Art, M.F.A.

Requirements

The Master of Fine Arts program in art requires a minimum of 60 s.h. of graduate credit. The degree is offered with thesis and with emphases in the following studio art disciplines: ceramics, graphic design, three-dimensional (3-D) design, drawing, intermediaw and video art, jewelry and metal arts, painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture. Students must earn at least 24 s.h. of credit for the degree at the University of Iowa, including approved credit earned for the M.A. in art.

M.F.A. students must hold an M.A. in art equivalent to that offered by the University of Iowa. Transfer credit is decided by faculty review. Following completion of the M.A., students may be invited into the M.F.A. program.

Required Courses

The 60 s.h. of credit required for the M.F.A. includes at least 24 s.h. in a primary studio art emphasis; at least 12 s.h. in a secondary studio art emphasis selected from those listed above; 3 s.h. in art history and theory of art (if not already taken); and 3 s.h. in theory, history, criticism, or philosophy (if not already taken). Students must earn 8 s.h. in their primary studio art emphasis and 4 s.h. in their secondary studio art emphasis after being granted an M.A. in art.

M.F.A. Committee Review

Students must undergo an M.F.A. committee review. They also must complete a written thesis and possibly a studio thesis. Students are reviewed by their committees at the end of the semester prior to the semester they intend to graduate.

Students are responsible for identifying a degree chair by the semester prior to the semester they intend to graduate. Committee members are selected in consultation with the degree chair by October 1 for spring or summer graduation and March 1 for fall graduation. The committee is comprised of the degree committee chair and three members of the graduate faculty at the assistant professor rank or above (two graduate faculty members from a student's major discipline, one graduate faculty member from a student's second studio discipline, and an additional member.) Adjunct faculty, lecturers, and visiting professors may serve on degree committees with approval of the degree committee chair and a Graduate College petition request (renewable every three years).

M.F.A. students sign up for review through the graduate program coordinator. They obtain a form to be signed by both the degree committee members and a faculty member in the second emphasis studio discipline. These forms must be returned to the office no later than the University’s official midterm day by 4:30 p.m.

M.F.A. Thesis

A thesis abstract is given to all degree committee members and is due by November 15 for May or August graduation and by April 15 for December graduation. The thesis chair is responsible for meeting with the student immediately thereafter to direct thesis content and to coordinate meeting with the full committee.

A copy of the thesis is due to all committee members before the M.F.A. exhibition to be read in its final form prior to thesis defense. The thesis must be as complete as possible including photocopies (may be black and white) of approved figures that will be included in the final thesis. The graduate program coordinator will provide a student with complete thesis/artist statement procedures, including the Graduate College calendar.

A thesis defense of the M.F.A. work must be scheduled with the candidate’s committee during the final semester in residence. The M.F.A. exhibition is the final examination and where the degree committee signs the final examination report.

The complete thesis in final form must be given to all committee members at least four weeks prior to the exhibition week. Graduate College regulations covering the specific requirements of the written thesis are found on the Graduate College Thesis and Dissertation website. The thesis and the signed Report of Thesis Approval are submitted by the Graduate College deadline. The Report of Thesis Approval (a page of the written thesis) must be signed by all degree committee members. The student is responsible for obtaining committee members’ signatures on the Report of Thesis Approval. Any corrections to the thesis required by the graduate examiner or the degree committee should be completed immediately.

Students may earn 1 s.h. for writing a technical or substantial thesis by registering for ARTS:7000 M.F.A. Written Thesis, with approval of the thesis supervisor. Thesis credit earned in an M.A. program is not applicable toward M.F.A. requirements.

Admission

Deadline date for submission of materials to the Office of Graduate Admissions is February 1 for studio art programs; admission is for fall.

Application materials should be uploaded onto a student’s admissions profile (see instructions below under “Application Procedures”). All applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College and the School of Art and Art History requirements.

