



The MFA Handbook 2025-2026

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GENERAL NOTICE

MFA students are advised that academic and other matters referred to in the MFA Handbook are subject to continuing review and revision and may change during a student's program of study. The MFA Handbook is intended to provide guidance, and is not a guarantee that a particular course, facility or service will be available in a particular semester or year. Additionally, the Handbook is not an all-inclusive set of rules and regulations but provides general information and guidance regarding MFA students' relationship to NSCAD University. Comprehensive policies, rules and regulations are contained in the NSCAD University *Academic Calendar ~ Guide to Undergraduate and Graduate Programs* and in additional publications that are available from the Office of Student and Academic Services. This MFA Handbook describes and explains the policies and procedures pertaining to the MFA Program in Studio. Published annually by the Director of the MFA Program and the MFA Committee, it is subject to revision. MFA students are advised to check the website (www.nscad.ca) and to read the NSCAD University Calendar. For more information about the university, its programs, policies and timetables, refer to this website.

Useful Links on the NSCAD University Website:

Student Resources | Calendar | Academic Dates

<https://navigator.nscad.ca/wordpress/home/studentresources/graduating-students/>

<https://navigator.nscad.ca/wordpress/home/studentresources/calendars-dates/>

Current Fees and Tuition Rates:

<https://nscad.ca/nscadfinancial/>

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN STUDIO

The Master of Fine Arts degree is internationally recognized as a standard qualification for teaching craft and visual arts at post-secondary educational institutions such as colleges and universities. The NSCAD MFA Program provides students with the opportunity to develop their work in a context of intense critical discussion. Pedagogy, Research/Creation and other integral academic courses enhance the studio focus. Students are selected for their capability as artists, crafts persons, or film and media artists, their critical abilities, and the personal qualities and interests that might contribute to their success as teachers and scholars.

The Master of Fine Arts program may be discipline-based or interdisciplinary, depending upon an individual student's research needs. Applicants normally have in-depth training and experience in at least one of the following areas: ceramics, jewelry/metalsmithing, textiles/fashion, drawing, sound, video, digital media, film, installation, painting, performance, photography, printmaking, and/or sculpture. Applicants are urged to focus their applications on their area(s) of greatest professional experience or skill.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The NSCAD MFA is a full-time cohort-based resident program. Over an 18-to-23-month period, or 4 to 6 semesters, MFA students accumulate 60 required credits towards the MFA degree. Typically, MFA students take 30 credits per academic year (with a minimum of 9 required every fall and winter semester). Tuition is charged per credit. Students typically register for 13.5 credits each semester in the first year and then take a few credits over the summer in order to ensure that their degree requirements are met without having to take an overload in their final year.

All students must complete four reviews by faculty committees, a Thesis Exhibition, and a Thesis Statement.

Under exceptional circumstances, permission to continue to pursue the MFA degree on a part time basis may be extended to students who have begun the program as full-time students. Part-time students may complete their studies across 8 semesters, or over a maximum of four years. Note that part time students are not granted personal studio space on campus.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition Payment

The MFA Scholarships (\$3000) are disbursed in each year of the program in two installments of \$750 each, at the beginning of September and January. The Office of Student and Academic Services credits these funds to tuition fees. The balance of

tuition must be paid in full during the mail-in or in-person registration dates (listed in the current time-table of classes).

Please note: *failure to formalize registration (including tuition fee payments) will delay the disbursement of the MFA Scholarship.*

In addition, admission to the program makes students eligible for other bursaries and funding opportunities. It also permits students to apply for several kinds of work and training opportunities; these may include Teaching and Research Assistantships.

Note: As of early 2026 NSCAD and CUPE (the Canadian Union of Public Employees) Local 3912 are in talks to establish a first contract for all Teaching and Research Assistants and Individual Course Instructors (ICAs). Exactly how assistants may apply for available posts, and what the rate of remuneration will be in coming months is not yet known since these contract talks are ongoing. Incoming students will be advised by the MFA Director of the necessary procedures once a new agreement comes into force.

As a studio-centered program that offers an internationally recognized terminal teaching degree, the NSCAD MFA program remains committed to providing as many teaching opportunities for its students as possible.

All MFA students are required to have a Canadian Social Insurance Number (SIN).

Tuition Schedule

Students make two half-year tuition payments to cover full-time enrolment in the fall and winter semesters. Students who qualify for NS residency may be eligible for reduced tuition. Students from elsewhere in Canada may also have access to other forms of reduced tuition.

Summer: Sometimes graduate-level courses are offered in the summer, but not always. Nevertheless, MFA students may always arrange to do internships and independent studies for credit. For example, MFAs may arrange to take 3500-level and higher LAS [Liberal Arts and Sciences] courses for graduate credit or a 6000-level Independent Research, Studio or Research Internship. MFA students may also take undergraduate studio courses over the summer (or any other) semester. Depending upon the situation, and discussion with the MFA Director, these may be credited as an Open, LAS, or Studio credits. Note that all such arrangements must be made in consultation with the MFA Director and the professor teaching the course you wish to enroll in and will involve spelling out just what is expected of you to ensure the course enables and requires graduate level work.

For more information on Tuition, Fees, Scholarships and other financial matters, please see <https://nscad.ca/nscadfinancial/>

Awards and Scholarships

Most scholarships available to MFAs are awarded upon entry to the Program. No separate application is required for these awards; applicants are reviewed as part of the admissions process.

MFA Scholarship: As noted above, each Full-Time MFA student accepted into the Program is awarded a \$3000 scholarship. (*\$750 at the beginning of each of four semesters of full-time continuous enrollment in which the student remains in good standing*)

The following scholarships are funded from endowments or charitable giving. Please note that amounts may fluctuate year-to-year.

FUNSCAD Graduate Entrance Scholarship: This scholarship was established by the Faculty Union of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (FUNSCAD) in 1987 in celebration of the NSCAD's 100th Anniversary. The annual award supports a new student in one of NSCAD's graduate programs.

Roloff Beny Graduate Photography Scholarship: The Roloff Beny Photography Scholarships have been made possible through the generous donation of the Roloff Beny Foundation in Toronto. Wilfred Roy Beny (1924-1984) was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta, in 1924. He later adopted the name Roloff, his mother's maiden name, and had a successful career as a painter and printmaker. In the 1950s, he embarked on a new career as a photographer and designer of sumptuous travel books, which were critically acclaimed and hugely successful. His works are included in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as well as the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario. A member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, Beny was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1972. The entrance scholarship is awarded to an MFA student with a concentration in Photography.

Joan Catherine DeWolfe Graduate Fellowship: "The late Joan DeWolfe loved art and loved collecting art—filling her modest Halifax bungalow with colour and creativity. With nine months to plan for her death, she thought carefully about

the legacy she would leave—deciding to support young artists and children in need. Ms. DeWolfe died May 11, 2012 at the age of 63 after a nine-month battle with cancer. During her career, Joan worked at various investment firms. In her last years, she worked as an executive assistant for Addictions Services at the Nova Scotia Department of Health. 'She collected the work of young artists,' said Jean Hogan, a close friend and co-executor of the DeWolfe estate. 'So she would be delighted to know that she is still facilitating the careers of artists.' Joan's gift provides endowed funding for graduate fellowships and support for youth to participate in Extended Studies programs. The entrance fellowships are awarded to MFA students in any medium who demonstrate academic excellence and high level of artistic achievement.

Robert Pope Foundation Graduate Scholarship: Robert Pope (1956-1992), a NSCAD graduate (BFA 1982), was a dedicated and determined artist, whose personal qualities and art contributed significantly to his valiant struggle with cancer. During his life he gained national recognition for his paintings and writings—most notably for his widely exhibited exhibition and book entitled "Illness and Healing, Images of Cancer". In 1992, he finally succumbed to the effects of Hodgkin's Disease at the age of 35. The Robert Pope Foundation fosters art, education and community health initiatives in an effort to celebrate life and enhance well-being, health and healing at all stages of living. The entrance scholarships are awarded to an MFA student in Fine and/or Media Arts who demonstrate academic excellence and high level of artistic achievement.

Laurel Woodcock Memorial Scholarship: Laurel Woodcock (1960-2017) was born in Ottawa and grew up in Montreal, studying Fine Art at Concordia University and later completed her MFA at NSCAD in 1992. As a conceptual artist, Laurel achieved a national reputation working in text and installation. Laurel also loved teaching. She joined the faculty in SOFAM [School of Fine Art and Music] Guelph in 2000 and immediately set about developing the Extended Practices program in Studio Art, an area that continues to embody, both in curriculum and attitude, Laurel's characteristic love of interdisciplinarity and dialogue. The entrance scholarship is awarded to an MFA student in any field.

