

National Association of Schools of Art and Design

DRAFT DOCUMENT

**FOR COMMENT ONLY
NOT FOR USE IN NASAD INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS**

STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE DEGREES

For current official curricular standards, see the
NASAD [Handbook 2014–15](#)

COMMENT PERIOD I

August 14 – November 1, 2015

Please forward all comments to:

Julia Harbo, Communications and Publications Coordinator
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF ART AND DESIGN
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21
Reston, Virginia 20190-5248

Email: jharbo@arts-accredit.org

Phone: 703-437-0700, Extension 125

Fax: 703-437-6312

Website: <http://nasad.arts-accredit.org>

1 **XIV. GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN THE VISUAL ARTS AND DESIGN**

2 **A. Fundamental Purposes and Principles**

3 **1. Purposes.** Each institution is responsible for developing and defining the specific
4 purposes of its overall graduate program in art and/or design and of each graduate
5 degree program it offers.

6 **2. Relationships: Purposes, Content, Requirements**

7 a. For each graduate degree program offered, there must be logical and functioning
8 relationships among purposes, structures, and content. For each program, this
9 includes decisions about:

10 (1) Specialization(s).

11 (2) The relationships between the specialization(s) and other art and design
12 disciplines, other fields of study, and art and design or other professions.

13 (3) Requirements in such areas as studio, research, scholarship, preparation for
14 teaching in terms of (a) the specialization, (b) support for the specialization,
15 and (c) breadth of competence.

16 b. For each graduate program, the curricular structure and the requirements for
17 admission, continuation, and graduation must be consistent with program
18 purposes and content.

19 **3. Major Field(s) and Supportive Studies.** Each graduate student is expected to gain
20 in-depth knowledge and competence in one or more fields of specialization. Graduate
21 programs include requirements and opportunities for studies that support the
22 specialization(s) chosen.

23 **4. Creative Work, Inquiry, Research, and Scholarship**

24 a. Professional work in art and design specializations is produced through creative
25 endeavor, inquiry, and investigation. Each type of work and each individual work
26 of art or design exhibits specific intent, content, methodology, and product.
27 Individual or group decisions about these four elements shape the ways that
28 creativity, inquiry, and investigation are used to produce work in various artistic,
29 scholarly, research, pedagogical, or other specializations. Competency to practice
30 in one or more fields of specialization includes the ability to conduct the types of

1 creative work, inquiry, and investigation normally associated with the
2 specialization(s) chosen.

3 b. These types include but are not limited to:

4 (1) Work in studio art or design that results in contributions to the body of
5 knowledge and practice in art and design.

6 (2) The development and application or incorporation of various types of
7 inquiry and investigation, including formal research or scholarship in
8 various fields that the artist or designer wishes to use in the creation or
9 production of a work of art or design.

10 (3) Research and scholarship as defined and practiced by professional
11 humanists, scientists, and social scientists. In art and design, this includes
12 but is not limited to such areas as art and design history, theory, and
13 criticism; the relationship of art and design to inquiry in the humanities, the
14 sciences, and the social sciences; the influences of art and design in and on
15 larger social, cultural, educational, economic, and technological contexts;
16 and the nature and application of art and design thinking and pedagogy.

17 (4) The development, compilation, and application or incorporation of inquiry
18 results, including those produced by formal research and scholarship, in
19 decisions about pedagogy and teaching, applications of art therapy, and
20 policy-making in various contexts.

21 **5. Types of Degree Programs.** Different specializations and different degree programs
22 reflect specific goals with respect to relationships among fields of practice and
23 approaches to creative work, inquiry and investigation, and to research and scholarship,
24 whether broadly or narrowly defined. The basic degree frameworks are described
25 below. The following classifications differ from the standard research-oriented and
26 practice-oriented labels usually applied to graduate degree programs. NASAD uses the
27 four degree fields categorized below for the purposes of clarity in representing the
28 nature of the various types of work in the area of art and design.

29 **a. Studio Art and Design.** These degrees combine creative work, inquiry, and
30 investigation in ways that focus on the advanced preparation of artists and
31 designers.

1 Degree titles reflect level of study and curricular content, and normally include
2 Master of Arts, Master of Science, and Master of Fine Arts.

3 **b. Scholarly Fields.** These degrees combine inquiry, investigation, and creative work
4 in ways that focus on the advanced preparation of scholars and researchers.

5 Degree titles reflect level of study and curricular content and normally include
6 Master of Arts, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy.

7 **c. Art Education, Art Therapy, Art-Related Professions.** These degrees
8 combine practice-oriented study in the field of specialization, inquiry,
9 investigation, research, and scholarship in various ways that focus on the advanced
10 preparation of practitioners, scholars, and/or researchers.

11 Degree titles reflect level of study and curricular content and normally include
12 Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Education, Doctor of Education, and
13 Doctor of Philosophy.

