The Department of Craft and Material Studies Graduate Manual is an addendum to the VCU Graduate Bulletin, which outlines university policies, procedures and requirements. The official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published in the Graduate Bulletin and on the Graduate School website, are fully applicable to all VCU graduate programs and graduate students and take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines. Students are bound by requirements published in the Graduate Bulletin corresponding to the year in which they entered the University.

As an addendum to the Bulletin, this Graduate Manual offers information, advice and requirements specific to students’ success in the Department of Craft and Material Studies concentrations. Generally speaking, the shared objectives among all departmental graduate students is to place emphasis on self-motivation, individual investigation, and the development of professional attitudes and skills. Graduate students are expected to demonstrate a serious commitment to their work and develop mature ideas and forms of expression.
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Faculty and Staff

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**Studios**
At the onset of entering the graduate program, each student will schedule a studio walk-thru with Studio Manager Jason Hackett. During the walk-thru, student will complete a Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Chair before physically moving into their studio. Incoming graduate students may move into their studio beginning August 1st. Students will schedule a final walk-thru meeting at the end of the program and sign off on the original contract. Exiting students must move out of the studio spaces by July 15th. Upon move out student must clear and clean space and paint and repair walls if necessary.

At times, it may be made necessary for both graduate and undergraduate students to simultaneously use common technical areas within the area; and in such instances, it is expected that graduate students will be courteous and helpful to other graduates as well as to undergraduate students.

**ADVISING**
Students should consult with their area head to map out a program of study and select courses each semester. The advising faculty member also serves as the student’s Graduate Committee Director. Students may also meet with the Assistant Chair regarding information on courses outside of the department, degreeworks (which tracks student curricula progress), course planning, scheduling, graduation requirements, etc.

**Continuous Enrollment**
The University requires that graduate students enroll each fall and spring semester. Full-time enrollment at 15 credits per semester in fall and spring is encouraged for all students completing coursework, and it is required for students who have been awarded Graduate Assistantships.

**Graduate Learning Outcomes**
Students will:
- demonstrate mastery in aesthetic and cross-cultural understanding
- use knowledge gained from critique to improve creative work
- demonstrate mastery of advanced craft techniques within their field
- gain comprehensive knowledge and up-to-date understanding of their field
- become leaders in the field by demonstrating proficiency in teaching and/or studio management responsibilities
PROGRAM OF STUDY AND CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

Graduate Curriculum

MFA Degree Requirements 60 Total Credits
- Studio-Media Area Studio 30 credits
- Candidacy, CRAF 681 6 credits
- Thesis, CRAF 682 6 credits
- Graduate Seminar 9 credits
- Art History 3 credits*
- Electives 6 credits

*Art History credits may be taken from the Department of Art History or may be an approved course rich in historical content and/or theory from another department (past approved courses include PAPR 527 Art & Critical Theory)

Suggested Course Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>(Summer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1) CRAF 681, Candidacy Research</td>
<td>1) CRAF 681, Candidacy Research</td>
<td>3 credits required for 12 month Graduate School Assistant only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) CRAF 690 Graduate Seminar</td>
<td>2) CRAF 690 Graduate Seminar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) 9 Credits CRAF Studio Credits*</td>
<td>3) Graduate Open Elective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4) 6 Credits CRAF Studio Credits*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1) CRAF 682, Thesis Research</td>
<td>1) CRAF 682, Thesis Research</td>
<td>3 credits required for 12 month Graduate School Assistant only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) CRAF 690 Graduate Seminar</td>
<td>2) Graduate Open Elective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Graduate Art History</td>
<td>3) 9 Credits CRAF Studio Credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) 6 Credits CRAF Studio Credits*</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*CRAF Studio Credits are to be taken from the area of concentration:
- CRAF 601-Metal
- CRAF 621-Wood
- CRAF 641-Clay
- CRAF 651-Glass
- CRAF 661-Fiber

Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee is composed of three or more graduate faculty members. The role of the committee is to provide guidance throughout the two years of the student’s graduate studies. The graduate committee supervises the candidate’s work for the MFA degree and recommends whether the student has met the requirements to mount a graduate thesis exhibition.

Incoming graduate students will be assigned a committee consisting of a Committee Chair from their major concentration and at least two other faculty members. The Committee Chair acts as the major advisor, and works closely with the student throughout their graduate coursework. The Committee Chair relays any concerns related to performance to
the student in a timely manner. The Committee Chair, along with the committee members, supervises the student’s candidacy exhibition, written thesis, and thesis exhibition.