Kenny Doren Graduate Entrance Scholarship: Alberta artist Kenny Doren (1967- 2012) graduated from NSCAD with an MFA in 2005. He was a multi-media artist and composer whose art installations, videos and digital operas have been presented in Canada, China, Finland, France and the U.S.A. His

practice employed musical interventions and political discourse utilizing video and performance. The entrance scholarship is awarded to a MFA student in any field.

Joseph Beuys Memorial Scholarship: The Joseph Beuys Memorial Scholarships have been made possible by the transfer of the Joseph Beuys blackboard from NSCAD University to the Art Gallery of Ontario. The AGO had early expressed an interest in acquiring this unique Canadian work of Beuys', and after assurances were given that its provenance and association with the university would be recognized, a purchase agreement was entered into with the AGO. The proceeds from the sale were reserved to establish the Joseph Beuys Memorial Fund. The blackboard was produced by Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), artist, professor and Fellow of NSCAD University, during his visit to the university to receive an Honourary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts (*honoris causa*) at Spring Graduation, May 8, 1976. The endowment fund supports an entrance scholarship for MA students and a scholarship for MFA students entering their second year of the program.

NSERC/SSHRC/CIHR – Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarships may be applied for by full time graduate students who are Canadian citizens or landed immigrants in their first year of study. Currently two SSHRC, one NSERC and one CIHR scholarship are disbursed to eligible graduate students making the appropriate application. For more information please see: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp

Other Financial Assistance

MFA students may apply for **Travel Assistance Funds** to support individual and group trips related to research or professional activities. Please note that applications for assistance must be submitted in September for the fall semester, and in January for the winter semester. The Academic Resources Committee assesses applications.

MFA students are eligible to apply for **Emergency Loans** and **Materials Grants** through the Office of Student Experience. Contact OSE for further information.

Information and application forms for in-program scholarships, bursaries, travel assistance and emergency loans can be obtained in the Office of Student Experience (OSE). Amounts and availability may change; see here for more

information: <https://nscad.ca/student-experience/academic-resources/scholarships-and-bursaries/>

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

MFA students require 60 accumulated credits to graduate. Full-Time MFA students complete their course work over 4 to 6 semesters (18-23 months); students who have been given permission to move to part time status should plan to complete their work over no more than 8 semesters or four years in total.

For undergraduates at NSCAD University, each credit taken signifies three hours of work per week, including contact hours with the instructor and hours of work outside of class, thus a three-credit course is thus estimated to require an overall commitment of nine hours, and so on. MFA students should expect to work intensively, which is to say, beyond this three-hour-per-credit guideline.

Below, a breakdown of the total credit requirements for the MFA Degree. Other ways of visualizing or thinking about this information follow on the next two pages.

Credit Requirements for The MFA Degree

Graduate Studio	30 credits (minimum)
LAS Credits (Required)	6 credits Pedagogy Seminar (3 credits) F Y1 Research/Creation Seminar (3 credits) W Y1
LAS Credits (Electives)	6 credits from: Graduate Seminars (MFAR) Graduate Seminar (MAED) (with permission) Independent Research
Open Credits LAS or Studio	6 credits <i>Choice of the following for open credits:</i> Extra studio credits; GRAD 6603/6606/6609 Research Internship; OPEN 6199 / LASC 6199 Off Campus Study; Any NSCAD Undergraduate Course 2000 or higher taken (with permission of the course instructor and MFA Director); or approved courses taken at another institution

Thesis Statement Preparation	6 credits MFAR 6610 Thesis Statement Prep I (3 credits) F Y2 MFAR 6620 Thesis Statement II: Final Drafts (3 credits) Taken with Program Advisor W Y2
Graduate Forum	6 credits = 4 x 1.5 credits per semester

Non- Credit Requirements of the MFA Degree:

First-Semester Review (with Program Advisor, Studio Advisor and one other committee member)

First-Year Review (with Program Advisor, Studio Advisors from both semesters and possibility of one other committee member)

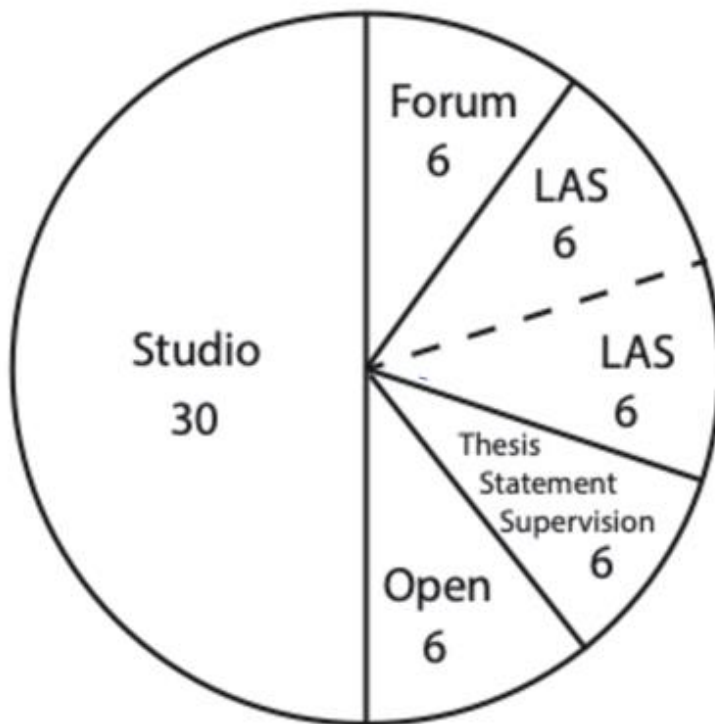
Third Semester Review (with Program Advisor, Studio Advisor and other committee members of choice)

Thesis Exhibition

Thesis Statement

Final Thesis Review (with Program Advisor and other committee members of choice, usually comprising 3-4 committee members in total)

Breakdown of Credit Requirements of the MFA Degree



30 STUDIO credits Students work one on one with a chosen faculty member (Studio Advisor) each semester to develop an individualized program of studio-based research that comprises at least half of their credits. You may pursue cross-disciplinary research interests or further examine and develop a highly focused practice. You may—and are encouraged-- to work with a different faculty member each term.

The MFA Forum is dedicated to developing critical conversations and cooperation among MFAs. Programming typically involves planning for the annual group show; NSCAD faculty and visiting artist and scholar lectures; introductions to artist-run centres, residency and curation opportunities; as well as discussions and workshops on a variety of topics.

4 core graduate-level academic courses (LAS) focus on teaching, studio arts-based research and thesis preparation; two (Pedagogy and Research/Creation) are required of all MFAs and two you may select according to your own needs and interests.

Thesis Statement Preparation I, taken in the Fall semester of Y2, helps you to hone writing and research skills and to develop a working draft of your thesis document. In your last semester, you will be enrolled in Thesis Statement II, which

will involve work with your Program Advisor, according to a schedule agreed upon by the two of you, to hone and complete your written thesis document.

2 Open credits may be filled via a wide range of seminars, lectures or studio courses that allow you to pursue your interests. These include independent study, internships (when available), or studio or seminar courses at the graduate or undergraduate level. (Undergraduate courses require the permission of the instructor and MFA Director.)

What does this look like in practice? Below is a typical MFA schedule structured to complete all LAS requirements in Y1 and take a light load in the summer, thus leaving only STUDIO, FORUM, THESIS PREPARATION and OPEN credits to complete for Y2. However, the structure of the program is somewhat flexible and may be altered in consultation with the MFA Director, the Program Advisor and the Registrar's Office.

Semester 1 (Fall) 13.5 cr.

MFAR 6100 Pedagogy (required) 3 cr. LAS

MFAR 6xxx Graduate Level seminar 3 cr. LAS

MFAR 6501 MFA Forum (required) 1.5 cr. FORUM

MFAR 6006 Graduate Studio 6 cr. STUDIO

Semester II (Winter) 13.5 cr.

MFAR 6600 Research/ Creation (required) 3 cr. LAS

MFAR 6xxx Graduate Level seminar 3 cr. LAS

MFAR 6501 MFA FORUM (required) 1.5 cr FORUM

MFAR 6006 Graduate Studio 6 cr. STUDIO

Summer 3 to 6 cr.