14 **d. Multiple Orientations.** These degrees focus on the simultaneous development of
15 (1) the ability to produce advanced research and scholarly findings, often using the
16 practices and protocols of the humanities, sciences, or social sciences, and (2) the
17 ability to utilize, combine, or integrate these findings with practice of the artistic,
18 design-oriented, pedagogical, therapeutic, or other art and design-related
19 professions.

20 Degree titles reflect level and content, and are consistent with the character and
21 requirements of the degree rubric chosen.

22 **6. Breadth of Competence**

23 **a. Cultural, Intellectual, and Technical Components.** Breadth of competence is
24 characterized by the ability to work in one or more fields of art and design with a
25 broad range of knowledge, skills, and perspectives. As examples, breadth of
26 competence includes the capacities to be engaged artistically, intellectually, and
27 operationally beyond the major specialization or field, connect art and design to
28 other fields and issues, and apply appropriate techniques and technologies to work
29 in and about art and design.

30 **b. Opportunities and Relationships.** Graduate programs in art and design should
31 provide opportunities for individual students to enlarge their breadth of competence.
32 This includes opportunities for deepening understanding of the relationships among

1 art and design specializations in areas such as studio, history, theory and analysis,
2 and pedagogy. The development of breadth of competence normally includes studies
3 beyond the undergraduate level.

4 **7. Preparation for the Professions**

5 **a. Career Development.** Many of those who earn graduate degrees in art and
6 design will be engaged for several decades in a variety of artistic and art- and
7 design-related professions. Students should be encouraged to acquire the
8 professional development skills necessary to advance themselves according to
9 their area of specialization and their own career objectives.

10 **b. Teaching.** Many of those who are in graduate degrees in art and design are or will
11 be engaged in art and design teaching of some type during the course of their
12 professional careers. When compatible with their purposes, institutions are
13 strongly encouraged to give attention to the preparation of graduate students as
14 teachers. Whenever possible, experiences should include teaching art and design to
15 both art/design majors and non-art/design majors. Graduate students, particularly
16 at the terminal master's (MFA) and doctoral level, should have opportunities for
17 direct teaching experiences appropriate to their major and minor areas under the
18 supervision of master teachers. As appropriate to primary and secondary areas of
19 concentration and to individual career objectives, preparation for teaching should
20 include an introduction to the pedagogy of subject matter considered fundamental
21 to curricula for undergraduate art and design majors, including foundations, art and
22 design history, theory, and technology.

23 **B. Resources and Art and Design Program Components**

24 **1. Resources.** Resources must be sufficient to support the purposes, goals, objectives, and
25 content of graduate programs and must meet NASAD operational requirements in this
26 regard (see Standards II.). The relationships between the establishment of objectives
27 and the development of program structure and resources are crucial to success. The
28 process of establishing and maintaining these relationships should be characterized by
29 the same rigorous pursuit of creative development and analytical excellence that are
30 functions of graduate study itself.

31 **2. Curricular Components.** Curricular components of graduate programs must meet
32 NASAD requirements in Standards III. (including, but not limited to: Credit and Time

1 Requirements; Time on Task, Curricular Proportions, and Competencies; Forms of
2 Instruction, Requirements, and Electives; Individual Program Continuity; Residence).

- 3 **3. Standards.** The standards applicable to each graduate program are comprised of
4 those referenced in Standards XIV.B.1. and 2. above, as well as those outlined for
5 specific programs that follow.
- 6 **4. Community.** An institution's overall graduate program in art and design requires a
7 traditional and/or virtual community of students and faculty to permit the formal and
8 informal sharing of experience, ideas, and knowledge.
- 9 **5. Experiences.** Graduate education requires the provision of certain kinds of experiences
10 that go beyond those typically provided in undergraduate programs. These include
11 opportunities for active participation in small seminars and tutorials, extensive informal
12 contact with faculty, and consultation during preparation of a final project over an
13 extended period of time.

14 **C. General Degree Requirements and Procedures**

15 **1. Credits**

- 16 a. At least one-half of the credits required for graduate degrees must be in courses
17 intended for graduate students only.
- 18 b. A single course that carries both an undergraduate and a graduate designation is
19 not considered a course intended for graduate students only.
- 20 c. A course may enroll an undergraduate student and maintain its status as being
21 intended for graduate students only if, in the context of that course, the
22 undergraduate student is expected to meet the same standards, do the same work,
23 and otherwise perform as a graduate student.
- 24 d. To obtain graduate credit, students enrolled in a single course that carries a
25 separate undergraduate and graduate designation or number must complete
26 specific published requirements that are at a graduate level. Distinctions between
27 undergraduate and graduate expectations must be delineated for such courses.
- 28 e. Only courses taken after undergraduate courses that are prerequisite to a given
29 graduate program may receive graduate degree credit in that program.

- 30 **2. Residence.** Residence policies are determined by the institution. Normally, a period
31 of continuous concentrated study within the graduate community is required.

