



Studio Art Graduate Student Handbook 2025–2026

Questions: 940-369-7671 | cvad.Studio@unt.edu

Introduction

Welcome to the University of North Texas College of Visual Arts and Design Department of Studio Art. The College of Visual Arts and Design faculty and staff are here to encourage your artistic, academic, and professional growth through classroom courses, individual study, and related activities.

The UNT Graduate Catalog governs your study. It is your responsibility to become informed and to observe all regulations and procedures required by the program you are pursuing. You should be familiar with those sections of the UNT Graduate Catalog that outline general regulations and requirements, specific degree program requirements, and the offerings and requirements of CVAD. Ignorance of a rule does not constitute a basis for waiving that rule. You must also be familiar with and abide by the deadlines and policies of the Toulouse Graduate School as published on the [TGS website](#).

The Studio Art Graduate Student Handbook contains information specific to the Department of Studio Art. This handbook supplements the information in the [UNT Graduate Catalog](#). Please refer to these documents for requirements and procedural information. We strongly recommend that each graduate student and faculty be familiar with the policies and regulations outlined in this manual as well as the graduate catalog. It is the responsibility of each student to meet all the requirements of the Department of Studio Art, the College of Visual Arts and Design, and the Toulouse Graduate School.

Important Contacts

- Nicole Foran, Chair, Department of Studio Art, Nicole.Foran@unt.edu
- Paho Mann, Graduate Director, Department of Studio Art, Paho.Mann@unt.edu
- Angela Vanecek, Office Manager, CVAD Academic Departments & Foundations, 940-369-7671, Angela.Vanecek@unt.edu

Communication Expectations

The CVAD faculty and staff are here to assist you in navigating your graduate studies. Information and deadlines related to your studies will be communicated via your my.unt.edu email. **Please respond promptly to emails, requests, announcements, and procedures.**

Forms

All the forms referred to in this document can be downloaded from the Studio Art Forms Library

on SharePoint. To access these forms, visit [Student Forms](#).

Degree Requirements

Students must fulfill all requirements specified in the UNT Catalog as well as successfully complete a series of reviews and exhibition requirement milestones. Throughout the degree program, students must participate in the following requirements as part of an overall system of evaluation. Students who do not complete their work according to the schedule will delay their graduation.

- ASTU 5005 Studio Art Teaching Practices (3 credit hours)
- ASTU 5010 Professional Practices for the Studio Artist (3 credit hours)
- ASTU 5015 Creative Project (3 credit hours)
- ASTU 5020 M.F.A. Exhibition (3 credit hours)
- ASTU 5001 Graduate Seminar (18 credit hours)
- Art History Courses (9 credit hours)
- Theoretical/conceptual framework courses (3 credit hours)
- Special Problems: Third Year Studio Hours (6 credit hours)
- Graduate electives (12 credit hours)

Required Reviews, Exhibitions, and Evaluations

- First Semester Review
- First Year Review
- Second Year Review
- M.F.A. Exhibition
- Oral Defense

Suggested Timeline

The following is a suggested sequence of classes and milestones that facilitate progress through the M.F.A. program. Variations based on enrollment and course availability are acceptable.

Year One - Fall Semester Suggested Course Work / Reviews

- ASTU 5001 - Graduate Seminar
- ASTU 5005 - Studio Art Teaching Practices
- ARTH 58xx - Art History Course
- File initial degree plan with the Graduate Director and Toulouse Graduate School
- Participate in First Semester Review

Year One - Spring Semester Suggested Course Work / Reviews

- ASTU 5001 - Graduate Seminar
- ARTH 58xx - Art History Course
- Theoretical/conceptual framework course
- Participate in First Year Reviews

Year One - Summer Sessions Suggested Course Work:

- Elective

Year Two - Fall Semester Suggested Course Work / Reviews

- ASTU 5001 - Graduate Seminar
- ARTH 58xx - Art History Course
- Elective
- Select Supervisory Committee Chair and members
- Participate in a committee meeting with your full committee
- File an updated degree plan with the Graduate Director and your Supervisory Committee Chair

Year Two - Spring Semester Suggested Course Work / Reviews

- ASTU 5001 - Graduate Seminar
- ASTU 5010 - Professional Practices for the Studio Artist
- Elective
- Participate in Second Year Reviews