GRAD 6603 Internship 3 cr. OPEN

or GRAD 6606 Internship 6 cr. OPEN

or Graduate or Undergraduate level courses taken for graduate credit etc. 3 cr. OPEN

Semester III Fall 13.5 cr

MFAR 6006 Graduate Studio 9 cr. STUDIO

MFAR 6501 FORUM (required) 1.5 cr. FORUM

MFAR-6610 Thesis Statement Preparation I (required) 3 cr.

Semester IV 13.5 cr.

MFAR 6012 Graduate Studio 9 cr. STUDIO

MFAR 6620 Thesis Statement II: Final Drafts (required) 3 cr.

MFAR 6501 Forum (required) 1.5 cr. FORUM

THE REQUIRED COURSES

MFAR 6003/6006/6009/6012 Graduate Studio

(30 credits minimum required: 3, 6, 9 or 12 credits per semester)

The course *Graduate Studio* is taken each semester and is the principal area of research and practice in Fine Arts, Media Arts, and Craft. This course requires graduate-level research and creative production under the guidance of a **Studio Advisor**, selected by the student. Each semester an MFA student, in consultation with their Program Advisor, will register for between 3 and 12 credits in *Graduate Studio* with a Studio Advisor. In *Graduate Studio*, students produce work towards their Thesis Exhibition requirement for the MFA

Degree. The course is graded **Pass** or **NC** (no credit). Receiving a grade of NC for the course may result in losing "good standing" status in the MFA Program (See **Definition of Good Standing**).

By approval, full-time students may take up to 9 credits over one semester of graduate studio as part of an Off-campus Exchange or in a Residency.

GRAD 6502 Graduate Forum

(1.5 credits per semester; 6 required credits)

This course enables graduate students in various disciplines to engage in critical discussion of their own and others' work. Attendance, participation, and the presentation of one's work in Forum meetings that are sometimes open to the College community are required. The primary goal of the Forum is to provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary exchange. In the Fall semester, emphasis is on establishing a framework of practices within the current graduate community. In the Winter semester, discussions and presentations of greater depth and focus both distinguish and link individual practices.

The Graduate Forum encourages cross-disciplinary discussion and understanding of global making practices through MFAs' presentation of their own work and discussion of the work of others. The Graduate Forum is to Graduate Studio (supports graduate studio research) as the Graduate Seminar and Research/Creation are to graduate *academic research (support works towards the Thesis Statement)*, and as the Pedagogy Seminar is to artists' *learning and teaching*.

The Graduate Forum also functions as the "town meeting" of the MFA Program and community, giving students an opportunity to discuss issues and ideas that may be brought forward to the MFA Committee. Work and responsibilities vary from year to year, with much of the work being broadly collaborative. Grades are Pass/Fail.

Graduate Level Liberal Arts and Science credits

(12 credits total)

Note: In graduate-level LAS courses, a minimum grade of "B+" must be achieved.

A minimum of 12 credits of graduate-level liberal arts and science ("LAS" or "L") course work is integral to the MFA Program at NSCAD University. Of the 12 LAS credits, 6 are earned in the following required courses, normally completed in the first year:

MFAR 6100 Pedagogy Seminar [3 credits, required LAS]

This seminar introduces students to issues related to teaching and research in the university environment.

MFAR 6600 MFA Research/Creation [3 credits, required LAS]

This course enables MFA students to design their programs of research, develop research journals, and produce early drafts of their Thesis Statement. It is taken in the second semester of study. This course is intended to provide MFA students the opportunity to research a topic that is central to their studio practice.

It is also recommended that students take ONE OR MORE of the MFA seminars offered in a given year.

For 2025-2026 these include:

MFAR 6218 Land and Parks Based Practices [3 credits, LAS]

This course builds upon nearly a decade of innovative collaboration between NSCAD and Parks Canada in offering for-credit site-specific residency-based group investigations and projects. Topics will address histories on the land as well as ethical principles, practices and responsibilities involved in undertaking and then exhibiting on the basis of such site-based residency projects. Collaboratively developed themes will be addressed by extensive research and readings.

MFAR-6260 Material Practices & Knowledge [3 Credits, LAS]

This course provides an introduction to historical, theoretical, practical, experiential, embodied, and relational considerations of material

practices. In this course, students will be introduced to the rich and complex discourse grounding and surrounding material-based creative practice, including engaging with material culture theory and material culture-based craft and art histories; anti-colonial relational ethics; theories of social anthropology; queer and feminist theories of embodiment; phenomenology; and dis/ability theories. This course will provide participants with a toolbox of theoretical tools and practical strategies that may be useful in their studio practices, as well as encouraging the development of skills to take care of oneself during the activity of creative production-including attention to emotional and embodied aspects of making.

MFAR-6202 Seminar: Technologies of Experience [3 Credits, LAS]

This course will examine the role that science and technology has had on the development of art and culture during the twentieth century. The epistemological transition from optical systems of representation to the contemporary arena of digital technologies will be explored through readings, writing, lectures and discussion.

In 2026-2027 these will include:

MFAR 6218 Land and Parks Based Practices [3 credits, LAS]

This course builds upon nearly a decade of innovative collaboration between NSCAD and Parks Canada in offering for-credit site-specific residency-based group investigations and projects. Topics will address histories on the land as well as ethical principles, practices and responsibilities involved in undertaking and then exhibiting on the basis of such site-based residency projects. Collaboratively developed themes will be addressed by extensive research and readings.

For 2026-27 MFA seminars will include:

MFAR 6218 Land and Parks Based Practices [3 credits, LAS]

This course builds upon nearly a decade of innovative collaboration between NSCAD and Parks Canada in offering for-credit site-specific residency-based group investigations and projects. Topics will address histories on the land as well as ethical principles, practices and responsibilities involved in undertaking and then exhibiting on the basis of such site-based residency projects. Collaboratively developed themes will be addressed by extensive research and readings.

MFAR-6219 Living on the Edge: Climate Catastrophe and Care
[3 credits, LAS]

Designed as a collaborative research-creation and practice space, this course explores a range of issues, resources and methods by bringing climate and care focused policy, philosophical, theoretical, art historical and speculative material into conversation with contemporary arts, media and craft practices. By focusing critical investigation on key climate-focused conversations and debates, this course fills an intellectual gap in graduate offerings needed to properly support contemporary climate-focused research and work. It will also introduce students to other artists and practitioners working in the field.

MFAR-6217 Placing Performance Practice [3 Credits, LAS]

This course considers critical intersections between performance art practices, the human body, and site/land/more-than-human entities through the analysis of contemporary performance art in conjunction with performance studies and related discourses, and research creation assignments that can include presentations, writing and artistic production. Topics explored include historical and contemporary factors that inform experiences of place, ethical considerations in place-responsive performance practices, positionality-based imperatives and the integration of participation and collaboration.

Other options for earning LAS or OPEN credits include:

- ∄ seminars offered in the Master of Art Education program (look under MAED in the course catalogue and request permission of the director) - for example:
 - ∄ MAED 6205 Issues in Contemporary Art Education
 - ∄ MAED 6230 Indigenous and Land-based Methodologies
 - ∄ MAED 6350 Museum and Curatorial
 - ∄ MAED 6370 Community and Art Education
- ∄ Independent studies *MFA students who have successfully completed one graduate level academic course at NSCAD may also apply for Independent Graduate Research. The supervision of Independent Research is to be undertaken by a full-time or regular part-time member of faculty whose research and teaching show evidence of current involvement in a relevant academic field. Please see the **Application for Independent Research** in the NSCAD Form Portal under MFA: https://forms.nscad.ca/form?form_id=53952

Independent studies require faculty collaboration and consultation with the Director of the MFA Program. Possible Independent Studies include:

FHIS 6200 Independent Research in Film History [3 credits, elective LAS]*

This course enables a graduate student to undertake a research project in the history, theory and/or criticism of film under the guidance of a faculty member.

AHIS 6700 Independent Research in Art History [3 credits, elective LAS]*

This course allows a graduate student the opportunity to undertake an independent research project under the guidance of an art history faculty member.

Students may also take a NSCAD undergraduate LAS course (3500 or above) with the agreement of the instructor, who must be willing to adjust requirements for graduate-level credit. See **Taking Undergraduate LAS Courses for Graduate Credit**, p. 35 and the Application for Independent Research in the NSCAD Form Portal under MFA: https://forms.nscad.ca/form?form_id=53952. Do also consult with the Director of the MFA Program.

