

# COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

C211 College Hall  
Fairfax Campus  
MSN: 1H4

Phone: 703-993-4551  
Website: [cvpa.gmu.edu](http://cvpa.gmu.edu)

## Administration

- Rick Davis, Dean
- Lisa C. Kahn, Associate Dean
- Nicole Springer, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
- Andrew Bursten, Director Finance and Administration, CFO
- Julie Thompson, Executive Director, Center for the Arts

### College Code: AR

The mission of the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) is to advance the study, creation, performance, exhibition, and management of the arts, acting on the strong belief in their transformative influence on individuals and civilizations. Fusing the academic and the professional, the campus and the community, the past and the present, CVPA seeks to engage new art forms, populations, and ways of working to meet the needs of a changing world both inside and beyond the walls of the university. The College strives to ensure that Mason's entire student population has the opportunity to experience and study the arts as a key component of a well-rounded liberal education.

Studying the arts goes hand in hand with creation, performance, and management. Each major features strong academic preparation in the history and theory of the art form in support of discipline-based technique courses. The college's faculty of practicing artist-teachers-managers works closely with students in a variety of curricular and co-curricular creative projects. Once basic techniques are established, students are encouraged to stretch, grow, and experiment within this supportive environment, enhancing their experience as working artists while enriching the cultural life of the campus community.

An education in the arts is deepened by regular contact with the work of distinguished visiting artists. The college is home to the Center for the Arts (<http://cfa.gmu.edu>) on the Fairfax campus and the Hylton Performing Arts Center (<https://hyltoncenter.org>) on the Science and Technology campus, both of which present diverse programs of cultural experiences for the entire university community, as well as Northern Virginia and the greater Washington, D.C., area. Artists from across the country and around the world regularly perform, give master classes, work with students during extended residencies, and interact with the community in a variety of other ways. The accessibility and vitality of the Concert Hall, Hylton Center, TheaterSpace, the School of Art Gallery, Johnson Center Cinema, Harris Theater, and other campus and regional venues provide an unparalleled educational experience in the arts.

## Requirements & Policies

### General Academic Policies

The requirements for each academic program offered by the college are described in the sections below. Students are ultimately responsible for

their academic progress towards their degrees. All students are subject to the university's general academic policies in addition to those specific to each academic unit.

### Accommodations for Disabled Students

Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (<http://ods.gmu.edu>) (Student Union I, Room 222; 703-993-2474) to open a file and learn more about accommodations that may be available to them.

### Auditing

Students who wish to audit a course must obtain written permission from the instructor before registering for the class. Students do not receive grades or credit for audited courses. A student who audits a course does so for the purposes of self-enrichment and academic exploration and are not required to actively participate in class assignments, presentations, or exams. The course is offered **only** on a space-available basis with the approval of the instructor. It is expected that auditing students will respect all class rules and practices.

The Course Audit Form can be found on the Registrar's website (<http://registrar.gmu.edu>). The form must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar by the last day to drop the course.

Note: A previously audited course may be taken again for credit in a later term. Students may also audit a course previously taken and passed; however, students may not change from credit to audit status nor from audit to credit status after the end of the drop period, as defined above. The usual tuition and fees apply to audit status.

### Auditing Courses under the Senior Citizen Waiver Program

Under terms of the Senior Citizen Higher Education Act of 1974, eligible Virginia residents (requires legal domicile for one year) that are 60 years of age or older are entitled to enroll to audit (no academic credit received) up to three academic credit courses per semester and pay no tuition or fees, except fees established for the purpose of paying for course materials or laboratory fees.

For more information on policies and procedures, please refer to the Registrar's website (<https://registrar.gmu.edu/topics/senior-citizen-waiver>).

### E-mail

George Mason University uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students should activate their Mason e-mail, use it to communicate with their school/ department/ program and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important information.

