

Graduate Handbook

Master of Fine Arts Design

School of Design & Creative Technologies

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I. Academic Program

The M.F.A. program at The University of Texas at Austin is distinctive by design. Each cohort of four to eight students works closely with Design Department faculty in small classes that offer individualized instruction. Graduate students are required to take at least 18 credit hours of their coursework outside of the design program, tailoring their curriculum to take advantage of the extensive resources of a top-tier, comprehensive research university while pursuing a research focus in graphics, objects, interactions, systems, and/or services.

The M.F.A. program cultivates expert designers who are also thoughtful, broadly educated critics and communicators prepared to enter careers in many fields. Alumni of the program enjoy successful careers not only as designers, but also as inventors, writers, entrepreneurs, strategists, CEOs, and university faculty.

A. Degree Requirements

Candidates for the degree must complete at least 60 semester hours of coursework, chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor, as follows:

- At least 30 hours of graduate coursework—ordinarily comprising the ten required courses listed below—must be in Design (“the major”)
- Studio Studies. A minimum of 65% of the total credits for the degree shall be in studio courses. MFA in Design: Minimum 39 studio semester hours
- 10% of the total program should be reserved for electives.
- A minimum of 15% of the total credits for the degree should be in academic studies concerned with visual media.
- At least 6 credits of graduate coursework must be from a single program other than Design (“the minor”)
- When preparation for teaching is published as a significant goal of a particular program, curriculum and pedagogy knowledge and skills are essential, and academic studies in design or related fields should occupy at least 20% of the total credits for the degree.
- No more than 9 upper-division undergraduate credit-hours may be applied toward the degree
- No more than 6 credit-hours may be completed under the credit/no credit grading option

The remaining elective credit-hours for the degree must be approved by the graduate advisor, and may include additional courses, internships, and independent studies in Design or in any other field at the university (including coursework applied to completion of an interdisciplinary Graduate Portfolio Program: see below or consult <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/programs/portfolio-programs>).

A. Overview of Required Courses

Required Courses	Credit-Hours
<i>Fall 1</i>	
DES385C, Thesis Studio I	3
DES380, Core Course in Design	3
DES397C, Design Pedagogy & Instruction	3
DES184, Design Documentation & Storytelling	1
DES184D, Design Perspectives	1
DES184E, The Art of Critique	1
<i>Spring 1</i>	
DES385D, Thesis Studio II	3
DES385K, Topics in Visual Design Studio	3
DES184F, Material Explorations	1
DES185L, Topics in Interaction Design Studio	1
DES185M, Topics in Industrial Design Studio	1
DES384C, Design Criticism	3
DES389T, Supervised Teaching in Design	3
<i>Summer 1</i>	
DES385F, Thesis Studio III	3
DES388, Introduction to Design Thinking	3
DES184K, Introduction to Campus Resources	1
DES395, Fieldwork in Design	3
Fall II	
DES385G, Thesis Studio IV (Review 2)	3
DES385N, Topics in Service Design	3
/or/	
DES352, Service & Systems Design	3
DES394, Topics in Advanced Design	3
DES384J, Design in Context	3
Spring II	
DES398R, Master's Report	3
DES398S	3

B. Sample Course of Study

Year One	Fall 1	Spring 1
	<p>Required Design Courses:</p> <p><i>Thesis:</i> DES385C Thesis Studio I</p> <p><i>Design Studios:</i> DES380 Core Course in Design DES397C Design Pedagogy & Instruction</p>	<p>Required Design Courses:</p> <p><i>Thesis:</i> DES385D Thesis Studio II (Review I)</p> <p><i>Design Studios:</i> DES385K Topics in Visual Design Studio DES184F Material Explorations</p>

	<p><i>Design Seminars:</i> DES184 Design Documentation & Storytelling DES184D Design Perspectives DES184E The Art of Critique</p> <p><i>Elective(s):</i> Elective (3.0)</p> <p>Total Credit Hours: 15</p>	<p>DES185L Topics in Interaction Design Studio DES 185M Topics in Industrial Design Studio</p> <p><i>Design Seminars:</i> DES384C Design Criticism</p> <p><i>Elective(s):</i> DES389T Supervised Teaching in Design Elective (3.0)</p> <p>Total Credit Hours: 15-18</p>
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Year One	<p>Summer 1:</p> <p>Required Design Courses:</p> <p><i>Thesis:</i> DES385F Thesis Studio III</p> <p><i>Design Studio:</i> DES388 Introduction to Design Thinking</p> <p><i>Design Seminar:</i> DES184K Introduction to Campus Resources</p> <p>(Students are encouraged to pursue graduate coursework in other fields, or graduate internships or independent studies in Design, for their summer semester electives.)</p> <p><i>Elective(s):</i> Elective (3.0) DES395 Fieldwork in Design</p> <p>Total Credit Hours: 10-13</p>
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Year Two	<p>Fall 2</p> <p>Required Design Courses:</p> <p><i>Thesis:</i> DES385G Thesis Studio IV (Review 2)</p> <p><i>Design Studios:</i> DES385N Topics in Service Design Studio *or* DES352 Service and Systems Design DES 394 Topics in Advanced Design</p> <p><i>Design Seminars:</i> DES384J Design in Context</p>	<p>Spring 2</p> <p>Required Design Courses:</p> <p><i>Thesis:</i> DES398R Master's Report ‡ DES398S Master's Exhibition</p> <p><i>Elective(s):</i> Elective (3.0)</p> <p>Total Credit Hours: 9</p> <p>‡ <i>Students may choose to complete the master's report over the summer but should</i></p>
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	<p><i>Elective(s):</i> Elective (3.0)</p> <p>Total Credit Hours: 15</p>	<p><i>be aware that they will need to (re-)enroll in, and pay tuition for, DES 398R in the semester in which they submit their report to the Graduate School.</i></p>
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C. Course Descriptions

DES 385C. *Thesis Studio I*. Explore principles and techniques of design across disciplines through project work in a studio setting.