Students have the option of altering their assigned committee before the end of the first week of classes during their third semester of graduate coursework, but at least one committee member must be from the area of concentration. The process to alter the composition of the committee is for the student to first discuss the changes with both the potential outgoing and potential incoming committee members. Once the changes have been mutually agreed upon, the student must e-mail the requested changes to the Department Chair and Assistant Chair and copy all outgoing and incoming committee members.

Students are required to arrange two committee meetings during the fall semester to review current work and research and are required to arrange one committee meeting during the spring semester prior to the end of semester candidacy review or thesis defense. Each student is responsible for arranging convenient meeting times at the beginning of each semester. Typically meetings times are suggested by the student through the use of doodle poll. Faculty schedules and availability will be posted outside of the department office.

**Committee Meeting Schedule Recommendations**

1) One of the two fall semester meetings should take place at mid-semester and the other should take place at the end of the semester

2) The spring semester meeting should take place between the beginning and middle of the semester.

   1st year students will have an additional candidacy defense meeting with the entire faculty while the candidacy exhibition is mounted. This meeting will be arranged by the department for each student.

   2nd year students will have an additional thesis defense meeting with their full committee while the thesis exhibition is mounted. This meeting is in addition to the spring semester meeting. Students are responsible for arranging a time for their defense.

**Suggested Meeting Sequence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meeting 1: mid-semester</td>
<td>Meeting 1: between the beginning and middle of the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting 2: end of the semester</td>
<td>Meeting 2: Candidacy Defense, scheduled by department during the Candidacy Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meeting 1: mid-semester</td>
<td>Meeting 1: mid-semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting 2: end of the semester</td>
<td>Meeting 2: Thesis Defense scheduled by the student during their Thesis Exhibition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Student End of Semester Self Report**

Each graduate student is required to complete an End of Semester Report at the end of each semester which is due the last day of class before finals begin (for the 2019-20 academic year these days are Friday, December 6th for fall and Tuesday, April 28th for spring).

The End of Semester Self Report consists of:
- completed Graduate Student Progress Report (template provided by department and completed by student)
- updated CV
- updated Artist Statement
- Images of work created during the semester for which report is being filed (all images should be minimum 1,600 pixels for the shortest dimension). Student will submit both carefully curated images of complete work as well as in-process, documentation, and other images

Students will submit the self report into a google folder shared by the department as the onset of each semester. Final grades will not be submitted until self-report is received.

**Evaluation of Graduate Student Progress**

At the end of each semester, the Committee Chair writes the End of Semester Graduate Student Report. This report, approved by the student’s entire committee, addresses committee coursework, semester grade, and comments on relevant successes, recommendations, and/or concerns regarding student performance in the program. The end of semester report is made available to each student.

If applicable, the graduate committee will write a letter of concern regarding student performance at any point during the semester. The letter of concern is delivered electronically via e-mail to the student, Department Chair and Assistant Chair.

**CANDIDACY**

After completion of the first 15 semester credits of graduate work and prior to the completion of 30 semester credits, the student will apply for candidacy.

The application to candidacy is initiated by the Assistant Chair and completed by the student’s graduate committee chair and Department Chair upon successful completion of the Candidacy Review. The review determines the prospective success of the candidate to proceed toward completion of the MFA degree.

Application to Candidacy Criteria:
1) Certification by the department that the applicant has met the departmental expectations including the attainment of the minimal 3.0 (B) average
2) The faculty determine that the student is adequately prepared to continue pursuing the M.F.A. degree (determined during Candidacy Review). Candidacy Review consists of an exhibition of an original and coherent body of work.

1) Space allocations for the group Candidacy Exhibition vary from year to year. Students are responsible for securing exhibition location unless the department secures location.

2) The review is held during the Reading Day at the end of the spring semester at the site of the exhibition. For the 2019-20 academic year, this date is Wednesday, April 29th.

3) The full Department of Craft/Material Studies graduate faculty and an outside reviewer will attend the review.

4) Candidacy review consists of 45 minutes per student. Student will begin with a 10 to 12 minute presentation by the candidate discussing work created during the first year of graduate study and a review of the current body of work presented at the exhibition location.

5) 1 week prior to the review day, student will provide an artist statement to the graduate faculty and outside reviewer. This will be requested by the Assistant Chair of the department.

Admission to an advanced degree program does not constitute admissions to advanced degree candidacy. Likewise, an admission to candidacy does not insure the granting of an MFA degree.

Candidacy Review Determinations: The Department of Craft and Material Studies graduate faculty determine if the candidate has satisfied the criteria to apply for candidacy. There are three possible outcomes.

