Department of Graphic Design

Graduate Handbook

Updated August 2017

MFA Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design
MA Master of Arts specialization in Graphic Design

Graphic Design Graduate Student Guidelines

Graduate student policies and requirements are established by several university groups. University-wide basic policies and minimum requirements are set by the Graduate College. Additional department guidelines are established by the department graduate faculty. Individual Program of Study (POS) Committees and major professors may also vary in their particular requirements. Although minimum expectations are similar, students cannot anticipate that all requirements will be identical for every graduate student. Graduate College policies and requirements are provided in the ***Graduate College Handbook.*** Graduate students are responsible for being aware of the policies in the ***Graduate College Handbook*** http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/ and for the management of their own graduate programs.

1. Administration and Responsibilities

Temporary Graduate Advisor
A graduate student new to the department is assigned to the Director of Graduate Education (DoGE). This faculty advisor works with the graduate student until a **major professor** and **Program of Study Committee** (POSC) has been selected.

Director of Graduate Education (DOGE)
The DoGE serves as the primary department graduate administrator and is appointed by the Chair. This individual has the following responsibilities:

- Assists the chair in keeping graduate faculty and students aware of department, university and college developments in graduate education.
- Serves as and advocates for graduate students.
- Directs department curriculum proposals for graduate programs through the college review process.
- Reviews all POSC submissions and ensures they meet Department program requirements.
- Reviews and assigns Department Assistantships in consultation with the Chair.
- Facilitates Graduate College and University procedures on behalf of the Department.
- Meets when appropriate with the Department Curriculum Committee in dealing with matters pertaining to graduate education.
- Recommends to the Graduate Dean in writing that:
    - Restricted admission be changed to Full admission on the basis of academic performance after the student has completed at least 10 credit of graduate level course with a GPA of 3.0 or more.
    - Provisional admission be changed to Full admission after background deficiencies have been completed.
    - The student be removed from Probation on the basis of satisfactory academic performance.

Graduate students with general questions, concerns or academic grievances related to the graduate program should discuss them with the DoGE, if they cannot be satisfactorily resolved by individual graduate faculty or their major professor.

Chair
In some circumstances, the Chair may temporarily act as DoGE. Any concerns or academic grievances related to the graduate program should be discussed with the DoGE. If they cannot be satisfactorily resolved by individual graduate faculty, the DoGE or their major professor they should discuss them with the Chair.

Major professor

A major professor is to be identified by mid-term of the **first (one year plan) or second (two year plan) semester** of graduate study for MA students, or by the mid-term of the **second (two year plan) or fourth (three year plan) semester** of graduate study for MFA students. A major professor is a member of the department graduate faculty whose area of expertise is normally in the student's area of emphasis. The responsibilities of the major professor are outlined below:

- Guides the graduate student doing scholarly creative research by conferring regularly to review his/her progress.
- Signs pre-registration and registration forms each semester and initials or signs other forms requiring the major professor's signature.
- Works with the graduate student in the development of thesis proposals and Program of Study drafts.
- Presides at meetings of the Program of Study Committee.
- Criticizes constructively and assists in editing thesis/thesis-exhibition drafts and creative work.

Program of Study Committee (POSC)

A Program of Study Committee is to be organized by the students, with the assistance of the major professor, by the end of the **first (one year plan) or second (two year plan) semester** of graduate study for MA students, or by the end of the **second (two year plan) or fourth (three year plan) semester** of graduate study for MFA students. The committee should have a minimum of three graduate faculty members. At least two members of the committee must be a full member of the Graphic Design faculty and one member must be from an academic area outside of the department. The responsibilities of the Program of Study Committee are outlined as follows:

- Reviews the academic progress of the student periodically.
- Advise the student during development of the thesis/thesis-exhibition proposal, either individually or as a group.
- Assists in planning and recommends approval of a Program of Study and Abstract of Thesis forms designed to meet student's objectives and fulfill department and Graduate College requirements.
- Discusses and recommends significant changes in student's Program of Study
- Evaluates the thesis/thesis-exhibition work critically and suggests improvements.
- Conducts an oral examination and recommends whether or not a degree should be granted (based on knowledge of subject matter and discussion of thesis or thesis-exhibition project).

