



# **Graduate Handbook 2025-2026**

## **Master of Fine Arts Design**

### **School of Design & Creative Technologies**

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## I. Academic Program

The M.F.A. in Design 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. Design graduate students are expected to be self-motivated, experienced practitioners of design with a strong portfolio of recent work, a clearly stated rationale for undertaking graduate study in design, and a well-defined area of investigation around which they propose to focus their coursework, research, and creation in the program.

The M.F.A. in Design program cultivates expert designers who are also thoughtful, broadly educated critics and communicators prepared to enter careers in many fields. Design graduate students are required to take at least 6 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. Alumni of the program enjoy successful careers not only as designers, but also as writers, entrepreneurs, strategists, CEOs, and university faculty.

### A. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for the degree must complete at least 60 credit hours of coursework, chosen with the advice and approval of the Design graduate advisor, as follows:

- at least 33 hours of studio coursework\*
  - at least 30 of which must be Design graduate studio courses
- at least 9 hours of academic studies concerned with design
- at least 6 hours in areas of study other than design
- no more than 9 upper-division undergraduate hours may be applied toward the degree

*\*Students are encouraged to complete 36-40 hours total of studio or other application-based courses or practicums. Courses should be discussed with the Design graduate advisor for individual applicability and approval.*

The remaining elective credit-hours for the degree must be approved by the Design 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>).

#### **Overview of Required Courses**

##### **CORE DESIGN COURSES: 33 credit hours**

All of the following courses:

<b>Offered Every Fall</b>	DES 385C* Thesis Studio I	3
	DES 385F* Thesis Studio IV	3
	DES 397C* Design Pedagogy and Instruction	3
<b>Offered Every <u>Other</u> Fall</b>	DES 380* Core Course in Design	3
	DES 384C Design Criticism	3
<b>Offered Every Spring</b>	DES 385D* Thesis Studio II	3
	DES 384J Design in Context	3

<b>Offered Every Spring</b>  <i>Note: Should be taken in student's final semester</i>	DES 398R Master's Report DES 398S* Master's Exhibition DES 392 Professional Communication of Research	3-6 3 3
<b>Every Summer</b>	DES 385E* Thesis Studio III  <i>Note: Students are encouraged to pursue graduate coursework in other fields, graduate internships or independent studies in Design, for their summer semester electives.</i>	3
<b>Total from this section</b>		<b>33-36</b>
<i>Total studio hours from this section*</i>		<i>21</i>

### **ELECTIVE DESIGN COURSES (STUDIO-BASED): 12-24 credit hours**

At least 12, up to 24 credits from this list (all studio-based):

- DES 184 Design Documentation & Storytelling
- DES 184D Design Perspectives
- DES 184E The Art of Critique
- DES 184F Materials Exploration
- DES 184G User Research
- DES 185L Topics in Interaction Design Studio
- DES 185M Topics in Industrial Design Studio
- DES 352 Service and Systems Design
- DES 382 Critique Studio
- DES 385K Topics in Visual Design Studio
- DES 385T Topics in Design Studio
- DES 385V Topics in Visiting Designer Studio
- DES 394 Topics in Advanced Design
- DES 395 Fieldwork in Design
- DES 388 Introduction to Design Thinking

*Note: Design studio courses can be substituted for studio courses in another department on occasion and with the Design graduate advisor's approval only.*

### **ELECTIVES: 6 to 18 credit hours**

At least 6, up to 18 elective hours to support thesis development:

- At least 6 credits must be in a "secondary area" (other than Design)
- Elective courses in Design or other disciplines can be selected to support thesis work
- Electives can (and in many cases should) contribute to the students' goal of 33 studio hours in the degree

## **B. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

Course descriptions for Design graduate courses are listed below. All course descriptions for Design lower-division courses, upper-division courses, and graduate courses can be found in the University Catalog: <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/coursesatoz/des/>.