### Registration

Students are personally responsible for correctly registering for courses and paying all tuition and fees by the official university registration and payment deadlines. Instructors do not have the authority to add students to courses. All students should verify the accuracy of their enrollment before the end of the add and drop periods.

## Questions about Academic Policies

Students with questions regarding exceptions to academic policies should contact the CVPA Academic Affairs Office (College Hall, C200; 703-993-4551).

## Undergraduate Policies and Information Degree Programs

The undergraduate degree consists of course work in the Mason Core, a major area of study, and electives. To earn a bachelor's degree, students must complete a minimum of 120 credits, of which at least 45 must be upper level courses (numbered 300 and above). At least one course at the 300 or 400 level must be designated "writing intensive."

### Academic Course Load

Undergraduate students earning degrees in CVPA may register for 18 credits per fall and spring semester without the dean's permission. Students are advised that they will be required to pay additional tuition beyond the 16-credit, university full-time academic load. Students should be cognizant of the time commitment when they register for their courses, especially if they register for high numbers of credits. Students are urged to consult with their advisor and familiarize themselves with Mason guidelines for work and academic load. Students are reminded that employment must not take priority over course work.

### Advising

Students are assigned advisors and are strongly encouraged to meet with them periodically, and particularly when they achieve 75 credits or are two semesters before expected graduation. Undeclared CVPA students and undergraduate students in academic difficulty (cumulative GPA under 2.00) are required to see an advisor prior to registration for the semester following registration restriction.

### Minimum Cumulative GPA in Major

Undergraduate students earning CVPA degrees must earn a minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA in their major, or higher, if required by their program.

### Foreign Language Requirement

Some degrees within CVPA require intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language or the completion of a minor, double major or double degree. The foreign language requirement may be fulfilled by completing a course in a foreign language numbered 202, 209, or 210 (or higher level courses taught in the language) or achieving a satisfactory score on an approved proficiency test. International students should consult the CVPA Student Academic Affairs Office about a possible waiver of this requirement.

### Leave of Absence

All undergraduate students who are planning an absence from George Mason must submit a formal request for Leave of Absence to the Office of the University Registrar. Students do not need to complete the Leave of Absence form if they are participating in a George Mason University sponsored study abroad program or have received permission to study elsewhere. The maximum time allowed for a Leave of Absence is two years. A new admission application will be required if a student is away for more than 2 academic years OR a Leave of Absence form was not submitted. Re-admission is not guaranteed. See AP.1.8 Undergraduate Leave of Absence for full university policy.

## Mason Core Program

The baccalaureate degree requires students to take a range of courses that provide a broad knowledge of the world, develop the ability to think both conceptually and critically, acquaint them with many different methods of inquiry, and provide the skills to continue intellectual growth throughout their lives. Students select from a range of courses outlined in the Mason Core section. Students accepted into the Honors College fulfill some/all of their Mason Core requirements with completion of that program of study. Students are strongly advised to consult the University Mason Core page.

### Minors

Some degrees within CVPA require a minor or intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language. University policy states that students must earn 8 distinct credits toward their minor that are not used for their major. Some programs have more specific criteria for applying credits to a minor.

### Physical Education Courses

Activity courses offered by the College of Education and Human Development cannot be counted toward credits required for a degree in CVPA. Students may take non-activity RECR courses for elective credit for CVPA degrees.

### Prerequisites

Undergraduate students must earn a C or better in prerequisite courses to proceed to the next course.

### Study Elsewhere

Students with fewer than 60 hours of transfer coursework (not including registration through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area or coursework completed through the Center for Global Education) may take up to 12 hours of coursework in CVPA disciplines at another institution. A student may seek permission for additional hours beyond these limits for summer registration if his/her permanent residence is more than 50 miles from the George Mason University Fairfax campus. Students must obtain advance, written approval from the student's dean and the course dean's office.

