



Vermont
College of
Fine Arts

STUDENT HANDBOOK

LOW-RESIDENCY MFA PROGRAMS

December 2017

36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
802 828 8600 • 866 934 VCFA
vcfa.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

College-Wide Policies and Useful Information

Academic Calendar (2017-2018)	1
Academic Honesty	2
Academic Progress and Length of Program	2
Academic Records	4
Student Right to Privacy (FERPA)	4
Transcripts	6
Transfer Credits	6
Accreditation	7
Admission to VCFA	8
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	8
Service Animals and Assistance Animals on Campus	10
Appeals, Complaints & Grievances	14
Artistic Freedom and Responsibility	14
Closing of the College or Programs	15
Credit Hours Per Semester	15
Discrimination & Harassment	15
Title IX – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex	17
Governance	18
Library	19
Student ID Cards	19
Veterans Benefits	20
VCFA Email Policy	20
VCFA Portals	22
Campus Matters	23
Student Code of Conduct	23
Alcohol and Drugs	26
Campus Safety	26
Dormitory Procedures	27
Early Arrival/Late Departure for Residencies	27
Emergency Medical Services	28
Facilities Operations & Maintenance	28
Food Service	28
Guests & Children on Campus	28
Lost & Found	28
Parking	29
Personal Property on Campus	29
Pets on Campus	29
Quiet Policy	29
Room & Board	29
Smoking on Campus	30
VCFA Contacts/Emergency Numbers	31
Financial Matters	32
Tuition & Fees	32
Financial Aid	32
Credit Balances	32
Leave of Absence	33
Withdrawal & Refunds	33
Return of Financial Aid	35
Final Assessment after Withdrawal	35
Graduation	35
Diplomas & Transcripts	35

Program-Specific Policies & Procedures

MFA in Film	36
MFA in Graphic Design	52
MFA in Music Composition	64
MFA in Visual Art	74
MFA in Writing, Writing for Children & Young Adults	91

ACADEMIC CALENDAR/ RESIDENCY SCHEDULE

Winter-Spring 2017 – Summer-Fall 2018



This schedule is for planning purposes only. Please check with program offices for more specific residency information (arrival and departure times, etc.) before making travel arrangements.

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>New Student Orientation</i>	<i>Semester/ Residency Start Date</i>	<i>Graduation/ Residency End Date</i>	<i>Semester End Date</i>
Winter-Spring 2017	Writing	12/28/16	12/29/16	1/7/17	6/24/17
Winter-Spring 2017	WCYA	1/10/17	1/11/17	1/20/17	7/7/17
Winter-Spring 2017	Visual	1/26/17	1/26/17	2/3/17	7/18/17
Winter-Spring 2017	Music	2/5/17	2/5/17	2/11/17	7/30/17
Winter-Spring 2017	Design	4/9/17	4/9/17	4/15/17	10/7/17
Winter-Spring 2017	Film	4/23/17	4/22/17	4/29/17	10/20/17
Summer-Fall 2017	Writing	6/25/17	6/26/17	7/5/17	12/28/17
Summer-Fall 2017	WCYA	7/7/17	7/8/17	7/17/17	1/8/18
Summer-Fall 2017	Visual	7/20/17	7/20/17	7/28 - 7/29/17	1/25/18
Summer-Fall 2017	Music	7/31/17	7/31/17	8/6/17	2/3/18
Summer-Fall 2017	Design	10/9/17	10/8/17	10/14/17	4/7/18
Summer-Fall 2017	Film	10/22/17	10/21/17	10/28/17	4/19/18
Winter-Spring 2018	Writing	12/28/17	12/29/17	1/7/18	6/24/18
Winter-Spring 2018	WCYA	1/10/18	1/11/18	1/20/18	7/7/18
Winter-Spring 2018	Visual	1/25/18	1/25/18	2/1/18	7/22/18
Winter-Spring 2018	Music	2/4/18	2/4/18	2/10/18	8/3/18
Winter-Spring 2018	Design	4/9/18	4/8/18	4/14/18	10/6/18
Winter-Spring 2018	Film	4/22/18	4/21/18	4/28/18	10/19/18
Summer-Fall 2018	Writing	6/24/18	6/25/18	7/4/18	12/28/18
Summer-Fall 2018	WCYA	7/8/18	7/9/18	7/18/18	1/11/19
Summer-Fall 2018	Visual	7/23/18	7/23/18	7/31/18	1/24/19
Summer-Fall 2018	Music	8/5/18	8/5/18	8/11/18	2/7/19
Summer-Fall 2018	Design	10/8/18	10/7/18	10/13/18	4/6/19
Summer-Fall 2018	Film	10/21/18	10/20/18	10/27/18	4/19/19

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The purpose of VCFA's Academic Honesty Policy is to maintain the highest standard of academic integrity and professionalism. Academic dishonesty, or cheating, is defined as any act that would have the effect of giving unfair advantage, or unfairly advancing, one's academic standing in the learning community. Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable to the learning community of VCFA. Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism, which is defined as the unacknowledged use of another's work, with the clear intent of passing the work off as one's own. [See individual program policies on plagiarism.]
- Submitting critical, scholarly, or creative work, or any work products that have been prepared in whole or in part by others without appropriate acknowledgement or citation.
- Falsifying data, information, or citations in work submitted.
- Altering any VCFA form, record, or document; forging the signature of any VCFA student, faculty, or staff member.
- Acting to prevent others from completing their work; willfully disrupting, damaging, or destroying the work of others.
- Tampering in any way with College computer systems; copying or destroying computer files, programs, software, or manuals without proper authority.

See the program sections of the Student Handbook for program-specific procedures regarding plagiarism and academic honesty.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND LENGTH OF PROGRAM

Master of Fine Arts Programs:

While the self-designed nature of each student's curriculum assures that learning is relevant and meaningful, the maintenance of rigorous College and program standards for academic progress assures that each student's learning constitutes a graduate-level education accomplished in a timely manner and within the administrative and educational capabilities of the institution. Detailed narrative evaluations of student learning are completed both at midterm and the end of each term, and these and other program-specific reviews and requirements determine whether students are awarded credit, continue to the next semester, are placed on probation or leave-of-absence, or are dismissed.

In addition to VCFA's academic probation policy, satisfactory academic progress is assessed on the following basis:

Most MFA programs at Vermont College of Fine Arts are designed to be completed within four semesters of full-time study; in a few cases, the MFA can require five semesters. Each semester requires 15 or 16 credits of enrollment in one semester study (or in the Visual Art program, at least one semester project). Each semester study or semester project is assessed at the end of the semester, and a final credit assessment of "CR" (Credit), "NC" (No Credit) or "W" (Withdrawn) is recorded in the student's academic record. An assessment of "I" (Incomplete) is temporary and must be replaced by a final assessment of "CR" or "NC" by the end of the approved extension period. Grade point averages are not calculated.

Credits attempted include all credits a student is registered for each semester, regardless of final assessment. Students enrolled in the MFA programs will be considered to be making satisfactory progress if their progress

allows for completion of the program at the following rate: total credits attempted must be satisfactorily completed within 150% of total credits required for completion of the program. For example, if the total credits required for program completion is 60, the maximum attempted credits allowed would be 90 (150% of 60). If the total credits required for program completion is 64 credits, the maximum attempted credits allowed would be 96. If the total credits required for program completion is 80, the total attempted credits allowed would be 120. For all 2-year MFA programs, the maximum timeframe to complete the program is 3 years, not including leaves of absence.

A final assessment of "CR" indicates that the student has satisfactorily completed the semester study or semester project and full credit was awarded. For any semester study or semester project for which a final assessment of "NC" or "W" is earned, no credits are awarded. The student must repeat the entire semester or project. A student may repeat any semester study or project only once, and only two semesters or projects can be repeated throughout a student's enrollment in the program.

If a student receives a final assessment of "NC" for any enrolled credits, s/he may be placed on probation for the following term. Probation is not allowed for two consecutive terms, or for more than two terms total, during the student's enrollment at VCFA.

Each student's academic progress will be reviewed at the conclusion of every semester. Since the curriculum for each VCFA student is individually designed, study plans and narrative evaluations provide syllabus-type information which is routinely shared among program faculty to facilitate and support student learning.

See the program sections of the handbook for more specific information about academic progress.

ACADEMIC RECORDS

Student Right to Privacy (FERPA)

Vermont College of Fine Arts complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended. The purpose of the act is to afford certain rights to students concerning their education records. The primary rights afforded are the right to inspect and review the education records, the right to seek to have the records amended and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from the records. The Act does not apply to students admitted to Vermont College of Fine Arts who have not officially enrolled. VCFA affords all of the rights under the law to its students.

Educational Officials

FERPA specifies that VCFA staff and faculty and certain other government or accrediting officials with a legitimate educational interest do have the right to review student records without consent. This includes any person employed by the college in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or other administrative position; individuals serving on the Board of Trustees; a student serving on an official committee (such as a grievance or disciplinary committee) or in a supervised Work Study position; individuals, organizations and other entities employed by or under contract to VCFA (such as an auditor, attorney, contractor, consultant, collection agent, or volunteer); accrediting or financial aid agencies and state and federal officials conducting lawful activities; and other outside parties providing services and functions or otherwise acting on behalf of the institution. VCFA staff and faculty with legitimate access to education records must be aware of their FERPA obligations with respect to privacy and disclosure of student information.

Legitimate Educational Interest

Education officials have a legitimate educational interest when, in the exercise or completion of their administrative, supervisory, academic, research or other administrative responsibilities on behalf of the institution, incur the need to know specific information from education records.

Annual Notification

Students will be notified of their rights as stipulated by FERPA annually, by publication in the Student Handbook or any other method deemed appropriate by the Registrar.

Directory Information

Student records are confidential, with access limited to those directly involved in the administrative or academic process. In accordance with FERPA, the college will not release student educational information without the expressed, written consent of the student. There are, however, some exceptions. As specified under the provisions of FERPA, certain information is considered to be public information, or “directory information,” provided that students are given the opportunity to prohibit the disclosure of such information.

At VCFA, the following information is considered “Directory Information”:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone #
- Email Address
- Photographs/Digital Images/Audio/Video
- Date of Birth
- Major Program of Study
- Class Schedule
- Dates of Attendance
- Grade Level
- Enrollment Status
- Degrees Received

Students have the right to withhold the release of “Directory Information.”

To do so, a student must make a written request to the Registrar to withhold this information. It should be noted that if a student asks for “Directory Information” to be withheld, it will be withheld from a variety of sources, including: friends, relatives, prospective employers, honor societies and the news media. Students should be aware that directory “blocks” are permanent and will not be removed without written request.

Examples of other exceptions:

- Emergency situation
- Lawfully issued subpoena
- Educational “need to know” by appropriate faculty or staff at the college

Students have the right to review any of their educational records.

Students should submit to the Registrar and Program Director written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect.

Students have the right to seek amendment of educational records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the Registrar and Program Director, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the Registrar and Program Director decide not to amend the record as requested by the student, the student will be notified of the decision and advise the student of his/her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing. Students who disagree with the resolution of a challenge are allowed to document their objection, and this statement must be retained and released with the education record to which the student objected.

Students have the right to file complaints with the Department of Education concerning alleged failure by Vermont College of Fine Arts to comply with the law. Written complaints should be directed to the following office:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605
(202) 260-3887, Fax (202) 260-9001.

Transcripts

Transcripts are issued by VCFA's Registrar's Office. Transcripts are available through [myVCFA](https://myvcfa.vcfa.edu), the college's secure "Self-Service" portal: myvcfa.vcfa.edu. Unofficial transcripts may be viewed and printed free of charge; there is a \$10 fee for each official transcript issued, and payment must be submitted with the transcript request.

Once all end-of-semester paperwork (final evaluations from both the student and their faculty advisor) is submitted by the Program office to the Registrar's office, final assessments and credits awarded are posted to each student's academic record, usually within one week. The earliest date students should expect their academic records to be updated and transcripts to become available is two weeks after the residency.

VCFA will not issue transcripts of a student's academic record until all debts with the college are cleared. For more information on transcripts, grades, and academic records at VCFA, please contact the Registrar's Office at (802) 828-8724 or visit registrar@vcfa.edu.

Letter Grade Equivalents

The College adheres to its use of Credit/No Credit as the official indicator of student learning on academic transcripts for the MFA programs. GPAs are not calculated. An assessment of "CR" (Full Credit Awarded) on a VCFA transcript is considered the equivalent of a B or better in a conventional grading system. Only in extraordinary situations where a student may be penalized by the absence of a traditional letter grade will the registrar, upon receipt of a letter-grade equivalent from the program, provide documentation of such to the requesting organization.

All third-party requests for letter grades should be submitted in writing to the appropriate program director, who will determine whether the situation warrants conversion to letter grade equivalents. If so, the program will request letter-grade equivalents from the appropriate faculty, submit to the registrar, and the registrar will provide documentation of such to the requesting third party. If not, the registrar will send VCFA's policy regarding Credit/No Credit determinations to the requesting third party.

Transfer Credits

The Master of Fine Arts programs at VCFA will *consider* accepting a maximum of one semester of graduate-level transfer credit toward the MFA degree. In order for credits to be considered for transfer, the student must apply and be accepted into the program, and the credits must be from an accredited institution of higher education. All potential transfer credits are subject to Faculty and/or Admissions Committee review. The earliest that a transfer credit decision will be made is at the point of acceptance into the program. See the individual program sections of the Student Handbook for program-specific criteria and procedures.

Credits obtained at Vermont College of Fine Arts are transferable only at the discretion of the receiving school.

For more information about FERPA and/or student records at VCFA, please contact the Registrar's office.

ACCREDITATION

Vermont College of Fine Arts is accredited by the **New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.**, through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution's accreditation should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
209 Burlington Road
Bedford, MA 01730-1433
Phone: 781-271-0022
E-mail: cihe@neasc.org
Web address: <http://www.neasc.org/>

* * * * *

In addition, the programs in Graphic Design, Visual Art, and Art & Design Education are accredited by:

National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)

11250 Roger Bacon Drive
Reston, VA 20190
Phone: 703-437-0700
Web address: <https://nasad.arts-accredit.org>

NASAD is a specialized accrediting agency for programs in art and design and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

ADMISSION TO VCFA

Admissions to the Master of Fine Arts, Master of Arts, and Master of Arts in Teaching programs of Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA) have the goal of assuring a capable and engaged student body moving toward the timely completion of graduate degrees that recognize excellent creative and critical work. Students are admitted based on their records of preparation to do graduate work in the discipline and/or genre(s) in which they apply, and on the judgment of the faculty that they can succeed in their program and contribute to the collaborative learning environment of the college. Candidates' creative and critical ability, commitment, and goals must be appropriate for graduate-level work and consistent with the requirements and goals of the program to which they apply. While mindful of the value of a diversified student body, VCFA faculty and administration will make admission decisions that are not determined by age, gender, sexual preference, race, religion, nationality, disability or any factor apart from the criteria expressed above.

See the program sections of the handbook for program-specific admissions information and procedures.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Definition:

VCFA conducts its academic and residential programs in accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and similar Vermont law. Disabilities may include physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more of an individual's major life activities, and which may require modifications to VCFA's facilities, programs, or services. These laws require, among other things, that:

- No student may be excluded from any program or any course solely on the basis of disability;
- Modifications in degree or course requirements that do not constitute a fundamental alteration of those degree or course requirements may be necessary to meet the needs of some students with disabilities;
- Auxiliary aids, such as tape recorders, note takers or amplification devices, must be permitted in the classroom when they are required to ensure the full participation of students with disabilities;
- Special teaching equipment or devices used in the classroom (and in some cases teaching techniques that rely upon the sight, hearing, or mobility of students) may require adaptation in individual cases;
- Alternate assessment and evaluation methods for measuring student achievement may be necessary for students with impaired sensory, manual, writing or speaking skills (except where those are skills being measured), so long as such alternate methods do not constitute a fundamental alteration of academic requirements;
- VCFA facilities must be accessible as required by law;
- Group meetings, classes, seminars, and/or lectures may have to be relocated to permit access for students with mobility impairments; and
- Counseling of students with disabilities toward more restrictive careers than students without disabilities is discriminatory; unless such counsel is based on strict licensing or certification requirements in a profession.

The law does not require VCFA to make accommodations that are unreasonable, unduly burdensome or that fundamentally alter the nature of VCFA's programs or services, changes to facilities are only required by law under certain circumstances, and VCFA is not responsible for services of a personal nature.