### **DES 380. Core Course in Design.**

Introduction to design process, research, and methodologies. Three lecture hours a week for one semester, with additional laboratory hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

### **DES 381. Core Laboratory 1.**

Practice laboratory for a variety of design methodologies. Three lecture hours a week for one semester, with additional laboratory hours to be arranged. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

### **DES 182, 382, 482, 582, 682. Critique Studio.**

Context and structured dialogue regarding areas of, and the student's own direction in, graduate research. For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

### **DES 383. Graduate Projects.**

Independent study. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

### **DES 184, 384, 684. Design Documentation and Storytelling.**

Covers portfolio creation and other tools related to documenting and communicating design work. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of the graduate adviser, and consent of instructor.

### **DES 384C. Design Criticism.**

Thinking, writing and talking about design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing; consent of the graduate adviser; consent of instructor.

### **DES 184D, 284D, 384D. 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. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of the graduate adviser, and consent of instructor.

### **DES 184E, 384E. The Art of Critique.**

Explore methods, frameworks, and practice in giving and receiving feedback in a design studio setting. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of the graduate adviser, and consent of instructor.

**DES 184F, 384F. Materials Exploration.**

Consider materials in design applications. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 184G, 384G. User Research.**

Explore generative and evaluative methods for design research, research synthesis techniques, and the design of research field studies for design applications. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 384H. Design Theory and Method.**

Examine theory and methods in design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing; consent of the graduate adviser; consent of instructor.

**DES 384J. Design in Context.**

Explore the social, political, historical, legal and economic contexts of design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing; consent of the graduate adviser; consent of instructor.

**DES 184K. Introduction to Campus Resources for Designers.**

Introduction to design-related resources on campus including the Library, materials lab, fabrication lab, and publication studio. One lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 385C, 685C. Studio I.**

Explore principles and techniques of design across disciplines through project work in a studio setting. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 385D, 685D. Studio II.**

Build upon principles and techniques of design across disciplines through project work in a studio setting. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser; [Design 385C](#) or [685C](#).

**DES 385E, 685E. Studio III.**

Refine and apply advanced principles and techniques of design across disciplines through project work in a studio setting. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser; [Design 385D](#) or [685D](#).



**DES 385F, 685F. Studio IV.**

Culminate previous knowledge of principles and techniques of design across disciplines through project work in a studio setting. For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser; [Design 385E](#) or [685E](#).

**DES 385G, 685G. Foundation Studio I.**

Introduction to vocabulary, principles, strategies, techniques and conventions foundational to design in a studio format. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 385H, 685H. Foundation Studio II.**

Build upon vocabulary, principles, strategies, techniques and conventions foundational to design in a studio format. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser; [Design 385G](#) or [Design 685G](#).

**DES 385J, 685J. Foundation Studio III.**

Refine vocabulary, principles, strategies, techniques and conventions foundational to design in a studio format. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser; [Design 385H](#) or [Design 685H](#).

**DES 385K, 685K. Topics in Visual Design Studio.**

Studio-based exploration of techniques and concepts specific to visual design. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 185L, 385L, 685L. Topics in Interaction Design Studio.**

Studio-based exploration of techniques and concepts specific to interaction design. For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate advisor.

**DES 185M, 385M, 685M. Topics in Industrial Design Studio.**

Studio-based examination of techniques and concepts specific to industrial design. For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate advisor.

**DES 385N, 685N. Topics in Service Design Studio.**

Studio-based exploration of techniques and concepts specific to service design. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 385T, 685T. Topics in Design Studio.**

Develop studio projects focusing on specialized or advanced topics or methods. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 385V, 685V. Topics in Visiting Designer Studio.**

Projects developed by visiting designer on technique and concepts related to their practice in a studio format. For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 386. Design History.**

Three lecture hours a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of the graduate adviser, and consent of instructor.