Year Two - Summer Sessions Suggested Course Work / Reviews

- Elective

Year Three - Fall Semester Suggested Course Work / Reviews

- ASTU 5001 - Graduate Seminar
- ASTU 5015 - Creative Project
- Third Year Studio Hours with Supervisory Committee Chair
- Participate in the exhibition planning meeting during ASTU 5015
- File an updated degree plan with the Graduate Director and your Supervisory Committee Chair
- Participate in a committee meeting with your full committee

Year Three - Spring Semester Suggested Course Work

- ASTU 5001 - Graduate Seminar
- ASTU 5020 - M.F.A. Exhibition
- Third Year Studio Hours with Supervisory Committee Chair
- Complete M.F.A. Extended Artist Statement
- Hold M.F.A. Exhibition and Oral Defense

Grade and GPA Requirements

Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher throughout the program. Failure to maintain this GPA may result in academic probation or dismissal from the program. Grades of 'C' or better are required for a course to count toward the degree. However, receiving a grade of 'C' in any course places the student on academic probation. A second grade of 'C' or below within the same semester may result in dismissal from the program. All students should be aware that probationary status may affect eligibility for employment within the college. Please refer to the Probation and Dismissal sections of this handbook for further details.

Use of Transfer Credit

A limited number (maximum 12) of conferred transfer credit hours may be applied toward the requirement of a new master's or doctoral degree. The option to use courses from a previous degree will serve students who would like multiple but overlapping or compatible degrees. Additionally, students in any graduate program may request the use of a limited (maximum 6) number of credits from a conferred degree toward the requirements of a second degree. Credits may never be used for three or more degrees; if a student seeks a third degree, it must stand alone. A degree may overlap with only one other degree for the purpose of using credits from a previously conferred degree; this only applies to graduate-level credits earned for a graduate-level degree.

For any transfer credit to count toward a degree, the courses transferred must have been taken within the Toulouse Graduate School's time limit. All course work and other requirements to be credited toward the M.F.A., whether transferred or taken at UNT, must be completed within seven years.

Federation of North Texas Area Universities

Any UNT graduate student admitted to a master's or doctoral degree program or pursuing certification may cross-register in graduate-level courses at TWU or East Texas A&M University that apply to their current degree program. Students must have their department's approval and verify that TWU or East Texas A&M University does not have restrictions on the course. Please read through the additional information for UNT students on the [Toulouse Graduate School website](#) for details.

Leave of Absence

Graduate students who experience circumstances that prevent them from maintaining active status through continuous enrollment (excluding summer term), and who, through consultation with the Graduate Director, advisor(s), and UNT International (international students only) determine that a leave of absence (LOA) is appropriate, must request an LOA via the form through the Toulouse Graduate School.

Probation

Graduate students who receive a grade of "C" or below or two "W" grades in one semester or receive a negative outcome on a grad review will be placed on probation. The Department Chair will notify the student of their probationary status in writing and send a duplicate copy of the

notice to the Graduate Director and Supervisory Committee Chair, as applicable.

After receiving the notification of probationary status, the student must seek formal counseling with the Graduate Director. Probationary students may not withdraw from any future courses without the consent of the Graduate Director or Supervisory Committee Chair and Department Chair. Students on probation may not qualify for employment by the college. Students will be removed from probation if they receive a grade of 'B' or higher on all their courses and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. If after two long semesters a student has a cumulative GPA below 3.0, they will be dismissed from the program. Students in their last semester of the program who receive a grade of 'C' will forgo the probation process and continue in the program as planned.

Dismissal

Students are required to always maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program. Other causes for dismissal from the program include the following:

- Receipt of a second grade of "C" or below or a third grade of "W."
- Two long semesters in sequence in inactive status without a leave of absence on file.
- Failure to pass reviews.

Withdrawal

A student that intends to withdraw from the program should submit a letter indicating their intent to withdraw to the Graduate Director. If the student has enrolled in classes for the next semester, they must contact the Registrar directly to drop the last class on their course schedule to withdraw from the university.

Changing Concentrations

A student desiring to change concentrations within the M.F.A. in Studio Art should make an appointment with the Graduate Director to discuss procedures.