In addition, students may take an approved undergraduate (3500 or above) or graduate-level academic course offered at another local

university, taken for Graduate Credit to fulfill their LAS credit requirement. MFA students enrolling in a course at another institution must comply with the regulations, tuition rates and deadlines of that institution and will be subject to any penalties the University incurs on their behalf. Courses at an outside institution are not included in NSCAD tuition. Students pay course tuition fees directly to the outside institution. Consult with the Director of the MFA Program; an MFA student must keep the NSCAD Registrar informed of their status at an outside institution.

Courses for Open Credits

Students may take up to 12 Open Credits during their MFA. These LAS and/or Studio credits can be earned in the following way:

OPEN 6199/LASC 6199 or STUDIO 6003/6

Students who wish to broaden their exposure and abilities to other practices, may make use of undergraduate workshops to expand their technical and conceptual abilities and establish a broader base of interconnected practices. Courses must be at the 2000 level or above. Courses may also be taken at another institution with the approval of the Graduate Program Director.

GRAD 6603/6606/ Research Internship

This internship will provide the graduate student with an opportunity to work with an art gallery or other appropriate organization as a researcher in relation to an exhibition, publication or product. Depending on the nature and outcome of the research, this course may be used to fulfill a 3-credit LAS elective.

Thesis Preparation Courses (required, 3 cr. Each; Letter grade (B+ minimum required))

MFAR-6610 Thesis Statement Prep I (3 Credits)

This course is designed to explore and help to clarify what an MFA thesis statement is or can be. Students will further develop key research and

writing habits and strategies and develop robust drafts of their thesis statements as part of the class.

MFAR-6620 Thesis Statement II: Final Drafts (3 Credits)

Under the supervision of the student's Program Advisor, the student will focus on completing and polishing the required Thesis Statement.

Registration Process

Following acceptance, all entering full-time (Y1) MFAs are automatically registered for a standard credit load for the first two semesters.

Following initial registration, all MFAs may self-register using selfserve.nscad.ca. See **Priority Access to Courses**, below.

Priority Access to NSCAD Courses

The registration process at NSCAD is organized by linking different priority groups to published registration dates. MFA students are always listed in the first priority registration group, meaning that they have priority access for all courses offered at NSCAD University, including courses that are in high demand from undergraduate students, **provided they complete the registration process within the period linked to their priority group**. Please check with Office of Student Experience regarding dates. Note that registration in undergraduate courses for graduate credit can only be done IF the instructor of the course wishes to offer this option.

MFA students should **enroll only for courses to which they are committed**, as enrolment and subsequent withdrawal from courses adversely affects the ability of other students to enroll in those courses.

English and Writing Proficiency

MFA students whose first language is not English are strongly encouraged to enroll in English language training courses outside NSCAD University, prior to or concurrent with their MFA studies. In some cases, admission may be

deferred, pending improvement in English language skills.

<https://nscad.ca/apply/international/>

Writing and Academic Support: Students at NSCAD University, including MFA students, may arrange for assistance with written work with the tutors at the NSCAD Writing Centre. See: <https://nscad.ca/student-experience/academic-resources/writing-centre/>

TEACHING / RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

Note: As of early 2026 NSCAD and CUPE (the Canadian Union of Public Employees) Local 3912 remain in talks to establish a first contract for all Teaching and Research Assistants and Individual Course Instructors (ICAs). Exactly how assistants may apply for available posts, and what the rate of remuneration will be in coming months is not yet known since these contract talks are ongoing. Incoming students will be advised by the MFA Director of the necessary procedures once a new agreement comes into force.

As a studio-centered program that offers an internationally recognized terminal teaching degree, the NSCAD MFA program remains committed to providing as many teaching opportunities for its students as possible.

Details below regarding prior arrangements for TA and RA ships are included here since some students still enrolled in the MFA program in 2025 and 2026 will have been covered by the terms listed below.

Teaching and Research Assistantships are not a requirement of the MFA degree. However, most MFA students are interested in gaining teaching and research experience, and the main form of financial support for this experience has been through non-competitive TA/RA stipends offered in each semester of the Program (4 x \$2500= \$10,000), funds that many students used to offset their tuition expenses. Historically, students in good standing could participate in a maximum of four RA/TA opportunities throughout their studies.

In the old, pre-unionization model, full-time and regular part-time faculty members made written requests for TAs and RAs to the Director of the MFA Program. TA/RA assignments were made by the Director, in consultation with Division Chairs and were prioritized on the basis of the needs of various areas of the University. The Foundation

Program typically requires many teaching assistants; historically, MFA students could expect to be assigned to at least one course in Foundation during their time at NSCAD.

[Old model] Forms to be filled in

For details of the duties and obligations of Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants and of their Supervising Faculty, see the **Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants** which accompany the teaching and research assistantship briefing forms available online through the form portal. For TAships see https://forms.nscad.ca/form?form_id=48989

For RAships see https://forms.nscad.ca/form?form_id=49733.

Supervising faculty are expected to discuss their expectations and work with MFAs to fill out these forms.

If you have been offered a TA or RAship through this older model, payroll will be in touch with you to fill in all necessary forms, so that you may receive your stipend. If you have questions or concerns, please see the MFA Director.

Pre-unionization Policy on MFA Graduate TAs and RAs

Teaching Assistantships:

1. Instructors are asked to respectfully introduce the Teaching Assistants during the first class and give them an opportunity to indicate their preferred pronoun to the group. Students must be contacted before the start of the first class for a meeting, where they will go over the course outline, review the Policy on Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants, and complete the briefing form. Students and Instructors should keep a copy of the completed briefing form for reference.
2. Graduate Teaching Assistants will work with faculty as assigned to assist in the delivery of courses, especially courses with large enrolments. It is recommended that Instructors meet with assistants 15-30 minutes before each class to review the lesson plan.

3. Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) should work an average of not more than ten hours per week during the semester. If the graduate student feels that the duties associated with a particular assignment average more than ten hours per week, the graduate student should consult the Director of the MFA Program. The MFA Committee works to ensure that the MFA students have equitable workloads.
4. If you have been assigned a TA, and the class meets less than 10 hrs per week, then the instructor may assign out-of-class, class preparation for projects, equipment demonstrations, material preparation, tutorials or marking assignments to make up the remaining TA hours
5. Teaching Assistants may assist with tutorials, demonstrations, marking assignments, critiques, or presentations. TAs are not responsible for course design, overall delivery, or final evaluation of students. Instructors are encouraged to provide mentorship for TAs to deliver a lesson plan, and on occasion, TAs can be given the chance to give a presentation or conduct a workshop to students **with** the instructor present.
6. Instructors who are unavailable to teach their class(es) **cannot** employ MFA Teaching Assistants as substitute instructors. They may decide instead to reschedule or cancel the class, or they may discuss alternate arrangements with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research.
7. Faculty with Teaching Assistants may have to train them for some tasks required for the course. The faculty member has the responsibility to ensure that the TA is adequately prepared for the work assigned, and the training must not exceed the 10hrs of work assigned per TA. Where a faculty member finds a TA unable to manage the work assigned, the faculty member will advise the Director of the MFA Program. The Director may meet with the faculty member and the TA to discuss the matter and to try to resolve the problem.

Research Assistantships:

8. Research Assistants assist in the research agendas developed by faculty and may not be given other tasks specific to the delivery of courses. Duties of RAs include but are not limited to; Studio Research, Literature Reviews, Material Research, preparation of Research materials, assistance with Research events, and Fabrication Assistants. Technical and safety training will be arranged by faculty and completed by the RA before commencement of position. Intellectual property rights should be negotiated prior to commencement of work.
9. All technical training and meetings with Faculty must be included in the designated 10hrs of work per week. Research Assistants CANNOT act as supervisors for other student researchers, as this is the sole responsibility of the supervising faculty member.
10. Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants shall be treated with the respect due all employees and all students. Direct any questions about NSCAD University policy regarding graduate Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants to the Director of the MFA Program.

Roles of faculty Advisors to MFA students

What are Program Advisors?

What are Studio Advisors?

Who may serve in these roles?

What is the difference between them?

A Program Advisor works with you to plan your work towards your degree. They help you to choose courses and make other decisions as you navigate the MFA. They also act as your thesis supervisor. A Program Advisor must be a full-time or full time pro-rated faculty member; most come from Fine Arts, Craft, Art History and Contemporary Culture or the Media Arts Divisions. Typically your Program Advisor works with you throughout your time in the degree program. Program Advisors and students are supported by MFA Director and encouraged to consult with them.