**DES 387, 487, 587, 687. Graduate Internship in Design.**

Professional design internship in a field of the student's interest. For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week for one semester. Hours to be arranged with supervisor. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of the graduate adviser, and consent of the instructor.

**DES 387H, 487H, 587H, 687H. Internship in Healthcare Design.**

For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of the graduate adviser, and consent of instructor.

**DES 388. Introduction to Design Thinking.**

Restricted to graduate students in design. A preliminary foundation in the emerging practice of human-centered design, the methodology driving design thinking as a way of achieving innovation across sectors. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 388C. Topics in Design Seminar.**

Examine specialized or advanced topics in design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 388D. Topics in Service Design Seminar.**

Examine specialized or advanced topics in service design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 388E. Topics in Industrial Design Seminar.**

Examine specialized or advanced topics in industrial design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 388F. Topics in Interaction Design Seminar.**

Examine specialized or advanced topics in interaction design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 388G. Topics in Visual Design Seminar.**

Examine specialized or advanced topics in visual design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 190, 290, 390, 490, 590, 690. Topics in Advanced Design Skills.**

For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 391. Core Laboratory 2.**

Designed to provide students with the opportunity to test and expand their design research through writing and various methods of dissemination. Three lecture hours a week for one semester, with additional laboratory hours to be arranged. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

**DES 392. Professional Communication of Research.**

Seminar addressing strategies for communicating design research processes and results to a variety of audiences through vehicles such as exhibitions, scholarly reports, and video recordings. Three lecture hours a week for one semester, with additional laboratory hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

**DES 393. Issues in Design Theory and Research.**

Investigates current discourse within design studies. Three lecture hours a week for one semester, with additional laboratory hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

**DES 194, 294, 394, 494, 594, 694. Topics in Advanced Design.**

Examine design practices in all areas, and their relationship to research. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester, with additional studio hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 395. Fieldwork in Design.**

Students conduct fieldwork as part of a collaborative research team and/or under the direction of a project supervisor. Three lecture hours a week for one semester, with additional laboratory hours to be arranged. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

**DES 396. Business of Design.**

Explore the integration of design into business and business into design. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 397. Service Design.**

Apply design thinking to service-based sectors such as hospitality, healthcare, food service and others. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 397C. Design Pedagogy and Instruction.**

Covers theory and research related to the pedagogy of design. Explores creation of design learning experiences. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 197P, 297P, 397P, 497P, 597P, 697P. Teaching Practicum.**

Applied teaching in design subjects. For each semester hour of credit earned, one lecture hour a week for one semester. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 398P. Capstone Project.**

Utilize design methodologies and techniques on an applied project. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the letter-grade basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of the graduate adviser.

**DES 398R. Master's Report.**

The equivalent of three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the credit/no credit basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in design and consent of instructor or the graduate adviser.

**DES 398S. Master's Exhibition.**

The equivalent of three lecture hours a week for one semester. Offered on the credit/no credit basis only. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in design and consent of instructor or the graduate adviser.

**DES 398T. 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. For each semester hour of credit earned, the equivalent of one lecture hour a week for one semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in design and graduate standing and appointment as a teaching assistant.

**C. GRADUATE REVIEWS**

Two formal reviews are required in the M.F.A. in Design program; each has a written and an oral component. All Design Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) members and all Design graduate students 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 Design 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 and how their research contributes something new
- d) demonstrate how criticism from past reviews/critiques has informed the direction of their work

Within 72 hours of completion of the review, the Design graduate advisor or the student's report supervisor (Review 1) or the student's report supervisor (Review 2) will contact the student to inform them of their 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 or the student's report supervisor 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/Al 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 Design graduate students. *Note: Review 1 usually constitutes a graded component of DES 385D Thesis Studio II.*

### ***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) 1-3 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 Design 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 Design graduate advisor. Design graduate students in their second year of study are required to attend and support Review 1.