DES 380. *Core Course in Design*. Introduction to design process, research, and methodologies.

DES 397C. *Design Pedagogy and Instruction*. This course covers theory and research related to the pedagogy of design in the broadest sense. It explores the creation of design learning experiences.

DES 184. *Design Documentation and Storytelling*. Covers the creation of visual artifacts and tools related to documenting and communicating design work from research, to synthesis, idea development and presentation of final outcomes (verbal, print and digital).

DES 184D. *Design Perspectives*. Explore design approaches, subfields, practices, and media through workshops, projects or lectures led by industry professionals, visiting instructors, and/or University faculty and graduate students.

DES 184E. *The Art of Critique*. Explore methods, frameworks, and practice in giving and receiving feedback in a design studio setting.

DES 385D. *Thesis Studio II*. Build upon principles and techniques of design across disciplines through project work in a studio setting.

DES 385K. *Topics in Visual Design Studio*. Studio-based exploration of techniques and concepts specific to visual design.

DES 184F. *Materials Exploration*. Consider materials in design applications.

DES 185L. *Topics in Interaction Design Studio*. Studio-based exploration of techniques and concepts specific to interaction design.

DES 185M. *Topics in Industrial Design Studio*. Studio-based exploration of techniques and concepts specific to industrial design.

DES 384C. *Supervised Teaching in Design*. Training and teaching under the close supervision of the course instructor for one semester; group meetings with the instructor, individual consultations, and reports throughout the teaching period.

D. Graduate Reviews

Two formal reviews are required in the M.F.A. in Design program; each has a written and an oral component. All Graduate Studies Committee members and all graduate students in Design are expected to attend the oral component

of all graduate reviews. In a typical 21-month course of study, these reviews occur as follows:

Review 1: During the spring semester of the first year (usually in early to mid-April).

Review 2: During the fall semester of the second year (usually in early to mid-November).

Design faculty of any rank, as well as other faculty and guests approved by the graduate advisor, are eligible to attend reviews, participate in discussions about students' progress, and provide written feedback to students. However, only design Graduate Studies Committee members may vote on whether to award a review grade of Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail.

During graduate reviews, students will be evaluated on their overall academic performance in the program and on how successfully they:

- a) respond in writing and in their oral presentation to the Review 1 and 2 briefs, below.
- b) demonstrate their mastery of theory, media, and techniques related to their area of design practice.
- c) position their own work within both historical and contemporary contexts.
- d) demonstrate how criticism from past reviews/critiques has informed the direction of their work.

Within 72 hours of completion of the review, the graduate advisor (Review 1) or report supervisor (Review 2) will contact the student to inform him/her of the review grade and to schedule a meeting to brief the student in greater detail about the faculty's feedback.

When a student receives a grade of Conditional Pass, the Design Graduate Advisor will outline in writing what the student is required to do in order to turn the Conditional Pass into a Pass. Often, students are required to submit a revised plan of work, and/or re-present at a "Review 1.5" attended by selected faculty on or before a specified date. If the specified conditions are not met by the deadline, or if the work submitted at that time is deemed of insufficient quality by the faculty, the student's grade may be changed to Fail.

Students who receive a review grade of Fail (or have their Conditional Pass changed to Fail) may be placed on probation or dismissed temporarily or permanently from the program. In addition, departmental probation may affect the number of credit hours a student is allowed to take, their TA/AI eligibility, and the level of financial support they receive. (In contrast, strong performance at Review 1 increases the likelihood of a merit-based scholarship award and/or TA assignment for the second year of study.)

Review 1 Brief

There are two components to Review 1: a one-page written document and an oral presentation to design faculty and graduate students.

Review 1 One-Page Document

48 hours prior to their oral presentation, Review 1 students must submit a one-page written document to the Design Graduate Advisor that briefly addresses:

- a) how their coursework to date both within and outside of the Design program has informed their thinking and interests
- b) what they have learned, accomplished, and/or realized during their first year of study
- c) their current area(s) of primary interest within the field of design
- d) what they still hope to learn about, or learn how to do, before completing the program
- e) one to three ideas about the direction their master's project might take, ideally framed as questions
- f) what their plans for summer and fall study are, and how they relate to the answers for questions *d* and *e*.

Review 1 Oral Presentation

The oral presentations for Reviews 1 and 2 are structured similarly. The graduate advisor acts as moderator for the reviews; the allocations of time listed below for the different portions of the review are approximate and vary each semester at the discretion of the graduate advisor.

- a) Any work pinned up or on display may be viewed during the first five minutes of the review.
- b) The student makes an oral presentation for ten to fifteen minutes. In these presentations, students should

address essentially the same points that they do in the written document (see above), but in addition, should introduce the faculty to the range of work they have completed to date in the program. Students should present images not only of final products, but also of their working processes, research/design methods, and works by others that have influenced their thinking.

- c) The student fields questions from the GSC faculty and other approved reviewers for 30–35 minutes.
- d) The GSC faculty and other approved reviewers exit the room to deliberate during the final 10 minutes of each review slot, during which students and non-voting faculty may continue discussion, if they wish, or disband in order to allow the next person to set up.

Review 2 Brief

There are two components to Review 2: a one-page written document and an oral presentation to design faculty and graduate students.

Review 2 One-Page Document

48 hours prior to their oral presentation, Review 2 students must submit a one-page written document to the graduate advisor that briefly addresses the following:

- a) the research or design problem that they have chosen to pursue for their master's project, and/or their goal, and the context out of which it arises
- b) their rationale for addressing this particular problem (i.e., the reasons they believe the problem to be one worth addressing);
- c) how other people have typically solved or addressed this problem (i.e., their "lit review" or review of design comparables/precedents);
- d) how they plan to address the problem (i.e., their method or approach);
- e) what some of their hypotheses or proposed solutions are (i.e., sketches, prototypes, iterations)
- f) how they anticipate that their goal, rationale, method/approach, and/or proposed solution differs from that of previous people who have worked on the same issue (i.e., contribution to the field).