1 Programs based on distance learning, or with a significant distance-learning
2 component, must fulfill the function of community by providing experiences that
3 produce interaction among graduate students and faculty.

4 **3. Language Proficiencies and/or Other Required Skills.** Specific requirements are
5 determined by the institution based on the objectives of the program.

6 **4. Coursework.** Institutions determine coursework requirements for each graduate
7 program. Requirements for the initial master's degree are usually stated in terms of
8 specific credits. At Master of Fine Arts or doctoral levels, institutions may not wish to
9 specify course or credit requirements, other than the satisfactory completion of
10 examinations, exhibitions, or a dissertation. Whatever the structure of these
11 requirements, there should be a logical relationship between studies and experiences
12 that develop knowledge and skills and those that evaluate progress.

13 **5. Independent Study.** Programs that include or are based upon independent study
14 must meet applicable requirements in Standards III.

15 **6. Programs Involving Distance Learning, Disciplines in Combination, or with a**
16 **Focus on Electronic Media.** Programs in these categories must meet applicable
17 requirements in Standards III.

18 **7. Evaluations.** While it is the prerogative of each institution to determine and publish
19 its own evaluation examinations and procedures, it is essential that student work be
20 evaluated periodically throughout the program.

21 **8. Final Project.** For degree programs in which a final project is required, the final
22 project is undertaken in the area(s) of specialization and is expected to be comparable
23 to the work of professionals in the field.

24 **XV. ADMISSION TO GRADUATE STUDY**

25 **A. Admission Policies.** Institutions are responsible for establishing specific admission
26 requirements for graduate study in art and design. These policies must be consistent with
27 the purposes and goals of the institution's specific graduate programs. Admission
28 standards must be sufficiently high to predict success in graduate study. Within the
29 parameters set by the institution, admission policies should be flexible to permit
30 acceptance of students specifically interested in pursuing one or more of the several
31 functions of graduate study in depth. The diversity of previous education, background,
32 and interests of applicants should be considered in assessments of potential.

1 **B. Completion of Previous Degree Programs.** Completion of an appropriate
2 undergraduate program or the equivalent is required for graduate study in art and design.
3 Through portfolio review, transcript documentation, art/design major degree completion,
4 and/or other means determined by the institution, all students admitted initially to
5 graduate study in art/design shall demonstrate prior achievement in terms of their
6 readiness to undertake graduate studies in their major field. (See Standards for
7 Accreditation VII. or VIII.) Admission to doctoral programs in art history, art education,
8 design, or other research fields may require completion of a master's degree, although a
9 master's degree program or the formal awarding of the master's degree need not be a
10 prerequisite.

11 **C. Evaluation of Creative, Scholarly, or Professional Work.** Admission to graduate study
12 shall be based on critical examination of the academic record; the content of courses
13 taken; and the portfolio of studio work, papers, and/or professional experience as
14 appropriate.

15 **D. Standard Published Examinations.** The use of standard published examinations in the
16 admission process is a prerogative of the institution. Any utilization should reflect the
17 objectives of the graduate program.

18 **E. Basic Language Competencies.** All students admitted to graduate degree study in art
19 and design shall demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skill in English to pursue the
20 required studies.

21 **XVI. SPECIFIC INITIAL GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS**

22 **A. Studio Art and Design**

23 1. The Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in fields of studio art or design requires
24 at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of concentrated, advanced post-
25 baccalaureate study.

26 2. At least 50% of the work should be in the chosen studio or design field, supported by
27 related advanced art/design history courses and studies in other arts fields as
28 appropriate to the particular studio discipline and to the individual's program of
29 study.

30 3. Published materials about studio degree programs indicate:

31 a. Fields, specializations, issues, or problems to be addressed and the content,
32 techniques and perspectives students are expected to use to address them.

- 1 b. Expectations for the development of depth and breadth in required subjects or
2 areas of study.
- 3 c. Levels of knowledge and skill expected upon graduation, including the levels of
4 artistic, intellectual, and disciplinary engagement with subject matter and
5 projects.
- 6 4. In addition to applicable requirements for all graduate programs, all studio art and
7 design initial master's degrees:
 - 8 a. Develop advanced capacities to work independently and make effective artistic
9 and intellectual judgments, and professional decisions in the area of
10 specialization.
 - 11 b. Require graduates to demonstrate professional competence in the area of
12 specialization before peers and faculty.
 - 13 c. Require a final project or some equivalent reviewed by more than one faculty
14 member.

15 **B. Art History and Criticism**

- 16 1. The Master of Arts degree in Art History, assuming the completion of a Bachelor of
17 Arts in Art History or equivalent or the make-up of any deficiencies, requires at least
18 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of advanced study in the discipline.
- 19 2. Work for the degree should develop a broad general knowledge of the history of art,
20 as well as specialization in a more limited area.
- 21 3. Students should be aware of historiography and methods of scholarship and be
22 capable of undertaking independent research.
- 23 4. Students should have a reading knowledge of at least one, preferably two,
24 appropriate foreign languages.
- 25 5. Normally, the awarding of the degree requires the satisfactory completion of a thesis
26 and/or a comprehensive examination.