- 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 guests for 30–35 minutes.
- d) The GSC faculty exit the room to deliberate during the final 10 minutes of each review slot, during which students and non-GSC members 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. *Note: Review 1 usually constitutes a graded component of DES 385F Thesis Studio IV.*

### **Review 2 One-Page Document**

48 hours prior to their oral presentation, Review 2 students must submit a one-page written document to the Design 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 Design 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. Design graduate students in their first year of study are required to attend and support Review 2.

- 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 exit the room to deliberate during the final 10 minutes of each review slot, during which students and non-GSC members may continue discussion, if they wish, or disband in order to allow the next person to set up.

## **D. CULMINATION OF STUDIES**

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, Design 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 spring of the Design graduate student's first year of study, prior to or immediately after Review 1 (see above), a Graduate Studies Committee member must be identified who is willing to serve as the supervisor (or co-supervisor) of the student's master's project and report. Graduate students will work with the Design graduate advisor to identify a supervisor that best aligns with their studies/interests. The supervisor should brief the student on the faculty comments and decisions from Review 1 and 2, should be a faculty member with whom the student has a good working relationship, and should be well positioned to give the student useful feedback about both the content and form of the 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 a Design graduate student has identified a report supervisor, they should consult with both their supervisor and the Design graduate advisor about who to ask to serve as a reader for their report. At a minimum, they must designate one supervisor and one reader (or two co-supervisors) on their 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 the student wishes to designate a non-UT reader, they 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**

Design graduate 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. *Note: 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. Design graduate students in their first year of study are required to attend and support the public colloquium. *Note: the colloquium constitutes a graded component of DES 392 Professional Communication of Research.*

### **M.F.A. Dossier**

In the final semester of the program, the Department of Design requires Design graduate 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. *Note: the dossier constitutes a graded component of DES 392 Professional Communication of Research.*

Students retain copyright to work created in the School of Design and Creative Technologies, 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**

Design graduate students must register for DES 398R Master's Report, during the last semester in which they are enrolled in the M.F.A. in Design 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 program). It must follow the content guidelines established by the Design Graduate Studies Committee and the formatting and submission guidelines established by the Graduate School. For more information: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation/deadlines-and-submission-instructions#ThesisorReport>

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. *Note: the student's thesis supervisor provides a grading of credit/no credit for DES 398R Master's Report.*

### **Format Check**

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

### **Master's Forms**

The following is a list of links to forms you may need access to while enrolled as a graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/forms>. If you don't find a form listed here, it is possible that policy requires you to submit a petition or letter with required signatures.

### **Digital Submission of the Report**

Graduating students are required to publish their report digitally by uploading a single PDF to the Texas Digital Library (TDL). More information and instructions can be found here: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations/digital-submission-requirement>



***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 Master's Report 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. in Design program.

Admission to the M.F.A. in Design program is based on the evaluation of four areas: a written statement of interest, a visual portfolio, resume/CV, and two letters of recommendation. Applicants' written statement should discuss their 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.

International students applying to The University of Texas at Austin must submit either an official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score report demonstrating an adequate knowledge of English. The Institutional TOEFL (ITP) and the IELTS General Training are not accepted. The M.F.A. in Design program does not have a preference for either test. International applicants who are from a qualifying country are exempt from this requirement. Additionally, applicants are exempt from the requirement if they possess a bachelor's degree from a U.S. institution or a qualifying country. Additional information can be found on the Graduate School's website: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/international-students>

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 Design 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**

An M.F.A. in Design degree 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/Al 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 their 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 a student has been away from the university for a semester or longer, they 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 Design graduate advisor; the Design graduate advisor and the Design Graduate Studies Committee; or the Design 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, Design graduate students must first clear their advising hold by making an appointment with the Design graduate advisor to discuss and receive approval for their proposed schedule of courses. Students should prepare for their meeting with the Design graduate advisor not only by preparing a list of possible courses, but also by writing down a list of goals—e.g., skills they want to acquire, bodies of knowledge they want to learn, projects they want to undertake, etc.—so the Design graduate advisor will be able to help them identify coursework that will support achieving those aims.