Review 2 Oral Presentation

The oral presentations for Reviews 1 and 2 are structured similarly. The graduate advisor acts as moderator for the reviews; the allocations of time listed below for the different portions of the review are approximate and may vary each semester at the discretion of the graduate advisor.

- a) Any work pinned up or on display may be viewed during the first five minutes of the review.
- b) The student makes an oral presentation for ten to fifteen minutes. In these presentations, students should address essentially the same points that they do in the written document (see above), but in addition, should introduce the faculty to the range of work they have completed to date in the program. Students should present images not only of final products, but also of their working process, the methods by which they make decisions, and works by others that have influenced their thinking.
- c) The student fields questions from the GSC faculty and other approved reviewers for 30–35 minutes.
- d) The GSC faculty and other approved reviewers exit the room to deliberate during the final 10 minutes of each review slot, during which students and non-voting faculty may continue discussion, if they wish, or disband in order to allow the next person to set up.

E. Culmination of Studies: Master's Exhibition, Colloquium, Dossier, and Report

Prior to graduating, usually in the spring semester of the second year, students must submit an Application to Graduate, exhibit their master's project in the M.F.A. exhibition, participate in the M.F.A. colloquium, submit a digital dossier containing a representative sampling of their work from the program, and write and submit a master's

report approved by their committee supervisor and reader(s).

Application to Graduate

At the beginning of the semester in which they expect to graduate, students should submit the online Application to Graduate form to the Office of Graduate Studies at <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation/deadlines-and-submission-instructions>. Pay close attention to the deadline for submission; there are no exceptions made for late forms.

The Application to Graduate requires students to submit the names of their master's report supervisor and reader(s), identifying their names and roles exactly as they will appear on the signature page of the master's report.

Report Supervisor

In the fall of your second year of study, prior to or immediately after Review 2 (see above), you must identify a Graduate Studies Committee member who is willing to serve as the supervisor (or co-supervisor) of your master's project and report. Your supervisor should brief you on the faculty comments and decision from Review 2, should be a faculty member with whom you have a good working relationship, and should be well positioned to give you useful feedback about both the content and form of your master's project and report. Occasionally, students opt to have two co-supervisors, one who oversees the master's project, and another who oversees the report.

Report Reader(s)

The report reader(s) provides additional input on the master's project and report. After you have identified a report supervisor, you should consult with both your supervisor and the Design Graduate Advisor about who to ask to serve as a reader for your report. At a minimum, you must designate one supervisor and one reader (or two co-supervisors) on your Application to Graduate; however, many students opt to have a supervisor and two (or even three) readers, up to a maximum of five committee members, total, depending on the nature of their master's project work.

Readers may be faculty members in design or in other departments at UT or faculty at other universities; in addition, one or more readers may be non-academic professionals whose expertise is in an intersecting field. If you wish to designate a non-UT reader, you will need to secure approval from the Design Graduate Advisor. In addition, all non-UT readers must submit a resume or curriculum vitae and complete a no-expense form, available at <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/forms>.

M.F.A. Exhibition

Students are required to exhibit their master's project in the annual M.F.A. group exhibition held in the spring. The exhibition should present the master's project as the culmination of a considered research and design process with a clear rationale and goal, rather than as an isolated object of aesthetic contemplation whose purpose and meaning are left wholly open to interpretation. Students should explain their research problem and design process in the exhibition in ways that are accessible to a general audience. Although the master's project itself is pass/fail, the exhibition usually constitutes a graded component of DES 392, Professional Communication of Research.

M.F.A. Colloquium

The Visual Arts Center's (VAC's) schedule permitting, all graduating students participate in a public colloquium within the VAC gallery space. At the colloquium, students briefly introduce their work, and then field questions from a moderator and the audience. The colloquium usually constitutes a graded component of DES 392, Professional Communication of Research.

M.F.A. Dossier

In the final semester of the program, the Design Division requires students to submit an M.F.A. dossier, which is a digital portfolio featuring the master's exhibition work and selected projects from M.F.A. coursework and reviews. Please see the instructor for DES 392 or the Design Graduate Advisor for the latest version of the M.F.A. dossier template and checklist. The dossier usually constitutes a graded component of DES 392, Professional Communication of Research.

Students retain copyright to work created in the Department of Design but should be aware that the university claims the right to exhibit, display, reproduce, perform, publish, or adapt students' works for non-commercial assessment, accreditation, and publicity purposes. For example, selected M.F.A. dossiers or works therefrom may be featured on departmental or division print or online publicity materials.

Master's Report

Students must register for DES 398R, Master's Report, during the last semester in which they are enrolled in the M.F.A. program. The master's report is an article-length (3000-8000 words) piece of writing that critically analyzes and visually documents the works displayed in the master's exhibition (and/or a selection of major works completed for design classes and reviews in the design program). It must follow the content guidelines established by the Graduate Studies Committee in Design and the formatting and submission guidelines established by the Graduate School.

Although the emphasis of each report is different, in general, the report should provide a rationale for the work undertaken; articulate a question or problem that guided the research; describe the methods used to gather data and/or generate solutions; assess the success of the proposed solutions; and document the work's appearance.

Format Check

All M.F.A. in Design students are required to perform a format check prior to submitting their master's reports. For more information on formatting, go to <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations/digital-submission-requirement#formatting>. Your report need not be fully complete to perform a format check.

Supervisor and Reader Signatures

You must secure the *original* signatures of your supervisor and reader(s) on a hard copy of the master's report signature page. This page must be formatted to meet the Graduate School's requirements. Students must ensure that the names of their supervisor(s) and reader(s) on the online Application to Graduate form exactly match the names and assigned roles on their report's signature page; mismatches in names or committee roles can result in a delay in graduation and the necessity of re-enrolling in (and paying tuition for) DES 398R.

