

MFA - Art Program Handbook

The three-year Master of Fine Arts (MFA) is studio-based and research-focused with an emphasis on interdisciplinarity, community engagement, and professional development. Each MFA student is provided with individual studio space. Graduate Assistantships in teaching, research, and professional development professionally advance students who have rare opportunities to engage in cutting-edge research, contribute to the development of curriculum, manage studios and shops, and work alongside community members, local organizations, and other departments on campus.

Through academic and public programming, the Department of Art collaborates with UNLV's Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art, a network of campus galleries, and the College of Fine Arts which boldly launches visionaries not only in art and design, but also in dance, film, theater, set design, entertainment design, music, architecture, and related disciplines. Graduate students have the opportunity to work with a diverse art/art history faculty whose work engages a variety of media, including site-based installation, sculpture, ceramics, photography, painting, drawing, printmaking, performance, intermedia, graphic design, and digital art. The department regularly presents visiting speakers and hosts artists-in-residence. Engagement with faculty, peers and the Las Vegas cultural community creates an experience-rich environment that guides MFA candidates in their exploration of creative research activities.

The UNLV MFA - Art provides the graduate student a rare opportunity to conduct creative research within a dynamic studio art program. The campus and studios are uniquely located in close proximity to the Las Vegas Strip and the surrounding desert landscape, shaping a permissive environment where risk, experimentation and transformation are encouraged.

The Department of Art strives to create a model for professional development in all areas of the arts, design and relevant histories, to teach the diversity of culture and identity in the US and its democratic values, and to prepare graduates for success in competitive and evolving communities through access to cutting-edge fabrication equipment, new critical and creative contexts, and opportunities for exhibition, publication, discussion, and critique linked with partners in Las Vegas and beyond.

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 or gradassociatedean@unlv.edu.

Department Graduate Faculty

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold 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

MFA - Art

Contact Information

Department of Art

Interim Department Chair

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Graduate Coordinator

Wendy Kveck wendy.kveck@unlv.edu Grant Hall 218

Department Main Office

Ham Fine Arts 153, 702-895-3237.

Program Requirements

Program requirements [regarding admission, coursework and culminating experience are found in the graduate catalog.](#)

Advisory Committee Guidelines

Graduate students select three Department of Art graduate faculty members to serve on their advisory committee by the end of the first year of their program. The committee chair, a tenured/tenure-track faculty member, in collaboration with the graduate coordinator, oversees the progress of the graduate student toward a successful midway and graduation thesis exhibition project.

Degree Program Benchmarks

MFA candidates must be full-time students and are required to enroll in a minimum of 9 credits per semester. After completing 3 semesters or thirty credit hours in the program, the candidates submit their work in the form of a midway exhibition and a 500-word midway statement to their graduate advisory committee for evaluation. A successful midway exhibition is a prerequisite for continuing in the program. The capstone of the UNLV MFA - Art is a solo graduation thesis exhibition project accompanied by a written thesis, a thesis defense, a public lecture, and a digital thesis packet. **The MFA in Art thesis is considered a “non-thesis” by the Graduate College and is fulfilled entirely in the Department of Art.**

The thesis exhibition is scheduled at the Donna Beam Fine Arts Gallery or another approved venue by the end of the third year of research. The public thesis project must have the final approval of the student’s advisory committee including a Graduate College Representative invited to serve as a fourth committee member and required to attend the candidate’s oral thesis defense. Graduate students must complete a comprehensive project consisting of an exhibition of a representative body of creative work and a written thesis statement (2,000-word minimum) regarding the work’s intent and underlying conceptualization. The exhibition or project must be created, curated, installed/de-installed and publicized by the candidate.

The final thesis defense covers the intent and underlying conception of the student’s comprehensive project. This examination is prepared and conducted by the student’s graduate advisory committee and the Graduate College Representative.

Students are required to present a public lecture about their work in their final year in the program.

Students are required to submit a digital Thesis Packet for permanent record: including the following: high-resolution, digital documentation of thesis work and installation and accompanying image list; 2,000-word minimum thesis statement; CV; 200-word minimum artist bio.

The MFA in Art thesis requires five components: (1) Written Thesis Paper (2) Thesis Exhibition or Project, (3) Public Artist Lecture, (4) Oral Defense and (5) A Digital Thesis Packet. **These components are considered “non-thesis” by the Graduate College and are fulfilled entirely in the Department of Art.** During their time in the program, students are required to apply for three professional development opportunities, including, but not limited to, artist residencies, exhibitions, and grants.

Other Opportunities

There will be many opportunities for graduate students to participate in events that support professional development, their cohort, the Department of Art, and the various art and design communities in Las Vegas and beyond. These could include: exhibitions, community meetings, open studio events, lectures, conferences, and group critiques.

Program Timeline

MFA in studio art is a 3-year program.

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the [graduate catalog](#).

Annual Review Procedures

Students are required to make adequate yearly progress towards degree completion.

The Graduate Coordinator oversees the student's progress in collaboration with graduate faculty in the first year, and the advisory committee oversees the progress of the individual student in coordination with the Graduate Coordinator in the second and third year of the program.

Each winter break and early spring term, graduate students are required to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) form. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress, and it establishes reasonable goals for the year ahead. Reported student data is shared with students' graduate coordinators and advisors to foster opportunities for discussion about students' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and next requirements, and mentoring plans so that students know what they need to do in order to progress successfully through their programs in a timely manner. Students who are graduating are also required to complete the form in order to record their achievements since the data is also used to track metrics related to the annual productivity of all students.

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

[The Graduate Academy: Innovative Leadership, Professional, and Career Development](#)

The goal of the Professional Development Academy is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

[Academic Success Center](#)

The goal of the Academic Success Center is to help students do well academically and complete their 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 130,000 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 Office of the Registrar, 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. It is the students' responsibility to ensure

they apply for [graduation on time](#) and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College [Student Services Team](#) and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College [RPC Team](#)

[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.

[The Intersection](#)

The Intersection is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

[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 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. 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.

Military and Veteran Services Center

The Military and Veteran Service Center is staffed with veterans and veteran education benefits-experienced staff to assist more than 1,800 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists attending UNLV. 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 [Graduate Student Handbook](#), and following websites:

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

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, based on sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV's Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the online reporting form at [Title IX Reporting Form](#), by email at titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu, by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

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
April 2019	Wendy Kveck	Updated information
July 2019	Wendy Kveck	Edits for clarity