27 **C. Design Research and Scholarship**

- 28 1. The research- and/or scholarship-oriented Master of Arts or Master of Science degree
29 in Design or Design Studies, assuming the completion of appropriate undergraduate
30 work, requires at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of advanced study in the
31 discipline and related areas.

- 1 2. Work for the degree develops a broad general knowledge of design, including but not
2 limited to design history, theory, criticism; design planning and strategy; or design
3 methods. Students must be able to relate to various design audiences and contexts;
4 describe various critical perspectives on design; and employ appropriate methods for
5 the study of design as a discipline and as a practice.
- 6 3. Students have functional knowledge of research, analysis, methods, and interpretive
7 progress; are capable of undertaking independent research; and are competent in the
8 use of research tools and technologies appropriate to their field of study.
- 9 4. Normally, the awarding of the degree requires the satisfactory completion of a thesis
10 and/or a comprehensive examination.

11 **D. Museum Studies.** A Master of Arts degree in Museum Studies (Museology) should
12 require much of the same breadth and depth of proficiencies as described for the general
13 Master of Arts in Art History, oriented to connoisseurship, and including at least an
14 introductory seminar course in museum studies and an appropriate internship.

15 **E. Art Education**

- 16 1. An initial master's degree program in art education requires at least 30 semester
17 hours or 45 quarter hours. The program should be constructed to add breadth and
18 depth beyond the undergraduate program in studio, in art and design history and
19 analysis, and in art education.
- 20 2. A minimum of nine semester hours of graduate art education courses taught by art
21 education faculty is required. Coursework for the remainder of the program is chosen
22 from among the advanced courses in studio, art/design history, analysis, criticism,
23 philosophy of art, art education, or in related areas and disciplines. At least two-thirds
24 of the total curriculum is in art education and other studies in the visual arts. It is
25 strongly recommended that institutions require at least one advanced course in
26 art/design history, one in studio, and one in art/design analysis.
- 27 3. All programs should include one or more advanced seminars concerned with
28 developments in philosophy of education and with contemporary problems in art
29 education. This may include a review of curriculum developments, teaching
30 methodology, innovations, and multidisciplinary concepts. Whether or not there is an
31 advanced survey in contemporary general education, there should be specialized
32 study of contemporary needs and developments in art and art education.

- 1 4. Some institutions make distinctions between practice-oriented and research-oriented
2 programs.
- 3 a. A practice-oriented program emphasizes the extension of specialized studio
4 work for art teachers. Institutions making such a designation should require at
5 least fifteen semester hours in studio.
- 6 b. A research-oriented program emphasizes theoretical studies and research
7 projects in art education. If an institution uses such a designation, at least fifteen
8 semester hours should be required in art education and associated research areas.
- 9 5. Students are expected to complete a final project indicating achievement within a
10 specialized area of inquiry. This may take the form of an exhibit, a thesis, a portfolio,
11 or another demonstration of competence related to the graduate program.
- 12 6. Degrees with such titles as Master of Arts in Teaching or Master of Science in
13 Teaching will be listed as master's degrees by NASAD only when their objectives
14 and structures are consistent with one of the initial master's degree formats outlined
15 in Standards XVI.A. through D., and E.1.-5. When the purpose of such degrees is the
16 completion of undergraduate requirements for teacher certification, the program will
17 be reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation but not listed by the Association.

18 **F. Art Therapy**

- 19 **1. Credit Requirement.** The master's degree in art therapy requires a minimum of 48
20 semester hours or 72 quarter hours. (60 graduate semester hours or 90 quarter hours
21 may be required for licensure or clinical education standards in some states.)
- 22 **2. Admission.** Each student admitted to an art therapy master's program or admitted to
23 candidacy for a master's degree in art therapy must:
 - 24 a. Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in the United States, be
25 accepted into a bachelor's/master's dual degree program in art therapy, or have the
26 equivalent academic preparation from an institution outside the United States.
 - 27 b. Present a portfolio of studio work demonstrating competence in the use of art
28 materials.
 - 29 c. Complete prerequisite courses including a minimum of 18 semester-hour (27
30 quarter-hour) credits of study in studio art and a minimum of 12 semester-hour (18
31 quarter-hour) credits of study in psychology. The psychology component must
32 include developmental psychology and abnormal psychology. If any of these credits

1 have not been earned prior to admission, they must be completed no later than 12
2 months after beginning the program. Credits for prerequisite courses may not count
3 toward the 48 semester hour or 72 quarter hour minimum for the degree.