### **Course Schedule and UTDirect**

The course schedule for each semester is published at <https://registrar.utexas.edu/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 holds, students self-register online using UT Direct.

### **Registering for Courses in Other Departments**

University rules allow students to include a maximum of nine hours of upper-division undergraduate courses in their degree program, if desired. Design graduate students are able to take both upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses in other departments with instructor permission and with approval of the Design graduate advisor. Note that undergraduate upper-division 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, students should first contact the professors who offer the classes of interest. Students should tell them they are a Design graduate student, and that they are seeking permission to take their class. Even if classes are listed as closed or restricted, a professor may allow a Design graduate student to enroll, or “add.” Once the student has permission to enroll in the class, ask that department's graduate coordinator about their registration procedures. Generally, graduate coordinators need to register students because most graduate classes have restricted enrollment. For a current list of graduate coordinators and their email addresses: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/connect>.

Enrollment in an interdisciplinary Graduate Portfolio Program can sometimes facilitate registration in graduate courses in other departments. With the approval of the Design graduate advisor, Design graduate students may apply to and complete an interdisciplinary Graduate Portfolio Program in tandem with their Design degree requirements. For a current list of GPPS, visit:

<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/programs/portfolio-programs>, and consult with individual GPP program websites and staff 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, students will need the assistance of the Design 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.

### **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 the student's 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 Design 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 options cannot be made after the mid-semester class day of long semester sessions or summer sessions.

### **Incomplete Grades and the Symbol X**

Incomplete grades 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 (i.e., fall or spring) 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) Design graduate advisor, 3) assistant chair for Design, 4) department chair for Design, and 5) dean. The decision of the dean is final.

When serious issues cannot be resolved informally, the Design 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 their good standing is in jeopardy. During the next semester or summer session in which the student is registered, they 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 by petition to the Design Graduate Studies Committee. 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 GPA of at least 3.00 may not withdraw without petitioning the consent of the Design graduate advisor and Dean of Graduate Studies.

A student may withdraw through the last class day of the semester. If the student abandons their 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](mailto: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 Design 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 Design graduate advisor and by the Dean of Graduate Studies in advance of the semester for which leave is granted. 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. See website for details: <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 Design graduate advisor, in consultation with the Design 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 Department of Design 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 Department of Design 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 Scholarships and Financial Aid website (<https://finaid.utexas.edu/>). International students can explore financial aid and services through the International Student and Scholar Services website (<https://global.utexas.edu/isss/advising-services/financial-aid>).

#### **Short-Term Loans**

Funds are 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. Contact Texas One Stop for more information (<https://onestop.utexas.edu/managing-costs/scholarships-financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/loans/>).

### **B. TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS AND ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORSHIPS**

#### **Appointment of TAs and AIs**

Many Design graduate students serve as teaching assistants (TA) for courses within the department. Assistant instructor (AI) appointments are also available on a case-by-case basis. Students should express interest in advancing to an AI role as early as possible since advance planning is needed to create an AI appointment in the department. TA and AI appointments are made on a semester-by-semester basis, in response to programmatic needs and availability of funds.

#### **Graduate Student Campus Jobs Listserv**

Graduate students who are interested and eligible for student appointments can find campus employment opportunities through the Graduate Student Campus Jobs Listserv. Graduate level positions, including Graduate Assistant, Graduate Research Assistant, Teaching Assistant, and Assistant Instructor positions from departments across campus are shared through this opt-in listserv. Current students can subscribe directly: <https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/info/graduatestudentcampusjobs>.