1) Awarded: If the student is awarded candidacy, the student proceeds toward the completion of the degree. Department files Degree Candidacy Form on behalf of the student.

2) Denied: If candidacy is denied, the student will withdraw from the program at the end of the 2nd semester or be terminated from the program (See Termination section page)

3) Postponed for Re-evaluation: In borderline cases, candidacy is postponed for re-evaluation and student is placed on probation. If the second evaluation which is scheduled prior to the beginning of the third semester is unsuccessful, the student is denied candidacy and terminated from the program. Students who are placed on probation are not eligible to teach during the summer and are not eligible to be considered for department assistantships or merit based funding.
THESIS
The thesis consists of three components:
1) Graduate Exhibition
   An exhibition is required of each candidate for the M.F.A. degree in Fine Arts. The exhibition must be a coherent show of work and must have the approval of a simple majority of the graduate faculty (the student’s committee) of the degree to be awarded.

   Graduate Exhibition: In the final semester of study, advanced degree candidates create, select and present an original, coherent body of work.

   In anticipating the graduate exhibition, the candidate must work closely with his/her graduate committee.

2) Visual Documentation
   Visual Documentation: The graduate exhibition must be documented visually. The images (300dpi 8x10" jpg) must be shared with Department Chair and Assistant Chair at the end of the exhibition and should comprehensively document the exhibit. These images should include documentation of work in the installation, overall views of the installation and details of work when needed.

3) Written Thesis
   This is a requirement for graduation and the candidate's committee must approve the final copy.

Submission of Thesis
The written thesis MUST address the following:
1) Thought processes or ideas at the foundation of thesis work, which may include an examination of motivations, aesthetic concerns and/ or any involvement with related conceptual issues.
2) Relationship of the candidate’s work influences, which may address, historical and theoretical influences on his/her work in this section.
3) Process developed in the progress of graduate study in a detailed manner including technical inventions or innovations, equipment, materials, and processes used.

Format
The thesis format must be compliant with VCU Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Manual available on the Graduate Schools website. It is expected that the written thesis conform to the rules of grammar using proper syntax and sentence structure. Clarity requires that the writer avoid jargon, vagueness, rambling, unsupported generalization, and that he or she be precise and accurate,
using sound reasoning. Good evidence should support all claims. The candidate should work with their graduate committee using their suggestions to edit and rewrite drafts of this statement to help achieve clarity. **An original artist statement in place of an abstract, a bibliography, and a curriculum vita must accompany the written thesis.**

Recommended Calendar for Written Thesis
At the beginning of the candidate’s fourth and final semester, an outline for the written thesis is submitted to their graduate committee. The candidate’s entire graduate committee must grant approval of the written thesis outline. Candidates must also complete an application for graduation by the deadline. Graduation application deadlines and instructions are clearly communicated to students by the department.

At the mid_semester committee meeting, the candidate’s entire committee will discuss a rough draft of the thesis statement. The candidate must submit copies of the rough draft to each committee member one_week prior to the mid_semester committee meeting. Copies of the written thesis final draft must be submitted to the candidate’s graduate committee and department chairperson two_weeks before the final committee evaluation meeting, which coincides with the Graduate Exhibition.

The student’s entire committee is responsible for the evaluation of the thesis exhibition including the written thesis. The final committee meeting will occur while the Graduate Exhibition is on view. After the approval of the exhibition and the written thesis, the student will proceed with the exhibition's visual documentation and their final (definitive) copy of the written thesis. Both the documentation and written thesis MUST be submitted electronically to the ETD site through the VCU library.

**GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

**Graduate Teaching Assistantships:**
Students awarded a Graduate Teaching Assistantship are required to work 15-20 hours per week. This may include teaching, studio responsibilities, or other department assistance and is determined by the student’s graduate committee chair and Department Chair. Students awarded a Graduate Teaching Assistantship are required to enroll in 15 credit hours per semester and are awarded funds to cover tuition (excluding fees) and a stipend. Assistantships are meritoriously awarded.

**Graduate Student Assistantships:**
Students awarded a Graduate Students Assistantship are required to work 15-20 hours per week. This may include teaching, studio responsibilities, or other department assistance and is determined by the student’s graduate committee chair and Department Chair. Students awarded a Graduate Student Assistantship are required to enroll in 15 credit hours per semester as well as 3 credits during the summer following the academic year.
Graduate Student Assistants are awarded funds to cover tuition (excluding fees) and a stipend. Assistantships are meritously awarded.