First Semester Review

Timing: End of semester one, year one

Location and duration: 30 minutes in the student's studio or other assigned space

First semester reviews are one part of an overall system of evaluation. They serve as an early touchpoint in the program to ensure students are making adequate progress in their studio practice, research, and critical engagement.

The first semester review will take place during the final two weeks of the semester, typically as part of ASTU 5005. The Graduate Director will coordinate with the instructor of ASTU 5005 to schedule these reviews. Each review will be attended by at least three full-time faculty members from the Department of Studio Art.

Review requirements and format

- Significant quantity of work made during the first semester of study.

- Annotated Bibliography: with 8-10 entries related to the student's studio practice. These can be readings, monographs, or exhibitions that inform and contextualize the student's studio practice. Each entry should be accompanied by three to five sentences summarizing the source.
- Artist Statement: 300-500 words addressing the work to be shown during the review.

Students will provide committee members with copies of their artist statement and annotated bibliography no less than one week in advance of the review.

Presentation of Work / the Review Experience

The review will take place in the student's studio, or another assigned location. Students will provide a 5- to 10-minute formal introduction of the work researched and produced during the first semester of study (conceptual, formal, technical developments as applicable) and future direction. At this point it is okay and expected that some of the work is experimental and not fully resolved. The review committee will ask questions before meeting to deliberate on the outcome of the review. The duration of the review is approximately 30 minutes.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on the overall quality and quantity of the work presented as well as their ability to contextualize the conceptual, formal, and process investigations in their practice. Following the student presentation, the committee will meet privately to discuss the student's progress and to vote for one of the following options:

- Pass - to continue in the program.
- Pass with reservations - to continue in the program with reservations.

Students who receive a "continue with reservations" outcome will receive written feedback clearly outlining the concerns. A follow-up meeting with either the ASTU 5005 instructor or the Graduate Director is required.

Failure to make satisfactory progress on the identified concerns before the First Year Review may result in dismissal from the program.

First Year Review

Timing: End of semester two, year one.

Location and duration: 60 minutes in assigned space.

First-year reviews are one part of an overall system of evaluation. In addition to maintaining a B average, students must also pass the first-year review to continue in their program of study. Failure to pass the first-year review may result in academic probation, loss of college employment, other funding, and dismissal from the program.

The Department of Studio Art will assign first-year review committees no later than four weeks into the student's second semester. At least one member of the review committee will be from the student's area of specialization. The review's timing will be established in this

communication.

Review requirements and format

- A significant quantity of work made during the first year of study. This can build on the work from the first semester review and can include that work.
- Annotated Bibliography with 10 to 15 entries related to the student's studio practice. This should build on the work done for the first semester review and can include those entries. These can be readings, monographs, or exhibitions that inform and contextualize the student's studio practice. Each entry should be accompanied by three - five sentences summarizing the source.
- Artist Statement: 300-500 words addressing the work to be shown during the review.

Students will provide committee members with digital copies of their artist statement and annotated bibliography no less than one week in advance of the review.

Presentation of Work / the Review Experience

During the review, students will have 15 minutes to provide a formal introduction of the work researched and produced during the year of study (conceptual, formal, technical developments as applicable) and future direction. The students should speak with the assigned committee member from their area to determine the format of the work to be presented. In extraordinary circumstances, students may be required to provide digital documentation of the work to each committee member, and the meeting may be technologically mediated. The department chair will determine this.

After the presentation, the committee will ask a series of questions about the year of study and the works presented.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on the overall quality and quantity of the work presented as well as their ability to contextualize the conceptual, formal, and process investigations in their practice. Following the student presentation, the committee will meet privately for approximately 20 minutes to discuss the work and progress to vote for one of the following options:

- Pass - to allow the student to proceed according to the schedule.
- Re-review - to require adjustments to the student's program and a re-review process. This will result in the student being placed on academic probation and may result in the loss of employment and funding.
- Dismissal - to recommend dismissal to the Department Chair based on unsatisfactory completion of the first- year review (no re-review).

Note: if a student received reservations during their first semester review, they must have addressed all reservations and receive an outcome of "proceed" to avoid dismissal from the program.

Review Result Documentation

The student will receive feedback at the time of the review. The committee will subsequently forward the formal decision to the Graduate Director. Official student notification of results will come from the Graduate Director no later than two weeks following the review.