PROCEDURE:

Upon acceptance to a Vermont College of Fine Arts program, every student is sent a Disabilities Services Survey form ("DSS form") asking if the student seeks accommodations for any disability that has been officially diagnosed by a licensed professional. Even if a student does not seek accommodations or if a student chooses

not to inform the College about a disability, the DSS form must still be signed, to indicate that the student has read and submitted to the Accessibility Services Coordinator. Students who have not received this form should obtain one from their program's office, from the Accessibility Services Coordinator or from <http://vcfa.edu/admissions/student-accessibility-services>. DSS forms should be completed and submitted as quickly as possible in order to facilitate the consideration of accommodation requests and the timely provision of reasonable accommodations.

Review of Information:

If a student submits a DSS form that indicates that a student seeks academic or other assistance or accommodations, the Accessibility Services Coordinator will consult with the student about their options, which may include, for example:

- That the student could seek formal accommodations for a disability, by submitting appropriate professional assessment and documentation of a disability from an objective, qualified, licensed professional to the Accessibility Services Coordinator. The licensed professional should provide a comprehensive report, including diagnoses, a description of how the physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities, and recommendations for academic or other accommodations. The report and documentation may be provided by the student when the DSS form is submitted to the Accessibility Services Coordinator, or it may be provided later in consultation with the Accessibility Services Coordinator. Even if some information is provided with the DSS form, the Accessibility Services Coordinator may request additional information, depending on the circumstances. All documentation must be reasonably current, depending on the nature of the condition(s) at issue. VCFA does not conduct or pay for such assessments or for the preparation of related documentation;
- That professional assessment and documentation is not indicated or required, but that the student should seek out appropriate academic assistance from faculty and program staff; or
- That some other approach is appropriate.

Accommodation Profile:

Upon receiving appropriate documentation of a disability as described above, the Accessibility Services Coordinator will, if a student so requests, work with relevant program staff and faculty as necessary to determine essential program requirements, make a decision about what reasonable accommodations can be provided without fundamentally altering the nature of the class and/or program at issue, develop an educational profile outlining accommodations and providing suggestions for students and faculty in the living/learning environment. The student must release this document to any individual by way of a signed release form provided by the Accessibility Services Coordinator. It may not be distributed by any other means or discussed publicly for reasons of student confidentiality.

Voluntary Nature of this System:

Students are not compelled to report disabilities, or to follow up on referrals to the Accessibility Services Coordinator, or to seek and pay for professional assessments, or to release the educational profile for accommodations to the program. Unless the student voluntarily completes these actions, VCFA cannot make accommodations for the student.

Confidentiality:

The material provided by the student or by professionals who have been involved in the student's diagnosis, treatment, or accommodations requests will be treated as confidential information. Access will be granted only to the Accessibility Services Coordinator and those involved in the student's education as necessary to facilitate an understanding of essential program requirements and the facilitation of accommodations, or if a health or safety issue is presented.

Appeal Process:

Any student dissatisfied with the accommodations or adjustments offered or made to accommodate a

disability will have the right to appeal. The appeal process will be as follows:

A written statement of the dispute will be sent by the student to the Academic Dean. This statement should include all relevant information and should request the desired remedial action. Based on this statement, the Academic Dean will return the matter to the Accessibility Services Coordinator for further consideration (with or without a suggestion that further information or documentation may be necessary), activate changes to the individual accommodations, or decide that the profile as developed is appropriate. The Academic Dean level of appeal will be final.

SERVICE ANIMAL AND ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY

Vermont College of Fine Arts complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the federal Fair Housing Act, and the Vermont Public Accommodations Act, to the extent that these laws are applicable to its programs and facilities. The following service and assistance animals policy was adopted to facilitate VCFA's compliance with applicable law. Animals that are neither service nor assistance animals as defined in this policy and applicable law are generally not permitted on campus.

Service Animals

The American with Disabilities Act defines a "service animal" as "any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability." A service animal is not a pet, but can perform some of the functions and tasks that an individual with a disability cannot perform themselves. Animals are considered "service animals" under the ADA if they meet this definition, regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government. The functions or tasks performed by the animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Assistance animals, as defined below, are not considered service animals. The following policy guidelines apply to service animals at VCFA:

1. A service animal may be excluded from any VCFA facility if that animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, if its behavior (for example, barking), is disruptive to other participants within the facility, or if it is not housebroken.
2. If a service animal is excluded from a facility, the individual with a disability will be given the option of continued participation, with assistance, within the facility.
3. The service animal must be clean, housebroken, in good health, and be current on its rabies vaccination.
4. All service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
5. All individuals who use service animals on campus must abide by current city ordinances/laws pertaining to licensing and vaccination requirement for service animals. It is the responsibility of the owner and/or user of the animal to know about these ordinances and/or laws.
6. All owners and/or users of service animals are responsible for cleaning up after and properly disposing of their animal's feces while on campus.

7. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. VCFA employees may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Employees cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Students who plan to utilize a service animal on campus should contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator at disability.services@vcfa.edu to let the College know that the animal will be on campus regularly, and to discuss any applicable logistical issues. Faculty members and staff members who plan to utilize a service animal on campus should contact disability.services@vcfa.edu for the same reasons.

Assistance Animals

"Assistance Animals" (which are sometimes also referred to variously as emotional support animals, companion animals, or therapy animals) are a category of animals that may work, provide assistance, or perform physical tasks, for an individual with a disability and/or provide necessary emotional support to an individual with a mental or psychiatric disability that alleviates one or more identified symptoms of an individual's disability, but which are not considered Service Animals under applicable law and VCFA's Service Animals Policy. Some Assistance Animals are professionally trained, but in other cases Assistance Animals provide the necessary support to individuals with disabilities without any formal training or certification. Dogs are commonly used as assistance animals, but other animals may serve a person with a disability as an Assistance Animal.

The question in determining if an Assistance Animal will be allowed in housing owned, operated or controlled by VCFA is whether or not the Assistance Animal is necessary because of the individual's disability to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy that housing, and its presence in that housing is reasonable. However, even if the individual with a disability establishes necessity for an Assistance Animal and it is allowed in VCFA housing, an Assistance Animal is not permitted in other areas of the College (e.g. dining facilities, libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, studios, performance spaces, etc.).

Procedures for Requesting Assistance Animals in VCFA Housing

The procedure for requesting Assistance Animals follows the general procedures set forth in VCFA's Americans with Disabilities Act Policy, available at: <http://vcfa.edu/admissions/student-accessibility-services> supplemented by the additional considerations and requirements outlined below.

Criteria for Determining Whether Presence of an Assistance Animal is Reasonable

VCFA housing is unique in several aspects including the mandatory assignment of roommates for many individuals and the requirement that individuals must share a room or suite in certain residence halls. To ensure that the presence of assistance animals is not an undue administrative burden or fundamental alteration of VCFA housing, the College reserves the right to assign an individual with an assistance animal to a single room without a roommate.

However, for all requests for assistance animals, the Accessibility Services Coordinator will consult with responsible College officials as necessary in making a case-by-case determination of whether the presence of an assistance animal is reasonable. A request for an assistance animal may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden on the College; (2) fundamentally alters VCFA's housing policies; and/or (3) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including VCFA property. The College may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable, or in the making of housing assignments for individuals with Assistance Animals:

1. The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
2. The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. serious allergies);

3. The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
4. The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
5. The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
6. The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others; or
7. The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.

Access to Non-Residential VCFA Facilities by Assistance Animals

An Assistance Animal must be contained within an individual's privately-assigned individual living accommodations (e.g., room, suite, apartment) except to the extent the individual is taking the animal out for natural relief. When an Assistance Animal is outside the private individual living accommodations, it must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness (subject to the leash/harness exceptions stated above). Assistance Animals are not allowed in any VCFA facilities other than VCFA residential facilities to which the individual is assigned.

Assistance Animals must be properly housed and restrained or otherwise under the dominion and control of the owner at all times. No owner shall permit the animal to go loose or run at large. If an animal is found running at large, the animal is subject to capture and confinement and immediate removal from VCFA housing.

Individual's Responsibilities for Assistance Animal

If the College grants an individual's request to live with an Assistance Animal, the individual is solely responsible for the custody and care of the Assistance Animal and must meet the following requirements: The owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the individual's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. The College has the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations, which may include a vaccination certificate. The College reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed. The owner is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner and, when provided, must use animal relief areas designated by VCFA. An individual with a disability may be charged for any damage caused by his or her Assistance Animal beyond reasonable wear and tear to the same extent that it charges other individuals for damages beyond reasonable wear and tear. The owner's living accommodations may also be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests if necessary as part of the College's standard or routine inspections. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a College-approved pest control service. The owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in residential facilities. The College shall have the right to bill the individual's account for unmet obligations under this provision. The owner must fully cooperate with VCFA personnel with regard to meeting the terms of this Policy and developing procedures for care of the animal (e.g., cleaning the animal, feeding/watering the animal, designating an outdoor relief area, disposing of feces, etc.).

Assistance Animals may not be left overnight in VCFA Housing to be cared for by any individual other than the owner. If the owner is to be absent from their residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the owner. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the Assistance Animal is contained, as appropriate, when the owner is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities. The owner agrees to abide by all equally applicable residential policies that are unrelated to the individual's disability such as assuring that the animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for individuals who reside there.

The animal is allowed in VCFA housing only as long as it is necessary because of the owner's disability. The owner must notify the Accessibility Services Coordinator if the Assistance Animal is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. To replace an Assistance Animal, the new animal must be necessary because of the owner's disability and the owner must follow the procedures in this Policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act Policy when requesting a different animal.

VCFA personnel will not provide care or food for any Assistance Animal including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.

Removal of Assistance Animal

VCFA may require the individual to remove the animal from College housing if:

- 1) The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others;
- 2) The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a College program;
- 3) The owner does not comply with the owner's responsibilities set forth above; or
- 4) The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the VCFA community.

VCFA will base such determinations upon the consideration of the behavior of the particular animal at issue, and not on speculation or fear about the harm or damages an animal may cause. Any removal of the animal will be done in consultation with the Accessibility Services Coordinator and may be appealed as outlined in the Appeal Procedures section of the VCFA Americans with Disabilities Act Policy.

Should the Assistance Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

Non-retaliation Provision

VCFA will not retaliate against any person because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in VCFA housing, including a request for an Assistance Animal.

APPEALS, COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES

Academic and Programmatic Appeals:

Vermont College of Fine Arts assures that students have access to a process for the reconsideration of academic evaluations, advancement decisions and other academic actions of the programs. Students dissatisfied with such academic aspects of their program are encouraged to seek resolution. The first step toward resolution is discussion with the faculty advisor, the Program Director and/or the Faculty Chair. If no mutually agreed upon solution can be reached, students may submit written petitions to the Academic Dean, whose decisions are final.

For exceptions to program policies, students may present petitions to the Program Director and Faculty Chair, in consultation with the Faculty Advisor, if appropriate.

Complaints and Grievances (non-Academic):

For reconsideration of administrative decisions, and all non-academic grievances and complaints, students should submit formal documentation in writing to the Program Director within two weeks of the initial incident, decision or notice. The Program Director, after consultation with the Faculty Chair, as appropriate, will make a determination on the petition, consulting with the Faculty Advisory Committee if needed. Students may appeal decisions in writing to the Academic Dean, whose decisions are final.

If there are numerous complaints regarding a specific issue or incident, the Program Director brings the complaint to the attention of the Academic Dean, who then consults with the President, if necessary, and develops a plan to address the issue. This plan is shared with the students and/or the college community via email from the President or Academic Dean or through a town hall-style meeting.

For further information about the complaints and grievances process through the State of Vermont, please see the state's Complaint Resolution Statement: http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Complaint_Resolution_Statement_for_Postsecondary_Education_Matters.pdf

For complaints or grievance specifically related to discrimination or harassment, please see the college's Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

ARTISTIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Vermont College of Fine Arts nurtures the artistic, intellectual, and social development of all members of our community. We foster inclusive artistic and cultural diversity and defend the principle of freedom of thought, practice, and expression. At the same time, we recognize the responsibilities of individuals within our community to consistently promote understanding and mutual respect.

VCFA advocates for these fundamental freedoms and responsibilities in all of our academic and artistic activities as an essential part of our educational mission. As a national center for education in the arts, our program offerings sometimes present content that challenges or disturbs. It is our expectation that faculty, students, and all members of the VCFA community will present material thoughtfully and responsibly and that they will engage with presented material in a manner that fosters openness, reflection, and dialogue. It is the responsibility of each individual within our community to judge for themselves the merit of any artistic and academic material presented. Students and faculty members are encouraged to exercise their personal right and responsibility to absent an event if material causes them distress, and to openly and respectfully engage with ideas they oppose, rather than seeking to suppress such material. Taking these actions brings no penalty or judgment from a program or its community.

CLOSING OF THE COLLEGE OR PROGRAMS

Consistent with standard 4.11 of the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA) recognizes its responsibility in the case of the closing of any VCFA program to assist enrolled students to complete their education with a minimum of disruption. The preferred solution in such a case will be to teach-out the program using appropriate educational standards and resources. If that is not possible, VCFA will do its best to assist students in finding comparable programs that will accept them using articulation agreements created to assure transferring students the least possible disruption and expense.

CREDIT HOURS PER SEMESTER

The MFA degrees awarded by VCFA are consistent with comparable degrees offered by other graduate programs in their standards, content, and length of study. While the self-designed nature of each student's curriculum assures that learning is relevant and meaningful, the maintenance of rigorous College and program standards for academic progress assures that each student's learning constitutes a graduate-level education accomplished in a timely manner and within the administrative and educational capabilities of the institution. Intensive one-on-one work with faculty advisors is the student's primary venue for learning and artistic growth, richly augmented by the five on-campus residencies with their extensive offerings. The work students do during and between residencies—which culminates in the production of their critical and creative theses—is commensurate with the quantity and quality of work done in conventional MFA programs.

In keeping with the standards recognized by the higher education community, VCFA utilizes the following general guidelines for estimating credit hours per semester:

Each semester at VCFA is 6 months in length, for which 15 to 16 credits are awarded for successful completion. Each semester begins with an on-campus residency with a minimum of 100 hours of instructional time. The remainder of each semester requires an average of 25-30 hours per week of independent study under the supervision of a faculty member. Each program requires students to participate in a final graduation residency, which is the culmination of the educational experience at VCFA.

DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

Vermont College of Fine Arts is committed to providing faculty, staff, students, artist-teachers, and invited visitors with an environment where they may pursue their careers or studies free from discrimination. The Chief Financial Officer is ultimately responsible for administering the college's equal opportunity, anti-harassment and accessibility (ADA) policies, and shares procedural responsibility with the program directors. The Office exists, in part, to ensure that all members of the College community understand their responsibility to create and maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

The College pledges itself to the broad application of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, in particular Titles VI and VII, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Americans and Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and comparable state and local laws.

Definition:

For purposes of this policy, discrimination and sexual harassment are defined as follows:

Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory harassment is conduct of any nature, which denies equal privileges or treatment to a particular individual because of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, and status as a Vietnam veteran, or sexual orientation, and/or any other classification protected by law. Harassment may

include, but is not limited to, verbal or physical attacks, written threats or slurs, unwelcome banter, teasing, or jokes that are derogatory, or depict individuals in a stereotypical and demeaning manner, or any other conduct based on the protected classification which has the purposes or effect of interfering unreasonably with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an offensive, hostile, or intimidating working or learning environment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and has been defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, promotion, grades or academic status; **or**
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for making an employment or academic decision affecting an individual; **or**
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance, or of creating and intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for work or learning.

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either gender toward a person of the same or opposite gender when that behavior falls within the operative definition of sexual harassment. Harassment without an overt sexual component can also violate the law and College policies under the circumstances outlined in the discriminatory harassment definition where it is shown that the harassment is directed at an individual because of the individual's gender.

Sexual harassment is prohibited and will not be tolerated at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Sexual harassment violates the dignity of individuals and impedes the realization of the College's educational mission. The College is committed to preventing and eliminating sexual harassment of faculty, staff and students through education and by encouraging faculty, staff and students to report any concerns or complaints about sexual harassment. Prompt corrective measures will be taken to stop sexual harassment whenever and wherever it occurs.

PROCEDURE:

The Chief Financial Officer has primary responsibility for resolving complaints. Students should first bring any concerns to their program director; any other member of the College community who has a complaint should immediately report the incident to the CFO or their immediate supervisor. The College prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint and/or participates in an investigation.

The College will make every effort to promptly investigate and resolve complaints with due regard for fairness and the rights of both the complainant and alleged offender. The College will make every effort to protect the privacy of the parties. If there is evidence of harassment, the College will make the prompt and effective corrective action appropriate to the situation. Knowingly make false allegations of harassment or providing evidence with the knowledge that it is false are also violations of College policy and will subject that person to disciplinary action.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS:

Disciplinary sanctions for violations of this policy, which may range from a reprimand to dismissal from the College, will be imposed in accordance with applicable College policies.