Program Advisors may also serve as Studio Advisors but the two roles are not the same. You will select your Studio Advisor each semester to work with you over that shorter period. While you may work with the same faculty member repeatedly, we recommend working with several different Studio Advisors over the course of your degree since each advisor should be able to help you focus on different aspects of your practice.

For at least the four regular semesters of the degree, each MFA student will enroll in 3, 6, 9 or 12 credits of Graduate Studio with a mutually agreed upon Studio Advisor. Studio Advisors are normally Full-time, Full-time Pro-rated faculty or approved Regular Part-time Faculty members or research fellows, typically in the Fine Art, Media Arts, Craft or Art History and Contemporary Culture Divisions. For a list of current faculty, consult the NSCAD website.

Selecting a Studio Advisor

Every semester, you will select a Studio Advisor with whom you will work in the course called Graduate Studio (MFAR 6003/6006/6009/6012). MFA students should email potential Studio Advisors to discuss the possibilities of working together. You need not commit to working with the first person you contact; faculty members are accustomed to this consultation process and may recommend other faculty they think suitable to you.

When meeting with a potential Studio Advisor, you should be prepared to discuss your immediate priorities for studio work and to show recent work or documentation of work.

Discuss with faculty how they like to work with their Studio students, including the frequency of contact they might have with you and their other studio advisees. This discussion should outline expectations and goals. Remember that the decision to work together is reached by mutual consent. MFA students and their Studio Advisors typically meet an average of an hour each week, but you typically establish this routine in dialogue with your advisor.

Selecting a Program Advisor

Each MFA student selects a Program Advisor by late November of their first semester, in time for their First-Semester Review. When selecting a Program Advisor, MFA students may consider asking a faculty member with whom they are working in Studio or as a Teaching Assistant, or another member of the faculty. *As with Studio Advisors, the decision to work together is arrived at by mutual agreement*

Any full-time faculty member who is resident at NSCAD University during your two-year program of study may be a Program Advisor. If your advisor will be on leave or sabbatical during this period, make sure they can continue to work with you, or that you and the Program Advisor have a contingency plan in place.

Although rare, students may change their Program Advisor in consultation with the MFA Director and, typically, the Chair of the Division where they do their primary work (eg. Fine Arts/ Craft/ Media Arts/ Film). You should be prepared to present reasons for such a requested change.

Students should have selected a program advisor by **December 1st** of the first semester of study. Before this date, you are to fill in the Program Advisor form through the forms portal at:

https://forms.nscad.ca/form?form_id=50539

Interim Program Advisor

Through the first weeks of the program, the Director of the MFA Program typically acts as an Interim Program Advisor and is available to assist Y1 MFAs in their selection of a Program Advisor. Faculty from your primary area of practice may also be matched with you as potential or initial Program Advisors.

Role and Responsibilities of the Program Advisor

The Program Advisor will

- act as the MFA student's advocate in the MFA Program
- be familiar with the NSCAD University Calendar: Guide to Graduate Programs (and course descriptions), the MFA Handbook and other relevant documents
- help direct the MFA student towards a balance of courses that meets the requirements of the MFA degree and the needs and interests of the student help direct the MFA student towards suitable faculty members who may work with the student (Studio Advisors, advisory Faculty in Teaching and/or Research, Review or Thesis Committee members)
- be available to consult with the student in planning the presentation of work for Reviews
- chair all four Reviews, and write and distribute summaries for the First-Year Review (2nd Review) and Thesis Review (4th Review)
- oversee the development of the written thesis through the course MFAR-6606 Thesis Statement Preparation (6 Credits) oversee required revisions to the Thesis Statement as required by the Committee in the Thesis Review
- consult with the student and the MFA Director on other academic matters, as required.

MFA Reviews Explained

Organizing your semester reviews and your thesis committee

Responsibilities of MFA Students for Reviews

First and Third Reviews

Second Reviews (Advancement to Candidacy)

Responsibilities of Program Advisors in Second Reviews

Evaluations and Outcomes

Fourth/Thesis Review/ Thesis Exhibition

Thesis Statement

Timeline Notes

Thesis Review Process

Evaluation and Outcome

Post-Review Process

Sample thesis title page

Organizing your semester reviews and your thesis review committee

Near the end of each of four academic semesters in which you are enrolled in the MFA program, you are responsible for forming a review committee consisting of at least three faculty members.

The review committee typically consists of your studio advisor, your program advisor and another faculty member with whom you'd like to have a conversation about your work. You may invite additional faculty members if you like; three is the necessary minimum.

You will be expected to set a date and time that works for you and your committee members by doodle poll or some other means. You also need to notify the MFA Director who your committee members are and when they will be meeting for your review. Faculty members chosen for your Committee must be **approved, Full-time or Regular Part-time faculty**.

The first three reviews are typically held in your studio--or if committee members are attending remotely, you should be, nevertheless, able to walk them around the work, materials and processes of your studio practice and research.

The fourth and final review is typically held in the gallery during the course of your thesis exhibition and functions as the thesis and thesis exhibition examination or critique.

Occasionally students apply for permission to include an **External Member** on their committee. An External Member is meant to provide a specialized or other significant context for discussion of a student's work. They may be, for instance: a recognized professional artist, craftsperson or writer in the community, an active member of a relevant community of cultural heritage, a faculty member at another, local university who has special knowledge of the MFA student's area of practice, a curator or critic. *In your contact with potential External Members, please advise them that there is no remuneration for service on an MFA Review or Thesis Committee.*

Application for approval of an External Thesis Committee Member typically consists of

- a short, written statement of request

- approval of the request by the Program Advisor
- the curriculum vitae of the proposed External Member
- the approval of the MFA Director, to whom all above elements should be submitted (usually an email containing them suffices)
-

Responsibilities of MFA Students for Reviews

MFA students organize the times and dates of all of their reviews with their committees.

It is advisable to find a time to meet *before the end of each semester*, since Faculty often make commitments to be away when they are not teaching.

No less than 10 days or one week prior to each of your reviews, you should prepare and circulate to your committee members:

1. A short summary of your progress in the Program (1 to 2 pages), including completed academic course work and teaching assistantships. You might discuss issues and ideas that have arisen in each of these contexts. Plans for future work may also be mentioned.
2. If you are in your Second or Third Reviews, you might also include the most recent draft of the Thesis Statement, as produced in the course Research/Creation or later updated.

First and Third Reviews

In these informal reviews at the end of your first and third semesters, you meet with your Program Advisor, Studio Advisor and one or two other faculty members to consider and discuss your ongoing studio work, your progress towards the degree, frameworks for your research and possible directions for study. During the course of this review, your committee may suggest courses you might take, additional theoretical or material approaches to your research, or work with a particular studio advisor. No written reports are required, unless to advise the Director of MFA Program of difficulties, although it is customary for your Program Advisor to take notes for you and to share them with you and other committee members. The studio Advisor will assign the grade for the semester's studio work (either P or NC) after the review.

Second Reviews--Advancement to Candidacy

Your second, i.e. *First Year Review*, is the official channel for recording progress towards the degree or any problems. You will organize and present a selection of work to committee members, usually in your studio. Typically at this First Year Review meeting, you will present studio work undertaken since beginning the program—both completed work and work in progress.

Your committee will reflect on your work in relation to the your **written summary of progress** (1 to 2 pages—usually an account of the courses you've taken, your TA and/or RA experiences and any other relevant information) as well as the most recent **draft of your Thesis Statement, as produced in your Research/Creation class**.

Your committee will ask questions about your current work, and discuss your future research and program plans with you. In advance of the meeting, you and your Program Advisor should agree on a way of conducting the review. You may exercise much or little control over the discussion--the point is to have a fruitful conversation that helps to underline or clarify the directions of your thesis research.

Following a discussion of your studio work, progress summary, and draft Thesis Statement, the committee may formulate specific recommendations as to future studio and course work, including study with specific faculty. Finally, the Committee will vote on your **Advancement to Candidacy**. In other words, it is at this point that the committee decides if you are cleared to move ahead to the second year of the MFA, or if you need to fill in gaps or do additional work to qualify for that advancement.

Responsibilities of the Program Advisor in the First Year/Second Review

The Program Advisor will ensure credit requirements have been met, help organize the review process with the student, chair the First-Year Review, take detailed notes on the discussion during the meeting to be compiled in a summary, and send copies of the summary to the Director of the MFA Program and the MFA student.