#### **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 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 at least half-time are eligible for UT health insurance, resident tuition entitlement (for non-Texas residents) and Tuition Reduction Benefits. Additional information can be viewed at: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academic-employment>

Health insurance for international students is automatically added for International students. Those with a benefits-eligible TA/AI appointment are eligible to waive this cost by submitting a waiver by the published deadline each semester: <https://global.utexas.edu/issv/advising-services/insurance/waivers>

### **Resident Tuition Entitlement and Tuition Reduction Benefits for TAs/AIs**

Nonresidents and international students who hold eligible TA/AI appointments may pay tuition and fees at the rate charged to Texas residents. A graduate student who seeks a resident tuition entitlement by reason of employment in a qualifying job title must submit the request online:

<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment/resident-tuition-entitlement#Employment>

Tuition Reduction Benefit (TRB) is available to those who hold benefits eligible TA/AI appointments: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment/academic-employment/tuition-reduction-benefit>. TRB refers to resident (in-state) tuition coverage that is provided to students as a benefit of their employment as a TA/AI which must be requested: <https://utdirect.utexas.edu/acct/fb/waivers/index.WBX>

### **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. All international students who will have classroom contact as part of their duties must be certified. The Office of Graduate Studies monitors the English proficiency assessment and training program. Under certain circumstances, this requirement can be waived. Learn more about requirements and exemptions:

<https://global.utexas.edu/english-language-center/resources/international-teaching-assistants>



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

### **A. 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 (COFA) at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin). The administrative structure of the university and its key academic officers is as follows:

#### **The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin)**

<https://www.utexas.edu/>

- President: Jay Hartzell
- Executive Vice President and Provost: Sharon Wood

#### **The Graduate School**

<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/>

- Dean: Sarah Ades
- Associate Dean of Graduate Study: James H. Cox

#### **The College of Fine Arts (COFA)**

<https://finearts.utexas.edu/>

- Dean: Ramón H. Rivera-Servera
- Associate Dean of Graduate Education: Raquel Monroe

#### **The School of Design and Creative Technologies (SDCT)**

<https://designcreativetech.utexas.edu/>

- Assistant Dean: Doreen Lorenzo

#### **Department of Design**

<https://designcreativetech.utexas.edu/academics-programs/department-design>

- Department Chair: Karol Murlak
- Design Graduate Advisor: Tasheka Arceneaux-Sutton

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 reviewed by the Chair and administered by the Graduate Advisor.

### **B. DESIGN GRADUATE ADVISOR**

The Design Graduate Advisor is a faculty member serving an academic appointment in Design. Tasheka Arceneaux-Sutton ([tasheka.arceneauxsutton@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:tasheka.arceneauxsutton@austin.utexas.edu)) serves as the Design Graduate Advisor. Design graduate students should consult the Design 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 Design graduate advisor are to:

- Advise graduate students in all matters regarding their academic progress through the program
- Bring student questions and concerns to the attention of the Design GSC
- Assign scholarship awards in keeping with the recommendations of the Design GSC
- Assign TA/Al 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)

## **C. DESIGN GRADUATE PROGRAM MANAGER**

The Design Graduate Program Manager is hired by the chairperson of the Department of Design and manages the Design graduate programs. The Design Graduate Program Manager is Scott Lauger ([scott.lauger@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:scott.lauger@austin.utexas.edu)). They oversee Department of Design graduate degree programs and respective staff. They also work to create systems, offer expert policy and procedural advice, and ensure Design graduate degree programs are positioned strategically for success in their fields.