Graduate Student

A graduate students is responsible for wide variety of matters:

- Submit all forms requiring signatures in a timely manner (mostly online approvals) well before due dates.
- Identify appropriate members to serve on the committee. Meet with them to verify availability and interest.
- Discuss the Program of Study with proposed major professor and POS Committee members.
- Keep DoGE informed regarding Assistantship plans.
- After obtaining agreement from the major professor, POS Committee and the program's DOGE complete the paperless POSC form online.
- Meet with the major professor and other committee members periodically, as often as possible or necessary, to discuss research progress and/or problems and to review the written and visual thesis components.
- Develop and, if necessary, regularly revise an agenda with the major professor.
- Inform the major professor of personal leave and sick leave. Personal leave should be planned so it does not interfere with the student's duties.
- Be accessible to the major professor periodically and within a reasonable schedule for discussion of various matters and/or assistance in research related or teaching assistantship activities.
- Provide copies of thesis to major professor in time for adequate review before submission deadlines.
- Schedule all POS committee meetings for discussion of research proposal, research progress, and final oral examination.
- Be proactive in meeting with committee members and within a reasonable schedule for discussion with members of the POS committee.
- Submit the written thesis to the committee members no later than one month to two weeks before the final oral examination.

2. Admission and Graduate Status Categories

The descriptions provided here are based upon the descriptions as described in the Graduate College Handbook. Students are admitted in the Department in the below categories.

Full admission status

Provisional admission status

A Provisional student may not schedule a defense.

Transfer from Provisional admission to Full status requires that the student:

i. Remove the background deficiencies as identified in the Admission Letter, coursework taken will require an average of B (3.00) or better;
ii. Meet the Graduate English requirement for students whose native language is not English;
iii. Pass a faculty portfolio review if requested by the DoGE;
iv. Secure a written recommendation from Director of Graduate Education to the Graduate College; and
v. Obtain approval of the Dean of the Graduate College.

Restricted admission status

A Restricted student may not schedule a defense and in general cannot obtain an assistantship.

Transfer from Restricted admission to Full status requires that the student:

i. Complete at least 9 semester credit hours of graduate-level graded courses as a graduate student at ISU;
ii. Earn a cumulative grade point average of B or above (3.00);
iii. Meet the Graduate English requirement (for students whose native language is not English);
iv. Pass a faculty portfolio review if requested by the DoGE;
v. Secure a written recommendation from Director of Graduate Education to the Graduate College; and
vi. Obtain the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College

3. Academic Progress and Academic Performance

Graduate English Requirement

Unless they have been certified in English at the time of admission all graduate students whose native language is not English must take the English Placement Test administered by the Department of English. The English Placement Test is given during the registration period of the student's first semester of enrollment. A student who does not pass this examination will be placed in one or more of the courses in the English 100 series and may be required to complete independent study assignments.

All international graduate students who are offered or considered for a teaching assistantship are required to take the Oral English Certification Test (OECT). http://acp.grad-college.iastate.edu/oral-english-certification-test

Change of Degree

Graduate students at Iowa State University are admitted to the University Graduate College and then to specific degree programs within departments. In order to change status from one degree to another, for example MA in Graphic Design to MFA in Graphic Design, it is necessary for the students to initiate a new application to the degree program they wish to enter. The university file already established will be transferred to the new program for review and other qualifications will be noted at that time. This may result in a longer time to graduation, possibly a new POS committee, a new thesis topic (or build on the previous), and the possibility of being denied admission to the program.

Students wishing to transfer to the MFA within the department should contact the DoGE regarding their plans. Normally, the program will review this type of request after 1-2 semesters in the initial program.

Graduate students Academic File
The Department initiates an academic file on each graduate student entering the Department. This file contains the student's application materials, copies of graduate reports, Graduate College forms, and copies of memos dealing with student's academic progress. Each graduate student's file is open for review by the graduate student. The file will be used by the graduate faculty advisor and the major professor to assist in developing the academic program of the student.

Graduate Students Exhibit/Review
Typically, at the end of each semester, usually the last week of class, the department faculty require that all graduate students involved in certain studios or other courses participate in an exhibition of their current work (ArtGr 511x, 512x, 521x, 522x, 672A & 672B).

Graduate students working only on thesis are not required to display the progress but may be asked to present a short report on their research to date.

All graduate students are required to participate in the critique process for their respective courses. All reviews are open to the public and academic community.