Evaluation and Outcome of the First Year/ Second Review

If all course work and studio research to date is evaluated positively, the Review Committee votes to advance the MFA student to candidacy for the degree. The committee may make specific recommendations to help advance

the student's research. If the student is not successful in the First-Year Review, they are not advanced to candidacy for the degree and are not in good standing in the MFA Program.

In cases where academic probation or suspension is recommended, the review summary is also sent to the relevant Senate committee to Review Student Grades. If a student is suspended, they must apply for re-admission by way of the normal application procedure and deadlines.

FOURTH Review | THESIS REVIEW | THESIS EXHIBITION | THESIS STATEMENT

The Thesis Review (Fourth Review) takes place towards the middle or end of your fourth full time semester, in conjunction with your Thesis Exhibition at the Anna Leonowens Gallery or at a venue approved by the Program Advisor and the Director of the MFA Program. The schedule of MFA exhibitions is organized by the Director of the Anna Leonowens Gallery, in consultation with all graduating MFA students. This consultation takes place in the fall of the student's second year. If an alternative venue is planned, you would need to provide or work out details with the MFA Director, Gallery Director and classmates at that time.

Timing and who to notify. Once you have confirmed the date of your final exhibition with the gallery, you should establish, with your Program Director, Studio Director and committee members, a date and time for your thesis review. You will need to notify the Gallery staff and the Director of the MFA Program of this time and date as well. You should also let the MFA Director know who will be on your thesis committee, so that all of the appropriate paperwork may be completed. We expect that discussion and planning for the Thesis Exhibition will take place between you and your current Studio Advisor; you should also make sure to involve your Program Advisor in this process at regular intervals. **You should allot two hours for your Thesis Review.** The Gallery staff prefers that Thesis Reviews take place in the morning, prior to 11 am, which is to say, outside of gallery open hours.

Thesis Statement

Your Thesis Statement may take a variety forms, determined in consultation with your Program Advisor, however it should be thought of as a thoroughly researched document supporting your Thesis Exhibition. It is generally expected to treat ideas, topics, information and theoretical approaches of

various sorts--autobiographical, conceptual, historical, critical, theoretical, and technical--that help to position your work within a broader social and/or arts practice context. No matter its format, you will be expected to use your thesis to search, confront, examine, and reflect on the contexts, practices, and scope of your studio research and on the particular work(s) you have chosen to present in or as your Thesis Exhibition.

Your Thesis Statement may be presented as a formal paper (recommended minimum of 3500 words), as an online document or web project, or as a combination of experimental writing and visual imagery. Your thesis is expected to demonstrate original research and a professional level of production in an academic OR alternative format that has been approved in advance by your Program Advisor.

Prior NSCAD MFA theses may be seen here:

<https://nscad.cairnrepo.org/islandora/object/nscad%3A4440>

Application to graduate

Students must submit an application to graduate ([available for download on the Forms & Downloads page](#)) by the published deadlines to be considered for graduation, typically October 30 in order to graduate the following April or May (Commencement), and February 15 in order to graduate by the end of the Fall term (no ceremony). YOU MUST submit an [Application to Graduate](#) to the Office of the Registrar to graduate. This involves a small fee.

Other Timeline notes:

At least one month prior to the Thesis Review, you submit a close-to-final draft of the Thesis Statement to your Program Advisor, who may suggest revisions.

Two weeks before the Thesis Review, you provide members of your Thesis Committee with the final draft of the Thesis Statement. Do not print expensive copies; this is still a draft.

Gallery staff may request that a copy of the final draft Thesis Statement be made available to gallery visitors. (*Note: The Thesis Statement is separate and distinct in its form, length and goals from the *short exhibition statement* required for their press release by the Anna Leonowens Gallery.*)

Thesis Review: Process

The duration of the Thesis Review is approximately two hours. Your Program Advisor chairs the Thesis Review and retains a vote. At the beginning of the Review, the participants will agree on procedures regarding the order of questioning and other particulars of the review procedure.

The Program Advisor/Chair keeps notes on the discussion that they will later summarize in a report to you and the MFA Director. Typically a review begins with the student presenting or summarizing their work and key concepts, sometimes by walking the committee around the gallery. The main portion of the Review is then given over to rounds of questions from members of the Thesis Committee to you about the Thesis Exhibition and Thesis Statement.

When this part of the Review has been completed to mutual satisfaction, the student is excused from the room while the Committee considers any remaining questions and evaluates whether the *Final MFA Exhibition*, the *Thesis Statement* and the student's *discussion and defense* of these in the Review have satisfied the Thesis Requirement for the MFA Degree. After the Committee votes on the fulfillment of the Thesis Requirement, the student is invited to rejoin the meeting, where they will be informed of the committee's evaluation. The committee may give the student additional deadlines to meet for a final thesis revision or resubmission.

Evaluation and Outcome

The Committee may vote to either:

- accept that the Thesis Requirement has been met for the MFA degree;
- accept that the Thesis Requirement has been met, with suggested revisions by a specified date;
- not accept that the Thesis Requirement has been met.

A student must pass the Review by majority vote to graduate.

Within two weeks, and referring to their notes from the Review, your Program Advisor will write a summary of the Review. The draft summary will be sent to the Committee members for approval. The final summary will be sent to the MFA Director and to you.

Within two weeks the Program Advisor will meet with you to advise on any required revisions to the Written Statement.

In order to graduate in April/May, Thesis revisions must be made and approved before the deadline to submit grades for graduating students. This date will be published in the Academic Calendar of Dates for the winter semester MFA students planning to graduate at the end of the second year are advised to plan their final review dates accordingly. Please check well in advance with the MFA Director and the Registrar, to be certain you will have met all requirements. *Please note that you must also file a formal application to graduate with the Registrar's office at least SIX months prior to your anticipated date of graduation.*

A student may not graduate until the thesis has been accepted and a digital copy of the thesis has been submitted to the library for archiving. You should also plan to submit any bound or material thesis objects to the library as soon as possible after your review and final corrections have been made. Substantial required revisions may necessitate a postponement of graduation.

Post-Review Process

The Program Advisor / Thesis Committee Chair meets with the student to oversee revisions to the Thesis Statement as required by the Review Committee in the Thesis Review. *Do not print or bind any copies for final submission to the library or the MFA Director until your Thesis Advisor has approved the revisions.*

Prior to graduation, the MFA student is required to submit **a digital copy** of the approved Thesis Statement to the library and their Program Director. Please contact the librarians to work out specific questions and details. If you are depositing a material or bound copy of your Thesis Statement in the library, please do so as soon as possible after your Thesis Statement has been approved. Again, bring your questions and formatting concerns to the library, your Program Director and the Director of the MFA.

The staff of the Anna Leonowens Gallery will arrange documentation of the Final MFA Exhibition. Images will be filed with the Non-Print Collection of the Library; they will also be sent to the MFA student. You would be advised however to document or arrange for the documentation of your show as you see fit, since the Gallery is providing a record of your show for the institution, and may not be aware of your particular aims or needs.

The Director of the MFA Program will inform the Registrar in writing when the Thesis requirements are met and copies of the final Thesis Statement have been approved.

Any expenses related to copying and binding review documents or Thesis Statement are the responsibility of the MFA student.

The MFA student will provide a digital copy of the Thesis Statement to the Library for inclusion in NSCAD University's institutional repository where it will be made publicly available. The MFA student will sign an agreement provided by the Library if they wish to give permission for their Thesis Statement to be included in the repository. You are responsible for ensuring that the content of your Thesis Statement is in compliance with Canadian copyright law. The digital copy of your Thesis Statement including accompanying images and media files must be in standard file formats that do not require proprietary software to access them. If you have special needs or concerns related to the documentation of your Thesis Exhibition work, please discuss these with the library as soon as possible.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Special Leave

A Special Leave from the MFA Program may be granted for professional or personal reasons. Requests for special leave are normally made in the semester before the intended period of absence to the Director of the MFA Program who will consult with relevant Faculty members and with the VP Academic and Research before final approval.