If a re-review is necessary, the re-review will take place during the following semester, and the scheduling will be indicated in the official student notification. The re-review format will be the same as the original review and is intended to be with the same committee members. Following the re-review, a letter will be sent by the Chair of the re-review committee within one week reporting the results to the Graduate Director.

In consideration of the committee's letter and with consultation with the Graduate Director, the Department Chair will decide either to allow the student to pass and progress in the program or dismiss the student from the program.

Select Supervisory Committee Chair

Timing: Fall of year two.

The student should identify a Supervisory Committee Chair from the Graduate Faculty in the Studio Art Department during the semester following completion of the first-year review. Supervisory Committee Chairs must be a member of the tenure system faculty. Lecturers can serve as co-chairs alongside a member of the tenure system faculty.

It is the student's responsibility to make a request to the faculty member they want to serve as their Supervisory Committee Chair. Requests should be made by the end of the second week of October. To make a request, students should email the requested faculty member and Graduate Director. In some cases, faculty will be unable to serve due to other responsibilities. In these cases, students will have the opportunity to request an alternative Supervisory Committee Chair.

The Supervisory Committee Chair will serve as the student's primary advisor as the student completes their course work, Second Year Review, M.F.A. Exhibition, and Oral Defense. The Supervisory Committee Chair will meet with the student regularly in a mentoring capacity and will facilitate all subsequent degree plans, committee formation, subsequent reports, defense forms, and meetings with the entire Supervisory Committee once it is formed.

Creating the Supervisory Committee

Timing: Fall of year two.

Supervisory Committees are initiated by the student and confirmed by the Graduate Director. Supervisory committees must be comprised of at least three members. While two of the three members must be from the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Studio Art, other members with relevant expertise may be selected outside the department or university. Supervisory Committee membership can be changed up to the student's enrollment in ASTU 5015 -

Creative Project. Supervisory Committee members must be able to attend in-person reviews, the oral defense, and committee meetings.

Second-Year Review

Timing: Spring of year two.

Location and duration: 60 minutes in assigned space.

In addition to maintaining a B average, students must also pass the second-year review to continue in their program of study. This review will occur at the end of the student's second year of study. In preparation for the second-year review, the student must complete the membership of the supervisory committee using the supervisory committee form.

While the Department of Studio Art sets the deadline for results, the review will be called by the student's Supervisory Committee Chair, who is also the chair of the review committee. It is the student's responsibility to work with their Committee Chair to select and reserve an appropriate location and secure the review site in keeping with the timing established by the Supervisory Committee Chair.

Review Requirements and Format

- New work made after the first-year review. Work made before the first-year review may only be included with permission from the Supervisory Committee Chair.
- An updated Annotated Bibliography with 10-15 entries related to the student's MFA exhibition direction. Five of these entries should be new since the first-year review. Each entry should be accompanied by three-five sentences summarizing the source.
- Artist Statement: 300-500 words addressing the work to be shown during the review.

Review Experience

During the review, students will have 15 minutes to provide a formal presentation of the work researched and produced during the year of study and to speak about future directions. The 15-minute presentation will be in the context of a display of the work itself. In extraordinary circumstances, students may be required to provide digital documentation of the work to each committee member, and the meeting may be technologically mediated. The Department Chair will determine if this is necessary.

After the presentation, the committee will ask questions about the year of study, artworks, and the direction for the final year in the program.

Assessment

Following the student presentation, the committee will meet privately for approximately 20 minutes to discuss the work and progress to vote for one of the following options:

- Pass - to allow the student to proceed with the student research work according to the schedule
- Dismissal - to recommend dismissal to the Department Chair based on unsatisfactory completion of the second-year review (no re-review)

Review Result Documentation

The student will receive feedback at the time of the review. Committee members will critically assess the viability of the work presented. The committee chair will forward the formal decision to the Graduate Director. Official student notification of results will come from the Graduate Director no later than two weeks following the final date for review result submissions.

In cases of a negative outcome and in consideration of the committee's letter and consultation with the Graduate Director, the chair of the department will decide either to allow the student to pass and progress in the program, or to dismiss the student from the program.