Students who wish to have non-UT co-supervisors or readers on their committees must have each such person sign a No-Expense Letter for Non-UT Committee Members. This form can be downloaded at <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/forms>.

Digital Submission of the Report

After you have secured the signatures of your committee members on the hard-copy signature page and your supervisor has cleared you to submit the final copy of your report to the Graduate School, you must upload the final version of your report by following instructions here: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations/digital-submission-requirement>

In addition to the text of your report, you must be prepared to upload as PDFs the following pages/documents:

- a) a title page,
- b) a signature page (Note: *only the hard copy of this page should be signed. The PDF that you upload should not include scans of your committee members' signatures.*),
- c) an abstract,
- d) a [Statement on Research with Human Participants](#) (PDF).

You must submit this form regardless of whether or not your research involved human participants.

Students whose research did involve human participants must attach a copy of their [IRB approval letter](#) or exemption notification.

Be aware that all master's reports (and theses and dissertations) are uploaded and made available for public viewing in perpetuity; students should not include in their reports any images or writing that they do not wish made public to the world, nor any work by others that might violate copyright law.

Prior to uploading your report to the TDL, you will be asked to enter keywords pertinent to the subject of your

report, to enter contact information, and to submit once again the names and roles of your committee members (be sure that the names and roles you enter match exactly those on your Application to Graduate and on your signature page). You will also be asked to declare that the contents of your report do not violate copyright law, either because you have not reproduced any copyrighted works in your report, have secured permission for the use of any copyrighted works contained in your report, or are claiming fair use of any copyrighted works contained in your report.

At the time of digital submission, students are also required to choose an “embargo option”: that is, to indicate whether they approve immediate publication of their report by the TDL, or whether they are requesting a one-year delay in TDL publication in order to publish their report’s results in another venue and/or to secure patent protection for innovations disclosed in the report. The Design Graduate Advisor and/or your report supervisor can provide guidance about whether or not you need to request an embargo on your report.

Hard-Copy Submission of Report Preliminary Pages to the Graduate School

The Graduate School no longer requires submission of a hard copy of the entire report. However, it does require the following documents to be delivered *in print* to the Graduate School by the submission deadline:

- a) a hard copy of the title page,
- b) a hard copy of the signature page that includes all committee members’ original signatures (*Note: only the hard copy of this page should be signed. The PDF that you upload should not include scans of your committee members’ signatures.*),
- c) a hard copy of the abstract,
- d) a signed hard copy of the [Statement on Research with Human Participants](https://utexas.box.com/shared/static/ci93fkvocqn6b35n72rfd8eyuyefl1ez.pdf) (<https://utexas.box.com/shared/static/ci93fkvocqn6b35n72rfd8eyuyefl1ez.pdf>).

You must submit this form regardless of whether or not your research involved human participants.

Students whose research did involve human participants must append a copy of their [IRB approval letter](#) or exemption notification.

If a Report is Not Accepted

If a report is not accepted by a supervisor, reader, or the Graduate School, the student must register (and pay tuition) for DES 398R during the following semester(s) until the report has been accepted by the report supervisor, reader, and the Graduate School. The graduate advisor, the student, and the report committee may meet in order to advise the student on revisions.

II. Academic Policies

A. Admission and Conditional Admission

The M.F.A. in Design program at the University of Texas at Austin seeks self-motivated, creative people whose academic records and interests suggest they would benefit from access to the resources of a research university. An undergraduate major in design is not required for admission; however, students with little previous background in design may be required to take or audit undergraduate courses in design in order to acquire the necessary design skills to succeed in the M.F.A. program.

Admission to the M.F.A. program is based on the evaluation of three areas: a written statement of interest, a visual portfolio, and three letters of recommendation. Your written statement should discuss your research interests within the field of design, and explain, if applicable, how the work in the portfolio relates to them. Letters of recommendation may come from individuals both within and outside of the field of design. The GRE is *not* required as part of the M.F.A. in design application, although strong GRE scores can help strengthen a nomination for fellowship support.

On occasion, the Graduate School or the Design Graduate Studies Committee may place conditions on a candidate's admission to the program. Such students must fulfill these conditions in order to continue in the program. Students should check with the graduate advisor to see whether conditions have been attached to their admission.

B. Transfer of Credits

A maximum of six semester hours of graduate-level coursework in which grades of either A or B were earned may be transferred from another regionally accredited U.S. institution. Pass/fail grades are not transferable. Students may petition for transfer credit by furnishing an official transcript showing courses and grades, and indicating which courses are graduate level. Courses may not have been used toward any other degree. If appropriate, the graduate advisor then endorses and forwards the petition to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval. Approved transfer credits do not appear on transcripts; they are recorded only on the departmental Program of Work and Graduation Application.

C. Time Limit

A Master of Fine Arts degree in Design is a 60-semester-hour, intensive, full-time program intended to span two academic years and the summer in between (21 months in total). Barring exceptional circumstances, students generally become ineligible for scholarship support, TA/AI assignments, and graduate studio space after their first 21 months in the program. Students must complete their degrees within four years of their date of entry into the program.

D. Change of Major

To change his or her major, a student must submit the Application for Admission to Another Graduate Major to the Graduate and International Admissions Center. The application must be approved by the graduate advisor in the new program. Applications must be submitted to the Graduate and International Admissions Center by April 1 for the summer session, by July 1 for the fall semester, and by October 1 for the spring semester. Students should consult the graduate advisor for the proposed new major about priority deadlines and additional requirements, procedures, and materials. If the student has been away from the university for a semester or longer, he or she must apply for readmission.

E. Change or Variation in Program

Limited variations in a student's program or course requirements may be requested by written petition. Depending on the nature of the request, changes may be approved by the graduate advisor; the graduate advisor and the Design Graduate Studies Committee (GSC); or the graduate advisor and the Graduate School dean. Petitions must be submitted well in advance of any pertinent university deadlines.