TITLE IX AND NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX

Vermont College of Fine Arts complies with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, which states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with Title IX requirements, VCFA prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all educational programs, activities or employment practices. This includes but is not limited to: admissions, academic programs, recruiting, financial aid, recreation, housing, and employment. Prohibited sex discrimination includes sex--based discrimination, sexual violence, and sexual misconduct as described in this policy. Title IX protects all people regardless of their gender from sex discrimination.

For more information on Title IX and VCFA compliance and standards, see below regarding the College's Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator:

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the U.S. Department of Education's implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, the College's Title IX Coordinator has primary responsibility for coordinating the College's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in all the operations of the College, as well as retaliation for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX.

VCFA's Title IX Coordinators are listed below. They are responsible for coordinating the College's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX. The Title IX Coordinators' responsibilities are outlined in greater depth below, but the core responsibilities include overseeing the school's response to Title IX reports and complaints and identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems revealed by such reports and complaints. To accomplish this, subject to the exemption for confidential employees discussed below, the Title IX Coordinators must be informed of all reports and complaints raising Title IX issues, even if the report or complaint was initially filed with another individual or office or if the investigation will be conducted by another individual or office. The Title IX Coordinators are available to respond to inquiries regarding violations of this policy, including sex--based discrimination or sexual misconduct, and to meet with students, employees or third parties regarding Title IX--related issues, such as issues related to the College's compliance with Title IX, response to Title IX reports or complaints, related grievance procedures, relevant patterns of conduct, or related education and prevention programs. The contact information for VCFA's Title IX Coordinators is below:

David Markow
(802) 828--8535
David.Markow@vcfa.edu

Louise Crowley, Assistant Dean
(802) 828-8821
Louise.Crowley@vcfa.edu

GOVERNANCE

Vermont College of Fine Arts is governed by a Board of Trustees whose composition and activities are guided by its By-Laws, adopted February 26, 2007 and revised January 12, 2008. The Board of Trustees has final responsibility for the institution, and assures the institution's health by exercising its authority to: determine the mission of the College; hire, evaluate and retain the President of the College; approve the strategic plan; and set tuition and budget. The Trustees delegate operating authority to the President of the College to achieve the College mission and realize its strategic plan within the established budget.

The Trustees delegate operating authority to the President of the College to achieve the College mission and realize its strategic plan within the established budget. Academic affairs receive input from an Academic Council consisting of program directors and faculty of each program along with the Academic Dean. Operating decisions at the level of academic programs and administrative offices are the responsibility of Cabinet Level Administrators and Program Directors. Students with questions about policies, operating decisions, or governance should discuss their inquiries with their Program Directors.

Students are encouraged to form a cross-program **Advisory Committee** on which each program is represented by a student from each entering cohort. This group is self-organizing and makes recommendations to the Administration of the College.

The **Student Advisory Council**, consisting of two student representatives from each academic program, provides student input on College affairs, including strategic planning, academic programs, and student services. Program Directors may nominate two students from their respective programs whom the President, Academic Dean, or other representative of the College administration or faculty will consult by telephone conference when issues arise requiring student consultation.

LIBRARY

In 2011, the VCFA Library joined a global consortium of over 60,000 libraries, and as a result our searchable online catalog now combines all of these libraries' card catalogs. A powerful resource, our simple search engine offers an enormous, open-access catalog containing virtually every book ever published. It also lists millions of sound recordings, periodicals, movies, maps, musical scores, and special collections. Most items not owned by VCFA Library can be requested via Interlibrary Loan. Through WorldCat, hundreds of thousands of e-books, electronic periodicals, along with thousands of public domain titles are instantly available in full-text format. The subscription databases JSTOR, Project MUSE, Art Full Text, and the Gale Company databases are fully integrated with this one, simple search engine.

Library Contact Information:

VCFA Library
36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 828-8512 (phone)
(802) 828-8514 (fax)
<http://www.vcfa.edu/library>

General Email Correspondence:

Send a message to vcfalibrary@vcfa.edu to request:

- Interlibrary loans
- Copies of research documents
- Circulating library materials
- Renewals of circulating materials currently on loan to you
- Research assistance, answers to reference questions, etc.

NOTE: Please be sure to identify yourself within the text of your email message.

STUDENT ID CARDS

Enrolled VCFA students will receive a student ID card at their first residency. This card is used in the VCFA Library, for admission to the art gallery, for after-hours admission to the computer lab during residencies, and other activities. Students may also use their VCFA student ID cards at libraries which extend their lending privileges to VCFA students and for student discounts elsewhere. There is a \$5 fee for replacement ID cards.

VETERANS BENEFITS

Vermont College of Fine Arts is approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to accept veterans' benefits. VCFA also participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program. VCFA's registrar certifies enrollment for veterans or their dependents so that their educational benefits can be used at VCFA.

VCFA is also approved for the Tuition Assistance (TA) Program through the Department of Defense.

A veteran's eligibility for educational benefits is established by the VA. Information may be found at www.gibill.va.gov or by calling 1-888-442-4551. The amount of the benefit is dependent on eligibility and entitlements.

Veterans who are planning to use their educational benefits to attend VCFA must first obtain a "Letter of Eligibility" from the VA. The form for this purpose (Form 22-1990 - Application for Education Benefits), along with complete instructions, is available at www.gibill.va.gov. The VA will then issue a "Letter of Eligibility" to the veteran, a copy of which should be sent to the registrar's office at VCFA:

Office of the Registrar
Vermont College of Fine Arts
36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Any questions about Veterans benefits should be directed to the registrar at registrar@vcfa.edu or 802-828-8724.

VCFA EMAIL POLICY

Email is the primary means of communication within the VCFA community. The Information Technology Department (IT) will assign all faculty, students and alumni an official VCFA email address. All College communications will be sent to students, faculty and alumni via their VCFA email accounts, with the expectation that these communications will be received and read in a timely fashion (at least once a day is recommended).

When using VCFA email, students, faculty, staff, and alumni must observe high standards of professionalism, discretion, and ethics. Disclosure of information about students or employees in violation of laws or College policies protecting confidentiality is prohibited. Given the nature of electronic communication, email users are reminded that confidentiality and privacy cannot be guaranteed.

It is a violation of the VCFA code of conduct for any user of an official email address to impersonate a college office, faculty/staff member, student or alumnus/a.

Email Addresses

Student email addresses are set up using the first and last name of record in the College's student information system (firstname.lastname@vcfa.edu). An email address will only be changed if a student's name is officially changed through the Registrar's office. Faculty email addresses are set up per the discretion of the director of their program.

Alumni email addresses will be set up based on the first and last name in VCFA's Alumni Affairs Management System. If an Alumnus/a wishes to have their email address changed they will need to contact the College's Alumni Affairs office and have their name updated in VCFA's Alumni Affairs Management System.

New Students' Email

New students will be notified by their program office when their vcfa.edu email account has been created. It is then the responsibility of the new student to activate their new vcfa.edu email account.

Redirecting Email

While VCFA recommends that faculty, students and alumni use the College's email system, email may be electronically redirected to another email address (e.g., @aol.com, @hotmail.com). However students, faculty and alumni do so at their own risk. The College is not responsible for the handling of email by outside vendors. Having an email redirected does not absolve a faculty member, student or alumnus/a from the responsibilities associated with communication sent to his or her VCFA email address.

Email Retention

VCFA does not retain copies or backup emails created or received by students, faculty and alumni using the VCFA email system. Email account holders are responsible for managing online email retention consistent with their storage allocation.

Deactivation of Email Accounts

If students, faculty or alumni are found to be in violation of the VCFA code of conduct as it pertains to their email account, their account will be deactivated until a review can be conducted as to the nature of the violation.

If a student withdraws from their program, their VCFA email account will be deactivated. VCFA will maintain a student's account for a period of 30 days after the withdrawal. At the end of 30 days the student's email account will be deleted.

Faculty email accounts will be deactivated and deleted after a two-year period of non-employment, unless other arrangements have been made with the Academic Dean or their Program Director.

Large-Scale Email/Distribution Group Use

Distribution group emailing is intended for use where the message is of common importance to the receiving community. Large-scale email communication within groups requires the implicit or explicit prior approval of that group; in the case of such communication from outside the group, access to distribution lists is restricted so that approval is required. Common sense and courtesy dictate that prior to sending email to a distribution group, the sender carefully consider whether doing so is appropriate and/or necessary.

Access to College distribution groups and the ability of recipients to respond to messages are limited in order to prevent inappropriate or unintended mass emails. Any VCFA email user may request permission to send a message to a distribution group by consulting their program staff (for faculty and students) or supervisor (for staff).

For open dialogue about program matters, students and faculty are encouraged to use program forums on the Commons.

Large-scale group e-mails may be terminated at the network level by College computing officials if it is determined that they are disrupting network traffic or of an inappropriate nature.

Violations of the VCFA Email Policy will be referred to the appropriate offices for enforcement under existing College procedures.

VCFA PORTALS

VCFA utilizes several portals for various purposes within the college community. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the portals and use them for the purposes described below. Please note that each portal has a different login setup (username and password) and it is important to keep track of this information for each portal.

myVCFA

This secure student portal is connected to the college's Student Information System. Through this portal students can pay their bills, access their academic records (official and unofficial transcripts), and maintain their contact information. The portal is located here:

<https://myvcfa.vcfa.edu/Home.aspx>, and login is as follows:

Username: Firstname.Lastname (as recorded in the college's Student Information System)

Password: User-defined when account is activated

For assistance with myVCFA, please contact the Registrar (registrar@vcfa.edu) or the IT Department (support@vcfa.edu).

VCFA Commons

Each MFA program maintains its own Commons site. This is where collaboration takes place amongst students, faculty and program staff; documents and resources are shared; program-specific schedules are maintained, etc. The Commons sites can be found here:

Film: <http://film.vcfa.edu>

Graphic Design - <http://gd.vcfa.edu>

Music Composition - <http://music.vcfa.edu>

Visual Art - <http://va.vcfa.edu>

WCYA - <http://wcya.vcfa.edu>

Writing - <http://write.vcfa.edu>

Username: Firstname.Lastname (as recorded in the college's Student Information System)

Password: 9-digit VCFA ID #

For assistance with the Commons, please contact your program office.

VCFA Library

Students have access to a vast array of resources through the VCFA Library portal. (See the Library section for more details.) Information about logging into the library database can be found here:

<http://www.vcfa.edu/gary-library/find-articles/login-procedure> and login is as follows:

Username: Lastname followed by last 6 digits of your VCFA ID#

Password: Last 6 digits of VCFA ID#

For assistance, please contact the library staff at vcfalibrary@vcfa.edu.

CAMPUS MATTERS

Student Code of Conduct

Vermont College of Fine Arts nurtures the artistic, intellectual, and social development of all members of our community. We foster inclusive artistic and cultural diversity and defend the principle of freedom of thought, practice, and expression.

VCFA supports students and faculty in a teaching and learning process that encourages them to not only explore their artistic discipline and individual work but to debate, express, and experience a broad array of ideas and perspectives. VCFA strives for an atmosphere of trust and inclusion and values a close community in which lasting associations and networks are formed. The intense and close atmosphere is integral to and a substantive piece of students' education. We also recognize the responsibilities of individuals within our community to consistently promote understanding and mutual respect and strive to ensure that everyone recognizes and appreciates each other's personal and professional boundaries. VCFA advocates for these fundamental freedoms and responsibilities in all of our academic and artistic activities as an essential part of our educational mission. As a national center for education in the arts, our program offerings sometimes present content that challenges or disturbs. It is our expectation that all students, faculty, staff, visitors, and all members of the VCFA community will present material thoughtfully and responsibly and that they will engage with presented material in a manner that fosters openness, reflection, and dialogue.

It is the responsibility of each individual within our community to judge for themselves the merit of any artistic and academic content presented. Students, faculty, staff and visitors are encouraged to exercise their personal right and responsibility to absent an event if material causes them distress, and to openly and respectfully engage with ideas they oppose, rather than seeking to suppress such material. Taking these actions brings no penalty or judgment from a program or its community.

As an enrolled student at VCFA, the additional following areas are included in our Student Code of Conduct:

Respect for Governance

Respect for Governance is the expectation that members of the VCFA community will act in compliance with the laws, regulations and policies that are in effect and govern behavior at the College and the conduct of College business. Whether physically on campus or elsewhere, students are expected to comply with all City, State and Federal laws, as applicable.

Respect for Others and for the Educational Environment

Respect for others is the central principle that governs interactions at VCFA. A primary expectation that flows from this principle is civility and tolerance. Respect for others is expected in all relationships including those with members of the greater Montpelier community. Respect should be present in verbal and written communications and should be shown at program and public events, meetings, on the telephone and in electronic exchanges. People have the right to disagree; however, there is also a responsibility to be civil and to maintain respect even while disagreeing. A positive working environment where everyone can receive respect and do their best work requires a respect and tolerance for difference and diversity.

All students, faculty, staff and visitors are expected to behave in a way that respects the educational environment. Behavior that disrupts the educational environment will not be tolerated.

Respect for Property and Respect for Information

Property includes physical assets, intellectual property, the College name and other resources. As a nonprofit organization it is essential to maintain the highest standards of stewardship for the property and resources entrusted to us. Respect for property, therefore, entails both respect for campus facilities and educational

resources, all intellectual property of Vermont College of Fine Arts and the property of individual students, faculty, staff, and others at the College.

Confidentiality

VCFA expects that students understand and honor that artistic and academic work shared with individuals and/or groups during residency and throughout the semester is not to be shared outside the designated community, including social media formats, without the express permission of the individual student or faculty member.

Statement of Ethical Conduct

VCFA expects all students, faculty, staff and visitors to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.

Appropriate Conduct

Students will not engage in behavior that is threatening, dangerous or harmful to self or others, that disrupts the learning and campus environment or that damage college property. Students are expected to cooperate with and be respectful of all VCFA personnel as they carry out their duties. Students may not possess firearms, other weapons or fireworks while on VCFA campus. Students may not tamper with smoke detectors, sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, wiring, or electrical equipment. Vermont State law also prohibits such tampering.

VCFA will take appropriate action regarding students who violate the College's campus and conduct regulations or disrupt the learning and campus environment. Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to: verbal warning, temporary or permanent dismissal from campus or from the program. Individuals who have authority to address such situations include Program Directors, Faculty Chairs/Co-Chairs, the Academic Dean, and VCFA Title IX Coordinators (for issues relating to Title IX law and policy). The officer responsible for decisions regarding disciplinary actions at VCFA is the Academic Dean, or his/her designate.

Disciplinary Procedures

Emergency/Immediate Situations: In an emergency or immediate and time-sensitive situation, VCFA may suspend its normal disciplinary procedures and temporarily dismiss and remove from campus a student whose conduct is determined to be sufficiently disruptive or dangerous. Such conduct includes but is not limited to behavior that is threatening to self or others, behavior that disrupts the campus and learning environment, public impairment from alcohol or other substances, and other offenses included in this Handbook. Should a student refuse cooperation or become disruptive enough that VCFA staff needs assistance, the Montpelier police may be contacted. VCFA Executive Director of Campus Facilities & Operations or his/her designate may act, in concert with the relevant Program Director, to enforce the College's disciplinary procedures and determinations. VCFA will then follow the non-emergency disciplinary procedures to determine non-temporary discipline

Non-Emergencies: In non-emergency cases, where there is indication that student behavior violates campus policy, the following sequence of actions will occur:

- **Fact Finding:** The offending behavior will be reported to the Program Director or his/her designate. The Program Director, and any other appropriate individuals involved in the incident, will investigate the allegations and determine the facts of the case, which will be reported, in writing, to the Academic Dean.
- **Interview With Student(s)/Others:** The Program Director and Faculty Chairs(s) will meet with the student(s) and any other individuals involved, in person or by phone, together and/or separately, as appropriate, to review the facts of the case, to allow the student(s) to respond to the allegations and to present his/her version of the alleged events. They may meet, separately, with any witnesses to the incident. The Program Director and Faculty Chair(s) will consult with the Academic Dean, as needed.

- **Disciplinary Action:** Following the meeting with the student(s), the Program Director and Faculty Chair(s) will determine if disciplinary action is warranted. If so, such action may include dismissal from the program or making continued enrollment conditional upon cessation of the offending behavior. The decision will be made in consultation with the Academic Dean and communicated in writing to the student, who will be required to sign a statement agreeing to comply with the conditions for continued enrollment.
- **Noncompliance by the Student:** If the student violates the conditions for continued enrollment, as determined by fact-finding and the Academic Dean, the student will be dismissed.
- In all such incidents the VCFA staff member(s) addressing the situation will document the incident and action(s) taken.

Appeal:

Decisions made and actions taken pursuant to these disciplinary procedures may be appealed to the Academic Dean of Vermont College of Fine Arts who shall make a final determination.