Students who complete 36 hours of coursework and pass the second-year review advance to M.F.A. candidacy.

M.F.A. Exhibition Proposal and Gallery Staff Meeting

Timing: Fall of year three.

During ASTU 5015, and in preparation for their M.F.A. exhibition, students must submit an exhibition proposal to the instructor of ASTU 5015 and their Supervisory Committee Chair. The instructor of ASTU 5015 forwards the proposal to the CVAD Galleries staff. This proposal is meant to help the students plan for their M.F.A. exhibition and allow the instructor, Supervisory Committee Chair, and CVAD Galleries staff to provide feedback on installation methods. During ASTU 5015 the student will hold a studio visit or other meetings with a member of the CVAD Galleries staff to receive feedback on installation methods.

The proposal should include:

- Artist Statement (one page or less)
- 10-20 images/videos of work. These can be the actual works to be exhibited or representative of works to be exhibited.
- Space/installation plan including type of work to be installed, method of installation, and approximate number of works. For example: Will the work be framed? Are there pedestal requirements? A need for digital projectors? Etc.
- Detailed timeline for the exhibition.

M.F.A. Exhibition

Timing: Spring of year three.

These exhibitions should be on campus in the Cora Stafford Gallery unless students request permission to use a quality alternative venue on campus or in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and get approval from the Supervisory Committee Chair and committee. Students must follow all gallery rules/responsibilities for installation and de-installation of M.F.A. exhibitions. Students planning on holding their exhibition in the Cora Stafford Gallery must participate in the M.F.A. Exhibition Planning Process. This process starts in the fall of the third year; if a student plans to hold their exhibition off campus, a secured a space and approval by

the beginning of their third year is required.

Oral Defense

Timing: Spring of year three.

The Oral Defense should take place during the M.F.A. Exhibition. The Extended Artist Statement is due to the committee no later than one week before the Oral Defense.

The oral defense is a formal public presentation of the work in the M.F.A. exhibition. The defense can take place in the gallery or in another appropriate venue on campus. It is the student's responsibility to secure the venue of their public oral defense. Once a time and location are determined, students should submit an announcement form to the Studio Art office, who will announce the student's defense to the broader college community.

In a 20-minute presentation, the student will demonstrate how the M.F.A. exhibition relates to their past work and how the research problem has been defined, researched, and addressed in the artworks presented. All committee members on file with the graduate school **MUST** be present, but in extraordinary circumstances, the meeting may be technologically mediated. The committee chair will determine this. All interested members of the public must be welcomed. After the presentation, the committee will ask the student questions about their work; guests in attendance may also ask questions.

At the conclusion of the Oral Defense, the Committee Chair should submit the M.F.A. Final Approval Form to the Graduate Director. Passage of the Oral Defense is required for successful completion of ASTU 5020: M.F.A. Exhibition and the M.F.A. degree.

Extended Artist Statement and Documentation of Outcomes

Timing: Final semester.

Students must upload an Extended artist statement, documentation of their M.F.A. exhibition, and a brief artist statement to [UNT Slideroom](#) before the end of their last semester.

Passage of the Extended Artist Statement and uploading documentation to unt.slideroom.com are required for successful completion of ASTU 5020: M.F.A. Exhibition and the M.F.A. degree. There is no cost to the student for this submission.

Extended Artist Statement

The M.F.A. Extended Artist Statement and Documentation of Outcomes is intended to answer the why/what/how of the work and must include a visual description and documentation of the work in the M.F.A. exhibition. It must consist of descriptions and contextualization of the art and should address the motivations, interests, and research driving the production of the artist. The development of a first draft is a requirement of ASTU 5015. Final edits are made in consultation with the student's Supervisory Committee Chair during ASTU 5020.

The Extended Artist Statement is due to the Supervisory Committee one week before the Oral

Defense. The statement should be 1,000 to 3,500 words long, not including image captions or annotation/footnotes. It should be formatted in 12-point type, single-spaced Times New Roman font (or equivalent). Sources and references to other works, artists, etc., should be cited correctly using any format the student prefers (APA, MLA, Turabian, Chicago, etc.). Visual documentation of the work, such as exhibition and/or installation images, should be included. Images should be centered, and each one should have a caption.