4 **3. Curriculum**

- 5 a. At least 24 semester-hour credits or 36 quarter-hour credits of the curricular
6 requirements shall be in art therapy coursework only. Content shall include:
7 history and theory of art therapy, techniques of practice in art therapy,
8 application of art therapy with people in different treatment settings, group work,
9 art therapy assessment, ethical and legal issues of art therapy practice, standards
10 of practice in art therapy, and cultural and social diversity. A thesis or
11 culminating project in art therapy is required. Career and Lifestyle Development
12 and Substance Abuse in art therapy may be required in some areas to fulfill state
13 specifications for counseling licensure.
- 14 b. The art therapy program must provide one or more opportunities for specialization
15 in competency areas such as variations in patient age, practice setting, and type of
16 intervention (individual, group, or family).
- 17 c. In addition to art therapy studies, students must complete studies and develop
18 knowledge in the following related content areas: psychopathology, human growth
19 and development, counseling and psychological theories, cultural and social
20 diversity, assessment, research, and studio art.

21 **4. Practical Training.** In addition to art therapy and related coursework, each student 22 must successfully complete supervised practical training.

23 **a. Practicum and Internship:** Each student must successfully complete supervised 24 practice as follows:

- 25 (1) A minimum of 100 hours of supervised art therapy practicum involving
26 observation and practice in preparation for internship.
- 27 (2) A minimum of 600 hours of supervised art therapy internship over at least two
28 academic terms. A minimum of 350 total client contact hours must be
29 accumulated in practicum and/or internship. It is recommended that programs
30 preparing students for mental health counseling licensure require a minimum
31 of 900 hours of supervised art therapy internship during which at least 400
32 total client contact hours must be accumulated in practicum and/or internship.

1 (3) The balance of the supervised hours (indirect hours) must include discussion
2 of student's work with the supervisor(s) and related activities including, but
3 not limited to: case review, record keeping, preparation, treatment team
4 meetings, in-service conferences, and related milieu activities, evaluation of
5 outcome, and successful termination of therapy. Students will demonstrate the
6 ability to effectively communicate clinical material and integrate theory and
7 practice through case presentation.

8 (4) Any credit awarded for art therapy practicum or internship may not be
9 included as part of required degree coursework.

10 **b. Supervision:** Students must have both individual and group supervision as
11 follows:

12 (1) **Individual Supervision.** For every 10 hours of client contact, there must be 1
13 hour of supervision by a registered art therapist (ATR) or licensed professional
14 in a related field (e.g., creative arts therapy, social work, psychology, marriage
15 and family therapy, psychiatry, or counseling). This may be one-to-one or
16 triadic and is usually performed by the onsite supervisor.

17 (2) **Group Supervision.** There must be 1.5 hours of group supervision by a
18 registered art therapist for every 10 hours of client contact. The ratio of 8
19 students to 1 ATR supervisor may not be exceeded. This is usually performed
20 by a program faculty member.

21 **5. Faculty** (*in addition to standards for all programs stated in Standards for*
22 *Accreditation II.E.*)

23 a. The program must have a director with responsibility and time assignments
24 sufficient to lead the program. The director's position must be full time. The
25 director shall hold one of the following professional credentials:

26 (1) Registered and Board Certified Art Therapist (ATR-BC).

27 (2) Registered Art Therapist (ATR) with licensure in a mental health related field
28 (e.g., art therapy, counseling, social work, psychology).

29 (3) Registered Art Therapist (ATR) with a doctorate in art therapy or related field
30 (e.g., counseling, psychology, social work).

31 b. All faculty teaching required art therapy content areas indicated in item 4. above
32 must be Registered Art Therapists (ATR).

1 c. At least one-half of the art therapy faculty must have practiced art therapy within
2 the most recent 5-year period.

3 **6. Facilities and Equipment** (*in addition to standards for all programs stated in*
4 *Standards for Accreditation II.F.*)

5 a. The program must have regular access to the following facilities:

6 (1) Classrooms for academic courses;

7 (2) Studio space for working with art materials; and

8 (3) Offices and conference rooms for faculty and student advisement.

9 b. The program must have regular access to the following equipment:

10 (1) Audio-visual equipment for classroom instruction;

11 (2) Studio art equipment and special supplies;

12 (3) Office equipment and supplies; and

13 (4) Computers with internet access.

14 c. The program must have access to library and learning resources. Students and faculty
15 must have access to books, journals, and online resources in art therapy, and in
16 mental health and fine arts.

17 **G. Multiple Orientations**

18 1. The Master of Arts or Master of Science degree combining studio practice and
19 scholarship or research, assuming the completion of appropriate undergraduate work,
20 requires at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of advanced study in art/design
21 and related areas.

22 2. Work for the degree produces competencies to develop research studies and utilize
23 findings in design or studio practice. Students must demonstrate knowledge and skills
24 in research methodology, the ability to conceptualize problems generically, and the
25 ability to connect research to problem solving in the creation of art/design.

