cite those references. Failure to do so will be deemed a violation of academic integrity and possibly an infringement of copyright and the Academic Discipline Procedure of Policy 71 will be invoked.
- If you are using visual or aural material that you have not made yourself, **you must make an appointment with your instructor/s to discuss the ramifications of using ‘found’ or ‘appropriated’ material.**
- Any original images used as the basis for any work you create – whether manipulated digitally or manually, or otherwise incorporated or appropriated for your work – must be properly cited, and must accompany your final work at the time of submission or evaluation.

A note on copyright free and Creative Commons: Resources are available in the public domain that are identified as copyright free or that fall under licenses from Creative Commons. Public domain is a term used for works that are not protected by copyright law. If an image is in the public domain then you are allowed to use it—to copy it, to manipulate it and to distribute it. Works identified as Creative Commons allow varying degrees of use. In this case, the authors decide how you can use their images.

Helpful Links:

1. CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation) [Carfac's Website](#)
2. Wikimedia Commons and Flickr have databases of digital files that are available for use. However, you need to check the conditions of use:
[Wikimedia Commons Website](#); [Flickr Creativecommons' Website](#)

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance: <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>

4.4 Academic Standing

MFA students must maintain a minimum average of 75% in each of their courses for the duration of the program. An average of 75% or higher in each respective course is considered good academic standing. A lesser grade in any course at any time may result in the student being asked to withdraw from the program.

4.5 Professional Standing

In order to be granted all of the benefits that our Program has to offer, MFA students must be in good professional standing. Accordingly, students are evaluated on qualities such as punctuality, attendance and participation in scheduled classes, their ability to meet deadlines, respect for their peers, instructors and the physical plant, and general professionalism in their behaviour.

4.6 Email

To ensure that all MFA students receive important information and communication from both the Fine Arts Department and the Graduate Studies Office, they are required to have an artsmail email account in addition to their personal accounts. MFA students should set up this artsmail account as soon as they register. Information on how to do this can be found at UW's Arts Computing Office (ACO): <https://uwaterloo.ca/arts-computing/help-and-support/email>

4.7 University Policies

Policy 32: Pets on Campus; see the following website: <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-32>

Research Ethics: All students and faculty must comply to the research ethics set out by the Office of Research Ethics. These guidelines apply to those working with animals, human participants and general research integrity. Please consult the following website for more information: <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics>