

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS, MFA

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The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts is a terminal degree which prepares students as professional artists and scholars who can work within their specialty and teach at the university level. Creative work and skill building are at the core of the study. The curriculum is designed for serious and talented students who are prepared to examine modes of creative inquiry in an inclusive, unique environment that promotes exploration, analysis, synthesis, and development as artists.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified on the [Graduate Admissions policy page \(https://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/\)](https://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/). Specific graduate admissions requirements can be found on the [College of Visual and Performing Arts Graduate Admissions requirements page \(https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/\)](https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/).

Concentration in Dance

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Dance, is a highly selective 60-credit program of study grounded in the modern dance genre that emphasizes mastery in performance, choreography, and teaching in higher education. Applicants must have significant (5 years or more) professional performance experience in modern or ballet at the national or international level. They must also demonstrate professional competence in choreography as exemplified by a significant body of work, and have experience teaching technique at the advanced level.

Specific graduate admissions requirements can be found on the [College of Visual and Performing Arts Graduate Admissions requirements page \(https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/\)](https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/).

Concentration in Graphic Design

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, Graphic Design concentration, is a terminal degree that offers creative students a broad study of design as well as the development of skills for teaching at the university level. The 60-credit program includes courses in typography, web and motion design, user experience, and branding. Coursework in theoretical and historical design will supplement the studio experience. The broad range of study is intended to develop design educators and professionals, preparing them for the ever-evolving field of design. Admission is selective, ideal applicants should possess a BFA degree in graphic design and a significant design portfolio, reflecting professional achievement.

Specific graduate admissions requirements can be found on the [College of Visual and Performing Arts Graduate Admissions requirements page \(https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/\)](https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/).

Concentration in Theater

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts with a concentration in Theater is a highly selective program designed for theater artists with some professional experience who continue to work professionally during their course of study. Students are admitted to a specific emphasis: Acting, Design & Technology, or Directing. A program of study will be designed for each individual, based on their area of expertise, previous experience and professional goals.

Specific graduate admissions requirements can be found on the [College of Visual and Performing Arts Graduate Admissions requirements page \(https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/\)](https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/).

Concentration in Visual Art

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts with a concentration in Visual Arts is a highly selective 60 credit terminal degree that prepares students to become professional artists, work in technology or arts-related fields, and teach at the university level. Coursework includes research in areas of study that include New Media, Painting and Drawing, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, and InterArts. Students have the opportunity to combine art forms in projects that may be installation, performance, publishing, time-based, or writing-based, and combine creative and critical approaches in their work.

Specific graduate admissions requirements can be found on the [College of Visual and Performing Arts Graduate Admissions requirements page \(https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/\)](https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/).

Policies

Program Requirements

Candidates are required to complete 60 credits, of which 30 are made up from core requirements. An additional 30 credits are based on concentration area and comprehensive experience.

MFA concentrations include:

- Dance
- Graphic Design
- Theater
- Visual Art

While the faculty anticipate that students will work through their coursework as described in this catalog, individuals with extensive professional accomplishment may craft an individualized program that meets curricular requirements. Individualized programs require the recommendation of the Graduate Committee within the student's respective school as well as the approval of the CVPA Associate Dean.

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 60

Students should complete all requirements within the concentration to which they have been admitted. Candidates are required to complete

60 credits, of which 30 are made up from core requirements. An additional 30 credits are based on concentration area and comprehensive experience.

Concentration in Dance (DANC)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Dance, is a highly selective 60-credit program of study grounded in the modern dance genre that emphasizes mastery in performance, choreography, and teaching in higher education.

Core Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Research Methods		
AVT 600	Research Methodologies	3
Graduate Seminar		
Two credits of		2
DANC 501	Graduate Dance Seminar	
Writing Seminar		
AVT 621	Art Writing Seminar	3
Advanced Aesthetics		
DANC 598	Philosophy and Aesthetics of Dance	3
Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend		
DANC 615	Contemporary Trends	3
Teaching Practicum		
DANC 627	Advanced Teaching Seminar	3
Directed Reading		
AVT 796	Directed Reading	1
Project		
Six credits of		6
DANC 798	Directed Choreography/Project	
Thesis		
Six credits of		6
DANC 799	Thesis	
CVPA 600	CVPA Graduate ProSeminar ¹	0
Total Credits		30

¹ Must be taken within the student's first two semesters.

Concentration Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
DANC 510	Contemporary Movement Theories	3
DANC 560	Advanced Choreography	3
Three credits of		3
DANC 570	Advanced Dance Performance	
DANC 571	Residency Workshop	3
Three credits of		3
DANC 790	Internship	
DANC 672	Dance Production	3
Select 12 credits from the following:		12
DANC 525	Advanced Modern Dance (must be taken for a minimum 6 credits)	
DANC 545	Advanced Ballet (must be taken for a minimum 3 credits)	
Total Credits		30

Concentration in Graphic Design (GD)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Graphic Design offers students a comprehensive study and preparation for the graphic design profession. The program includes courses in typography, web design, image making, and brand design, as well as prepares students for an academic career in Graphic Design. The broad range of study is intended to develop professionals prepared for an ever-expanding graphic design field.

Core Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Research Methods		
AVT 600	Research Methodologies	3
Graduate Seminar		
Eight credits of		8
AVT 611	Graduate Design Seminar	
Writing Seminar		
AVT 621	Art Writing Seminar	3
Advanced Aesthetics		
AVT 613	Experiential Design History	3
Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend		
AVT 618	Visual Communication Theories	3
Teaching Practicum		
Four credits of		4
AVT 670	Teaching Practicum	
Directed Reading		
AVT 796	Directed Reading ¹	3
Project		
Six credits of		6
AVT 798	Directed Project and Exhibition (6 credits) ¹	
Thesis		
Three credits of		3
AVT 799	Thesis ¹	
CVPA 600	CVPA Graduate ProSeminar ²	0
Total Credits		36

¹ Involves a study of the historical basis for a studio project; an independent creative production suitable for public viewing; and a written thesis documenting the evolution of the creative problem and exploring the intention, purpose, and relative success of the finished project.

² Must be taken within the student's first two semesters.

Concentration Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
AVT 614	Brand Identity Design	3
AVT 617	Advanced Typography	3
Select 6 credits from the following:		6
AVT 519	Special Topics in Graphic Design	
AVT 619	Advanced Web Design	
AVT 596	Independent Study	
AVT 599	Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology	
Other graduate studio courses as approved by director		

AVT 641	Graduate Graphic Design I	3
AVT 646	Graduate Graphic Design II	3
AVT 647	Advanced Graduate Graphic Design I	3
AVT 648	Advanced Graphic Design II	3
Total Credits		24

Concentration in Theater (THR)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Theater, is a terminal degree that prepares students to become professional artists, work in theater or arts-related fields, and teach at the university level.

Core Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Research Methods		
AVT 600	Research Methodologies	3
Graduate Seminar		
Two credits of		2
THR 591	Graduate Seminar	
Writing Seminar		
THR 652	Writing Seminar	3
Advanced Aesthetics		
AVT 621	Art Writing Seminar	3
Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend		
Six credits of		6
THR 651	Advanced Dramatic Theory and Criticism	
Teaching Practicum		
THR 655	Teaching Practicum	3
Directed Reading		
THR 796	Directed Reading	1
Project		
THR 797 & THR 798	Project Preparation and Project Practicum	6
Thesis		
THR 799	Thesis (3 credits)	3
CVPA 600	CVPA Graduate ProSeminar ¹	0
Total Credits		30

¹ Must be taken within the student's first two semesters.

Concentration Requirements for All Emphases

Code	Title	Credits
THR 539	Aesthetics for the Theater	3
THR 560	Advanced Script Analysis	3
THR 691	Professional Development	3
THR 790	Directed Research	3
Total Credits		12

Track Requirements

In each area of emphasis, students must pick either a professional or academic track. Students in the professional track will complete at least three additional credits in practical production experience over and above the core in the following:

Code	Title	Credits
Select 3 credits from the following:		3
THR 694	Graduate Field Experience	

THR 696	Advanced Acting Practicum	
THR 697	Advanced Playwriting and Dramaturgy Practicum	
THR 698	Advanced Directing Practicum	
THR 699	Advanced Design Practicum	
Total Credits		3

Students in the academic track will complete at least three additional credits in practical teaching over and above the core in the following:

Code	Title	Credits
THR 755	Academic Track Practicum	3
Total Credits		3

Emphasis Requirements

With the approval of their mentor, students will have the flexibility to select courses from Emphasis areas:

Code	Title	Credits
Select 15 credits from the following:		15
Acting Emphasis:		
THR 525	Advanced Musical Theater Workshop	
THR 590	Special Topics for Graduate Study	
THR 599	Independent Study	
THR 610	Acting Mentorship	
THR 620	Acting Techniques	
THR 694	Graduate Field Experience	
THR 696	Advanced Acting Practicum	
Design & Technology Emphasis:		
THR 530	Topics in Theater Design	
THR 590	Special Topics for Graduate Study	
THR 599	Independent Study	
THR 630	Design Mentorship	
THR 694	Graduate Field Experience	
THR 699	Advanced Design Practicum	
AMGT 602	Seminar in Arts Management	
AMGT 609	Performing Arts Management	
AMGT 706	Festivals and Special Events	
AMGT 752	Arts Entrepreneurship	
GAME 635	Issues in Interactive Entertainment	
GAME 650	Advanced Music and Sound for Games	
AVT 682	Experimental 2D Animation	
AVT 686	Experimental 3D Animation	
AVT 687	Advanced Topics: New Media	
AVT 688	Hybrid Animation	
FAVS 565	Documentary Filmmaking	
FAVS 575	Fiction Film Directing	
FAVS 599	Special Topics	
Directing Emphasis:		
THR 540	Directing Techniques	
THR 590	Special Topics for Graduate Study	
THR 599	Independent Study	
THR 640	Directing Mentorship	
THR 694	Graduate Field Experience	