26 3. Requirements for work in other disciplines must be correlated to the goals and
27 objectives of common or individual degree programs.

28 4. Normally, the awarding of the degree requires the satisfactory completion of a thesis
29 and/or a comprehensive examination.

1 XVII. SPECIFIC TERMINAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

2 A. The Master of Fine Arts and Equivalent

3 **1. Purpose.** The Master of Fine Arts degree title is appropriate only for advanced
4 graduate-level programs that focus on studio practice in some aspect of art or design.
5 Studio or practice-based master's degrees with other titles must meet the standards
6 below if they are to be considered terminal master's degrees and thus equivalent to
7 the MFA. See Standards XVII.A.6. The art and design professions and the academy
8 recognize the MFA and equivalent programs as the terminal degrees for practitioners
9 and educators in the studio arts or design. Therefore, MFA and equivalent programs
10 must exhibit the professional intensity and high standards expected of all terminal
11 degree programs. For the remainder of this section, the terms Master of Fine Arts or
12 MFA include both MFA and equivalent programs with other titles.

13 **2. Credit Requirements.** A Master of Fine Arts program requires the equivalent of at
14 least two years of full-time graduate study, with a minimum of 60 semester hours or
15 90 quarter hours.

16 **3. General Requirements: Art.** The elements outlined below should be combined and
17 synthesized in an individual exhibiting exceptional skill in studio art or design and a
18 well-developed personal aesthetic.

- 19 a. Advanced professional competence in some aspect of studio art or design as
20 exemplified by a considerable depth of knowledge and achievement
21 demonstrated by a significant body of work.
- 22 b. A breadth of understanding in art and/or design and/or appropriate related
23 disciplines, and the ability to think independently, to integrate, and to synthesize
24 information associated with practice in an area of specialization.
- 25 c. Awareness of current issues and developments that are influencing the principal
26 field(s) of study, and the basic ability and clear potential to contribute to the
27 expansion and evolution of these field(s).
- 28 d. Writing and speaking skills to communicate clearly and effectively to the art
29 and/or design communities, the public, and in formal or informal teaching
30 situations.

- 1 e. Advanced capabilities with technologies utilized in the creation, dissemination,
2 documentation, and preservation of work in the field(s) or area(s) of
3 specialization.
- 4 f. A basic knowledge of bibliographic or information resources associated with
5 work and analysis in the major field(s) of study.
- 6 **4. General Requirements: Design.** The competencies outlined below are essential in
7 enabling degree holders to combine and synthesize critical elements associated with
8 advanced, highly skilled, analytically-based studio work in design.
 - 9 a. Advanced professional competence in a specific design specialization or some
10 aspect of studio-based design practice.
 - 11 b. Professional depth of knowledge and achievement demonstrated by a significant
12 body of studio-based design work.
 - 13 c. Ability to integrate and synthesize information associated with an area of
14 specialization, including the ability to reach and articulate conclusions as an
15 individual designer.
 - 16 d. In-depth understanding of the consequences of design in various contexts,
17 including those that involve relationships among the elements of complex
18 interacting systems; and the ability to frame and conduct investigations of such
19 systems in relationship to design practice.
 - 20 e. Ability to explore and develop design methods and tools that are appropriate to
21 supporting collaborative work, engaging human-subject research, and addressing
22 complex problems.
 - 23 f. Ability to apply existing research methods from professional design practice and
24 make judgments about the appropriateness of specific research methods and
25 strategies for the specific nature of a design task.
 - 26 g. Ability to conceive and produce studio work that is speculative and
27 propositional; for example, what design can achieve economically, socially,
28 culturally, and technologically.
 - 29 h. Ability to integrate into design practice the knowledge, perspectives, and values
30 gained through the study of design precedents, fields related to design, and
31 modes of inquiry in design and other fields.

- 1 i. Ability to use analytical tools, design processes, technologies, and
- 2 bibliographical resources to develop concepts, reveal patterns of information,
- 3 and create rationales for specific design solutions or projects.
- 4 j. Ability to communicate clearly in speech and writing about design practice and
- 5 research to the public and various professional communities.
- 6 k. Understanding of the nature of leadership in design practice and functional
- 7 development of the organizational and critical skills necessary to assume such
- 8 leadership.

9 **5. Preparation for Teaching Design.** Basic understanding of, and experience in,
10 curriculum and pedagogy in preparation for college teaching is strongly
11 recommended for all candidates for the MFA in Design. Associated mentoring by
12 experienced design teachers is also strongly recommended.

13 When preparation for teaching is published as a significant goal of a particular
14 program, curriculum and pedagogy knowledge and skills are essential, and academic
15 studies in design or related fields should occupy at least 20% of the total credits for
16 the degree.

17 Historical knowledge of the evolution of design education from craft to profession,
18 including current developments that alter professional expectations, is essential.

