

## Master of Fine Arts in Writing for Dramatic Media Program Handbook

### Welcome

Welcome to Writing for Dramatic Media, the graduate degree within the Department of Film. You are here due to a very select process and the three-year rigor is one of the most challenging of any writing program in the country. This handbook and the Graduate Catalog will provide you with the information to guide you through your time at UNLV, however, they do not serve to replace your interaction with your Graduate Coordinator. Development of great performance writing depends on collaboration and interaction. The same concept applies to the study of great performance writing in that your experience will be maximized with collaboration and interaction with the student cohort and the instructor.

### Mission Statement

This terminal film degree focuses specifically on the art and craft of writing for performance across a broad spectrum of media with superior academic and artistic standards for the candidates. They are expected to elevate their talent and craft to professional levels of excellence. Students completing the three-year program will have a significant group of scripts that will range from the traditional feature motion picture screenplay to the variety of performances found in the latest media as the digital world evolves.

### Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: [valarie.burke@unlv.edu](mailto:valarie.burke@unlv.edu) or [GradAssociateDean@unlv.edu](mailto:GradAssociateDean@unlv.edu).

### Department Graduate Faculty

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

### Program Information

This terminal degree focuses specifically on the art and craft of writing for performance. This is a three-year long creative writing discipline housed in a film department. The focus of the program is on developing feature screenplays but the candidate will also produce television screenplays, stage plays, and various types of work for digital media as it evolves. The program is based on a “conservatory” approach of practice and repetition and includes a significant amount of “pitching,” or working aloud, as part of the process. Students completing the three-year program will have a significant group of feature motion picture, television, and other scripts that have been honed to a professional level. In addition to faculty with professional experience, the students are exposed to a variety of professional guests.

### Certificate

The Department of Film also offers a certificate program available to students matriculating in any graduate program besides the MFA in Writing for Dramatic Media.

## Contact Information

### *Department Chair*

Heather Addison, [heather.addison@unlv.edu](mailto:heather.addison@unlv.edu)

### *Graduate Coordinator/Program Head*

Sean Clark, [sean.clark@unlv.edu](mailto:sean.clark@unlv.edu)

### *Department Main Office*

FDH 452, (702) 895-3547

## Program Requirements

Program requirements regarding **admission, coursework and culminating experience** are found in the graduate catalog.

## Advisory Committee Guidelines

The advisory committee will be composed of three graduate faculty members from the Department of Film and one “outside” committee member. These members will be chosen by the candidate.

## Degree Program Benchmarks

While the candidate may have a variety of writing across the assorted forms of dramatic media, the expectation is that there will be a feature length screenplay as the culminating creative activity. Typically, the candidate doesn’t determine which script will be benchmark work until the start of the third year in the program.

## Program Timeline

All candidates join the program in the fall semester of the first year. The expectation is that they will pass their oral defense and graduate in the spring of their third year.

## Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the graduate catalog.

Writing for various media requires a constant state of collaboration and interaction with other artists. Such collegiality will be expected. If there is a significant issue with the collaborative process, it will be address in the Annual Review

## Annual Review Procedures

Each spring term, graduate students are required to complete the Graduate Student Annual Review survey. This survey will be sent by the Graduate College to the student’s Rebelmail account. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress while setting goals for the year ahead.

## Probation

If a student fails to successfully progress in their degree program, their department/school will recommend that the student be placed on probation by the Graduate College. Students on probation may be dismissed/separated from their program for failing to successfully meet the conditions of their probation by the deadline provided. Please see the **Probation and Separation** section of the Graduate Catalog for more information.

## University Resources

### **Academic Success Center**

The goal of the Academic Success Center is to help students do well academically and complete they studies on time. They offer or will refer you to such programs and resources as tutoring, advising, skills testing, career exploration and more. They guide students every step of the way to the many

established resources created to ensure they complete their educational goals. Learn more about the programs and services the center currently offers.

#### Alumni Association

With an alumni base 90,000 strong, the UNLV Alumni Association offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

#### Commencement Office

Located in the UNLV Registrar's Office, the commencement office is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College.

#### Office of Diversity Initiatives

The vision of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's diversity mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment.* This Office also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

#### Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The DRC is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

#### Office of International Student and Scholars

International Students and Scholars (ISS) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

#### Jean Nidetch Women's Center

The Jean Nidetch Women's Center is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

#### UNLV Libraries

UNLV Libraries has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

#### Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The Graduate & Professional Student Association serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The

GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

#### Office of Student Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Conduct collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the *UNLV Student Code of Conduct* by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

#### Office of Veteran Services

The UNLV Office of Veteran Services is staffed with veterans and GI Bill-experienced staff to assist more than 1,000 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

#### The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

#### Writing Center

This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the Online Writing Lab (OWL) page.

## University Policies and Procedures

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Activation for Military Service](#)
- [FERPA/Privacy Rights](#)
- [Health Insurance - Mandatory](#)
- [Jeanne Clery Campus Safety and Security Report](#)
- [Proof of Immunization](#)
- [Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects](#)
- [Rebemail Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Student Computer Use Policy](#)
- [Title IX](#)

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the [Graduate Catalog](#):

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Academic Policies](#)
- [Admission and Registration Information](#)
- [Degree Progression Policies & Procedures](#)

In addition, the [Graduate College website](#) contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

*Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.*

**Handbook Information**

Last revised	Revised by	Changes summary
12/16/14	Sean Clark	Initial presentation