F. Registration

Advising

In order to register for courses, you must first clear your advising bar by making an appointment with the graduate advisor to discuss and receive approval for your proposed schedule of courses. Please prepare for your meeting with the graduate advisor not only by preparing a list of possible courses, but also by writing down a list of goals—e.g., skills you want to acquire, bodies of knowledge you want to learn, projects you want to undertake, etc.—so that the graduate advisor will be able to help you identify coursework that will support you in achieving those aims.

Course Schedule and UTDirect

The course schedule for each semester is published at www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/schedules shortly before the advising and registration periods begin. The course schedule provides important information about registration and payment procedures; course times, locations, instructors, prerequisites, and special fees; and the academic calendar. Students are responsible for following these procedures. After clearing their advising and financial bars, students self-register online using UT Direct.

Registering for Courses in Other Departments

University rules allow you to include a maximum of three upper-level undergraduate courses in your degree program if you so desire. Graduate students are able to take both upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses in other departments with instructor permission and with approval of the Design graduate advisor. Note that undergraduate upper-level courses are those whose last two digits are between 20 and 79; graduate-level courses are those whose last two digits are between 80 and 99. (The first digit of the course number indicates the number of credit hours of the course.)

To enroll in classes outside the Department of Design, you should first contact the professors who offer the classes of interest. Tell them you are a Design graduate student, and that you are seeking permission to take their class. Even if classes are listed as closed or restricted, a professor may allow a graduate student to enroll, or “add.” Once you have permission to enroll in the class, ask that department’s graduate coordinator about their registration procedures. Generally, graduate coordinators need to register you because most graduate classes have restricted enrollment. For a current list of graduate coordinators and their email addresses, go to <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/programs>.

Enrollment in an interdisciplinary Graduate Portfolio Program can sometimes facilitate registration in graduate courses in other departments. With the approval of the graduate advisor, M.F.A. in Design students may apply to and complete an interdisciplinary Graduate Portfolio Program in tandem with their degree requirements in Design (see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/programs/portfolio-programs> for a current list of GPPs). Please consult individual GPP program websites for application information and procedures.

Late Registration

Late registration extends from the first through the fourth class day in a long-session semester and from the first through second class day in a summer term. After those dates, you will need the assistance of the graduate coordinator to register. A late fee is charged for late registration, and permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies may be required. Avoid late registration if at all possible. The graduate coordinator can answer questions regarding late registration.

Add/Drop Procedures

The deadlines and UT Direct access periods for adding and dropping courses can be found on the academic calendar at <https://registrar.utexas.edu/calendars>. After the first four class days of the semester, schedule changes must be made by the graduate coordinator in the department in which the course is offered. Adds and drops after the 12th class day must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and must be accompanied by a persuasive rationale for the late add or drop.

G. Grading Policies

Grade Point Average

The graduate grade point average (GPA) is calculated by the Registrar and appears on your official record maintained by the Registrar. To graduate, all graduate students must have a GPA average of at least a B (3.00).

Credit/No Credit

A student may take no more than two courses for a master's degree on a credit/no credit basis, and only non-Design elective courses may be taken credit/no credit. A student must elect this option within the first eight weeks of the semester and must have the approval of the graduate advisor. Credit/No Credit grades are not computed in the grade point average. Performance level of "C" or above shall constitute a grade of Credit (Cr). Changes in grading option cannot be made after the mid-semester class day of long semester sessions or summer sessions.

Incomplete Grades and the Symbol X

Incompletes are not issued for student or faculty convenience (i.e. lack of work or unfinished work); they may be issued only in the case of approved, compelling, non-academic circumstances beyond the student's control. If there is a compelling reason, the instructor may report the symbol X (incomplete) to the Registrar in place of a grade. The student must then complete the course requirements and the instructor must report a final grade by the end of the grade-reporting period in the student's next long-session semester of enrollment. If this deadline is not met, the symbol X is converted to the symbol I, which can never be converted into a grade.

Incompletes may not be listed on the Application for Degree Candidacy unless they will be cleared by the beginning of the final semester of coursework. A student may not graduate with an incomplete grade (X) on the program of work.

Grade Disputes and Grievance Procedures

Every effort should be made to resolve grade disputes and other grievances informally between the student and the faculty member most directly involved. Such efforts failing, the order of review within the M.F.A. in Design program is the following: 1) the course instructor, 2) graduate advisor, 3) department chair for Design 4) assistant dean, and 5) dean. The decision of the dean is final.

When serious issues cannot be resolved informally, the graduate student may have recourse to the formal grievance procedure that can be found in the General Information Catalog. It should be noted that the precise procedure to be followed in adjudicating a given grievance would depend on the particular circumstances surrounding the case. For further information on formal procedures, including those for non-academic grievances, see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/grievances>.

H. Academic Warning, Probation, and Dismissal

Warning

If in any semester a student's grade point average falls below a B, the student will be warned by the Dean of Graduate Studies that his or her good standing is in jeopardy. During the next semester or summer session in which the student is registered, he or she must maintain a B average or be subject to dismissal. During this period the student is not permitted to drop any courses or to withdraw without the recommendation of the graduate advisor and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Probation

A non-passing assessment in Review 1 or Review 2 will result in departmental probation until the student has completed satisfactory work. Stipulations of probation, including deadlines and expected improvement, are decided by the Design Graduate Studies Committee. Failure to comply with the terms of departmental probation can result in dismissal from the program.

Dismissal

A student who has been dismissed by the university for academic reasons may be readmitted only by petition to the GSC in Design. The Dean of Graduate Studies makes the final decision.