The duties of the Design Graduate Program Manager are to oversee:

- Program budgets
- Admissions infrastructure and operations
- Graduate staff team
- Strategic partners and offerings
- Systems and protocols
- Scheduling
- Faculty appointments
- Branding and marketing
- Events and student experience

## **D. DESIGN GRADUATE COORDINATOR**

The Design Graduate Coordinator is hired by the chairperson of the Department of Design and serves as the administrator and coordinator of the Design graduate programs. They 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 Design Graduate Coordinator are to:

- Assist the Graduate Advisors in all aspects of running Design graduate programs
- Handle routine correspondence with applicants and current students
- Administer the admissions process
- Advise students and the Design graduate advisor on University policy and curricular requirements
- File petitions on behalf of students and the Design graduate advisor
- Gather and distribute information pertinent to graduate students
- Maintain graduate student records, including Programs of Work and graduation applications
- Direct students to University resources

## **E. DESIGN GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE**

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

The following faculty currently serve on the Design GSC: [Kate Canales](#), [Kate Catterall](#), [Michael Charles](#), [Tamie Glass](#), [Gray Garmon](#), [Carma Gorman](#), [Kelcey Gray](#), [Jiabao Li](#), [Monica Penick](#), [José Perez](#), [Tasheka Arceneaux Sutton](#) and [Byron Wilson](#).

The duties of the Design GSC are to:

- Make recommendations concerning graduate curricula, which the Graduate Studies Committee chair submits to the Graduate School for approval
- Recommend the admission or rejection of applicants to the program
- Set general requirements for the M.F.A. in Design program
- Be responsible for certifying and recommending students for admission to candidacy for all graduate degrees in its academic area
- Provide a description of requirements and procedures needed to achieve a degree

## **F. 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 tenured or tenure-track Graduate Studies Committee members—serve as sole supervisors of) Master's Report committees in Design.

The following faculty are able to serve as sole supervisors of a Master's in Design thesis: [Kate Catterall](#), [Michael Charles](#), [Tamie Glass](#), [Gray Garmon](#), [Carma Gorman](#), [Jiabao Li](#), [Monica Penick](#), [José Perez](#), [Tasheka Arceneaux Sutton](#) and [Byron Wilson](#).

## **VI. Facilities, Resources, Information**

The Design Department is housed in [Anna Hiss Gymnasium \(AHG\)](#), the [Art Building \(ART\)](#), and the [Doty Fine Arts Building \(DFA\)](#) alongside the Studio Art, Art Education and Robotics programs. Design graduate students have card-swipe access to the buildings (and/or key access, when relevant) to their shared studio space in the AHG building. In addition, graduate students have access to many other departmental and university resources, including those listed below.

### **A. DESIGN FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

#### **M.F.A. in Design Graduate Student Studio (AHG 1.304)**

Design graduate students have a dedicated shared studio space in AHG 1.304. Each student is provided a desk, chair and storage unit for individual use. Only current Design graduate students and necessary faculty and staff have card-swipe access to this space.

Some M.F.A. in Design courses are taught in this space. When classes are not in session, students may use this as a workspace, including evenings and weekends. General supplies, art cart materials, and printer(s) are available to students with limited refills per academic year.

#### **The Design Lab (ART 2.212)**

<https://designcreativetech.utexas.edu/gallery/design-lab>

[https://rrk.finearts.utexas.edu/?page\\_id=474](https://rrk.finearts.utexas.edu/?page_id=474)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bRtyb6rfzUYX0bdr00D1TubcWXeiOdQ6/view>

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)**

<http://sites.utexas.edu/digifablab/about/>

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 Woodshop (ART 2.314)**

The centrally located woodshop 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](http://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. Design graduate 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)**

<https://www.lib.utexas.edu/about/locations/fine-arts>

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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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)**

<https://soa.utexas.edu/materials-lab>

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/resources/statistical-consulting/free-statistical-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**

<https://ehs.utexas.edu/>

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.

### **Building Access and Keys**

Graduate students in the Department of Design have access to the AHG 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 hold 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**

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/graduate>

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.

### **The University of Texas Course Schedule**

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules>

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.

### **General Information Catalog**

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/general-information>

This catalog contains information and academic regulations for the University. The official academic calendar also appears in the General Information Catalog.