The following important links provide full policies that pertain to you as a student at VCFA:

VCFA Alcohol Policy:

<http://vcfapublicdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/policies/VCFA-Alcohol-Policy.pdf>

VCFA Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy:

<http://vcfapublicdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/policies/VCFA-Sexual-Misconduct-Policy.pdf>

Title IX Sexual Misconduct Coordinators are david.markow@vcfa.edu and louise.crowley@vcfa.edu.

VCFA Title IX Sexual Discrimination & Harassment:

<http://vcfapublicdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/policies/VCFA-Discrimination-and-Harassment-Policy.pdf>

The Coordinator is erica.hare@vcfa.edu.

A student may contact their Program Director or any of the above for information and assistance in these areas.

Alcohol and Drugs

On the VCFA campus, consumption of alcoholic beverages and the use of drugs are governed by the laws of the State of Vermont. Furthermore, the following campus regulations are in effect for VCFA students, faculty, and other participants in VCFA-sponsored events, and infractions are subject to disciplinary action.

At official College and program functions where alcohol will be sold, only alcoholic beverages catered by an individual or business with a liquor license and contracted by VCFA or an individual program may be consumed. Public drunkenness and disruptive behavior in public places, including lounges, hallways, and stairwells is not permitted.

BYOB consumption of alcoholic beverages out-of-doors and in residential buildings on the VCFA campus is permitted on the condition that those involved conduct themselves in a discrete and responsible way. This policy applies to individuals and small groups only. Those wishing to organize parties involving the use of alcohol, indoors or outdoors, must contact the appropriate Program Director for permission and for information on caterers.

No Café Anna alcohol is permitted to leave the building in which it is served or sold.

NO Alcohol may be brought into College Hall.

Campus Safety

The VCFA Campus Relations staff is a diverse team with the common goal of providing a safe environment at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Our team works closely with the Montpelier Police and Fire Department to provide a safe and healthy environment for all of our campus guests.

Facilities Operations and Campus Relations may be reached 24/7 during the brief on-campus residencies for the low-residency MFA programs, and weekdays 7am-11pm and weekends 7am through 7pm the rest of the year. They welcome all calls for emergency and routine service. Weekdays 11pm through 7am and weekends 7pm through 7am there is a call service that will answer calls and page staff for emergencies only. Call (802) 828-8888 to reach them.

The VCFA Annual Campus Safety Report, as well as Campus Emergency Procedures, is available at www.vcfa.edu/campus-safety. This report is required by federal law and contains policy statements and crime statistics for the school. The policy statements address the school's policies, procedures and programs concerning safety and security; for example, policies for responding to emergency situations and sexual offenses. Three years' worth of statistics are included for certain types of crimes that were reported to have occurred on campus, in or on off-campus buildings or property owned or controlled by the school and on public property within or immediately adjacent to the campus. You may also request a paper copy from Campus Services.

Campus Relations at VCFA is a function of the Facilities Operations department. The Campus Relations staff is led by the Executive Director of Facilities Operations. The Campus Relations Leadership Team also includes the Assistant Director of Facilities Operations, responsible for daytime Campus Relations operations, and two full-time and 2-3 part-time Campus Relations personnel. The department provides services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, while VCFA low-residency students are on campus, and 7am-11pm Monday through Friday and 7am through 7pm on weekends for the remainder of the year.

Campus Relations staff will provide escort service to students on campus, upon request. Campus Relations cannot transport students on or off campus for any reason.

Students with disabilities can receive assistance from Facilities staff with their luggage.

Thefts of personal property and other crimes at VCFA must be reported immediately to the Campus

Relations/Facilities staff. They will take a report from the individual and will, if appropriate, contact the Montpelier Police Department. Students are expected to cooperate fully with VCFA staff and police in the investigation of alleged crimes.

Dormitory Procedures

The VCFA Academic Programs and the Campus Services Coordinator are responsible for overseeing student dormitory housing. Students who encounter housing problems should report them promptly to:

- Facilities for any maintenance issues (windows not opening, extension cords needed, light bulbs, etc) at 802-828-8888
- Assistant Program Directors for any non-facilities related issues.
- The Coordinator of Campus Services is also available to students weekday 9am-4pm should they have any issues on campus or have trouble reaching Facilities at 802-917-3085
- Contact information is also provided in your dorm packet as well as at <https://sites.google.com/a/vcfa.edu/campus-services/>

The following guidelines should be noted by all students:

- Students should keep their dormitory doors locked at all times.
- Students should take their keys with them whenever they leave their rooms. If a student gets locked out of a dorm room, there may be a considerable wait for a Facilities or Campus Relations person to unlock the door.
- Students are responsible for handling their own used linens. Place used linens (sheets and towels) into pillowcase and deposit in laundry bin of the assigned dorm. Please do not leave used linens in hallways or in rooms. Please DO leave pillows, blankets, and mattress pads in rooms.
- Before leaving, students must return their keys to a key drop box. A \$25 lost key fee will be applied to any student who does not return a key on the day of departure, with an additional \$75 fine applied if the key is not returned within 7 days.
- No student may change assigned rooms without permission from their Program office or the Campus Services Coordinator.

In general, quiet in the dormitories will be observed throughout the day and night. After 10 PM those students desiring further discourse and social interaction, even in small groups, should adjourn to Dewey Lounge, on the 1st floor of Dewey. When students congregate in a lounge or common area, they should pick up and clean the area when done.

Absolutely no smoking, burning candles, or incense is allowed in any of the buildings. If an alarm goes off, **immediately evacuate to the front lawn and designate someone to call Campus Relations at 802-828-8888 and the Fire Department at 802-229-4193**, then wait for assistance. Please see the Smoking Policy for more information regarding smoking on campus.

Early Arrival/Late Departure for Residencies

Students should plan to arrive on campus no earlier than the arrival date indicated by the Program Director, and should plan to depart no later than the designated departure date. Any student with a particular logistical or personal need may request an early arrival or a late departure before or after a residency. Requests may be made no later than two weeks before the check-in date.

Requests must be approved first by the Program Director, who will consider the academic needs and the logistical and personal circumstances of the particular request. If the Program Director approves, the request will be forwarded to the Coordinator of Campus Services, who will consider the availability of the facilities and notify the Program Director. Any student who arrives early or departs late from campus housing will be charged the per diem rate of campus housing at the time of the stay, payable in advance by check.

During non-residency times VCFA hosts many conferences, retreats, meetings, and special events throughout the year. Please understand that early arrivals and late departures from campus housing are often impossible for VCFA to accommodate, because of the complex nature of scheduling campus housing around residencies and conferences. Requests involve considerations around facilities, housekeeping, campus safety, and others. For the convenience of our students, VCFA has a commitment to honoring requests for early arrival and late departure when we can, and we ask for your understanding in situations when we cannot accommodate these requests.

With early arrivals and late departures, we cannot guarantee that students will be housed in the same room or building as their assigned residency room. We will make every effort to keep you in the same room when we can. Please understand that VCFA does not provide 24-hour security during non-residency dates.

Emergency Medical Services: 9-1-1

No medical services are provided by VCFA. **In an emergency, please call 9-1-1.**

Any personal injury occurring on campus, or other sponsored sites, must be also be reported immediately to Facilities/Campus Relations staff (802-828-8888).

Facilities Operations & Maintenance

The goal of Campus Relations/Facilities Operations is to maintain the Vermont College of Fine Arts campus and its atmosphere in appropriate and first-rate order for students. In this regard, students are expected to cooperate in keeping campus facilities clean and in good repair.

Facilities staff enforces safety regulations and practices, oversees parking on campus, and strives to maintain a safe atmosphere conducive to a healthy learning environment. If a student sees anything out of order or in need of repair, please contact Facilities Operations (802) 828-8888.

Damage fees may be applied if a student's actions result in damage to College property.

State laws and building codes prohibit set-ups (tables, chairs, displays, etc.) in hallways, or in any place that blocks visibility or access to an emergency exit. All requests for set-ups and/or audio-visual equipment should go through the program offices.

Food Service

New England Culinary Institute (NECI) prepares all meals in the campus dining hall located in Dewey Hall. NECI students are instructed in the dining hall by expert chefs. Students with food allergies or special dietary needs must notify their program office in advance of their residency. (See "Room & Board" for further information.)

Guests & Children

The academic residency of VCFA's programs (and sponsored sites) is a special opportunity for serious and sustained interaction between students and faculty members. For this reason, overnight guests of students are not permitted in student rooms without permission from the Program Director. Children are not permitted to stay in campus housing. Children on campus must be accompanied at all times by their parent or guardian. Nursing mothers should contact their Program Director to inquire about accommodations.

Guests of students may rent rooms, if available, for overnight stays connected with graduation or other special ceremonies. VCFA Campus Relations may remove persons who appear in campus facilities or in the dormitories without permission or invitation.

Lost & Found

VCFA's "Lost & Found" is located in the VCFA Campus Store on the first floor of College Hall (802-828-8721).

Parking

Short Term Parking Permits are available at check-in or from the Campus Services Coordinator in exchange for your license plate and phone numbers. They include a detailed map of student-approved lots on the reverse side. Your permit must be displayed on the dashboard of the vehicle.

From April 15 to November 15, 24-hour parking is also available on the city streets around the College and the quad, unless otherwise posted. However, throughout the winter months, overnight parking on Montpelier streets is subject to the City of Montpelier's parking ban in order to accommodate snow removal. Vehicles blocking access will be towed and the owner will be responsible for all towing and storage fees. For more information go to <http://www.montpelier-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/3258>

Personal Property on Campus

All items that students bring to the Vermont College of Fine Arts campus are considered to be personal property of the student for the sole purpose of academic review and performance. This includes, but is not limited to, equipment used in making, processing, presenting or displaying music, art or design work; and any equipment such as musical instruments, electronic equipment, laptops, projectors, monitors, LCD projectors, DVD players, televisions, etc. Vermont College of Fine Arts is not responsible for any damage to, or loss of, personal property. Therefore, it is recommended that students ask their insurance agents about coverage of personal property prior to the residency.

Pets on Campus

Pets are not permitted to stay in campus housing and are not allowed at program functions.

Quiet Policy

VCFA's campus is dedicated to adult and non-traditional learning. A respectful and serious environment on campus and in the dormitories is an essential component of this goal. In general, quiet in the dormitories will be observed throughout the day and night. After 10 PM those students desiring further discourse and social interaction, even in small groups, should adjourn to a lounge area away from the dorm rooms. When students congregate in a lounge or common area, they should pick up and clean the area when done.

Furthermore, VCFA is located in a residential section of the city, surrounded by private homes. Noisy gatherings on campus are inappropriate. VCFA Campus Relations will ask participants in noisy gatherings to respect the College's quiet policy.

Room & Board

Room & board is a comprehensive fee that covers a student's stay in the dorms as well as all meals in the campus cafeteria throughout the residency. For students staying off-campus, there is a meal plan available for a flat fee that covers all meals throughout the residency.

Students will be asked to complete a room & board form prior to the residency indicating their roommate preferences, medical need for a single room, plans to stay off-campus, and/or meal plan request. In addition, students with food allergies or special dietary restrictions will be asked to complete an allergy form which will be shared with the cafeteria staff in order to make necessary food accommodations. In rare cases a student with severe allergies or dietary restrictions can petition the program office to waive the board segment of the comprehensive room & board fee. Such petitions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Program Director with final approval granted by the CFO. Procedure:

- Complete room & board form prior to the residency
- If a student has food allergies or dietary restrictions, complete the food allergy form to be submitted to the cafeteria staff

- If a student with severe food allergies and/or dietary restrictions, wishes to request that the board segment of their comprehensive room & board fee be waived, this request must be made in writing to the program office at the time that room & board forms are due to be reviewed by the Program Director and approved by the CFO.

Smoking on Campus

It is the policy of Vermont College of Fine Arts to provide a safe working and learning environment for staff, faculty, students, and visitors. The VCFA Campus Smoking Policy has been written in recognition of the Surgeon General's conclusion that smoking is injurious to health, and that involuntary, second-hand smoke is a cause of disease in nonsmokers. VCFA recognizes the rights of those who choose to smoke but chooses to provide a smoke-free environment to the greatest extent possible.

To protect the health of all community members, and in accordance with state statutes, VCFA prohibits smoking in any form in all indoor places, including all workplaces, VCFA-owned vehicles, and residence halls.

In addition, no smoking is allowed within 25 feet of any building on the VCFA campus. This policy complies with the American with Disabilities Act, which provides smoke free entrances for employees and students with respiratory and other conditions affected by exposure to smoke.

VCFA CONTACTS/EMERGENCY NUMBERS

(Area code for all numbers is 802 unless otherwise noted)

DORMITORIES:

Dewey	1 st Floor	828-8871
	2 nd Floor	828-8872
	3 rd Floor	828-8873
Glover	Lower Level	828-8851
	1 st Floor	828-8563
	2 nd Floor	828-8853
	3 rd Floor	828-8854
Noble	1 st Floor	828-8559
	2 nd Floor Landing	828-8861
	3 rd Floor	828-8859

EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

Campus Relations/Facilities Operations	828-8888
Ambulance	911 or 229-4913
Police	911 or 223-3445
Central Vermont Hospital	371-4100
Washington County Mental Health	229-0591

PROGRAMS:

Art & Design Education (MAT/MAADE)	828-8553
Film	828-8529
Graphic Design	828-8896
Music Composition	828-8534
Visual Art	828-8636
Writing	828-8839
Writing for Children & Young Adults	828-8637
Writing & Publishing	828-8779

STUDENT SERVICES:

Accessibility Services	828-8829
Admissions	828-8535
Bursar	828-8808
Campus Services	828-8580
Financial Aid	1-877-612-2599
Library	828-8512
Registrar	828-8724

LOST & FOUND

VCFA Store (College Hall)	828-8721
---------------------------	----------

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Tuition & Fees

Tuition and fees for each program are determined on an annual basis as approved by the Board of Trustees, and are published on the college website. Tuition and fees are subject to change without notice.

Tuition bills are mailed 8-10 weeks prior to the beginning of each new semester. Payments may be made by check, online e-check, or by credit card payment. A student may elect, when the bill is received, a deferred payment option that requires four payments over the first three months of the semester. Contact the Bursar for more specific information about this option.

Students may not register for the next semester if the balance from a previous semester has not been paid, unless special arrangements have been made with the Bursar's office. Students who fail to pay past due balances may be dismissed from the college.

Enrollment Deposit Fee

New students are required to pay an enrollment deposit fee (see tuition and fee schedule) prior to their initial residency or registration. The deposit is applied to the matriculated student's first semester of tuition and fees. The enrollment deposit is non-refundable.

Room & Board Fee

Room & Board is a comprehensive fee that covers a student's stay in the dorms as well as all meals in the campus cafeteria throughout the residency. For students staying off-campus, there is a meal plan available for a flat fee that covers all meals throughout the residency. (See "Room & Board" for further information.)

Financial Aid

VCFA's financial aid staff makes every effort to see that students admitted to the College are able to enroll and continue their enrollment with support through financial aid services. Financial assistance in the form of grants, loans, scholarships and fellowships, is available to eligible students attending VCFA academic degree programs. Scholarships are awarded through the academic programs and more information can be found on the tuition & scholarship sections of the program websites. General financial aid and loan information is available on the college's website under the Admissions section. Application for financial aid in no way affects admission decisions.

Financial aid is a means of payment, and the absence of or delay in receipt of financial aid funds does not affect the financial responsibility of the student for charges due to the college.

Credit Balances

Credit balances created by federal or state financial aid funds will be automatically refunded. Credit balances created by funds other than federal or state financial aid funds will not be automatically refunded to you. Please contact the Bursar's office to receive these other credit balances.

Leave of Absence

Enrolled students may request up to two consecutive semester-long leaves of absence from the program without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing in the program. See each program section for specific program guidelines. Financial aid recipients are advised that the length of the LOA may affect the timing of repayment for federal student loans. Federal regulations state that any period of non-enrollment longer than 180 days-- the loan(s) six-month grace period--may put a student's loan(s) into repayment status. Additionally, the federal government will report the student to their lender as 'withdrawn' from the college.

IMPORTANT: Leave of Absence status as described above does NOT constitute an "Approved Leave of Absence" as defined by federal financial aid regulations. Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA's financial aid counselor: VCFA-FAO@financialaidservices.org or 877-612-2599.

Withdrawal & Refunds

Students may withdraw from VCFA at any point during the semester. (Visual Art students may withdraw from individual study projects.) The amount of a refund, if applicable, is determined by the start date of the semester, the effective date of the withdrawal, and the balance of the student's account, after financial aid adjustments, as of the withdrawal date. Financial aid adjustments are based on federal guidelines. **(See Return of Financial Aid below.)**

The withdrawal must be in writing and should be sent directly to the program office or the registrar's office. The date of withdrawal is the earlier of:

- The date the student notifies the college; OR
- The ending date of the previous semester if the student fails to register for a new term.

