

# VISUAL STUDIES, M.F.A.

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## Program Description

The Master of Fine Arts Program in Visual Studies, offered at Norfolk State University, is a unique program which provides highly motivated and mature students with an intensive, multifaceted educational experience in the visual arts. The Master of Fine Arts in Visual Studies (M.F.A.), the terminal professional degree in Fine Arts, is usually completed in two and one-half years or more depending on the candidate's academic pace. Study for the M.F.A. culminates in a solo graduate exhibition, written thesis documentation, and an oral defense of the candidate's work.

## Path to the Degree Completion

At the end of the first year of study (12-18) credit hours, a mandatory General Review is facilitated by the graduate faculty. Based on the result of the review process, the faculty determines whether the student will continue in the graduate program or is terminated from the program. At the end of the first year of study, the graduate faculty will conduct a Continuance and Candidacy Review. Based on the result of the Continuance and Candidacy Review process, the faculty will determine whether the student continues in the graduate program as a degree candidate or is terminated from the program. If continuance is recommended, candidacy for the Master of Fine Arts degree will be indicated. The faculty's decision will be submitted in written form to the student, signed by the student's advisory committee and the program coordinator.

Final degree requirements include the following:

- A solo exhibition of work completed during the program. This exhibition is presented to the public in a professional art venue in the Hampton Roads area. The student is responsible for securing the venue, selecting the work, hanging the show, creating exhibition announcements and all publicity as well as organizing a reception.
- The student writes a thesis based on his/her area of inquiry. This comprehensive work includes a literary review and visual documentation of work color photographs of the works, or a visual format best suited to the nature of the work. This becomes a permanent record of the student's work while matriculating in the program.
- The graduate committee conduct an oral examination covering issues raised in the thesis document and thesis exhibition.

## Graduation

Students should refer to the academic calendar published on Norfolk State University's website concerning deadlines for graduation, procedures for applying for graduation, fees, etc. Application for graduation must be in the department. For additional information, students should contact:

Graduate Program Coordinator  
Department of Visual Studies and Performing Arts  
Norfolk State University  
700 Park Avenue  
Norfolk, Virginia 23504

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## Timeline

The Master of Fine Arts degree has a limit of seven years for completion from the date of entry.

## CURRICULUM

### Degree Requirements

The Master of Fine Arts degree requires a minimum of 60 credit hours, including 27 hours in graduate studio, 12 hours in related academics, nine hours in graduate seminars, six hours in directed field experience appropriate to the student's professional goals, and six hours in documentation (including the solo exhibition).

### Masters of Fine Arts (MFA)

The credit hours will be divided in the following manner:

Subject Area	Credits
Graduate Studio	27
Courses in Related Academics	12
Directed Field Experience	6
Graduate Seminars	9
Documentation (Including Solo Exhibition)	6
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>	<b>60</b>

Course	Title	Credits
<b>First Year</b>		
Choose 9 credits from 500 level Graduate Studio or Tutorial Special Problems		
FIA 535	Painting: Group Studio	3
FIA 561	Printmaking Studio	3
FIA 597A	Tutorial Work/Special Studies	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>9</b>

Students must earn at least a B (3.00) in all courses used to fulfill the graduate class requirements.

### Letter grades of "I" in Studio Courses, Seminars, Topics Courses, and Art History Courses

At the end of the semester, a professor of the Visual Studies Program may assign a grade of "I" (Incomplete) when the instructor deems such a grade to be appropriate and believes that circumstances warrant an extension of the student's coursework. Such a decision is completely at the discretion of the individual professor, and in this regard the professor's decision is final.

If an "I" grade is assigned, the professor will set the conditions for its removal in writing. The student is then entirely responsible for its timely removal. In order to receive a passing grade, the student must complete the requirements for the removal by the date established with the professor no later than the end of the next academic year. Otherwise, the "I" grade will be converted to a failing grade by the instructor or the University Registrar.

Code	Title	Credits
FIA 701	Thesis Exhibition	3
FIA 702	Graduate Exhibition	3

#### FIA 701 Thesis Exhibition

A student enrolling for FIA 701 Thesis Exhibition Documentation and Thesis may be eligible to receive a grade of "I" if the student is unable to complete the thesis or documentation during a single semester. Students are encouraged to complete this requirement in a timely manner, but the program also recognizes that more than a single semester of work may be necessary for students to complete a comprehensive thesis statement or comprehensive documentation. In each case, the student's major advisor and advisory committee will be entirely responsible for determining whether assigning an "I" is appropriate. If all other coursework is completed, the student must enroll in FIA 750 Continuing Registration while finishing his/her thesis documentation. The thesis must be complete and approved by the student's graduate committee before the thesis exhibition is mounted and oral examination is completed.