### **TA/Al Information**

<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academic-employment>

This website 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**

<https://community.utexas.edu/disability/>

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact the Office of Disability and Access as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

### **College of Fine Arts Career Services**

<https://sites.utexas.edu/cofacareers/>

Fine Arts Career Services (FACS) offers resources and professional support to the undergraduate and graduate students of the College of Fine Arts. Through one-on-one career coaching, workshops, special events, coursework, and funding opportunities, FACS can support students' professional journey during

their time on the 40 Acres and after. The FACS team all have backgrounds in career services as well as the visual/performing arts, and are ready to help students find their own creative pathway.

### **Industry Relations**

<https://designcreativetech.utexas.edu/industry-outreach-university>

Industry Relations in the School of Design and Creative Technologies serves as the bridge between student creatives and their desired industries, including design, technology, entertainment, and more. Services include one-on-one consultations, webinars and resources, networking guidance, and assistance with resumes, cover letters, and portfolios. The goal of Industry Relations is to equip students to advocate for themselves and supply the necessary opportunities to practice that advocacy. From orientation to graduation, Industry Relations provides curated resources and individual career direction to students pursuing their dreams in the creative industries.

### **Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

<https://www.utexas.edu/campus-life/entrepreneurship-and-innovation>

UT Austin believes it's critical to foster the entrepreneurial spirit that runs deep in all of our colleges and schools. And that's why there are dozens of ways to educate student entrepreneurs, encourage local startup community engagement, support tech commercialization, and serve as an intellectual hub for pioneering research and enterprise. The mission of COFA's newly created Center for Creative Entrepreneurship (CCE) exists to empower students with the mindset, skillset and the practice necessary to transform passions into a sustainable business or career. They are focused on bringing forth students' innate entrepreneurial abilities toward the development of their future.

### **University Health Services (UHS)**

<https://www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/>

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 on the website.

### **Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)**

<https://www.utgsa.net/>

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.

## 2024-2025 GSC Certification Form for Graduate Student Handbooks

Graduate student handbooks describe graduate degree requirements, program expectations, and deadlines; and they are intended to supplement information published in the Graduate Catalog.

Graduate School policy requires that student handbooks be reviewed annually by the graduate program's Graduate Studies Committee in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog publication cycle.

The signature on this document acknowledges that the Graduate Studies Committee of the graduate program in the Department of Design has reviewed and approved the attached handbook content for publication with the 2023-2024 Graduate Catalog.



December 18, 2023

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Tamie Glass, Design GSC Chair

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Date



## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the M.F.A. in Design Student Handbook, which describes important information regarding the program and understand that I should consult with program staff if I have questions.

Since the information and policies described here are subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the Handbook may occur and that I will be notified should the program make any changes.

I understand and agree that I will read and comply with the policies contained in this Handbook and am bound by the provisions contained therein.

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

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**Student Signature:**

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## AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE FORM

I authorize representatives of the M.F.A. in Design program to release the following information from my school record to employers who request it:

- Resume and Headshot
- Program GPA
- Class Standing

I understand that the M.F.A. in Design program does not guarantee employment or salary following graduation but does offer career planning assistance to current students.

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

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**Student Signature:**

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## PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE FORM

For valuable consideration, I do hereby authorize The University of Texas, and those acting pursuant to its authority to:

- a) Record my participation and appearance on videotape, audiotape, film, photograph, or any other medium
- b) Use my name, likeness, voice, and biographical material in connection with these recordings
- c) Exhibit or distribute such recording in whole or in part without restrictions or limitation for any education or promotional purpose with which The University of Texas, and those acting pursuant to its authority, deem appropriate

Name:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## COPIES OF PHOTO ID AND MEDICAL INSURANCE CARDS

1. Please upload a front and back copy of your photo ID.
  
2. Please upload a front and back copy of your medical insurance card. If you do not currently have medical insurance or you will be applying to The University of Texas student healthcare plan, please be send a copy of your insurance card as soon as you receive one. Your insurance card is required for events off-campus and company treks.