III. Breaks in Attendance

A. Withdrawal

Dropping an entire semester's course load constitutes withdrawal from the University for that semester. Students on warning status (see below) due to failure to maintain a grade point average of at least 3.00 may not withdraw without petitioning the consent of the graduate advisor and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

A student may withdraw through the last class day of the semester. If the student abandons his or her courses without withdrawing, the instructor in each class determines what grade should be recorded. In order to withdraw for a semester or summer session, a student must file a Withdrawal Petition and Refund Request form with the Dean of Graduate Studies, which is available in the Office of Graduate Studies, Main 101 or by email by emailing GradStudentSvcs@austin.utexas.edu. Refunds are prorated per a published schedule. The student's identification card must also be turned in to the Graduate School. Withdrawals for medical reasons are handled through the Student Health Center: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/withdrawals>

B. Leave of Absence

A student may, under unusual circumstances, apply to the graduate advisor for a leave of absence. Normally, the maximum amount of time that may be requested is one or two long-session semesters. A leave of absence does not affect the time limit for completion of the degree. A leave of absence form must be approved by the graduate advisor and by the Dean of Graduate Studies. A student must have a compelling reason for requesting a leave of absence (i.e. personal illness, family illness, birth or adoption of a child, etc.). The Graduate School does not accept "insufficient funds" as an acceptable reason for granting a leave of absence. While on a leave, a student may not receive advice or assistance from faculty members and may not use services or facilities of the university.

To be readmitted, a student must submit an Application for Readmission to the Graduate and International Admissions Center by the deadline noted in the General Information Catalog and pay the general application fee. The fee is waived if the student has received an official leave of absence. The student must also obtain the approval of the graduate advisor in the program in which he or she was last enrolled:

<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/leaves-of-absence>

C. Readmission

Students who have a break in attendance for one long semester or more must apply for readmission by:

- submitting an Application for Readmission form and fee
- obtaining the approval of the graduate advisor to return and register
- meeting the applicable deadline: December 1 for the spring semester, August 1 for the fall semester.

IV. Financial Support

A. Fellowships, Scholarships, Grants, and Loans

University-Funded Fellowships

The Graduate School and the College of Fine Arts seek nominations each year for a variety of high-dollar-value continuing fellowships. The graduate advisor, in consultation with the graduate faculty, nominates eligible students for these awards. Nominees are typically asked to provide an updated CV, a statement of intent, and letters of recommendation in support of these nominations. Awardees are typically notified in late spring.

University-Funded Scholarships

The Design Department awards merit-based* scholarships to selected Design graduate students at the end of the first academic year. These awards are competitive and are based on students' performance in Review 1, overall GPA/academic performance, and performance in Design Department classes, independent studies, and activities. (*Although financial need is a criterion for some awards, most specify that the award must go to a student who exhibits academic or artistic merit *in addition to* financial need.)

Grants and Loans

- Information about federal financial aid, including federal grants and loans, can be found on the Graduate School's funding site, <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances>, and the Office of Student Financial Services's site, <http://finaid.utexas.edu>.
- Information about other fellowship and grant opportunities may be found via the Regional Foundation Library in Austin (<https://diversity.utexas.edu/tgrc/>).

Short-Term Loans

The Office of Student Financial Services has funds available to provide short-term emergency or tuition assistance loans to students. Tuition loans may be used each semester during registration and will be applied to a student's fee bill. Emergency loans of up to \$300 are given in cash. Contact Student Financial Services for more information.

B. Teaching Assistantships and Assistant Instructorships

Appointment of TAs and AIs

Many Design M.F.A. students serve as teaching assistants for courses within the department or secure employment at campus fabrication and production labs.

All teaching assistant and assistant instructor appointments are made on a semester-by-semester basis, in response to programmatic needs and availability of funds.

Guidelines and Resources for TAs/AIs

For comprehensive information on University policies for teaching assistants and assistant instructors consult <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academic-employment>, which provides a list of duties, benefits, teaching tips, and links to other helpful information.

Teaching Assistant Qualifications

- Must be admitted to Graduate School without conditions.
- Must have a grade point average of 3.0 or better.
- Must be registered for at least 9 hours during long-session semesters and 3 hours during summer terms in which they are employed.
- Must have no incompletes.

Continued eligibility for a TA position depends upon:

- Satisfactory performance of TA duties.
- Satisfactory academic progress.
- Positive faculty and student evaluations.

Assistant Instructor Qualifications

- Must have passed Review 1 and be approved by faculty consensus after this Review.
- Must have taken DES 398T or any other equivalent teaching course.
- Must have a grade point average of 3.0 or better.
- Must be registered for at least 9 hours during long-session semesters and 3 hours during summer terms in which they are employed.
- Must have no Incompletes.

Continued eligibility for an AI position depends upon:

- Satisfactory performance of AI duties.
- Satisfactory academic progress.
- Positive faculty and student evaluations.

Insurance for TAs/AIs

Teaching Assistants and Assistant Instructors appointed for 20 hours for 4.5 months (one long semester) or more are eligible for various types of group insurance offered by the university. Questions concerning university policies should be directed to the Office of Human Resources at 512-471-4343, North Office Building (NOA), Wichita and 27th Street. Or view benefits at: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academic-employment>

In-State Tuition Eligibility for TAs/AIs

Nonresidents and international students who hold teaching assistantships may, under certain conditions, pay tuition and fees at the rate charged to Texas residents.

International Students as TAs/AIs

Before the start of the first semester in which they are to assume their instructional duties, most international students must complete an assessment of their English-language proficiency. This half-day assessment includes a structured oral interview conducted, videotaped, and evaluated by English-language professionals. All international students who will have classroom contact as part of their duties must be certified before they may assume instructional duties. The Office of Graduate Studies monitors the English proficiency assessment and training program. Under certain circumstances, this requirement can be waived. Contact the graduate coordinator to find out if you qualify for a waiver. Questions may be directed to the ESL Services Office. See their webpage at <https://global.utexas.edu/english-language-center/resources/international-teaching-assistants>.