#### FIA 702 Graduate Exhibition

This is a comprehensive solo exhibition and the culmination of the graduate experience. The thesis exhibition provides evidence of the student's professionalism, maturity and conceptual development. The exhibition may be held on campus, but students are also urged to find suitable professional venues off-campus.

A student enrolling for FIA 702 Graduate Exhibition may be eligible to receive a grade of "I" if the student is unable to complete the body of work necessary for mounting a comprehensive graduate exhibition in a single semester. Students are encouraged to complete the exhibition requirement in a timely manner, but the program recognizes that the scheduling for exhibitions sometimes makes the completion of the requirement in a single semester impossible. In each case, the student's major advisor and advisory committee will be entirely responsible for determining whether assigning an "I" is appropriate. If all other coursework is completed, the student must enroll in FIA 750 Continuing Registration while preparing for the exhibition.

All students must take FIA 610 Graduate Seminar, which is a course with changing art criticism topics. The remainder of the graduate seminar requirement may be fulfilled by FIA 695 Graduate Seminar: Contemporary Art (another series of changing contemporary topics) and FIA 610A Graduate Seminar.

Upon completion of 12-18 hours of graduate work, each student will present a selection of work to the faculty for discussion and evaluation as part of a general review. After completing this general review, a major advisor and two advisory committee members are selected for the student, after consultation with the student by the program coordinator.

The resulting advisory committee will then invite additional faculty members to complete a committee to assess the Continuance and Candidacy Review. The committee will decide the continuance status of the student after the CC Review and include appropriate explanations of its decision.

M.F.A. candidates must register for FIA 701 Thesis Exhibition during the final semester of study. By review of the student's work, the advisory committee will determine the nature of the required documentation.

The student's advisory committee will then submit the documentation requirements, in writing, to the student and the program coordinator.

Each student is required to enroll in FIA 702 Graduate Exhibition during the final semester of study. For this requirement, the student will present a public exhibition of work.

The student's thesis committee composed of the major advisor and two faculty of the advisory committee will be responsible for evaluating all preparation and work done for FIA 701 Thesis Exhibition-FIA 702 Graduate Exhibition. The committee will submit its recommendations and grade assignments for each course to the student and the program coordinator.

The committee will conduct an oral defense and assess the quality of the final exhibitions.

## Admissions Requirements

The applicant must have 3.0 GPA in their undergraduate degree and must have completed 36 credit hours (or its equivalent) in studio art and 12 hours in art history at the undergraduate level. Additionally, applicants must submit a portfolio, which indicates creative ability, evidence of a developing focus, innovative techniques, and a capacity for growth. Admission to the program is competitive with a limited number of spaces available. Indication of the ability to work independently is important. Three letters of reference and a statement addressing the student's background and professional goals must accompany the portfolio. There is no GRE test required in the Visual Studies Program.

### Application Deadline

The priority deadline for application to the Master of Fine Arts Graduate Program in Visual Studies is May 1 for fall and November 1 for spring. All application materials must be complete and received at Norfolk State University on or before the deadline to ensure a decision for the subsequent semester. Applications received after these deadlines may be deferred to the next semester. Enrollment in the program begins the semester following admission. Applications are available online (<https://nsu.elluciancrmrecruit.com/Admissions/Pages/welcome.aspx>) Please upload all supporting documents.

### Application Review

The admission committee, composed of graduate faculty and the graduate coordinator, will review the portfolios of all applicants, and the decision of the committee will be communicated in writing to the Dean of the School of Graduate School and Research and then to the applicant.

A completed application file includes the following:

1. Completed admissions application.
2. A non-refundable application fee.
3. Three letters of recommendation from faculty members, or persons familiar with the applicant's interest and ability in art.
4. A portfolio of 10-20 representative examples of the applicant's work—three dimensional work should have two views each. Each piece of work should be labeled with the, title of the work, medium, date, and numbered in the order in which it is to be viewed. A list should also be included which corresponds to the numerical ordering. The list must include the title of each work, medium, dimensions of work, and date completed.

5. One transcript from each college and/or university previously attended. An unofficial transcript can be uploaded for admission's decisions but an official transcript is required if admitted prior to enrolling in courses.
6. A written statement, not to exceed four (4) pages, describing background and professional goals expected from this program.

## **Transfer Credit**

Transfer credit will be considered at the time of admission. Applicants desiring graduate transfer credit must submit a written request along with transcripts of the courses for which transfer credit is desired and the request must accompany the initial entry application. A maximum of 12 credit hours may be transferred into the program.

## **Non-Degree Status**

The policy on non-degree status is in accord with the University's policy as stated under General Policies and Procedures. Should the student apply for formal admission into the program, credit for courses already taken will be treated the same as transfer credit. A maximum of 12 hours is transferable.