School of Art and Art History Requirements

Applicants whose first or official language is not English and whose previous academic degrees were not earned at an English-language institution must score as follows on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): for studio art applicants, 81 (internet-based). All applicants must have a minimum TOEFL iBT speaking score of 26 and a listening score of 25. An application will not be reviewed if scores are lower than the requirements specify.

Prospective graduate students must meet the School of Art and Art History's admission requirements for the specific degree program they plan to enter. They must submit application materials to the University’s Office of Graduate Admissions and to the specific program they wish to enter. Program-specific application requirements and deadline dates are listed below.

All applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College on the Graduate College website.
Non-native speakers of English should note that most students are financially funded through teaching, and the Iowa Board of Regents mandates that all non-native speakers of English pass an oral English test in order to teach.

Application Procedures

Prospective students may apply online through the Office of Admissions website. After submitting an application, applicants will receive email instructions on how to access their admissions profile on MyUI. Applicants then upload the required supplemental documents through a secure portal.

Required documents include:

- transcripts from all colleges and universities an applicant has attended,
- contact information for three individuals (able to assess applicants' potential for graduate study) designated to provide letters of recommendation, and
- a statement of purpose.

Applicants should consult the Art History Graduate Bulletin on the School of Art and Art History website.

Studio art applicants' portfolio requirements are listed below. Images in the portfolio should be uploaded pdf files no larger than 72 dpi and 1240 by 1240 pixels. File size must not exceed 1 MB. Images must be numbered according to the order they are to be presented to the admissions committee, beginning with an inventory list that includes each image's name, title, medium, size, and approximate date of work, as well as the student's name and emphasis. Applicants may supply a link to their personal website.

Portfolio contents and submission requirements are as follows.

- Ceramics, three-dimensional (3-D) design, and jewelry and metal arts: eight images in the primary studio art discipline and two in a second discipline.
- Graphic design: documentation of 15 to 20 projects. Applicant should include a brief description of each work, illustrated with embedded still images and supplemented by links to online media. The precise number of images varies according to the nature of the work. Contact the School of Art and Art History with any questions.
- Intermedia and video art: documentation of 5 to 10 projects. Applicants should include a brief description of each work, illustrated with embedded still images and supplemented by links to online media. The precise number of images varies according to the nature of the work. Contact the School of Art and Art History with any questions.
- Painting and drawing: eight images in the primary studio art discipline and two in a second discipline.
- Photography: 20 images in photography and two or three images in a second discipline.
- Printmaking: 10 to 20 images.
- Sculpture: 20 images in sculpture, including details, and two or three images in a second discipline.

The Office of Graduate Admissions notifies all applicants by mail of admission decisions.

Financial Support

Fellowships, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and tuition scholarships are awarded to graduate students on the basis of artistic and/or scholarly record.

Iowa Arts Fellowships

The Graduate College awards Iowa Arts Fellowships to two incoming or first-year studio art graduate students each year. For more information, see Iowa Arts Fellowships on the Graduate College website.

Teaching and Research Assistantships

Assistantships are awarded to graduate students on the basis of academic record, promise as scholars or artists, and demonstrated ability to do the job. Quality of performance in one's graduate program at Iowa is generally the major criterion for awarding teaching assistantships. The number of hours of work required depends on the amount of the award.

Scholarships and Fellowships

The School of Art and Art History offers a variety of scholarships and fellowships made possible by contributions from alumni who wish to support promising artists and scholars. These awards are made on the same basis as teaching and research assistantships.

Information and application materials for graduate scholarships and fellowships are included in the admissions package. They also are available from the School of Art and Art History main office.

Renewal or reappointment for fellowships and assistantships depends on adequate progress toward the degree (students must accumulate at least 18 s.h. of graduate credit each calendar year and maintain a grade-point average above the required minimum) and satisfactory performance of assistantship duties.

Decisions on assistantships and financial aid generally are made during the latter part of the spring semester for the following academic year.

Career Advancement

Many graduates pursue careers that match their degree specializations, for example, commercial or graphic designer, conservation or museum curator or administrator, art educator, public artist, or community art center coordinator or instructor.