THR 698	Advanced Directing Practicum	
THR 755	Academic Track Practicum	
FAVS 565	Documentary Filmmaking	
FAVS 575	Fiction Film Directing	
FAVS 599	Special Topics	
Musical Theater Emphasis:		
THR 525	Advanced Musical Theater Workshop	
THR 590	Special Topics for Graduate Study	
THR 599	Independent Study	
THR 610	Acting Mentorship	
THR 620	Acting Techniques	
THR 694	Graduate Field Experience	
THR 696	Advanced Acting Practicum	
THR 755	Academic Track Practicum	
MUSI 621	Graduate Applied Music	
MUSI 688	Opera and Musical Theater Ensemble	
MUSI 699	Independent Study	
Playwriting & Dramaturgy Emphasis:		
THR 571	Advanced Playwriting Workshop	
THR 590	Special Topics for Graduate Study	
THR 599	Independent Study	
THR 694	Graduate Field Experience	
THR 697	Advanced Playwriting and Dramaturgy Practicum	
THR 740	Directors and Dramaturgs in Collaboration	
Total Credits		15

Concentration in Visual Art (VART)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Visual Arts, is a terminal degree that prepares students to become professional artists, work in technology or arts-related fields, and teach at the university level. Students select an emphasis in one of the following: New Media, Painting and Drawing, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, or InterArts. Students have the opportunity to combine art forms in projects that may be installation, performance, publishing, time-based, or writing-based, and combine creative and critical approaches in their work.

Core Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Research Methods		
AVT 600	Research Methodologies	3
Graduate Seminar		
Six credits of		6
AVT 610	Graduate Seminar	
Writing Seminar		
AVT 621	Art Writing Seminar	3
Advanced Aesthetics		
AVT 507	Advanced Aesthetics	3
or AVT 599	Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology	
Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend		
AVT 620	Theory, Criticism, and the Arts	3
Teaching Practicum		
Four credits of		4
AVT 670	Teaching Practicum	

Directed Reading

AVT 796	Directed Reading	3
Project		
Six credits of		6
AVT 798	Directed Project and Exhibition	
Thesis		
Three credits of		3
AVT 799	Thesis	
CVPA 600	CVPA Graduate ProSeminar ¹	0
Total Credits		34

¹ Must be taken within the student's first two semesters.

Note:

AVT 796 Directed Reading/AVT 798 Directed Project and Exhibition/AVT 799 Thesis involves a study of the historical basis for a studio project; an independent creative production suitable for public viewing; and a written thesis documenting the evolution of the creative problem and exploring the intention, purpose, and relative success of the finished project.

Concentration Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Select 9 credits from the following:		
AVT 596	Independent Study	9
AVT 599	Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology	
Other courses as approved by director		
Three credits of		3
AVT 599	Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology	
AVT 610	Graduate Seminar	2
AVT Emphasis Courses		12
Total Credits		26

Areas of Emphasis

Code	Title	Credits
InterArts		
Select 12 credits of any 500 - 600 level AVT course as approved by the division director. InterArts graduate students may combine courses from studio areas of emphasis (as indicated below) and work with faculty to design an interdisciplinary thesis project.		12
Total Credits		12

New Media Art

Code	Title	Credits
Select four from the following courses:		
AVT 616	Advanced Art and Interactivity	12
AVT 676	Graduate Sound Art	
AVT 682	Experimental 2D Animation	
AVT 684	Advanced Image Making	
AVT 685	Video Art	
AVT 686	Experimental 3D Animation	
AVT 687	Advanced Topics: New Media	

AVT 688	Hybrid Animation	
Total Credits		12

Painting and Drawing

Code	Title	Credits
Select four courses from the following:		12
AVT 522	Drawing V	
AVT 523	Drawing VI	
AVT 599	Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology (Must be approved by advisor)	
AVT 622	Advanced Drawing	
AVT 632	Graduate Painting I	
AVT 633	Graduate Painting II	
AVT 634	Advanced Graduate Painting I	
AVT 635	Advanced Graduate Painting II	
Total Credits		12

Photography

Code	Title	Credits
AVT 652	Graduate Photography I	3
AVT 653	Graduate Photography II	3
AVT 654	Advanced Graduate Photography I	3
AVT 655	Advanced Graduate Photography II	3
Total Credits		12

Printmaking

Code	Title	Credits
AVT 642	Graduate Printmaking I	3
AVT 643	Graduate Printmaking II	3
AVT 644	Advanced Graduate Printmaking I	3
AVT 645	Advanced Graduate Printmaking II	3
Total Credits		12

Sculpture

Code	Title	Credits
AVT 662	Graduate Sculpture I	3
AVT 663	Graduate Sculpture II	3
AVT 664	Advanced Graduate Sculpture I	3
AVT 665	Advanced Graduate Sculpture II	3
Total Credits		12

Note:

Mason does not guarantee the availability of these courses every semester; some are offered in alternate years.