Application to Graduate

It is the MFA student's responsibility to apply to graduate within the appropriate timeframe. An application must be submitted to the Registrar by the dates stipulated in the Academic Calendar. See:

<https://navigator.nscad.ca/wordpress/home/studentresources/graduating-students/>

<https://navigator.nscad.ca/wordpress/home/studentresources/calendars-dates/>

Residency and Extensions

For Full-Time MFA students, The MFA Program is to be completed within an 18- to 24-month period. Extensions may be granted in some circumstances. Full-Time MFA students who have not completed their requirements for the MFA degree within the residency period, and who wish to complete their degree, must apply for an extension and must pay a continuation fee per semester for each fall and winter semester until they complete the requirements.

Extensions must be applied for in writing to the Program Advisor and the MFA Director, as well as the Registrar, as per the Continuance policy (see <https://navigator.nscad.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Academic-Continuance-Guideline-2023-1.pdf>). This letter of application must state the reason for an extension and must be accompanied with a letter of support from the Program Advisor outlining the terms of the extension and the schedule of meetings with the Program Advisor. If granted activation status, the student is allowed limited entitlements. These entitlements include the use of the library and meetings with the Program Advisor as outlined in the letter of support. The student is not permitted to occupy a studio space or an office. Students should be aware that extensions are not automatically provided; in fact, they are discouraged.

Limitations to this extension are as follows:

Full-Time Students earning the MFA degree in Studio must complete the Graduate Studio requirement, and the exhibition component of their degree within the **24 month period**. All MFA students must complete the degree within four years, or eight fall and winter semesters, from first registration.

If a Full-Time MFA student fails to apply for an extension and activation status after the 24-month period, and has not completed the MFA degree, the student will forfeit the degree.

MFA students permitted part time status to complete their studies must do so over 8 semesters, with the possibility of extending research and study up to 4 years. Part-time MFA students must take a minimum of 3 to 6 credits each fall and winter semester, and anywhere from 3 to 15 credits in the summer semester. Studio space is not promised and typically not available to part time students.

Definition of Good Standing

An MFA student will maintain good standing by achieving a minimum grade of **"B+"** in all courses that are assigned a letter grade, achieving the grade **"Pass"** in Studio work, and by obtaining a favourable review on the First-Year Review and any other Reviews conducted by the student's Review Committee(s).

If an MFA student's performance is in question, formal notification may be made by the Thesis Committee, the Program Advisor, the Studio Advisor, or the Director of the MFA Program to the Academic Dean, who will determine a course of action that may include any of the following:

- a specific sequence of study to remedy the problem;

- withdrawal of Teaching or Research Assistantship and/or scholarship award;
- academic probation; or suspension.

Appeals are to be handled under the [NSCAD Grade Appeal Policy](#) as noted on the website.

Faculty Positions Defined

An MFA student may work with any Full-time or approved Regular Part-time, Sessional or Prorated faculty member in *Graduate Studio* and *Independent Research* courses. The student should be aware of distinctions in faculty contracts within the University and the workload they are contracted to undertake.

Full-time and Prorated Faculty have an ongoing relationship with the University which involves not only teaching the courses which are assigned to them, but professional research, publishing and exhibiting, as well as committee and advisory work. Their contracts stipulate two semesters of teaching and one semester of research/creative practice. Generally, this means teaching in the fall and winter semesters and research in the summer. Except when on sabbatical, when contingency plans should be made, faculty should be available for contact during the spring and summer semesters, though they may not be available in-person for periods of time.

Limited-Term Sessional Appointment Faculty teach a full-time course load on a temporary contract, usually for one or two years. They keep office hours, participate in the business of their Division, do research and committee work and may supervise graduate students.

Regular Part-Time Faculty (RPTs) are contracted to teach a specific course or courses on a semester contract. They are not required to be in the University except during their scheduled class times and up to two office hours per week. RPTs who are approved to do so may serve as studio supervisors.

Individual Course Appointees (ICAs) are contracted to teach a specific course or courses on a semester contract. They have not yet qualified for or applied for status as Regular Part-Time Faculty and are normally ineligible to teach or supervise in Graduate Programs.

Adjunct Faculty are professionally distinguished individuals who work outside the University who have been approved to teach or to supervise undergraduate or graduate students. The approval process is the same as for External Members of the Thesis Committee.

Summer Study

MFA courses are occasionally offered in the summer semester. In any case, Full-Time MFA students continue to have full access to their studios and university facilities. Students are encouraged to fulfill their Open Credits through residencies, exchanges or research internships during the summer months.

NOTE: *Some summer faculty are visiting ICAs. Regular faculty and the Director of the MFA Program may be away from the University for periods during the summer.*

Exchange Programs

In the past, the NSCAD MFA Program has offered exchange opportunities with several other universities during our non-teaching semester (i.e., summer). MFAs are free to research and propose new exchange possibilities. See the MFA Director if you would like to discuss an exchange.

MFA Group Exhibition

MFA students organize an annual group exhibition of their work at the Anna Leonowens Gallery, usually opening in mid-November. The Anna Leonowens Gallery staff will meet the group in the first weeks of the fall semester to initiate the exhibition plans.

For coordination of the group exhibition, the MFAs select a team of curators who will take responsibility for gathering information, mapping out the show, and working with the Anna Leonowens Gallery staff. All MFAs share tasks related to the exhibition.

Visitors Program

Visiting artists and lecturers may be selected by individual programs or the university as a whole. Many visitors are keen to meet with MFA students; visitors are frequently MFA forum guests. Sometimes visitors are available to do studio visits. The MFA Director will keep you informed of these details.

MFA students may assist the Director of the MFA Program or others in organizing visits and welcoming visitors.

THE MFA PROGRAM AND THE NSCAD UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Graduate students are encouraged to contribute to the NSCAD University community by participating in University committees. MFA students elect representatives to represent them on the following committees:

Library Committee (one graduate student): This committee oversees, evaluates and recommends library services and practices in support of academic programs.

MFA Committee (one first-year and one second-year MFA student): The MFA Committee meets regularly to discuss matters of program curriculum and policy.

Scholarship and Awards Committee (one graduate student): This committee meets each semester, plus two full days in May, to review scholarship and bursary applications. It also implements new awards and reviews scholarship budgets.

SUNSCAD (one graduate student): The Student Union of NSCAD

Travel Subsidy Review Committee (one graduate student): This committee meets to review applications for financial aid (including travel grants, emergency loans, materials grants), and policy pertaining to student affairs.

Medical and Counseling Services

The Student Health Plan entitles both Canadian and international students to medical services in Nova Scotia. Information concerning medical and counseling services is available from the Office of Student Experience. Upon registration, all full-time students are automatically enrolled in the **Health Insurance** plan. See OSE if you wish to opt out of the plan because you have another insurance provider through whom you may receive health services.

Access Policy

With the exception of certain holiday periods (typically Winter break), students have access to their studio spaces on a 24-hour basis. Security guards patrol the Fountain Campus at regular intervals from 5 PM to 8 AM. The library and technical facilities of the University post normal hours of operation. After-hours access to the Photography Department and Multimedia may be arranged if either facility supports significant focus of an MFA student's research. For reasons of safety and security, there is no after-hours access to the Woodshop, the Metalshop, Foundry and some other areas of the University.

Studio and Office Space

Space is allocated to MFA students according to need and availability by the Director of the MFA Program in consultation with the Division Chairs.

MFA students may be allocated studio space in the Fountain campus, the Academy Building, or at the Port Campus, or a workspace in a specialized area of the University (Jewellery, Textiles, etc.).

Studio spaces are for the exclusive use of the MFA students assigned to them. Keys are not to be shared with others.

Students are responsible for keeping the studio space in reasonable condition and for reporting any damage or thefts to the Director of Facilities Management.

Graduating students must vacate their studio spaces by **mid-August** and take all personal belongings. Any items to be discarded must be marked as "GARBAGE". Any "special handling" items for disposal should be so marked and Facilities Management should be notified.

MFA students have access to their studios and to the facilities of the University during the summer semesters. *Some facilities are closed between semesters and during technical staff holidays in the summer.* MFA students are advised that NSCAD University cannot accept any responsibility for students' property left on the premises, or for University property that the student has damaged or improperly used. Students may be required to replace University property that is lost, stolen or damaged while signed out. Students should lock up all valuables and equipment when leaving an area. Wood working tools, sanders, circular saws, grinders etc, must be used in one of the two wood shops (Port Campus, or D-013 at Fountain Campus).

Furniture Needs

Please direct needs to the MFA Director. DO NOT use or move furniture items from classrooms and studio teaching areas.

Keys/Swipe Cards

Keys for studio areas may be picked up from the Service Centre on the Fountain Campus or from designated staff at the Academy and Port Campuses. There is a partially refundable deposit of \$25 and proper ID must be shown. The Service Centre requires a memo from the MFA Director regarding assigned studio spaces before keys are distributed.