Students who enroll elsewhere without advance written permission while enrolled at Mason will not receive transfer credit for the course work taken at another institution unless they re-apply for admission to Mason as transfer applicants and meet all priority deadlines. Re-admission is not guaranteed and transfer credit is awarded based upon course equivalences in effect at the time of re-admission. Freshmen and transfer students in their first semester at Mason are not permitted to study elsewhere. Courses previously attempted at Mason (including withdrawals) cannot be taken elsewhere. Schools and Colleges have study elsewhere criteria for courses in their disciplines in addition to University policy. Students must be in good standing with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 in their Mason courses. See AP.1.4.2 Permission to Study Elsewhere for additional information.

### Transfer of Credit

Transfer students must resolve transfer credit issues within the first academic year of enrollment.

Undergraduate students may transfer a maximum of 18 credits earned in nondegree status into a degree program.

## Withdrawals

Students are responsible for all courses in which they remain officially enrolled once the drop period has ended.

Undergraduates enrolled in degree programs are eligible to withdraw from three classes through the ninth week (of a fifteen week semester) without dean's approval and at the student's own discretion during their entire undergraduate career at Mason. See AP.1.5.1 Selective Withdrawal for Undergraduates for further details.

Instructors do not have the authority to withdraw students from classes. Withdrawals other than Selective Withdrawals require the approval of the academic dean and are typically allowed only for full semesters at a time (all enrolled courses) and are only permitted for non-academic reasons. No withdrawals can be approved to avoid an unsatisfactory grade. When submitting a withdrawal request, students must provide original, verifiable, third-party documentation for the reason for the withdrawal. Requests for withdrawals should be submitted as early in the semester as possible, and never after the last day of classes.

## Graduate Policies and Information

For items not listed below, please refer to the university's policies: AP.6 Graduate Policies.

### Admissions

CVPA follows university policies for graduate admissions. Some programs ask for additional admissions requirements. Please refer to the program for a listing of all requirements.

All applicants, regardless of admission or not, will have their decision uploaded through their self-service center. Applicants will be notified that their decision is ready for their review via email to the address they provided at the point of application. Applicants will not be told decisions over the phone or in-person. Applicants who do not meet our minimum requirements (e.g., GPA, test scores, pre-screening requirements, portfolio requirements) may be issued a denial decision before their application is completed.

The College of Visual and Performing Arts does not offer an appeal process for admissions decisions. Applicants are welcome to file a new application for a future semester.

### Graduate Programs

CVPA's graduate programs offer highly focused study designed to prepare students for professional work in the arts and education. The requirements for each graduate degree are described under the program's catalog entry.

### Transfer of Credit

Graduate credit earned prior to admission to a certificate, master's, or doctoral program may be eligible to be transferred and applied to a CVPA graduate program, certificate or doctoral degree. Please see AP.6.5.3 Transfer of Credit for more detailed information about the requirements.

## Appeals Process

### Appeals of Academic Procedures

See Appeals of Academic Procedures for University Policies.

### CVPA Procedures for Grade Appeal

Although faculty members are generally the best judges of student performance in their classes, circumstances may cause a student to

believe that a professor has made an unfair grade decision. Therefore, a Grade Appeal process has been established to ensure a fair hearing in such cases. Grade appeals are not accepted after the last day of classes for the following semester, as indicated in the Schedule of Classes (spring for fall grades, fall for spring and summer grades). The process for initiating and resolving a Grade Appeal is as follows:

1. The first step to resolve differences between an instructor and student concerning a grade should be a discussion with the instructor; this meeting should occur within two weeks of the student's written request for a meeting; if the instructor is no longer affiliated with the University, the appeal is made to the Program Director.
2. If the instructor and student cannot resolve the issue, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, he or she must present to the Program Director, a written appeal including the following:
  - A description of the outcome of the informal discussion process.
  - Any relevant documents the student would like to have reviewed as part of the appeal process.
  - A copy of the course syllabus and assignment descriptions.

The Program Director will discuss this appeal with the faculty member and will provide the student with written notification of the outcome within 1 week.