MFA Required Thesis Component Proposal Presentation
Near the end of their third semester (MFA), typically during the Fall semester, graduate students are required to present their intended thesis and research interests to all Department faculty. This short presentation will enable students to identify their major professor and committee, as well as allow faculty to provide feedback at an early stage of the thesis process. The DoGE will announce date, location etc, before midterm each Fall. Typically this presentation will take place as part of ArtGr 531x prior to the Thanksgiving Break.

POSC Electronic Submission
It is the student's responsibility to meet with their Committee prior to submitting a POSC to ensure they have a suitable plan in place. The student must describe in the "Notes" or "Comments" sections of the POSC any course substitutions or modifications. Once the POSC is submitted, an e-mail is automatically generated for their Committee to approve. Once the Committee has approved, it then routes to the DoGE to approve.The student can track the POSC status in the "Alert" section of AccessPlus, and they are responsible for facilitating that process.

Please consult the Graduate College web site for details.

Thesis and Thesis Exhibition

Requirements

MFA graduate students in the Department are required to complete a **research-thesis (ArtGr 699)** as part of their graduate study. MA and MA EGD graduate students in the Department are required to complete a **creative component (ArtGr 599)** as part of their graduate study. Both are administered by the Department and the Graduate College. It is the responsibility of the major professor to supervise the research and creative work and the preparation of the preliminary and final drafts of the thesis to insure the highest level of quality when the students presents the material to the Program of Study Committee for final consideration.

Responsibility for researching, writing and editing the thesis or creative component rests with the student, under the supervision of the major professor. The ability to express oneself with reasonable clarity and precision is a necessary prerequisite for progress at the graduate level and later professional development.

- **MFA Thesis**
  - A Master's of Fine Arts (MFA) thesis is a scholarly endeavor that demonstrates the ability of the author to do independent creative work. Precise expression, logical construction and attention to detail are essential. However, considerable variation in style and format is possible. A thesis may have an experimental, historical, philosophical or technical emphasis. Creative design work done as part of the thesis should also be available for review at the time of the final examination. Students are required to take 3-9 credits of **ArtGr 699: Thesis** (please consult your curriculum sheet).

  - The written component of the thesis needs to follow the Graduate College's precise guidelines format and submission guidelines. It is the student's responsibility to review the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETDs) guidelines available on the Graduate College's web site. In addition, the Graduate College sponsors workshops during the fall and spring for thesis authors, check the web site for availability.

  - Information on the approved format and the timetable for submitting the thesis is detailed at the Graduate College web site. The student is required to provide a digital copy of the thesis to the Graduate College Office and one copy to the major professor. All due dates and deadlines are the responsibility of the student.

- **MA/MA EGD Creative Component**
  - A Master's of Arts (MA) creative component is a scholarly endeavor that demonstrates the ability of the author to do independent creative work. Precise expression, logical construction and attention to detail are essential. However, considerable variation in style and format is possible. A creative component may have an experimental, historical, philosophical or technical emphasis. It is expected that, in general, a creative component will primarily be project-based work, supportive written document. Student is required to take 6-9 credits of **ArtGr 599: Creative Component.**

  - A copy of all creative component outcomes (project and written) must be submitted to the Major Professor as well as the DoGE once approved by the POS Committee.

Graduate Exhibition
It is required that all MA/MFA graduate students participate in a joint exhibition of work for all thesis/creative component projects, as well as other work. This exhibit will take place at the end of each spring semester. Work included in the exhibit will be limited to material produced specifically as part of the program. All design work to be included in an exhibition should be reviewed with the major professor. In general, this work should not have been previously exhibited.

Students finishing "out of sequence" (Fall rather than Spring), or with approval from the POS Committee and the DoGE, if circumstances warrant (medical emergencies, etc.), a student may exhibit in a solo exhibition of their thesis. The student is responsible for securing an appropriate university or off-campus space for their exhibition. The exhibition should be scheduled for at least one week and should be held during the semester in which the final exam is scheduled.

4. Academic Support and Development

Graduate Studio Space
Students actively engaged in graduate classes are given priority to be in the studios, students only working on a thesis have studio space if the program has the capacity to accommodate their needs. Depending on the needs of the program the DoGE may have to reallocate space and usage in the graduate studio. It is expected that all students and faculty work together to create the best learning environment for the program.