If a student withdraws within two weeks of the semester start date, all tuition and fees will be removed from the student's account (with the exception of the non-refundable deposit and room and board fees for the residency, if applicable*). After that two-week period, the refund schedules for the **Winter-Spring 2018** semester by program are as follows:

Writing (Winter-Spring 2018)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	12/29/17-1/11/18	100%
3 & 4	1/12/18-1/25/18	75%
5 & 6	1/26/18-2/8/18	50%
7 & 8	2/9/18-2/22/18	25%
After week 8	2/23/18 and beyond	0%

WCYA (Winter-Spring 2018)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	1/11/18-1/24/18	100%
3 & 4	1/25/18-2/7/18	75%
5 & 6	2/8/18-2/21/18	50%
7 & 8	2/22/18-3/8/18	25%
After week 8	3/9/18 and beyond	0%

Visual Art (Winter-Spring 2018)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	1/25/18-2/7/18	100%
3 & 4	2/8/18-2/21/18	75%
5 & 6	2/22/18-3/7/18	50%
7 & 8	3/8/18-3/21/18	25%
After week 8	3/22/18 and beyond	0%

Music (Winter-Spring 2018)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	2/4/18-2/17/18	100%
3 & 4	2/18/18-3/3/18	75%
5 & 6	3/4/18-3/17/18	50%
7 & 8	3/18/18-3/31/18	25%
After week 8	4/1/18 and beyond	0%

Graphic Design (Winter-Spring 2018)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	4/8/18-4/21/18	100%
3 & 4	4/22/18-5/5/18	75%
5 & 6	5/6/18-5/19/18	50%
7 & 8	5/20/18-6/2/18	25%
After week 8	6/3/18 and beyond	0%

Film (Winter-Spring 2018)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	4/21/18-5/4/18	100%
3 & 4	5/5/18-5/18/18	75%
5 & 6	5/19/18-6/1/18	50%
7 & 8	6/2/18-6/15/18	25%
After week 8	6/16/18 and beyond	0%

**It is understood that a student who fails to notify the college of withdrawal from the program is obligated for all tuition and fees assessed for the complete semester.*

Return of Financial Aid

Students who are using student loans to pay their tuition and are considering withdrawing from the program should talk to VCFA's financial aid coordinator about the financial aid ramifications as VCFA's refund schedule does not take financial aid return requirements into consideration.

Federal regulations require Vermont College of Fine Arts to perform a calculation for the return of federal financial aid when a financial aid recipient withdraws, is expelled, or otherwise ceases to be a student before the end of the semester for which aid was received. The return amount due to the federal financial aid program(s) is calculated on a per diem basis with a formula established by Federal regulations. In other words, the financial aid office will calculate the percentage of aid you have earned by dividing the number of days you were enrolled before withdrawal by the number of days in the semester. The remaining portion of your aid will be returned. Returns are required to be calculated on any student who withdraws before 60% of the semester is completed. An example of the federal refund formula is available upon request in the Financial Aid office.

The returns will be applied to the financial aid programs in the following order: Federal Unsubsidized Stafford loans, Federal Subsidized Stafford loans, PLUS loans, and other Title IV programs. Funds returned to the federal loan program will reduce the student's loan balance with their lender. **The student will be responsible for reimbursing Vermont College of Fine Arts for any funds returned by the university on behalf of the student.** Student will be notified of this amount by mail, and balances must be paid to the Business Office.

Final Assessments ("Grades") after Withdrawal

If a student withdraws during the refund period, a final assessment of "W" (Withdrawn) will be recorded on the student's academic record. If a student withdraws after the refund period has passed, a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) will be recorded on the student's academic record. If the withdrawal is effective at the end of the semester, the final credit determination as supplied by the evaluating faculty for each course will be posted to the student's academic record. In the case of an appeal of an academic decision, the refund schedule may be paused until a final determination is made.

Graduation

Graduation requires both academic and financial clearance. The Program Director and Registrar will certify that all academic degree requirements have been fulfilled. The Bursar's Office will audit financial accounts. If academic and/or financial clearance is not granted, a hold will be placed on the graduation process until the academic deficiency and/or the financial obligation is cleared.

Diplomas & Transcripts

Students who have not fulfilled their financial obligations with the college will not receive diplomas or transcripts until all amounts due to the college have been paid.

Vermont College of Fine Arts reserves the right to change any provision, requirement, statement of policy or procedure, service or facility detailed in this handbook. This handbook does not constitute a contractual agreement between the student and VCFA.

SECTION 2

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

FILM PROGRAM MASTER OF FINE ARTS, FILM

Degree & Credit Hours	
Learning Goals	37
Length of Program	38
Admission & Enrollment	
Admission	38
Enrollment & Deferment	39
Transfer Credit	39
Enrollment Status	39
Program Requirements	
Residency	40
Semester Projects	41
Thesis Year	42
Degree/Graduation Requirements	42
Academic Progress	
Evaluation	43
Awarding of Credit	43
Overview of Student Presentations, Papers and Forms	44
Thesis Review Process	45
Extension Policy	48
Academic Probation	49
Leave of Absence	49
Withdrawal	50
Dismissal	50
Additional Policies	
Plagiarism	51
Academic Appeals	51
Copyright Policy	51

DEGREE & CREDIT HOURS

DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts in Film degree through the MFA in Film program. The Master of Fine Arts in Film degree represents the advanced study of filmmaking.

CREDIT HOURS

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. Fifteen graduate-level credits are granted for the successful completion of each semester. Sixty credit hours are required for the awarding of the degree. If a student is granted transfer credit, they may graduate upon completion of forty-five credit hours with VCFA.

LEARNING GOALS

1. Demonstrate a mastery of professional and artistic skills through the creation of a new, rigorously pursued and developed body of work appropriate to the student's focus in live action filmmaking, animation, and/or screenwriting.

- Projects may be of varied style, genre, length and media, subject to self-identified project goals, and refined through faculty guidance at residency and during the semester.
- Student projects will be assessed in the context of professional practice for filmmaking and screenwriting with regards to storytelling techniques and production values.
- Supplemental film or other professionals, such as specialized technicians, or experts in specific non-film-related fields (e.g., an historian or a documentarian), and other qualified consultants or content experts may serve as student resources as needed.

2. Make appropriate creative choices, grounded in professional practice, in the application of the language of film.

Interaction between students and faculty will address student progress by assessing the production process, the integration of research and production, and the identification of additional theoretical and historical research, as they apply to the semester's work.

3. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the student's work in the context of film history and criticism, and of relevant contemporary works by others.

The faculty will develop recommended reading and viewing lists that will form the core of the students' general research and theoretical investigation, evidenced in the semester self-reflection papers, in the students' creative work, and in the thesis.

4. Synthesize research into project-based production.

Student work will be grounded in critical analysis. Written end-of-semester self-reflections will address the specifics of student engagement within the context of the semester's project(s).

LENGTH OF PROGRAM

All degree programs at Vermont College of Fine Arts must be completed within 150% of attempted credits.

TERMINAL DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in the field.

ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION

Admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Film program is based on the Admission Committee's determination regarding a student's aptitude for success, determined by demonstrated potential to effectively develop and communicate visual content.

- Applicants must have completed a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and have a basic proficiency in both current hardware and software used in the field of filmmaking, specific to their learning needs.
- Applicant portfolios should highlight visual strengths and could be a chronicle of development as a filmmaker over time. Projects, whether scripts or film projects, should show a variety and range. The faculty will look for candidates who demonstrate professional standards in craft, experience with traditional and/or non-traditional forms of filmmaking, an awareness of personal or social engagement with the medium, and a critical perspective on filmmaking.
- Applicant statements of purpose should evidence potential to engage with a range of intellectual traditions and to receive and productively respond to criticism. Applicants should demonstrate knowledge of contemporary filmmaking and its critical components, as the program requires significant emphasis on critical and conceptual content in creative work.

Bachelor's transcripts and letters of recommendation from those who are familiar with the student's design practice and ability to work independently are required. All admission decisions are made by the Admission Committee, which is comprised of program faculty members and the Program Director. All admission decisions are confidential. An application fee is required before an application will be processed. Application fee waivers are granted on the basis of expressed financial need.

Applications may be reviewed without official transcripts at the discretion of the program but acceptance in such cases will be conditional upon receipt of official transcripts. A new student may not enroll and begin a semester until official transcripts documenting completion of the required undergraduate degree is on file with VCFA.

The program will occasionally consider accepting a student who does not hold a bachelor's degree. Such candidates must demonstrate strong evidence of exceptional artistic work paired with writing and research abilities appropriate to graduate level study. This exception is not made often and the decision to waive an undergraduate degree is weighed carefully by the Admissions Committee at each individual request.

Admissions decisions are generally made within one month of the receipt of a completed application packet.

If a student is denied acceptance to the program for a specific semester, they may submit a new application to be reconsidered for another semester. In some cases, an applicant may be asked to wait one full year to re-apply, allowing time for further artistic growth and development.

ENROLLMENT AND DEFERMENT

Students admitted into a particular semester may defer admission one semester without penalty, provided they make their request in writing to the Program Director within one month of the start of the semester. It is preferable that students submit their tuition deposit for the semester they originally applied for, since this is what holds their place in the following semester as a deferral. If, however, enrollment is delayed more than one semester beyond the initial acceptance, students are required to re-apply and be considered by the Admission Committee. Readmission is not guaranteed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The Film program will consider one semester of transfer credit from a student transferring from another Film MA, MFA, or MS program provided that:

- (a) The student applies for admission to the program and is accepted;
- (b) The faculty, through a review of student work, finds sufficient evidence that the student can be successful in the program within only a year and a half of study.

Previous coursework must have been completed at an accredited school of art and design, and must have been within the last five years. In addition to materials required for the admissions review (official transcripts of previous undergraduate and graduate study are required materials), applicants for transfer credit should submit:

- Course descriptions for the graduate credits for which transfer credit is requested;
- A statement describing the previous plan of study, evaluating his or her work in the previous Film program, and explaining his or her reasons for applying to transfer into the MFA in Film Program at VCFA.

Decisions to award transfer credit will be made after initial acceptance to the program and upon receipt of all official transcripts, course descriptions, and a transfer statement.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

A student enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts in Film program has full-time status of 15 credits. Students who wish to attend part-time can arrange for semesters of study that are not consecutive, but single semesters are always full-time.

Currently enrolled students in need of enrollment verification should contact the registrar's office (registrar@vcfa.edu).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENCY

Every semester begins with an on-campus residency at Vermont College of Fine Arts located in Montpelier, Vermont.

Overview:

Students begin each semester with a weeklong residency where they join faculty, peers, and visiting filmmakers on our Montpelier campus for vibrant days of lectures, critiques, workshops, and discussion. The residency allows for reflection, input, and dialogue surrounding creative process and practice. Shared experiences during residency can be profound, generating and sustaining cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary conversations and fostering relationships lasting far beyond graduation.

Attendance:

All enrolled students are expected to participate fully in the entire on-campus residency period. Such participation is required for the semester's credit and for the granting of the degree. If a student cannot participate fully he or she must petition the MFA Program at least one month prior to the residency. Exceptions will be considered and approved for one-time only situations deemed appropriate and affecting a student's arrival or departure from the residency by no more than one day. Graduating students are required to attend their graduation ceremony for the actual awarding of the degree.

Residing Off-Campus:

Students may reside off-campus during residencies and, for billing purposes, must notify the office of such accommodation well in advance of the residency. All students, and especially first semester students, are encouraged to stay on campus so that they can experience the residency, including the informal community that develops, to the greatest degree. Students residing off-campus during residencies can inquire with the program about purchasing a meal plan separately if needed.

Guest Attendance:

Although specified events are open to the public, other activities and facilities are for students and faculty only, and students may not be accompanied to the residency by spouses, friends or family. Our experience has been that the residency period is an extremely demanding time to which students must give full attention. Guests are allowed for special occasions only such as public performances and graduation ceremonies. Students must receive permission from the MFA office for guests to stay overnight in a dorm; if approved, there is a fee.

Leave of Absence Residency Requirement:

Students taking a leave of absence from the program (See the Leave of Absence policy) should not plan to attend the residency that begins the semester of their leave. Credit will be reviewed for the previous semester by the student's advisor, and work done in that semester will be presented at the residency that begins the semester that the student returns to their studies. Students on Leave of Absence will still be copied on important program correspondence and have access to their academic files. Students should let the Program Office know in writing at least 6 weeks in advance of a semester whether they plan to go on leave or return from leave.

Residency Offerings:

Faculty, guest filmmakers, and students will give presentations at each residency. Students are expected to attend all Film program functions, all guest lectures, and student lectures as specified in the residency schedule.

Faculty Advisor Assignments:

VCFA employs faculty based on their creativity, diversity, expertise, demonstrated teaching ability, and academic credentials. All VCFA faculty members are part-time and bring the benefits of simultaneous artistic careers and networks to their students. VCFA faculty members are committed to the long-term vision of the Film program as well as to the mission of the College as a whole.

Faculty bios will be listed and updated on the VCFA website. During the residency, students will have opportunities to talk with and get to know faculty members in a variety of contexts: over meals, during presentations and lectures, and by meeting with faculty one-on-one in open office sessions. These opportunities will allow for students to ask the faculty questions about teaching styles and approaches, and aid students as they decide which faculty they want to study with in the upcoming semester.

Mid-residency, students submit an Advisor Selection form indicating how they might successfully work with each of at least three prospective faculty advisors. The Advisor Selection forms will be read carefully and weighed with student strengths and challenge areas when faculty advisors are assigned for the upcoming semester, ensuring the best match possible for student success.

While every effort is made to ensure that student choice is respected, the program does not guarantee that any student will be able to work with any one particular faculty member. Students are expected to work with four different faculty advisors during their enrollment at VCFA.

Residency Evaluation:

Each student and faculty member are required to complete a survey after each residency evaluating their experience. Student and faculty assessments of the residency period are confidential and assist the Program office in planning, allowing the office to address concerns and consider suggestions.

SEMESTER PROJECTS

Once faculty advisors are assigned, students will meet in both group and individual conferences with their advisors to plan semester work and set up a semester study plan. Students will prepare a Semester Study Plan in consultation with their faculty advisor during each residency. The Semester Study Plan is a formal document that solidifies the individual work embarked upon for the six-month semester and negotiates communication methods and deadlines. The semester study is completed away from campus with frequent and thorough dialogue between students and their faculty advisors.

The primary focus of the semester project will be each student's creative work, as well as a calendar of deliverables appropriate to the semester project(s). The student will submit work to the faculty advisor every four weeks, respond to criticism and suggestions, and submit revisions of the material as needed. Following each monthly interaction, the faculty advisor will provide a brief summary of that month's interactions and guidance. At the faculty advisor's discretion, submission schedules and work methods may be modified somewhat to suit individual needs in special circumstances. Monthly communication and work submission must remain the standard. Semester projects require a minimum investment by the student of 25 hours per week and a minimum of five documented monthly exchanges between students and faculty advisors. The semester project plans are on file with the program office.

The faculty advisor is the primary resource for the semester project. However, students are encouraged to become involved with scholarly local and professional activities that can enrich and support their semester projects. **While these activities do not substitute for work with the faculty advisor**, they do evidence increased experience and commitment to the practice.

Students are not permitted to use employment and/or internship opportunities for semester work but are instead asked to direct their semester work towards an individual, sustained process of creative inquiry.

SEMESTER REFLECTION

The semester's project is supplemented through a formal reflection (written or creative) piece, presented to the faculty advisor for review as part of the academic assessment for the semester and kept on file in the Program Office as part of the student's permanent academic record. It is the student's responsibility to be sure the Semester Reflection is on file with the program Office. There is a Semester Reflection required at the completion of each of the student's first three semesters, but not at the completion of Thesis.

THESIS YEAR

The Thesis Year begins at the student's third residency. Each student undertaking the Thesis will present a formal proposal to the faculty Thesis Board. During this presentation and discussion Thesis candidates will receive commentary, and recommendations for the thesis proposal that should be addressed in a separate Thesis proposal, submitted in addition to the third and fourth semester study plans. Thesis proposal must be filed with the Program Office. It is understood that the Thesis proposal may change in scope and detail, even direction, over the Thesis Year, but that each substantive change must be approved by the Thesis Board and filed with the Program Office.

DEGREE/GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Degrees are awarded following positive recommendations of the Faculty Advisor and the Faculty Advisory Committee, review by the Program Director and Academic Dean, and approval by the President of the College.