Exhibition Documentation

Students should submit up to 20 images documenting the work from their M.F.A. Exhibition to [UNT Slideroom](#). Images should document the work as well as the installation. Digital images should be .jpeg formatted, 72ppi, no larger than 5MB each. Files should be titled YourName_ArtworkTitle_01.jpg.

Committee Chairs should approve the images before they are uploaded.

Brief Artist Statement

The brief artist statement (100 words or fewer) should contextualize the student's work or practice as an artist. This statement will be submitted to the UNT digital library and made publicly available. Committee Chairs should approve statements before they are uploaded.

Employment by the College of Visual Arts and Design

Fellowships and assistantships are available on a competitive basis, by the terms of a student's offer letter, and as needed by the College of Visual Arts and Design.

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching Assistants (TAs) aid a lead faculty member, and those assigned to the Foundations Program teach lab sections. TAs are evaluated by their lead faculty.

Graduate Student Assistantships

Graduate Student Assistants (GSAs) work in a specific area, assisting students and faculty, including, but not limited to, the CVAD shops, fabrication labs, gallery, documentation room, etc. Particular duties of GSAs vary accordingly. GSAs are evaluated by their supervisor.

Teaching Fellowships

Graduate students who have experience as TAs and have at least 18 credit hours of graduate coursework may be awarded a teaching fellowship (TF), in which a graduate student is the instructor of record. Fellows are mentored and evaluated by a member of the Department of Studio Art faculty.

Application Procedures

Currently enrolled graduate students or newly accepted students to the graduate program with no deficiencies or leveling are eligible to apply for employment through the college.

Applications are available on the college's website. Reapplication each semester is required. Application deadlines are announced each semester. Late applications will not receive priority

consideration. Failure to apply on time forfeits the terms of a graduate admission offer letter. Completion of an application does not guarantee an appointment.

TA/TF/GSA Selection Criteria

Studio Art TA, TF, and GSA positions are assigned primarily based on instructional needs. Students must complete registration prior to being assigned a position. Other considerations include:

- Academic standing and passing formal reviews
- Evaluations of prior appointment(s)
- Faculty and staff recommendation(s)
- SPOT evaluation(s)
- Applicant's academic concentration
- Semester Credit Hour Requirement

Students must be enrolled in nine credit hours of coursework during the appointment to hold any teaching fellowship or assistantship during the fall or spring semester.

Students in their final semester who have an approved degree plan on file, have completed required course work, and are registered for ASTU 5020 may request a Course Load Exception (CLE) using the form available from the Toulouse Graduate School. Students whose CLE is approved are eligible for employment

Guidelines for Using CVAD Facilities / Grounds

All incoming studio art graduate students must attend the annual fall Health and Safety Training. Failure to attend will result in delayed studio assignments. All students must comply with the CVAD Safety guidelines. These safety guidelines can be found at [here](#) using your UNT credentials.

If repairs or maintenance work is needed, make a request through the appropriate art technician or the Department of Studio Art office via email outlining the specific work that needs to be accomplished. Students should not call or submit work requests directly to the Facilities Department.

University and CVAD equipment, classrooms, laboratories, and any other university property are for use by employees and current students. Friends and former students are not permitted to borrow or otherwise use university property. Students are not allowed to take home any university and CVAD property without permission.

Graduate students should be aware of equipment in their work area. Lost or stolen UNT property or equipment must be reported to the Chair of Studio Art and the University Police at 940-565-3000. All university keys must be returned to the Access Control office when students change assignments or graduate. If a student does not turn in a checked-out key, they will be charged for lost key duplication. If these charges are not paid, a hold will be put on your

transcripts. Do not accept keys from or give keys to other students.

Graduate Studio Spaces

The College of Visual Arts and Design provides access to studio space for its graduates. Graduate studio space is provided for the express purpose of producing art objects and scholarly work in pursuit of an M.F.A. degree for up to six consecutive long semesters from the start of a student's study at UNT and for students enrolled full-time (9 hours per semester). It is expected that the student will use the space for this purpose only. The studio is a professional working area, and every effort must be made to preserve the rights of others working in the area. Occupants must fill out a Studio Space Agreement annually and submit it to the Department of Studio Art office. Items left in studios by students who fail to vacate their studios, according to the contract, may be disposed of.