19 Reflection on the teaching/learning paradigm, clarity in teaching goals relative to the
20 curriculum, and appropriate original research to assess learning and adjust teaching
21 strategies are desirable.

22 **6. Published Components: Art.** As a matter of public record and as the basis for
23 evaluation, the objectives of each specific MFA program must be defined and
24 published.

25 **7. Program Components: Design.** Specific programs and procedures applicable to
26 awarding the MFA degree are determined by the institution. Standards and guidelines
27 providing a framework for these specific decisions are outlined in Standards XIV.C.
28 The necessary components of Master of Fine Arts degrees are:

- 29 a. Advanced studio practice.
- 30 b. Academic studies concerned with design and design-associated research,
- 31 including, as appropriate, studies in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

- 1 c. Work in both studio and academic studies that fosters abilities to integrate
2 knowledge and skills associated with art/design practice and to make
3 connections and integrations with other fields appropriate to the individual's
4 program of study.

5 **8. Curriculum Structure and Degree Titles**

6 **a. Studio Studies.** A minimum of 65% of the total credits for the degree shall be in
7 studio. As part of this requirement, institutions are responsible for maintaining
8 title/content consistency. In order to designate a major in a specific studio area
9 (e.g., MFA in Painting, MFA in Graphic Design, etc.), at least 50% of the total
10 credits for the degree shall be in the major area. Institutions with a more general
11 program should use more general titles such as MFA in Studio Art, MFA in
12 Design. The studio component consists of supervised curricular experiences, as
13 well as independent study. All of these produce knowledge and skills that enable
14 the student to produce a final project of high professional quality.

15 **b. Academic Studies.** A minimum of 15% of the total credits for the degree should
16 be in academic studies concerned with visual media. Course assignments should
17 be made with careful consideration of (1) the scope and objectives of the
18 student's program, and (2) the content of studies completed at the undergraduate
19 level. Academic study should continue throughout the graduate program.

20 **c. Elective Studies.** Elective studies are important in Master of Fine Arts programs,
21 since they provide opportunities for students to follow specific areas of interest
22 related to their areas of specialization or their prospective careers. It is strongly
23 recommended that at least 10% of the total program be reserved for electives.

24 **9. Published Objectives.** As a matter of public record and as the basis for evaluation,
25 the objectives of each specific MFA program must be defined and published.

26 **10. Admission, Retention, Advisement.** Admission, retention and advisement
27 mechanisms should be inter-related and must support the objective of each specific
28 MFA program. Admission is based on projections of individual capability and
29 capacity for professional work. Retention and advisement mechanisms ensure the
30 continuing assessment of the admission decision and provide the means by which
31 progress toward professional preparation can be most effectively guided.

32 **11. Faculty.** Master of Fine Arts programs in a specific area shall be led by faculty who
33 are specialists in that area. Faculty leading MFA programs should be exemplars of

1 the studio and teaching professions they represent. Faculty resources should be
2 sufficient to expose students to a variety of points of view.

3 **12. Student Assessments.** Assessments of progress should be provided on a regular and
4 periodic basis: once each semester or once every two quarters is recommended as a
5 minimum. Constant and current career guidance and counseling should be provided to
6 aid and support students' entry into the profession.

7 **13. Presentation of Work**

8 a. Master of Fine Arts candidates shall have frequent opportunities to present their
9 work, particularly in the context of their educational programs. They should be
10 encouraged to develop and present their work in circumstances that develop
11 connections with the professional world related to their course of study.

12 b. The MFA candidate is required to present a final body of work showing
13 professional competence in studio art or design. While such presentation may be
14 supported by a written document, such a document in itself may not constitute
15 the final body of work.

16 **B. Doctoral Degrees**

17 **1. Purpose.** Doctoral degrees are earned only in graduate programs that emphasize
18 research or scholarship in some aspect of art and/or design.

19 **2. Time Requirements.** Doctoral programs require the equivalent of at least three years
20 of full-time graduate work.

21 **3. Procedures.** Programs leading to the doctorate utilize similar procedures, the
22 specifics of which are determined by each institution. These are outlined in Standards
23 XIV.C.

24 **4. Qualifying Prerequisites: All Programs.** Whatever their area(s) of specialization,
25 candidates for the doctorate in a field of the visual arts/design normally demonstrate
26 the following as a prerequisite to qualifying for the degree:

27 a. Intellectual awareness and curiosity sufficient to predict continued growth and
28 contribution to the discipline.

29 b. Significant professional-level accomplishment in one or more field(s) of study.

30 c. A knowledge of analytical techniques sufficient to perform advanced research or
31 analysis or produce scholarly work in one or more fields or specializations.