A student's record must give evidence of the following:

- full participation in five residency periods
- successful completion of four semester projects with full credit awarded each semester
- successful completion of the final thesis semester project
- work with a minimum of three different faculty advisors during the course of the Program

All financial obligations must be met before a diploma or transcript is issued.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

EVALUATION

Halfway through each semester, students and faculty complete narrative evaluations regarding progress toward the project goals, the efficacy of the student-faculty relationship, and the quality of monthly discussions. In addition, students and faculty submit narrative evaluations of semester work at the end of each semester. These evaluations must be sent to the MFA office two weeks prior to the residency period. A semester completion report and faculty end-of-semester evaluations are sent to the Registrar's office for the student's permanent record.

Students are expected to submit written evaluations of their advisor at the end of each semester. Forms are provided by the office and are to be returned at semester's end when transcript evaluations are submitted. Students' evaluations of faculty are confidential and are shared with faculty anonymously.

The student's academic progress and completion of degree requirements are monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis by the Faculty Advisors, Program Director and the Faculty Chair. In special circumstances, a student's progress may also be monitored and/or evaluated by the Faculty Advisory Committee. All students about to undertake their third semester will be reviewed by faculty during residency for their preparation to begin thesis study.

If a student's work is not progressing as needed during the semester, the student will receive a written notification via email or certified letter from the Program Director and Faculty Chair outlining the areas of concern that need to be addressed during the remainder of the semester. This generally takes the form of a mid-term warning, but could be issued at any time during a semester based on individual situations.

AWARDING OF CREDIT

Traditional grades are not used in the MFA programs at VCFA, and GPA's are not calculated. A successfully completed semester will earn a final assessment of **CR** (Credit) at the end of the semester. A final assessment of **NC** (No Credit) will be recorded if the work has proven to be inadequate. **CR** is considered to be the equivalent of a B or better in a traditional grading system. The underlying assumption is that students at the graduate level should perform well, not just adequately. The awarding of credit is based on evidence of substantial effort, productivity, timeliness, and artistic progress.

A student who has failed to comply with the terms outlined in their Semester Study Plan or whose work is deemed academically deficient may earn a temporary assessment of "Incomplete". An "Incomplete" must be concluded within a 30-day extension period (see Extensions below), if petitioned for and approved. If the work is then successfully completed, a final assessment of **CR** will be recorded. If the work is not successfully completed within the extension period, then a final assessment of **NC** will be recorded. Students are given adequate notice by their advisor and the program director if they are in jeopardy of not receiving credit, with the hope that they will still be time for them to successfully complete the semester.

In the case of an academic or medical extension, a temporary assessment of "Incomplete" may be recorded. At the end of the extension period, a final credit determination will be made. (See Extension Policy below.)

Once all end-of-semester paperwork (final evaluations from both the student and their faculty advisor) is submitted by the Program office to the Registrar's office, final assessments and credits awarded are posted to each student's academic record, usually within one week. The earliest date students should expect their academic records to be updated and transcripts to become available is two weeks after the residency.

OVERVIEW OF STUDENT PRESENTATIONS, PAPERS, AND FORMS

Please note that specific due dates for each current semester will be on the Film Commons under ANNOUNCEMENTS.

1st Residency

- All incoming students give an **Introductory Presentation** that introduces their work to date and goals for their time at VCFA.
- After individual meetings with prospective advisors for the coming semester, students submit the **Advisor Request Form**.
- After receiving final approval from their advisors, students submit the **Semester Study Plan**, outlining their study plans for the upcoming semester.

Between 1st and 2nd Residency

- Students submit the **Midterm Evaluation**.
- Students upload work to their **Project Sites** for the **Midterm Work Share**.
- At mid-term students are assigned by the Program to small Work Share group and provide critical feedback to other members of the group via the Film Commons site.
- Approximately one week before the 2nd residency, students submit the **End of Semester Reflection (Parts I & II)**, and an **Advisor Evaluation**.
- Prior to residency, students upload final work for the semester to their **Project Sites**.

2nd Residency

- Students present work at a **crit**.
- After individual meetings with prospective advisors for the coming semester, students submit the **Advisor Request Form**.
- After receiving final approval from their advisors, students submit the **Semester Study Plan**, outlining their study plans for the upcoming semester.

Midterm between 2nd and 3rd Residency

- Students submit the **Midterm Evaluation**.
- Students upload work to their **Project Sites** for the **Midterm Work Share**.
- At mid-term students are assigned by the Program to small Work Share group and provide critical feedback to other members of the group via the Film Commons site.
- Students discuss their **Thesis Project** ideas with their advisors during the semester, and email them a draft version of their **Thesis Proposals** as part of the final deliverables for discussion in the final feedback session.
- Two weeks before residency, students submit the **Thesis Proposal Form**.
- Approximately one week before residency, students submit the **End of Semester Reflection (Parts I & II)**, and an **Advisor Evaluation**.
- Prior to residency, students upload final work for the semester to their **Project Sites**.

3rd Residency

- Students present work at a **crit**.
- Students give a **Thesis Proposal Presentation**, outlining the work they plan to accomplish for a **Thesis Project** in the coming year.
- After individual meetings with prospective advisors for the coming semester, students submit the **Advisor Request Form**.

- After receiving final approval from their advisors, students submit the **Semester Study Plan**, outlining their study plans for the upcoming semester.
- Students submit a revised final **Thesis Proposal**.

Midterm between 3rd and 4th Residency

- Students submit the **Midterm Evaluation**.
- Students upload work to their **Project Sites** for the **Midterm Work Share**.
- At mid-term students are assigned by the Program to small Work Share group and provide critical feedback to other members of the group via the Film Commons site.
- Approximately one week before the residency, students submit the **End of Semester Reflection (Parts I & II)**, and an **Advisor Evaluation**.
- Students submit a draft version of the **Thesis Milestones** document as part of the final deliverables for discussion with the advisor in the final feedback session.
- Prior to residency, students submit the **Thesis Milestones** document.
- Prior to residency, students upload final work for the semester to their **Project Sites**.

4th Residency

- Students present work at a **crit**.
- After individual meetings with prospective advisors for the coming semester, students submit the **Advisor Request Form**.
- After receiving final approval from their advisors, students submit the **Semester Study Plan**, outlining their study plans for the upcoming semester.

Midterm between 4th and 5th Residency

- Students submit the **Midterm Evaluation**.
- Students upload work to their **Project Sites** for the **Midterm Work Share**.
- At mid-term students are assigned by the Program to small Work Share group and provide critical feedback to other members of the group via the Film Commons site.
- Two weeks before residency, **Thesis Projects** and **Bibliographies** are due. See the **Thesis Review Process** and **Thesis Review Criteria** documents on the Film Commons for detailed information.
- Approximately one week before the 5th residency, students submit the **End of Semester Reflection (Parts I & II)**, and an **Advisor Evaluation**.

5th Residency

- Students present their **Thesis Projects**.
- **Commencement** is on the final Saturday.

In addition to successfully completing 4 semesters of work, all film students must pass a faculty review of their thesis work in order to be eligible for the MFA degree. Thesis films must be provided to the program in H.264 file format at 30mb/sec bitrate as well as on Blu-Ray.

THESIS REVIEW PROCESS

Final semester students need to complete a thesis project as part of the final semester's graduation requirements. The final thesis submission (including bibliography) is due two weeks before the student's final residency, at which point the Faculty Chair and Program Director will preview it. For this deadline, production students email Vimeo links to their finished videos with a password provided to them, and all other submissions should be emailed to Stephen (screenplays as PDF attachments). Bibliographies are submitted via a form on the Film Commons. Expect confirmation of receipt for all emailed submissions and check in with Stephen if you do not receive it.

In the days that follow this submission and lead up to residency, production students are permitted to fine-tune their videos until the first (Saturday) afternoon of residency when the review/exhibition copy is due. Videos must be in H.264 format and handed off on a drive to Justin. Once this version is submitted on the first Saturday afternoon, there will be no further fine-tuning or resubmissions permitted during residency.

The final semester advisor will write up the end-of-semester evaluation with no credit award indicated, and the credit decision will be made at the final thesis review during residency. The faculty advisor's final evaluation, along with the thesis project, will be reviewed by two additional faculty at the student's final residency. They will award Credit (CR), No Credit (NC) or an Incomplete (INC), and convey this decision to the Program Director. The decision is finalized after further discussion with the faculty advisor, Faculty Chair and Program Director. At this point, the end-of-semester evaluation with the credit award decision becomes part of the student's permanent academic record. The two faculty reviewers will then meet with the thesis candidate to discuss the decision in a brief feedback session.

In the event that Credit is awarded, the student is cleared academically for graduation and receipt of the MFA.

In the event No Credit is awarded, the student must repeat the final semester and resubmit the thesis project. The degree will not be conferred, nor will the student be allowed to attend graduation until the thesis project is approved and the final semester completed.

An Incomplete may be given if a thesis is very close to completion. A student receiving an Incomplete may attend graduation, but will not yet be granted the degree. The student may then petition for one of the following extensions to address shortcomings in the thesis:

1. The student may petition the Faculty Chair and Program Director for a **Thesis Extension with Mentorship**. The student will be assigned a faculty advisor and will receive one final feedback session to be scheduled a time that is mutually beneficial, and is no later than one month before the following residency. The final thesis submission is due no later than two weeks before the following residency. If granted, this extension will require a fee as per the published Bursar guidelines, but generally 20% of the cost of attendance for one semester, due and payable at the time the extension is granted.
2. For a very nearly completed thesis that needs relatively minor fine-tuning or polish, the student may petition the Faculty Chair and Program Director for a **Final Revision Extension**, with no further faculty feedback and a final due date no later than two weeks before the following residency. The cost for this one-time-only Final Revision Extension is \$800, due and payable at the time the allowance is granted.

The exhibition files of thesis films will be archived by our department, as will thesis screenplays, bibliographies, and other supporting thesis materials submitted.

THESIS SPECIFICATIONS, REVIEW CRITERIA, and CREDITS

Thesis Specs for Films

Near-final film submissions are due 2 weeks before the first day of residency via a Vimeo link emailed to the Program Director, Faculty Chair and current semester's Faculty Advisor. Include any supplementary materials with your email and submit your bibliography form on the Film Commons.

Technical specs for all exhibition files (Savoy, on campus, archive)

- Compression: H.264
- Playback resolution: HD (1920x1080)
- File type: .mp4 or .mov
- Keep Bitrate around 30mbit/s (3.6MB/s)
- Audio – reference tone: -12dB, stereo.

Thesis Specs for Screenplays

Final screenplay submissions are due 2 weeks before the first day of residency, to be emailed as PDF attachment to the Program Director, Faculty Chair and current semester's Faculty Advisor. Include any supplementary materials with your email and submit your bibliography form on the Film Commons. Your materials will be immediately forwarded to two faculty reviewers.

All screenplay students are assigned a **half-hour slot during residency** and are required to either stage a reading of part of the thesis, or give another form of presentation (e.g., a pre-recorded reading, verbal overview with excerpts, etc.)

Thesis Review Criteria

Your final thesis must be submitted as a complete, finished and standalone piece, and not as a work-in-progress or excerpt, even if you intend to continue work on it. For production theses, any obvious omissions, rough spots, missing work or elements, etc., should be resolved to the fullest extent possible prior to submission. Screenplays should be submitted as complete, polished final drafts, thoroughly proofread for typos, and any stylistic or formatting errors.

The following questions and project facets will be considered when reviewing theses. Some do not apply to all projects.

SCREENWRITING

Story development (theme, plot, character) and structure

Strength, creativity and distinctiveness of the writer's voice

Clarity of thesis and/or purpose, effectiveness and research in non-fiction writing

DIRECTING (ALL GENRES)

Directorial vision with regards to aesthetic and technical components Development and structure with regards to story, visual and aural components Strength of choices Work with actors

Work with other creative and technical collaborators Outreach to organizations connected to subject

FILMMAKING (ALL GENRES)

Cinematography, Editing, Producing, Sound (including sound design and music), Graphics, VFX, titles

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

How does the thesis fulfill the thesis proposal submitted? Are all creative decisions manifest to a satisfactory degree? Is the quality of the finished piece satisfactory?

Was the work undertaken satisfactory in terms of process and progress? How many roles did the student take on personally in the submitted work? How does this work hold up within the context of similar works in its genre?

Did the student work consistently and at the level required by the program during their time at VCFA?

Did the student grow and make substantial contributions to their body of creative work during their time at VCFA?

Credits

Your final end credit should be:

- Made in conjunction with the MFA in Film Program at Vermont College of Fine Arts with the VCFA logo.
- The VCFA brand guidelines and logo are under the “Resources” tab on the Film Commons: <https://sites.google.com/a/vcfa.edu/film/crediting-vcfa>

THE CRITIQUE AT RESIDENCY

The critique (crit) is an opportunity for you to present some aspect of your current work in 20 minutes to two or more faculty members who were not your most recent mentor, and to students who are in your crit group.

Discussions with faculty directly follow your presentation and last 20-25 minutes. You may opt to open up the discussion to fellow students for any portion of that time.

Your crit is not part of your previous or upcoming semester’s evaluation, but is an isolated opportunity for feedback on a specific segment of your work from the past semester. You need not represent or summarize your entire semester’s work, or detail your process, but should just briefly introduce or frame the work you present. Examples of what can be presented (and combined) in crit include: - any short script(s) or script excerpts that can be read in less than 20 minutes - up to 20 minutes of edited video at any stage from rough assembly to final cut (not raw footage) - scenes or excerpts from scripts or videos that you have specific questions about (for example regarding pacing, directing actors, sound, structure, etc.) - a pitch for a project, and/or support materials such as a treatment, beat sheet, storyboards, animatics, look book, sample or mood reel, etc. - exercises, rehearsal scenes, or different versions of scenes for comparison

Ideally you will: - fill your twenty minutes of presentation with as much work as possible - keep explanations minimal and concise, only providing whatever setup is needed (if any) for the work presented - specify what kind of feedback you would like

You have the option to guide crit feedback around specific questions of interest to you about any aspect of your writing or filmmaking. Some questions may be better asked before you present the work (so everyone can have them in mind) and some may be better asked afterwards. You also have the option to keep feedback completely freeform and undirected. And finally, you have the option to maximize your feedback from the faculty present, or to open up the discussion at any point to the students present.

Keep in mind that the feedback you receive will involve spontaneous reactions to what you present in 20 minutes, and may not align with your or your advisor’s opinions that result from a deeper engagement with your work and process. Like all spontaneous feedback, which may not be fully articulated, it should be processed through a prism of how it may be of value to you, how your work presented this way strikes these specific people, and how it may have potential to inspire thought or action in new directions.

Crits are required of all students except those who are at their first residencies and fifth residencies. The latter may request a crit at their final residency for work done in the final semester that is not part of their thesis projects. The Program Office must receive such requests no later than one month before the start of residency for scheduling.

EXTENSION POLICY

A student unable to complete a semester's study plan may petition for a one-month extension. An extension is granted only in extenuating circumstances, upon recommendation of the Faculty Advisor, and with the approval of the Program Director and the Faculty Chair. All academic extensions begin the day after the residency ends. Requests for an extension must be made in writing to the Program Director and the Faculty

Chair at least two weeks before the end-of-semester date. Students will pay a fee for a one-month extension.

Students granted an extension cannot enroll for a new semester. After the extension period is complete, the student will be on withdrawn status until the beginning of the next semester.

Students and faculty will submit end-of-semester evaluations and students will submit end-of-semester work to the MFA office within 10 days of the end of the extension period.

A student who is completing his/her final semester on an extension will not receive a diploma until he/she has completed the extension and met all degree requirements. In this circumstance, the student will return for the next residency period to complete the final residency requirements and receive the diploma.

For purposes of financial aid certification or student loan deferment, students on extension status shall not be considered enrolled. No federal, state or institutional aid shall be awarded by the institution for an extension period.

Longer extension periods may only be granted by petition to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, with approval by the academic dean, in the case of extreme medical or personal circumstances. In such circumstances, appropriate documentation is required by a health care professional. The advisor and program office will review the petition and supporting documentation to determine whether an additional extension is warranted and what the appropriate length of time for the longer extension is.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student may be placed on academic probation by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair if the student has failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals or working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, or if the student's work is deemed below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level. Students will be notified if they are placed on academic probation and will have specific criteria to meet during the probation semester in order to return to an academic status of good standing. A student on probation will continue to be eligible for financial aid.

Following a semester of academic probation, a student's work will be re-evaluated by their advisor and the Faculty Chair and, with the approval of the Program Director, the probationary status will either be lifted, in which case the student will continue their enrollment in good academic standing, or the student's enrollment will be discontinued.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Enrolled students may request up to two consecutive semester-long leaves of absence from the program without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing in the program. Students must submit a written request for a leave of absence to the program no later than a semester date published and communicated to all enrolled students. Leave notice received after this date incurs a late fee.