3. Failing a satisfactory resolution, the student may appeal the grade by submitting a written appeal to the CVPA Academic Affairs Office. Undergraduate students will submit their request to Assistant Dean Nicole Springer; graduate students will submit their requests to Associate Dean Dr. Lisa Kahn in the Academic Affairs Office.

The decision of the CVPA Assistant or Associate Dean is final.

### CVPA Procedures for Appeal of an Academic Action

In exceptional circumstances a student may request a meeting to review the decision of an academic action.

1. The student must state in writing the reasons for requesting further appeal of an academic action, and provide any additional or new information relevant to the appeal.
2. The Assistant Dean (undergraduate)/Associate Dean (graduate) for Academic Affairs reviews all appeals.
3. The dean will conduct a review of the documentation provided by the student, and may request additional information in order to make an informed decision.
4. A nonparticipating observer of the student's choice may attend the meeting with the dean, and the dean may also have a nonparticipating observer attend.
5. The student may follow University appeal procedures outlined in Appeals of Academic Procedures.

### CVPA Procedure for Non-Academic Appeals or Grievance

A student who intends to file a non-academic appeal, or intends to file a grievance against a faculty member, another student, or administrator undertakes the following steps:

1. The student meets with the professor and Program Director to discuss the non-academic appeal/grievance; this meeting should occur within two weeks of the student's written request for a meeting; if the person is no longer affiliated with the University, the request is made to the Department or Program Director only.

2. The professor (Program Director) responds to the student within three days of the meeting.
3. If the student wishes to continue the non-academic appeal/grievance, the student must submit a written explanation to Academic Affairs Office. The Associate Dean reviews all non-academic appeals and grievances, and has the final decision for the college
4. The student may follow additional University appeal procedures outlined in Appeals of Academic Procedures.

### Academic Termination from an Undergraduate Program

Termination from a major may be imposed as a result of excessive repeating of required courses without achieving the minimum standard, and for other evidence of continued failure to make adequate progress toward completion of the major. Some programs have specific criteria for termination from the major. See the program and AP.5.2.4 Termination from the Major.

### Academic Dismissal from an Undergraduate Program

A third suspension results in academic dismissal from the university. See AP.5.2.6 Academic Dismissal for details.

### Academic Dismissal from a Graduate Program

The Office of the University Registrar contacts students via e-mail if they have earned an academic warning, or dismissal. Students wishing to appeal should contact the CVPA Graduate Programs Office within three days of the e-mail date. A deadline for the appeal documentation is determined, normally two weeks. Students are to submit:

1. A written statement explaining the circumstances that led to the dismissal, along with supporting documentation from employers, physicians, or other sources as necessary;
2. Evidence that the circumstances precipitating the unsatisfactory academic performance have been remedied;
3. Statement from department and program's graduate coordinator supporting the student's continued enrollment at the University.

Upon receipt of the above,

1. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs reviews the appeal.
2. The final decision of the Associate Dean is forwarded to the student and the Office of the University Registrar.
3. The student may follow University appeal procedures outlined in Appeals of Academic Procedures.

For these, and any other academic concerns, students are encouraged to contact George Mason University's Ombudsman for Student Academic Affairs. The ombudsman is a neutral, independent, informal, and confidential party who provides assistance to students in resolving university-related concerns. The ombudsman is an advocate for fairness and the equitable treatment of students, operates independently of all formal grievance processes at the university, and considers all sides of an issue in an impartial and objective manner. The ombudsman has no authority to make exceptions or to grant requests but can perform informal investigations and, as a result, may recommend actions that lead to changes in processes and policies at the university. Meetings with the ombudsman are confidential. The ombudsman serves all undergraduate and graduate students at the university.

- Computer Game Design Program
- Film and Video Studies Program
- School of Art
- School of Dance
- School of Music
- School of Theater

## Programs

- Visual and Performing Arts, MFA

## Academic Units

- Arts Management Program