V. Administration of the M.F.A. in Design Program

A. Administrative Structure of the Program

The M.F.A. in Design program is housed in the School of Design and Creative Technologies (SDCT) of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. The administrative structure of the university and its key academic officers is as follows:

The University of Texas at Austin

President: Jay Hartzell

Provost: Daniel Jaffe

The Graduate School

Dean: Mark J. T. Smith

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies: Dean Neikirk

The College of Fine Arts

Dean: Douglas Dempster

Associate Dean: Holly Williams

The School of Design and Creative Technologies (one of four departments/schools in CoFA)

Assistant Dean: Doreen Lorenzo

Chair: Kate Canales (Design)

Graduate Coordinators for Design: Scott Lauger & Michelle Harris

Design Graduate Advisor: James Walker

Policies and procedures regarding admissions, registration, fellowships, and the Graduate Studies Committee are set by the Graduate School. Decisions about scholarships and teaching assistant/assistant instructor appointments are made at the departmental level by the Chair.

B. Design Graduate Advisor

The Design Graduate Advisor is a faculty member serving an academic appointment in the Design. James Walker (jameswalker@utexas.edu) serves as the Design Graduate Advisor. Design graduate students should consult the Graduate Advisor for “what” and “why” questions related to the program (e.g., “What courses should I take?” “What should I do to prepare for Review 1?” “Why does the program have so many electives?”)

The duties of the graduate advisor are to:

- advise graduate students in all matters regarding their academic progress through the program.
- represent the Design program at Graduate School functions and in all dealings with the Graduate School.
- call, develop the agenda for, and act as chairperson for Design GSC meetings.
- bring student questions and concerns to the attention of the Design GSC.
- enact GSC-approved changes to the graduate curriculum.
- assign scholarship awards in keeping with the recommendations of the Design GSC.
- assign TA/AI appointments in keeping with the recommendations of the Design GSC.
- oversee graduate admissions, including application review and interview procedures.
- oversee graduate assessment, including writing assessment plans and reports.
- review and revise annually all Design graduate program documents, including the graduate handbook, graduate prospectus, and graduate website copy.
- develop strategies for publicizing the graduate program and recruiting applicants (as budget allows)
- administer other aspects of the M.F.A. in design program as needed.

C. Graduate Coordinator for Design

The graduate coordinators for Design are hired by the chairperson of the Department of Design and serves as the administrator and coordinator of the graduate program. Scott Lauger (Scott.Lauger@austin.utexas.edu) and Michelle Harris (mcharris@austin.utexas.edu) currently serve as Graduate Coordinators. The Graduate Coordinators should be Design graduate students' first point of contact for "how" and "when" questions related to the program, including questions about admissions, visas, finances, and graduation procedures (e.g., "When will my out-of-state tuition waiver show up on my bill?" "How much do I owe for next semester, and when do I need to pay it?" "How do I register for a class in another department?" "When do I apply to graduate, and how?").

The duties of the graduate coordinator are to:

- assist the graduate advisors for Design in all aspects of running their graduate programs
- handle routine correspondence with applicants and current students
- administer the admissions process
- advise students and the Graduate Advisor on University policy and curricular requirements
- file petitions on behalf of students and the Graduate Advisor
- gather and distribute information pertinent to graduate students
- maintain graduate student records, including programs of work and graduation applications
- administer TA/AI assignments
- direct students to University resources

D. Design Graduate Studies Committee Design

The Design Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) is composed of tenured and tenure-track members of the Design graduate faculty.

The Design GSC:

- Makes recommendations concerning graduate curricula, which are submitted to the Graduate School for approval.
- Recommends the admission or rejection of students to the program.
- Sets general requirements for the M.F.A. in design.
- Is responsible for certifying and recommending students for admission to candidacy for all graduate degrees in its academic area.
- Provides a description of requirements and procedures needed to achieve a degree.

E. Design Graduate Faculty

Graduate faculty in Design are full-time or part-time faculty who have been authorized by the Graduate School to teach Design graduate courses, supervise Design graduate independent studies and internships, and serve on (but not—unless they are also Graduate Studies Committee members—serve as sole supervisors of) Master's Report committees in Design.

VI. Facilities, Resources, Information

The Design Department is housed in the Art Building (aka ART), alongside the Studio Art and Art Education programs. Design graduate students have card-swipe access to the building and key access to their shared studio space in the building. In addition, graduate students have access to many other departmental and university resources, including the following:

A. Design Facilities and Resources

The Computer Lab (ART 1.202)

Design graduate students have key-code access to the computer laboratory in ART 1.202. The lab houses 20 Macintosh computers equipped with Adobe Creative Cloud, Rhino, and other design software. During the lab's posted hours of operation, lab proctors can provide color printing services and check out digital cameras, projectors, and other equipment.

The Design Lab (ART 2.212)

Both graduates and undergraduates enrolled in the Design program receive key-code access to the Design Lab's production/publication facilities and equipment. The lab's facilities include a photography studio for shooting photographs and videos of two- and three-dimensional objects; a fully-equipped chemical darkroom; a silkscreen production area; a polymer plate-making machine; bookbinding equipment; a spray booth; and a letterpress/relief publication studio that includes a Vandercook No. 4 proofing press, a historic Columbian platen press, a collection of metal type, and the spectacular Rob Roy Kelly American Wood Type Collection, which comprises over 160 faces of various sizes and styles dating from between 1828 and 1900. The lab also houses and makes available for check-out smaller pieces of equipment, such as digital cameras and projectors, a programmable sewing machine, and hand tools such as hammers and drills. Students are required to complete mandatory safety training prior to using equipment in this facility.

The Digital Fabrication Lab (ART 2.402)

The Digital Fabrication Lab (aka the FabLab) houses multiple 3D scanners and printers, a vinyl cutter, two laser cutters, a Shopbot flat-bed CNC router, and a CNC milling machine. 3D modeling software such as Rhino 3D and Geomagic Studio is available for use in the lab. Students are required to complete mandatory safety training prior to using equipment in this facility.