Leave-of-absence status entitles the student to:

- Maintenance of files and records
- Inclusion in all program mailing lists and receipt of program materials
- Return to full participation in the program (upon request of the student no later than three months prior to the residency which initiates the next semester)

Students can submit any documents or examples of work completed during the leave period for inclusion in their records. Such material will be considered in decisions about degree candidacy and graduation date but will not be accepted in lieu of program requirements or granted credit.

Students who have completed a semester and plan to go on leave-of-absence for the following semester should not plan to attend the residency that begins the semester. Students who wish to extend the leave of absence for a second semester must submit a second request in writing to the program office as detailed above. Students who take more than two consecutive leaves of absence are automatically separated from the program. Students thus separated from the program must apply for readmission by contacting the Program Director.

A student readmitted within five years of being separated from the program will receive credit for previous work done in the program. If a student separated from the program for more than five years reapplies and is accepted into the program, credit for work previously completed would be granted at the discretion of the program.

IMPORTANT: Leave of Absence status as described above does NOT constitute an “Approved Leave of Absence” as defined by federal financial aid regulations. Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA’s financial aid counselor (877-612-2599).

WITHDRAWAL

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time. The date of withdrawal is defined as the day on which the Program Director or Registrar receives official notification of withdrawal by the student or such later date as the notification may indicate. See the Withdrawal & Refund Policy for more specific information.

DISMISSAL

Occasionally, a student may be dismissed from the program by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair upon the recommendation of the Faculty Advisory Committee. The conditions for dismissal are if the student has consistently failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals and working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, refuses to participate fully in the residency, or is abusive of faculty and other students. If the work of a student is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level, his or her continuation in the program can be denied. No student may receive a determination of “NC” (No Credit) for two consecutive semesters and remain in the program.

The date of dismissal is defined as the date on which the student receives written notice of dismissal from the College. A student may reapply to the program after a minimum of one year from the date of dismissal.

Failure to comply with any of the rules or regulations in this Handbook is grounds for dismissal from the program.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's work, and the person who plagiarizes does so with the clear intent to pass off the work of another as his or her own.

In most instances, a case of suspected plagiarism will be handled in the following way: A faculty member will report the suspected plagiarism to the Faculty Chair and the Program Director. If the Faculty Chair and Program Director find sufficient evidence of plagiarism, they will present that evidence to the Faculty Advisory Committee. If the majority of the Faculty Advisory Committee agrees that there is sufficient evidence of plagiarism, they will recommend a penalty to the Program Director and Faculty Chair. The Program Director will consult with the Faculty Chair and will be responsible for determining and communicating the appropriate penalty to the student. The penalty may consist of one or more of the following: denial of academic credit, probation, suspension, or expulsion. While the procedure described above is the one the MFA in Film program will follow in most instances, it is important to note that any faculty member or administrator who suspects a student of plagiarism may report the case directly to the Program Director and Faculty Chair, who might choose alternative ways to handle in some cases. In all cases, a decision will be communicated to the student within thirty days of the initial report to the Faculty Chair and Program Director.

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Students dissatisfied with some aspect of the Program are encouraged to seek a resolution to the problem. The first step toward such a resolution is discussion with the Program Director and the Faculty Chair. If no mutually agreed upon solution can be reached, the student will take the matter to the academic dean.

For exceptions to program policies, students may present to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, in consultation with the student's Faculty Advisor, petitions related to these regulations or reconsideration of academic and administrative decisions.

The Program Director and the Faculty Chair, after consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee, will make a determination on the petition. Students may appeal this action to the academic dean whose decision is final.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

We record lectures by faculty and others during residencies with their permission. It is expected that these recordings will be for personal use only. They may not be distributed, quoted, or used in any manner beyond this without written permission of the author. The same is true of the correspondence between students and faculty. We expect everyone in our community to act responsibly within the confines of copyright law and to serve as guardians of our creative and critical work.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

GRAPHIC DESIGN PROGRAM MASTER OF FINE ARTS, GRAPHIC DESIGN

Degree & Credit Hours	53
Learning Goals	53
Length of Program	53
Admission & Enrollment	
Admission	54
Enrollment & Deferment	55
Transfer Credit	55
Enrollment Status	55
Program Requirements	
Residency	56
Semester Project	58
Academic Progress	
Evaluation	59
Thesis Guidelines	59
Degree/Graduation Requirements	60
Awarding of Credit	60
Extension Policy	60
Academic Probation	61
Leave of Absence	61
Withdrawal	62
Dismissal	62
Additional Policies	
Plagiarism	63
Academic Appeals	63
Copyright Policy	63

DEGREE & CREDIT HOURS

DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design degree through the MFA in Graphic Design program. The Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design degree represents the advanced study of graphic design.

CREDIT HOURS

Fifteen graduate-level credits are granted for the successful completion of each semester. Sixty credit hours are required for the awarding of the two-year degree and 90 credits are required for the awarding of the three-year degree. If a student is granted transfer credit, they may graduate upon completion of a minimum of forty-five credit hours with VCFA.

LEARNING GOALS

The learning goals of the MFA in Graphic Design program are as follows:

- To **develop** an ability to synthesize form, content and craft
- To **deepen** and expand critical ability
- To **build** fluency in design discourse and visual culture
- To **claim** agency in the larger context of design and society

The Master of Fine Arts Degree in Graphic Design is a terminal degree and affords graduating students the necessary credentials to teach at the higher education level. The goal of the MFA in Graphic Design program is not only to credential, but also to help students develop advanced design skills, vision, and knowledge.

LENGTH OF PROGRAM

All degree programs at Vermont College of Fine Arts must be completed within 150% of attempted credits.

TERMINAL DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in the field of Graphic Design.

ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION

Admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design program is based on the Admission Committee's determination regarding a student's aptitude for success, determined by demonstrated potential to effectively develop and communicate visual content.

- Applicants must have completed a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and have a basic proficiency in both current hardware and software used in the field of graphic design.
- Applicant portfolios should highlight visual strengths and should show a variety and range of design experience. The faculty will look for candidates who bring context and richness to the form and content of their design endeavors.
- Applicant statements of purpose should evidence potential to engage with a range of intellectual traditions and to receive and productively respond to criticism. Applicants should demonstrate basic knowledge of contemporary visual culture, as the program requires significant emphasis on critical and conceptual content in creative work.

Two and Three-Year Track Enrollment

The two-year MFA Program in Graphic Design at VCFA is designed for graduate students with backgrounds and/or baccalaureate degrees in a graphic design field. The two-year program is designed to allow for sustained study and critical thinking associated with graduate level education. Attention will be given to the development of specific communication strategies through graphic design, as well as to critical thought and content generation.

The three-year MFA Program in Graphic Design at VCFA is designed for graduate students with backgrounds in liberal arts, fine arts, and sciences, as well as for students with backgrounds in design who need an extra year of development. In the three-year program, the first year is designed to bolster students' strengths and critical abilities in typography, image making, and design history, theory and authorship. Upon completion of the initial year of study, students complete two more years of study at the level of their peers in the two-year program.

The Admissions Review Committee will determine acceptance to each track at the time of application, and decisions will be based on previous education and aptitude for success at the Master's level.

Official Bachelor's transcripts and letters of recommendation from those who are familiar with the applicant's design practice and ability to work independently are required. All admission decisions are made by the Admissions Review Committee, which is comprised of program faculty members and the Program Director. All admission decisions are confidential. An application fee is required before an application will be processed. Application fee waivers are granted on the basis of expressed financial need.

Applications may be reviewed without official transcripts at the discretion of the program, but acceptance in such cases will be conditional upon receipt of official transcripts. A new student may not enroll and begin a semester until official transcripts documenting completion of the required undergraduate degree is on file with VCFA.

The program will occasionally consider accepting a student who does not hold a bachelor's degree. Such candidates must demonstrate strong evidence of exceptional design work paired with writing and research abilities appropriate to graduate level study. This exception is not made often and the decision to waive an

undergraduate degree is weighed carefully by the Admissions Review Committee at each individual request.

Application reviews are rolling throughout each semester and priority scholarship and final deadlines are posted on the website each semester. The Program office notifies applicants of the results of their admissions review as soon as possible after a decision has been made.

If a student is denied acceptance to the program for a specific semester, they may submit a new portfolio and statement of purpose to be reconsidered for another semester. In some cases, an applicant may be asked to wait one full year to re-apply, allowing time for further artistic growth and development.

ENROLLMENT AND DEFERMENT

Students admitted into a particular semester may defer admission to a later semester without penalty, provided they make their request in writing to the Program Director within a month of the start of the semester. It is preferable that students submit their tuition deposit for the semester they originally applied for, since this is what holds their place in the following semester as a deferral. If, however, enrollment is delayed for one year beyond the initial acceptance, students are required to re-apply and be considered by the Admission Committee. Readmission is not guaranteed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The Graphic Design program will consider one semester (15 Credit Hours) of transfer credit from a student transferring from another Graphic Design MA, MFA, or MS program provided that:

- (a) The student applies for admission to the program and is accepted.
- (b) The faculty, through a portfolio review, finds sufficient evidence that the student can be successful in the program in a shorter time period.

Previous coursework must have been completed at an accredited school of art and design, and must have been within the last five years. In addition to materials required for the admissions review, applicants for transfer credit should submit:

- (a) Course descriptions for the graduate credits for which transfer credit is requested
- (b) A statement describing the previous plan of study, coursework, and reasons for applying to transfer into the MFA in Graphic Design Program at VCFA.

Decisions regarding transfer credit will be made after initial acceptance to the program and upon receipt of all official transcripts, course descriptions, and a transfer statement.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

A student enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design program has full time status of 15 credits. Students who wish to attend part-time can arrange for semesters of study that are not consecutive, but single semesters are always full time. Currently enrolled students in need of enrollment verification should contact the registrar's office at registrar@vcfa.edu.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENCY

Each semester begins with a seven-day residency at Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier, Vermont. Full residency attendance is required to begin each semester of study, and full graduation residency attendance and participation are required for the awarding of the degree.

Overview:

Students begin each semester with a residency where they join faculty, peers, and visiting designers on the Montpelier campus for vibrant days of lectures, critiques, workshops, and discussion. The residency allows for reflection, input, and dialogue surrounding creative process and practice. Shared experiences during residency can be profound, generating and sustaining cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary conversations and fostering relationships lasting far beyond graduation.

Attendance:

All enrolled students are expected to participate fully in the entire residency period. Such participation is required for the semester's credit and for the granting of the degree. Students should petition the MFA Program at least one month prior to the residency if they need to miss any part of a scheduled residency. Exceptions will be considered and approved for one-time only situations deemed appropriate and affecting a student's arrival or departure from the residency by no more than one day. Graduating students are required to attend their graduation ceremony for the actual awarding of the degree unless permission is given by the Program Director to miss under extenuating circumstances.

Religious Worship During Residencies:

Students should petition the program office at least one month prior to the residency if they need to miss any part of the scheduled residency for religious worship. The College makes exceptions to attendance for religious worship on a case-by-case basis.

Arrival and Departure for Residency:

Students should plan to arrive and depart within scheduled arrival and departure times. If times vary from scheduled residency arrival and departure times, the Program office must be notified no later than the time that Housing Forms are due. Under extenuating circumstances, students will notify the Program office immediately so that arrangements can be made for late arrival or early departure. Failure to notify Program office in the event of late residency arrival or early residency departure will result in disciplinary action on the part of the Program.

Graduation Residency:

Students attending their Graduation Residency are permitted to arrive one day early for residency and to stay in the dorm that night free of charge. This is allowed so that they can have extra time for installation of their thesis exhibition and so that they may assist the Exhibition Coordinators in their preparation of the Thesis Gallery Space. Graduating students who arrive on campus a day early should not expect campus services, such as the library, store, café, or program office, to be at full residency hours or capacity. All other students must seek permission from the Program office for additional dorm nights, which will be approved only on an available basis, and an overnight fee will be charged for any scheduled additional dorm nights.

Residing Off-Campus:

Students may reside off-campus during residencies and, for billing purposes, must notify the office of such accommodation no later than the time when housing forms are due. All students, and especially first semester students, are encouraged to stay on campus so that they can experience the residency, including the informal community that develops, to the greatest degree. Students residing off-campus during residencies can inquire with the program about purchasing a meal plan separately if needed.

Guest Attendance:

Although specified events are open to the public, most activities and facilities are for students and faculty only, and students may not be accompanied to residency events by spouses, friends or family unless previously approved by the Program Director. The residency period is an extremely demanding time to which students must give full attention. Graduating students are permitted to Guests are allowed for special occasions only such as public performances and graduation ceremonies. Students must receive permission from the MFA office for guests to stay overnight in a dorm; if approved, there is a fee.

Residency Activity Requirements:

Faculty, guest designers, and students will give presentations at each residency. Students should see "Presentation Guidelines" for details regarding their presentation requirements. Students are expected to attend a minimum of five faculty lectures or workshops, all guest lectures, and student lectures as specified in the residency schedule. Additionally, faculty will hold group critiques of design work. Students are required to participate in these sessions as specified. In general, students are expected to participate fully in the residency.

Exhibition Requirements:

All returning students must bring design work created during the previous six months to each residency in order to participate in a group exhibition of student work, including critiques and dialog associated with exhibitions. See "Guide to the Residency" for more details on exhibition requirements.

The student must provide audio-visual or computer equipment used in the exhibition of work. All exhibitions are considered "process exhibitions" with the exception of the thesis exhibition. The final thesis exhibition is mounted for critique and as a graduation requirement.

All artwork transferred to the Vermont College campus is considered to be personal property of the student for the sole purpose of academic review and exhibition. This includes, but is not limited to, equipment used in displaying artwork such as LCD projectors, DVD players, Televisions, etc. Vermont College of Fine Arts is not responsible for any damage to or loss of personal property. Therefore, it is recommended that students inquire with their insurance agent regarding coverage of personal property before attending the residency. If damage occurs through official handling of artwork or equipment by VCFA faculty, staff or invited guests, VCFA will accept responsibility for the damage.

Faculty Advisor Assignments:

VCFA employs faculty based on their creativity, diversity, expertise, demonstrated teaching ability, and academic credentials. All VCFA faculty members are part-time and bring the benefits of simultaneous careers and networks to their students. VCFA faculty members are committed to the long-term vision of the Graphic Design program as well as to the mission of the College as a whole.

During the residency, students will have opportunities to talk with and get to know faculty members in a variety of contexts; over meals, during presentations and lectures, and by meeting with faculty individually. These opportunities will allow for students to ask the faculty questions about teaching styles and approaches, and aid students as they decide which faculty they want to study with in the upcoming semester.

Mid-residency, students submit an Advisor Selection form indicating how they might successfully work with each of at least five prospective Faculty Advisors. The Advisor Selection forms will be read carefully and weighed with student strengths and challenge areas when Faculty Advisors are assigned for the upcoming semester, ensuring the best match possible for student success.

While every effort is made to ensure that student choice is respected, the program does not guarantee that any student will be able to work with any one particular faculty member. Students are expected to work with a minimum of three different Faculty Advisors during their enrollment at VCFA and students should work with a different faculty member each semester of study. In extremely rare cases, Faculty Advisors may be changed during a semester if there are conflicts between the Faculty Advisor and the Advisee, but these types of

changes would be made based on careful consultation with all involved parties, including the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Academic Dean.

Residency Surveys:

Students and Faculty are asked to complete a survey after each residency evaluating their experience. Student and faculty assessments of the residency period are confidential and assist the Program office in planning, allowing the office to address concerns and consider suggestions.

SEMESTER STUDY

Once Faculty Advisors are assigned, students will meet in both group and individual conferences with their Advisors to plan semester work and set up a Semester Study Plan. Students will prepare a Semester Study Plan in consultation with their Faculty Advisor during each residency. The Semester Study Plan is a formal document that solidifies the individual work embarked upon for the six-month semester and negotiates communication methods and deadlines. Semester work is completed away from campus with frequent and thorough dialogue between students and their Faculty Advisors. In some cases, Advisors and/or the Program Office may request students to revise Semester Study Plans based on change of direction in study or for clarification purposes during a semester.

The student will submit work to the Faculty Advisor every four weeks, respond to criticism and suggestions, and submit revisions of the material as needed. Following each monthly interaction, the faculty advisor will provide a brief summary of that month's interactions and guidance. A general guideline of 35 pages is given to students as a gauge of the amount of work required for monthly packet exchange, and this may vary from student to student, incorporating creative work, process writing, and critical reflection. Submission schedules and work methods may be modified slightly to suit individual needs in special circumstances with approval from the Faculty Advisor and the Program Director. Monthly communication and work submission should remain the standard. Semester work requires a minimum investment by the student of 25 hours per week and a minimum of five documented monthly exchanges between students and faculty advisors. The semester study plans are on file with the Program office. Students may not substitute professional work for semester work done in the program, unless they have integrated their professional work with their semester work in the Semester Study Plan, and the work done during a semester is above and beyond professional work done for a job or for credit at another institution. Faculty Advisors must approve of any professional work integration in the Semester Study Plan. Students are not permitted to use employment and/or internship opportunities for semester work but are instead asked to direct their semester work towards an individual, sustained process of creative inquiry.