Swipe cards (deposit required) are for general access at all three campuses. You have continuous access; the swipe cards are programmed to expire in mid-August of your graduating year.

If you have any difficulties with your keys or access card, see staff in the Service Centre.

Photocopying

There is a budget for photocopying materials connected with MFA Program business (memos, announcements, materials for *Graduate Forum* and

committee work). Photocopying costs for materials used in TAsHips are the responsibility of the Division in which the course is offered. The Learning Commons copier or the Service Centre copier should be used. See the appropriate Division Chair (*p. 29*) or staff in the Service Centre. Photocopies for personal and research use may be made in the Service Centre and the Design Print Shop in Photo (3rd Floor, Duke Building, Fountain).

Printing

Free black and white printing is available in Port 219 computer cluster, on the ground floor at the Academy Building, and in the Learning Commons and Multimedia (N320a) at the Fountain Campus.

Note: The costs of copying and binding the Thesis Statement for the archive is the responsibility of the MFA student.

Electrical Appliances

MFA students are responsible for ensuring that any microwaves and refrigerators designated for graduate students and located in N500, in studios at the Academy Building, in MFA studios at the Port Campus or any other MFA studio area are kept clean and in good working order. Any problems may be brought to the attention of the Director of the MFA Program.

Internet, Computer Access, and Student E-Mail

Multimedia Help Website: <https://learningcommons.nscad.ca/fountain-mmcc>

Wi-Fi access is available throughout the three campuses.

All NSCAD University students have email accounts set up for their use when enrolled. Please do check your NSCAD email frequently as it is the official means of communication for all NSCAD business.

All campuses have computers and printing services available on a first come first serve basis.

Glossary of Terms

Director of the MFA Program

The Director oversees the MFA Program and is Chair of the MFA Committee, which sets policy and curriculum for the Program. The Director also leads the *Graduate*

Forum, in addition to teaching other courses. The Director advises MFA students and faculty and is available to assist with any concerns.

MFA Committee

Not to be confused with your Review or Thesis Committees, the MFA Committee is a policy- recommending sub-committee of the Academic Senate, the academic governing body of the university. It is composed of eight members: faculty reps from each Division, the VP Academic, and two MFA students. It meets on an as-needed and sometimes monthly basis to review and advise on matters of MFA policy and curriculum.

Studio Advisor

An MFA student works with a Studio Advisor each semester in the course *Graduate Studio* to discuss and develop work. MFA students typically meet with their studio advisors each week and may work with several different faculty members over the course of their degree.

Program Advisor

The Program Advisor, chosen in the first semester, chairs of the student's Reviews, helps the student plan for reviews, supervises the Thesis Statement Preparation, reads through drafts of the Thesis Statement and oversees changes to the final draft as recommended by the Fourth or final Review Committee.

Review Committees

These committees typically consist of your Program Advisor (Chair) and two full-time and/or RPT faculty members. An External member may be added if you request, and they would make a good contribution to the discussion. Note that the program does not have funds to pay external or non-NSCAD faculty for attendance at reviews.

First Year Review

At the end of the second semester in the Program, MFA students present their work, progress statement and early Thesis draft (as developed in the Research & Creation seminar) to their Review Committee. Committee members discuss the student's progress and provide feedback and suggestions. Successful completion of the First Year Review is a requirement to advance to candidacy for the degree. If the Committee does not approve advancement, they may recommend probation or schedule a second review.

Thesis Review

The MFA student's Thesis Exhibition, the Thesis Statement and the oral presentation before the Thesis Committee are all considered in the final Thesis Review. It normally takes place late in the winter semester of the second year, during the period of the Thesis Exhibition.

TA/RA Supervisor

This is a Faculty member course instructor who supervises a graduate Teaching Assistant, or a Faculty member who supervises a graduate research assistant. Forms

governing the relationship between faculty supervisor and TA or RA may be found on the Forms portal under the MFA heading: <https://forms.nscad.ca/>

Note that NSCAD and CUPE are negotiating new terms for TA and RAships, meaning that some details in the definition above may change.

Taking Undergraduate LAS Courses for Graduate Credit

MFA students may fulfill their elective Liberal Arts and Sciences (**LAS**) or **OPEN credits** by enrolling, with the agreement of the course instructor, in any approved undergraduate class at the 2000 level or above at NSCAD University. To ensure that participation in the undergraduate classes is at a level appropriate for graduate study, adjustments to the course outline will need to be made in terms of assignments and method of evaluation.

MFA students will be given expanded assignments and the criteria for evaluation will reflect expectations for graduate level work (B+ or better).

To enroll in one of these courses, a student must complete with the instructor the **Graduate Independent Study form** (https://forms.nscad.ca/form?form_id=53952) in which they agree upon and describe additional assignments and evaluation methods for graduate credit. Once this form is approved by the MFA Director, the Registrar will be able to create a graduate placement for the course.

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APPENDIX

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Application to Enroll in a Course at an Outside Institution

Graduate Studio Policy

Application to Enroll in a Course at an Outside Institution

This form must be completed prior to registration and before a Letter of Permission will be issued.

Fall **Winter** **YEAR**

MFA Student:

Program Advisor:

Course Code & Title:

Course Instructor:

Institution:

Department:

Course Duration: _____ to _____

Deadline to Drop: _____

Please **attach** the published course description.

Outline the relation of this course to your program of study:

Signatures:

Student

Program Advisor

Date

To be reviewed by the MFA Director and the Registrar. Please submit this form to the MFA Director. Please be sure to complete a LETTER OF PERMISSION form available in OSE or on the website.

**Policy on MFA Graduate Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants
Teaching Assistantships:**

1. Instructors are asked to respectfully introduce the Teaching Assistants during the first class and give them an opportunity to indicate their preferred pronoun to the group. Students must be contacted before the start of the first class for a meeting, where they will go over the course outline, review the Policy on Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants,

and complete the briefing form. Students and Instructors should keep a copy of the completed briefing form for reference.

2. Graduate Teaching Assistants will work with faculty as assigned to assist in the delivery of courses, especially courses with large enrolments. It is recommended that Instructors meet with assistants 15-30 minutes before each class to review the lesson plan.
3. Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) should work an average of not more than ten hours per week during the semester. If the graduate student feels that the duties associated with a particular assignment average more than ten hours per week, the graduate student should consult the Director of the MFA Program. The MFA Committee works to ensure that the MFA students have equitable workloads.
4. If you have been assigned a TA, and the class meets less than 10 hrs per week, then the instructor may assign out-of-class, class preparation for projects, equipment demonstrations, material preparation, tutorials or marking assignments to make up the remaining TA hours
5. Teaching Assistants may assist with tutorials, demonstrations, marking assignments, critiques, or presentations. TAs are not responsible for course design, overall delivery, or final evaluation of students. Instructors are encouraged to provide mentorship for TAs to deliver a lesson plan, and on occasion, TAs can be given the chance to give a presentation or conduct a workshop to students **with** the instructor present.
6. Instructors who are unavailable to teach their class(es) **cannot** employ MFA Teaching Assistants as substitute instructors. They may decide instead to reschedule or cancel the class, or they may discuss alternate arrangements with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research.
7. Faculty with Teaching Assistants may have to train them for some tasks required for the course. The faculty member has the responsibility to ensure that the TA is adequately prepared for the work assigned, and the training must not exceed the 10hrs of work assigned per TA. Where a faculty member finds a TA unable to manage the work assigned, the faculty member will advise the Director of the MFA Program. The Director may meet with the faculty member and the TA to discuss the matter and to try to resolve the problem.

Research Assistantships:

8. Research Assistants assist in the research agendas developed by faculty and may not be given other tasks specific to the delivery of courses. Duties of RAs include, but are not limited to; Studio Research, Literature Reviews, Material Research, preparation of Research materials, assistance with Research events, and Fabrication Assistants. Technical and safety training will be arranged by faculty and completed by the RA before commencement of position. Intellectual property right should be negotiated prior to commencement of work.
9. All technical training and meetings with Faculty must be included in the designated 10hrs of work per week. Research Assistants CANNOT act as supervisors for other student researchers, as this is the sole responsibility of the supervising faculty member.
10. Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants shall be treated with the respect due all employees and all students. Direct any questions about NSCAD University policy regarding graduate Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants to the Director of the MFA Program.

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