The Wood Shop (ART 2.314)

The centrally located wood shop houses stationary woodworking, plastic-working, and metalworking machines, as well as an inventory of manual and power tools available for use and checkout. A supervisor is on hand during posted shop hours to provide instructional support and to ensure safe and proper use of equipment and machinery. Students are required to complete mandatory safety training prior to using equipment in this facility.

The Visual Arts Center (ART 1.106)

www.utvac.org

The gallery spaces of the Visual Arts Center (VAC) span two floors and 13,000 square feet. The VAC hosts rotating exhibitions as well as the design and studio art M.F.A. exhibitions. M.F.A. students may also submit proposals for exhibitions in the VAC at other times during their studies at the university.

The Fine Arts Library (DFA 3.200)

www.lib.utexas.edu/fal

The Fine Arts Library, just across the street from the Art building, provides easy access to over 350,000 books and scores, 12,000 DVDs, 400 current serial subscriptions, and more. Students may click the "Pick It Up" option in the library catalog to have an item from another branch of the University Libraries delivered to the FAL circulation desk

for convenient pickup. The 3rd floor of the FAL also houses photocopiers and a free, book-friendly digital scanner.

The Foundry (DFA 3.200)

<https://web-prod.lib.utexas.edu/study-spaces-technology/foundry>

The Foundry is a joint venture between the College of Fine Arts and the University Libraries, and is open to all students, faculty, and staff at the university. The Foundry houses laser cutters, programmable sewing machines, a textile printer, 3D printers, soldering irons, and a host of other fabrication equipment. In addition, its device library makes available for checkout a wide variety of equipment and devices, including digital cameras and camcorders, drawing tablets, headphones, LCD projectors, digital voice recorders, LittleBits Synth Kits, Arduinos, Raspberry Pis, electronic sensors, and Oculus Rifts.

Harry Ransom Center (HRC)

www.hrc.utexas.edu

The HRC houses about a million books, thirty million manuscripts, five million photographs, and more than one hundred thousand works of art. It holds exceptional collections of incunabula, including over 900 volumes of Aldus Manutius imprints; a large collection of Eric Gill works and archives; a major collection of fine printing; and extensive collections of historic posters and periodicals.

The Materials Lab (WMB 3.102)

www.soa.utexas.edu/matlab

The School of Architecture's Materials Lab supports architects and designers with a collection of over 27,000 material samples from the design and building industries. The collection has a particular focus on innovative and sustainable materials.

Statistical Consulting

<https://stat.utexas.edu/consulting/free-consulting>

All UT Austin students, faculty, and staff are eligible for up to one hour of free consulting each week with statistical consultants available for appointments by phone/Skype or in-person, and over email.

B. Facilities-Related Policies

Environmental Health and Safety

The University of Texas at Austin's Department of Design must follow all current federal, state and University policies regarding safety. These policies are too numerous to list here. Highlights of specific rules and regulations are usually posted in shop and work areas. For specific information about safety in a particular area, see the material data sheets that are located in each lab, or visit the university's Environmental Health and Safety website at <https://ehs.utexas.edu/>.

Building Access and Keys

Graduate students in the Department of Design have access to the ART building with their proximity chip-enabled UT ID cards. Any key issued to a graduate student (whether for a studio space or for an area in which they are appointed to work as a Teaching Assistant or Assistant Instructor) is for use by that student only. For security reasons, neither keys nor UT ID cards may be lent to anyone else for any reason. All UT-issued keys must be returned to Key Services (a division of Physical Plant) at the end of the semester in which a student graduates. If the keys are not returned, a bar may be placed on the student's records and award of the degree may be withheld until the keys have been returned. Proximity card access to the building automatically terminates when a student graduates or is no longer enrolled.

C. Other University Resources and Policies

This handbook contains brief summaries of many University, Graduate School, College of Fine Arts, and Department of Design policies and procedures. More detailed information can be found in the following publications:

The Graduate School Catalog: This catalog specifies the requirements for each of the degrees offered by the Graduate School, as well as listing regulations and prerequisites for courses offered in the Graduate School. You can view it online as a PDF at <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/graduate>.

The University of Texas Course Schedule: Information concerning academic calendars, courses offered, prerequisites, registration, tuition and payment deadlines, and add/drop procedures may be found in the official Course Schedule. An online-only course schedule is published for each semester and summer session. You can view schedules at <http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules>.

General Information Catalog: This catalog contains information and academic regulations for the University. The official academic calendar also appears in the General Information Catalog. This catalog is available online and as a PDF at <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/general-information>.

TA/AI Information: The academic employment site (<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academic-employment>) contains detailed information for Teaching Assistants (TAs), Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), and Assistant Instructors (AIs). It describes policies and procedures affecting TAs, GRAs, and AIs; explains their role in the University; describes services that may help them in their duties; and lists employee benefits provided by the University.

UT Services for Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. Additional information can be found at: <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability>

College of Fine Arts Career Services: Individual career advising and information on internships and jobs is provided for students and alumni alike. Additional information can be found at: <http://finearts.utexas.edu/careers>.

University Health Services (UHS): UHS provides immunizations and allergy shots, urgent care, women's health, physical therapy, nutrition services, and much more. Students may call the 24/7 Nurse Advice Line for free at: (512) 475-6877 (NURS). Additional information regarding services, insurance, and fees can be found at: <http://healthyhorns.utexas.edu>.

Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC): The GSC is located in room 2.112 of the Student Activity Center. In addition to the free candy, tampons, condoms, and printing located at the center, its staff provides invaluable support and assistance to campus LGBTQ, women's, or ally organizations, as well as individuals. Helpful resources can be found online at: <http://ddce.utexas.edu/genderandsexuality/resources/>.

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): The Graduate Student Assembly's mission is to foster a "productive line of communication between University administration, all colleges and schools, and the graduate student community." GSA members may apply for travel awards funded through HornsLink. The GSA also maintains a graduate student lounge located in room 3.102D of the Student Activity Center. More information can be found at: <http://www.utexasgsa.org/about-us/>.