Research or Travel Mini-grants
Funding for student research or travel is available from the Graduate Student Senate. Normal thesis research expenses will not be approved for a mini-grant. Applications need to be accompanied by a description of the need and an itemized budget. More information about possible sources for student research funds can be obtained by talking to your major professor, the DoGE, as well as other Graphic Design faculty.

The Department will, when resources are available, offer Graduate student grants for conference presentations and research.

Preparing Future Faculty
The PFF (Preparing Future Faculty) program supplements departmental graduate preparation by offering new teaching, mentoring, and learning possibilities, which give postdoctoral fellows, PH.D. students, and master's students further credentialing for a competitive academic job market. PFF's goal is to better prepare graduates for faculty careers through a combination of seminars, mentoring, and practical classroom and departmental service experiences. For more information about this program please see the Graduate College web site.

5. Assistantships

The department has two types of graduate assistantships, teaching (TA) and research (RA). In order to be considered for an assistantship a student must submit an application before the deadline of February 28th. The application is available from the department graduate secretary in 158 College of Design and the DoGE.

Priority is given to students who hold full admission status. Preference is also given to students who have the POS committee formed and POS recorded and are making satisfactory progress towards completion of the degree. All assistantships are based on adequate resources. Graduate students are not guaranteed a teaching assistantship during their tenure. All graduate assistants are assessed resident tuition fees. Typically, the department awards Quarter-time assistantships. Please consult the Graduate College handbook and web site for further details regarding tuition, stipends and other benefits.

All international graduate students who are offered or considered for a teaching assistantship are required to take the Oral English Certification Test (OECT). http://acp.grad-college.iastate.edu/oral-english-certification-test

The following assistantship policies apply to all graduate students enrolled in the Graphic Design Department.

Graduate students seeking graduate assistantships should file a Program of Study Committee (POSC) by the end of their second semester (MA, MA EGD) or the end of their fourth semester (MFA) in order to be considered for an assistantship.

1. Typically graduate students must be enrolled in a minimum of 9 credits in order to receive an assistantship or a workspace in the Departmental Graduate Studio.

2. Graduate students seeking graduate assistantships may receive up to 4 for semesters of support (MA, MA EGD) or 6 semesters (MFA) from the time of enrollment, provided adequate progress is made on their POS.

3. The following criteria are used to make determinations for assistantships:
   a) Departmental and College needs
   b) Minimum 3.0 GPA
   c) Enrollment in a minimum 9 cr. per semester
   d) Adequate progress on Program of Study

e) Previous RA/TA performance
f) Renewal is on a semester or yearly evaluation of performance based on merit
g) MFA candidates have the first priority of consideration for assistantships
h) MA candidates will be considered after MFA candidates
i) Provisional and Restricted candidates will only be considered case-by-case

4. The Chair may waive any of the above policies for extenuating circumstances in consultation with the Director of Graduate Education.

Usually the assistantship is appointed for the academic semester and the assignment may vary from fall to spring. The teaching assistant is expected to attend lectures, classes, and faculty meetings relevant to the curriculum. The teaching assistant will be assigned to a professor who is in charge of the curriculum and class structure.

The following two policies apply to all graduate students enrolled in the College of Design.

1. Graduate students seeking graduate assistantships outside the Department should notify the DoGE of their intentions.

2. Graduate students seeking graduate assistantships after completing six semesters in one of the College's graduate programs must request and receive approval from their Department Chair before the College will approve funding for graduate assistantships and tuition scholarships.

Normal Progress Timeline for fulltime students

A. ***Year 1***

The department requires students who are seeking research or teaching assistantships to have completed all the normal progress criteria.

- Student completes all deficiencies, if any, and receives full admission status with a request from the DoGE.
- A minimum of 9 credit hours must be completed each semester to be making normal progress for fulltime students.
- A grade point average of at least 3.0 is required to be considered normal progress.
- Demonstrates scholarly and professional competence at reviews and critiques throughout the semester and at the graduate review ending each semester.
- MA and MA EGD student selects a major professor and a Program of Study Committee.
- MA and MA EGD students develops with their POS Committee and Major Professor the Program of Study.

B. ***Year 2***

Failure to meet requirements for normal progress may result in loss of assistantship or in extreme cases, dismissal from the academic program.