**University Assistantships**
In addition to the assistantships mentioned above, there are several Graduate Assistantships listed on the [vcujobs site](https://vcujobs.vcu.edu). These non-arts Graduate Assistantships provide a varying degree of stipend support and funding for tuition. Assistantships are updated on the vcujobs site on a regular basis.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**Grants and Funding for Travel**
Opportunities are forwarded by the department to students as they become available. Additional scholarship and grant information including funding opportunities for Graduate Student Travel Grants for conference presentations and exhibition openings can be found through the links below. VCUArts awards Graduate Student Travel Grants to support original scholarship. The mission of the program is to help fund travel that is not in conjunction with any credit bearing coursework or faculty led activities affiliated with the University, including candidacy, thesis, or dissertation research. Priority is given to invited/adjudicated presentations or performances and juried exhibitions occurring at professional conferences and/or in professional venues. Funds are also awarded to support professional conference attendance.

- [graduate.vcu.edu](https://graduate.vcu.edu)
- [arts.vcu.edu/scholarships](https://arts.vcu.edu/scholarships)
- [arts.vcu.edu/grants/graduate-travel-grant/](https://arts.vcu.edu/grants/graduate-travel-grant/)

**External Opportunities**
The Department of Craft and Material Studies is committed to ensuring our students, alumni, faculty, and community are aware of funding, exhibition, residency, and other related opportunities. View our list of recommended opportunities on our department website:

- [arts.vcu.edu/craft/resources/opportunities/](https://arts.vcu.edu/craft/resources/opportunities/)

**Graduate Teaching Opportunities**
All VCU graduate students must complete 18 credits prior to being evaluated for teaching opportunities. Teaching opportunities for graduate students are based on merit and department needs. The department tries to award at least one teaching appointment during graduate studies which may occur during the summer following the completion of the first year or first semester of the second year.

**GRONDS FOR TERMINATION**
Termination from the Craft and Materials Studies Program follows regulations set forth by the VCU Graduate School in regards to graduate student termination and appeal process.
For more information on the VCU Graduate School termination and appeals process, please refer to the online graduate bulletin.

The student’s graduate committee can initiate termination at the department level at any point during the school year. The termination process begins with the committee writing an official letter and filing official paperwork indicating the reason for termination with relevant documentation attached. The request is forwarded to the Dean of the School of the Arts/Dean Designee and a formal letter is forwarded to the student.

The Dean/Dean’s Designee reviews the request and notifies the Office of Records and Registration. An approved request generates a termination letter through certified mail to the student. This letter must include a statement of the student’s right to appeal and inform the student that appeals must be initiated at the program/department and/or school level within 14 business days after receipt of the letter.

Reasons for termination may include but are not limited to:

- Academic (a grade of C, D or F, GPA below 3.0, graduate committee withdrawing recommendation for candidacy review, denied candidacy at the end of the second semester)
- Discontinuous enrollment
- Exceeding time limit
- Honor policy violation
- Academic misconduct
- Professional misconduct
MFA Timeline

1st Semester
Beginning of semester
student arranges graduate committee meetings (email doodle poll to committee members based on their availability which is posted outside of department office)
Mid-September to mid-October
1st committee meeting
End of November to beginning of December
2nd committee meeting

2nd Semester
Beginning of semester
student arranges graduate committee meetings
Mid-February to mid-March
3rd committee meeting
Mid-April/Beginning-May
Students install candidacy exhibition
Candidacy Review-Spring Reading Day (Wednesday, May 1, 2019)

3rd Semester
Beginning of semester
any changes to committee structure must be submitted in writing by the end of the first week of classes
student arranges graduate committee meetings
Mid-September to mid-October
4th committee meeting
End of November to beginning of December
5th committee meeting

4th Semester
Beginning of semester
student arranges graduate committee meetings
January 17th
Written Thesis Outline due to committee
Friday, January 24th
Deadline to complete online graduation application/graduation check-out in (eservices)
Mid-February to early March
6th committee meeting
Due to graduate committee: written thesis rough draft one week before 6th committee meeting
Mid-April to early May
Depending on Candidacy Exhibition dates, final draft of written thesis due to
graduate committee members two weeks prior to final review in the Anderson Gallery
MFA Thesis exhibition
Submittal of completed thesis and any supporting documentation due to the VCU Library ETD site. Dates tbd. Student will complete the online ETD form to committee prior to their final committee meeting/final defense in anticipation of faculty signing and approving the online ETD form. Assistant Chair will communicate deadlines and instructions.

July 15
Studio move-out and cleanup (MUST arrange a check-out time with Jason Hackett, Studio Manager)