- 1 d. A knowledge of the historical record of achievement associated with the major
2 field(s) of study.
- 3 e. A knowledge of general bibliographical and information resources in art and/or
4 design.
- 5 f. Considerable depth of knowledge in some aspect of art and/or design, such as an
6 historical period, an aspect of theory, properties and behaviors of materials or
7 systems, psychological inquiry, and educational methodology.
- 8 g. Sufficient writing, speaking, and visual skills to communicate clearly and
9 effectively to members of the scholarly and research communities and the wider
10 community.
- 11 h. Research skills appropriate to the area of study as determined by the institution. At
12 their discretion, institutions may add other prerequisites in areas such as, but not
13 limited to, teaching, management, and policy.

14 **5. Qualifying Prerequisites: Design Programs.** In addition to qualifying prerequisites
15 for all programs as listed above, candidates for the Ph.D. in Design normally
16 demonstrate the following as a prerequisite to qualifying for the degree:

- 17 a. Ability to identify and pursue design research problems, topics, and
18 opportunities consistent with their areas of content expertise, including but not
19 limited to the ability to extend the knowledge base of the field by framing and
20 exploring questions that address matters of professional, social, and user interest
21 and value.
- 22 b. Ability to describe and work within the advanced conceptual and critical
23 frameworks associated with the student's design research work and final project.
- 24 c. Ability to construct and articulate conceptual frameworks in reference to theories
25 and the work of scholars and practitioners in design and other fields.
- 26 d. Ability to pose hypotheses and to integrate and synthesize information, data,
27 analysis, and opinion in developing and producing design research.
- 28 e. Understanding of various quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods,
29 and the ability to use this understanding in constructing and executing specific
30 research plans.

- 1 f. Understanding of research ethics and procedures related to the use of human
2 subjects.
- 3 g. Skills in using scholarly techniques to produce professional-level design
4 scholarship. Normally, essential scholarly techniques include, but are not limited
5 to compiling bibliographies; developing arguments about the place, value, and
6 influence of work; writing literature reviews; choosing, developing, and using
7 methodologies that are cogent and understandable; providing evidence of
8 research findings; and putting research into contexts through documentation and
9 publication.
- 10 h. Abilities to communicate research findings directed to the professional design
11 and/or broader scholarly communities.
- 12 **6. Final Project.** The final project requirements for the doctorate include a dissertation
13 demonstrating scholarly competence.
- 14 **7. Content Areas**
- 15 **a. Art or Design History, Criticism, Theory, and Aesthetics.** The program shall
16 prepare professionals for the scholarly study of art and/or design at the highest
17 level. Coursework and research projects may involve art or design from many
18 cultures and contexts; new critical perspectives and modes of inquiry; and research
19 relationships to other fields.
- 20 **b. Art Education.** The program shall prepare professionals to develop vital
21 research studies and utilize research findings in the day-to-day instructional
22 process at the K–12 level and/or produce high levels of scholarship in art
23 education and related areas. Coursework and research projects may involve
24 research into the foundation of visual intelligence; the mechanisms of
25 influencing values in the visual arts/design; the psychology of teaching and
26 learning in the visual arts/design; curriculum and methods; policy; the history of
27 art/design education; and so forth.
- 28 **c. Design.** The program shall prepare professionals for the scholarly study of
29 design at the highest levels. Coursework and research projects may involve
30 issues related to a variety of audiences/users and contexts; new research methods
31 and applications; and the relationship of design to other fields.

1 **d. Unique Programs.** A program may be based on a particular combination of
2 disciplines, scientific or technological research based in some aspect of art or
3 design, oriented toward applications of research in specific fields, professions, or
4 industries, and so forth.

5 **C. Degrees Combining Research and Practice Orientations**

6 **1. Basic Requirements for Terminal Master’s Degrees.** Terminal master’s degrees—
7 Master of Fine Arts or equivalent—with multiple core objectives in studio and research
8 or scholarship require the equivalent of at least two years of full-time graduate study
9 with a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours. Specific programs and
10 procedures applicable to awarding these degrees are determined by the institution.

11 **2. Basic Requirements for Doctoral Programs.** Doctoral programs with multiple core
12 objectives in studio and research or scholarship require the equivalent of at least
13 three years of full-time graduate work. Procedures and requirements are determined
14 by the institution.

15 **3. Design Degrees**

16 a. Degrees combining studio and scholarship shall prepare professionals who
17 develop research studies and utilize findings in professional design practice.

18 b. Coursework and research projects for this degree category should include studio
19 work, such as designing and testing prototypes and the execution of demonstration
20 projects that illustrate design research concepts or methodologies.

21 c. Final requirements for master’s students may be a written document or a visual
22 body of work demonstrating research approaches or results.

23 d. Final requirements for the doctorate should include a dissertation that has a
24 significant project component that is of relevance to either the study or practice
25 of design.

26 e. Research/practice programs should be led by faculty with expertise in design
27 research. In acknowledgement of the interdisciplinary nature of design research, it
28 is appropriate for the student’s coursework and final project to involve faculty
29 support from relevant disciplines outside the specific area of design specialization.