- MFA student develops a thesis topic with the major professor and presents it to the POS Committee for approval and discussion.
- Student meets regularly with the committee to keep the appraised of the progress on the thesis/research.
- MFA student prepares a draft of the thesis prospectus with the major professor's supervision for committee review and approval.
- A minimum of 9 credit hours must be completed each semester for fulltime students to be making normal progress.
- A grade point average of at least 3.0 is required to be considered normal progress.
- Demonstrates scholarly and professional competence at reviews and critiques throughout the semester and at the graduate review ending each semester.
- MA and MA EGD student provides a final copy of the creative component to the committee no later than one month to two weeks before the final oral examination.
- MA and MA EGD student and POS Committee schedule a time for the final oral exam.
- MA and MA EGD student submits final approved creative component to DoGE

C. Year 3

- MFA student provides a final draft of the thesis to the graduate college for format check and approval, possibly hiring a copy editor.
- MFA student provides a final copy of the thesis to the committee no later than one month to two weeks before the final oral examination.
- MFA student and major professor schedule a time for the final oral exam.

All graduate students are encouraged to read Chapter 9., Rights and Responsibilities of the Graduate College Handbook. This chapter outline the procedures and criteria for dismissal from the graduate program. The complete handbook is available from the Graduate College Website.

Procedures for earning a Master of Fine Arts Degree

From Iowa State University, Department of Graphic Design

Throughout program

- Meet with **Director of Graduate Education** prior to the beginning of the first semester.
- Obtain approval for **research proposal or scholarly equivalent** from POS committee.
- **Meet all coursework and other requirements**
- Obtain approval **Human Subjects Committee** for research that in any way utilizes data or studies human subjects.

First Year

- May choose or be assigned a **major professor/advisor**
- Consult with **Major Professor** and **POSC Committee** regarding the **Program of Study**
- Complete **Program of Study Committee (POSC) form**, get approvals from committee and DoGE, and submit to graduate college for approval.

Second Year

- Must choose or be assigned a **Major Professor**
- Consult with **Major Professor** and **POSC Committee** regarding the **Program of Study**
- Complete **Program of Study Committee (POSC) form**, get approvals from committee and DoGE, and submit to graduate college for approval.

Third Year

- Complete **research project** and **write thesis.**
- File **Application for Graduation**(Diploma Slip) with Graduate College for intended term of graduation
- Establish date and time for **final oral examination** with POS committee
- Submit **Request for Final Oral Examination** form to Graduate College at least 4 weeks before examination date.
- Bring thesis to Graduate College for **Preliminary format check** (optional but strongly encouraged)
- Give **thesis** to committee members at least one month to two weeks before final examination date.
- Successfully pass **final oral examination** and submit report form to Graduate College
- Receive **Graduate Student Approval Slip for Graduation** form from major professor or program.
- Submit final electronic **thesis** to Thesis Office and DoGE
- Bring signed **Graduate Student Approval slip for Graduation** to Graduate College for final signatures
- Attend **commencement ceremonies**

Procedures for earning a Master's of Arts Degree

From Iowa State University, Department of Graphic Design

Throughout program

- Meet with **Director of Graduate Education** prior to the beginning of the first semester.
- Obtain approval for **research proposal or scholarly equivalent** from POS committee.
- **Meet all coursework and other requirements**
- Obtain approval **Human Subjects Committee** for research that in any way utilizes data or studies human subjects.

First Year

- Choose or be assigned a **major professor/advisor**
- Consult with **Major Professor** and **POSC Committee** regarding the **Program of Study**
- Complete **Program of Study Committee (POSC) form**, get approvals from committee and DoGE, and submit to graduate college for approval.

Second Year

- Complete **research** and **creative component.**
- File **Application for Graduation**(Diploma Slip) with Graduate College for intended term of graduation
- Establish date and time for **final oral examination** with POS committee
- Submit **Request for Final Oral Examination** form to Graduate College at least 4 weeks before examination date.
- Give **creative component** to committee members at least one month to two weeks before final examination date.
- Successfully pass **final oral examination** and submit report form to Graduate College
- Receive **Graduate Student Approval Slip for Graduation** form from major professor or program.
- Submit final electronic **thesis** to Thesis Office and DoGE
- Bring signed **Graduate Student Approval slip for Graduation** to Graduate College for final signatures
- Attend **commencement ceremonies**