The faculty advisor is the primary resource for the semester work. However, students are encouraged to become involved with scholarly local and professional activities that can enrich and support their semester projects. **While these activities do not substitute for work with the faculty advisor**, they do evidence increased experience and commitment to the practice.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

EVALUATION

Halfway through each semester, students and faculty complete narrative evaluations regarding progress toward the project goals, the efficacy of the student-faculty relationship, and the quality of monthly discussions. In addition, students and faculty submit narrative evaluations of semester work at the end of each semester. These evaluations must be sent to the MFA office no later than the Semester Calendar specified due date for Final Evaluations. A semester completion report and faculty end-of-semester evaluations are sent to the Registrar's office for the student's permanent record.

Students are expected to submit written evaluations of their advisor at the end of each semester. Forms are provided by the office and are to be returned at semester's end when transcript evaluations are submitted. Students' evaluations of faculty are confidential and are shared with faculty anonymously.

The student's academic progress and completion of degree requirements are monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis by the Faculty Advisors, Program Director and the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs. In special circumstances, a student's progress may also be monitored and/or evaluated by the Faculty Advisory Committee.

If a student's work is not progressing as needed during a semester, the student will receive a written notification from the Program Director and Faculty Chair outlining the areas of concern that need to be addressed during the remainder of the semester. This generally takes the form of a mid-term warning, but could be issued at any time during a semester based on individual situations. Students will be notified in writing during the semester, usually at midterm, if they are in danger of not receiving credit for the semester. They will receive corrective action steps to take in most cases to prevent loss of credit.

THESIS GUIDELINES

Thesis Readiness Letters:

Shortly after midterm reviews during a student's second semester, students will receive an official "thesis readiness" letter from the Program Office and their current Faculty Advisor which brings together comments and suggestions from the first and second semester advisors and assesses their readiness to begin thesis work in the third semester. Students who receive a favorable letter can successfully move into thesis work in their third semester. Students who receive warning letters are notified of areas that need attention and fuller development. Students who receive warning letters may then have a meeting with their Faculty Advisor, the program Chair or Co-Chairs, and their current Advisor during the residency beginning their third semester to further discuss areas of concern and to offer additional support to the student moving into thesis work. In rare cases, a student may be asked to complete an additional semester if it is determined that they are not yet ready to move into thesis work or if they are struggling academically once they embark on thesis work. Each semester, faculty advisors work with students in the dual modes of practice and theory. Critical theory and acquired knowledge of visual culture are integrated each semester with emphasis on personal growth. The thesis is seen as the culmination of the four semesters of study. The primary submission is a proposed and approved body of creative work developed over all previous semesters and organized to reflect an increasing focus on a particular theme or topic that has arisen over the course of study. Creative work will be synthesized as a designed text articulating the central ideas of the thesis and/or tracing the student's progress in discovery and expression. ***Please see Graphic Design Thesis Handbook for specific Guidelines regarding the MFA in Graphic Design Thesis. These handbooks are made available to thesis students in print at residency and digitally on the Student Commons.***

DEGREE/GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Degrees are awarded following positive recommendations of the Faculty Advisor and the Faculty Advisory Committee, review by the Program Director and Academic Dean, and approval by the President of the College.

A student's record must give evidence of the following:

- Full participation in all required residency periods
- Successful completion of all required semesters with full credit awarded each semester
- Successful completion and submission of all of the requirements of the thesis document
- Full participation in the thesis exhibition during the graduation residency
- Final digital presentation of thesis work to students and faculty of required length
- Full participation in the thesis critique
- Full participation in the residency graduation ceremony unless permission is granted to miss by the Program Director
- Meeting all financial obligations to the college before a diploma or transcript can be issued

AWARDING OF CREDIT

A successfully completed semester will earn a final assessment at the end of the semester of "CR" (Credit). A final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) will be recorded if the work has proven to be inadequate. "CR" is considered to be the equivalent of a B or better in a traditional grading system. The underlying assumption is that students at the graduate level should perform well, not just adequately. The awarding of credit is based on evidence of substantial effort, productivity, timeliness, and artistic progress.

A student who has failed to comply with the terms outlined in their Semester Study Plan and/or whose work is deemed academically deficient may earn a temporary assessment of "Incomplete". An "Incomplete" must be concluded within a specified extension period (see Extensions below), if petitioned for and approved. If the work is then successfully completed, a final assessment of "CR" will be recorded. If the work is not successfully completed within the extension period, then a final assessment of "NC" will be recorded. Their Advisor and the Program Director give students adequate notice if they are in jeopardy of not receiving credit, with the hope that they will still be time for them to successfully complete the semester.

In the case of an academic or medical extension, a temporary assessment of "Incomplete" may be recorded. At the end of the extension period, a final credit determination will be made. (See Extension Policy below.)

EXTENSION POLICY

A student unable to complete a semester's study plan may petition for an extension. An extension is granted only in extenuating circumstances, upon recommendation of the Faculty Advisor, and with the approval of the Program Director and the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs. All academic extensions begin the day after the residency ends. Requests for an extension must be made in writing to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair at least three weeks before the end-of-semester date. Students will pay a fee for an extension, which will be determined by the length of additional teaching time needed to cover the extension.

Students granted an extension do not enroll for a new semester. Instead, they will be required to take a Leave of Absence for the subsequent semester. After the extension period is complete, the student will be on Leave of Absence status until the beginning of the next semester and will not plan to attend the residency that begins the Leave of Absence Semester.

Students and faculty will submit end-of-semester evaluations and students will submit end-of-semester work to the MFA office no later than the official end of the extension period.

A student who is completing his/her final semester on an extension may not receive a diploma until he/she has

completed the extension and met all degree requirements. In this circumstance, the student will return for the next residency period to complete the final residency requirements and receive the diploma.

For purposes of financial aid certification or student loan deferment, students on extension status shall not be considered enrolled. No federal, state or institutional aid shall be awarded by the institution for an extension period.

Medical extension periods may only be granted by petition to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs, with approval by the Academic Dean, in the case of extreme medical or personal circumstances. In such circumstances, appropriate documentation is required by a health care professional. The Advisor and Program Director will first review the petition and supporting documentation to determine whether an additional extension is warranted and what the appropriate length of time for the extension should be.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student may be placed on academic probation by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair if the student has failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals or working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, or if the student's work is deemed below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level. Students will be notified if they are placed on academic probation and will have specific criteria to meet during the probation semester in order to return to an academic status of good standing. A student on probation will continue to be eligible for financial aid.

Following a semester of academic probation, a student's work will be re-evaluated by their Advisor and the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and, with the approval of the Program Director, the probationary status will either be lifted, in which case the student will continue their enrollment in good academic standing, or the student's enrollment will be discontinued.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Enrolled students may request up to two consecutive semester-long leaves of absence from the program without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing in the program. Students must submit a written request for a Leave of Absence to the program no later than 30 days before the start of the new semester. Leave notice received after this date incurs a late fee, which can be found on the published "Tuition and Fees" schedule for the program.

Leave-of-absence status entitles the student to:

- Maintenance of files and records
- Inclusion in all program mailing lists and receipt of program materials (if requested)
- Return to full participation in the program (upon request of the student no later than one month prior to the residency which initiates the next semester)

Students can submit any documents or examples of work completed during the leave period for inclusion in their records. Such material will be considered in decisions about degree candidacy and graduation date but will not be accepted in lieu of program requirements or granted credit.

Students who have completed a semester and plan to go on Leave of Absence for the following semester should not plan to attend the residency that begins the semester. Students who wish to extend the leave of absence for a second semester must submit a second request in writing to the Program office as detailed above. Students who take more than two consecutive Leaves of Absence are automatically separated from the program. Students thus separated from the program must apply for readmission by contacting the Program Director.

A student readmitted within five years of being separated from the Program will receive credit for previous work done in the program. If a student separated from the program for more than five years reapplies and is accepted into the program, credit for any work previously completed would be granted at the discretion of the program.

IMPORTANT: Leave of Absence status as described above does NOT constitute an "Approved Leave of Absence" as defined by federal financial aid regulations. Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA's financial aid counselor (877-612-2599).

WITHDRAWAL

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time. The date of withdrawal is defined as the day on which the Program Director or Registrar receives official notification of withdrawal by the student or such later date as the notification may indicate. See the Withdrawal & Refund Policy for more specific information.

DISMISSAL

The Program Director and the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs may dismiss a student from the program, in consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee. The conditions for dismissal are if the student has consistently failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals and working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, refuses to participate fully in the residency, and/or is found to be abusive of faculty and/or other students. If the work of a student is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level, his or her continuation in the program can be denied. No student may receive a determination of "NC" (No Credit) for two consecutive semesters and remain in the program.

The date of dismissal is defined as the date on which the student receives written notice of dismissal from the College. A student may reapply to the program after a minimum of one year from the date of dismissal.

Failure to comply with any of the rules or regulations in this Handbook is grounds for dismissal from the program.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's work, and the person who plagiarizes does so with the clear intent to pass off the work of another as his or her own.

In most instances, a case of suspected plagiarism will be handled in the following way: A faculty member will report the suspected plagiarism to the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and the Program Director. If the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and Program Director find sufficient evidence of plagiarism, they will present that evidence to the Faculty Advisory Committee. If the majority of the Faculty Advisory Committee agrees that there is sufficient evidence of plagiarism, they will recommend a penalty to the Program Director and Faculty Chair. The Program Director will consult with the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and will be responsible for determining and communicating the appropriate penalty to the student. The penalty may consist of one or more of the following: denial of academic credit, probation, suspension, or dismissal. While the procedure described above is the one the MFA in Graphic Design program will follow in most instances, it is important to note that any faculty member or administrator who suspects a student of plagiarism may report the case directly to the Program Director and Faculty Chair, who might choose alternative ways to handle in some cases. In all cases, a decision will be communicated to the student within thirty days of the initial report to the Faculty Chair and Program Director.

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Students dissatisfied with some aspect of the Program are encouraged to seek a resolution to the problem. The first step towards any such resolution is discussion with the Program Director and the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs. If no mutually agreed upon solution can be reached, any of the above mentioned parties can take the situation to the Academic Dean.

For exceptions to program policies, students should first present requests to the Program Director, who will then consult with necessary parties in order to decide whether or not to grant the exception. Formal requests in writing related to these regulations or reconsideration of academic and administrative decisions should be made first to the Program Director, with the current Faculty Advisor copied.

The Program Director, in concert with the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs, and in consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee as needed, will make a determination on student petitions. Students may appeal this determination to the Academic Dean, whose decision is final.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

We record and sometimes stream lectures by faculty and others during residencies with their express permission. It is expected that these recordings will be for personal use only. They may not be distributed, quoted, or used in any manner beyond this without written permission of the creator. The same is true of the correspondence between students and faculty. We expect everyone in our community to act responsibly within the confines of copyright law and to serve as guardians of our creative and critical work.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

MUSIC COMPOSITION PROGRAM MASTER OF FINE ARTS, MUSIC COMPOSITION

Degree & Credit Hours	65
Learning Goals	65
Length of Program	65
Admission & Enrollment	
Admission	66
Enrollment & Deferment	66
Transfer Credit	66
Enrollment Status	67
Program Requirements	
Residency	67
Semester Project	68
Thesis Semester	69
Degree/Graduation Requirements	69
Academic Progress	
Evaluation	70
Awarding of Credit	70
Extension Policy	71
Academic Probation	71
Leave of Absence	71
Withdrawal	72
Dismissal	72
Additional Policies	
Plagiarism	73
Academic Appeals	73
Copyright Policy	73

DEGREE & CREDIT HOURS

DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition degree through the MFA in Music Composition Program.

The Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition degree represents the study of music from the composer's, not the critic's or the scholar's, perspective. The focus for every student is on the art of composition, first and foremost. The program offers students the opportunity to work with faculty across a range of musical genres and, through that process, gain the technical tools and formal clarity to realize most fully their own compositional voices.

CREDIT HOURS

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. The MFA in Music Composition program requires a minimum of 60 credit hours (four 15-credit semesters) for the award of the degree. The exception is in the rare case when a student is granted acceleration and may then graduate upon completion of 45 credit hours in the program.

LEARNING GOALS

The learning goals of the MFA in Music Composition program are as follows:

- High achievement in the creation of music
- Ability to productively describe and discuss music and the compositional process
- Knowledge of music, and writing about music, relevant to the student's compositional interests

LENGTH OF PROGRAM

All degree programs at Vermont College of Fine Arts must be completed within 150% of attempted credits.

ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION

Admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition program is based primarily on the quality of original work submitted by Bachelor's degree holders and the judgment by the MFA Faculty Committee that the applicant's preparation and goals are compatible with the program's design and ideals.

An applicant's portfolio of samples and scores must indicate sufficient quality of creative work and musical foundation, level of commitment, and sophistication of compositional skills to demonstrate that the applicant is ready to do graduate work in music composition. The application Statement of Purpose must give evidence of strong background in music composition, the ability to do independent study, as well as the readiness to receive and use criticism of his or her work.

Baccalaureate transcripts and two letters of recommendation from persons familiar with the student's compositions are required of all applicants. All admission decisions are made by the MFA Faculty Committee which is comprised of faculty members in the program. A \$75 application fee is required before an application is processed.

Applications may be reviewed without transcripts at the discretion of the program; however, acceptance in such cases is pending receipt of the official undergraduate transcript. A new student may not enroll and begin the residency until the official transcript indicating respective program completion is on file. The Program occasionally considers accepting a student without a Bachelor's degree. Such candidates must show evidence to the MFA Faculty Committee of exceptional compositional background.

A decision on an application is usually made within three to four weeks after the application materials have been received. When a candidate is denied admission, the applicant may submit a new application and be reconsidered at a later date.

ENROLLMENT AND DEFERMENT

A student admitted into a particular semester may defer admission for one semester without penalty, providing a request to do so is made at least two months prior to the residency for which the student was originally accepted. If the student does not enroll in the semester following the one to which she or he was originally accepted, the student must reapply to the program. Readmission is not guaranteed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The Music Composition program will accept a semester of graduate-level credit in music composition provided that the Faculty Admissions Committee deems the student's compositional skill at least to be equivalent in quality to that of VCFA students at a corresponding stage in their progress toward the MFA degree. In addition to materials required for the admissions review (official transcripts of previous undergraduate and graduate study are required materials), an applicant for transfer credit should submit a) course descriptions for the graduate transcript(s) for which transfer credit is requested; and b) a statement describing the previous plan of study, evaluating his or her work in the previous composition program, and explaining his or her reasons for wishing to transfer to the MFA in Music Composition program at VCFA. The earliest that a transfer credit decision will be made is at the point of acceptance into the program.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. A student enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition program (15-credits/semester) has full-time status; part-time study is not offered.

Currently enrolled students in need of enrollment verification should contact the registrar's office (registrar@vcfa.edu).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENCY

Every semester begins with an on-campus residency at Vermont College of Fine Arts located in Montpelier, Vermont. The requirements of the residency are as follows:

ATTENDANCE

The seven-day residency period, which occurs every six months (in August and February) is a principal component of the MFA in Music Composition program. Required to initiate a semester's work, the residency provides the student with a range of presentations, workshops, and performances to balance against the individualized focus of the semester composition projects; an opportunity to choose a Faculty Advisor; time to prepare the study plan with faculty guidance; general direction in the development of an individualized curriculum; and a source of stimulation, support, and community. All enrolled students are expected to participate fully in the entire seven-day period. Such participation is required for the semester's credit and for the granting of the degree. If a student cannot participate fully he or she must petition the MFA Program at least one month prior to the residency. Exceptions will be considered and approved for one-time only situations deemed appropriate and affecting a student's arrival or departure from the residency by no more than one day.

Students may reside off-campus during residencies and, for billing purposes, must notify the office of such accommodation eight weeks prior to the residency. All students, and especially first semester students, are encouraged to stay on campus so that they may experience the residency, including the informal community that develops, to the greatest degree.

Although specified events are open to the public, other activities and facilities are for students and faculty only, and students may not be accompanied to the residency by spouses, friends or family. Our experience has been that the residency period is an extremely demanding time to which students must give full attention. Guests are allowed for special occasions only such as public performances and graduation ceremonies. Students must receive permission from the MFA office for guests to stay overnight in a dorm; if approved, there is a fee.

Students taking a leave from the program (see the Leave of Absence policy) are expected to attend at least part of the residency that opens the leave semester, specifically in order to participate in rehearsals and concerts of their music written during the previous term. If extenuating circumstances make such attendance impossible, the student must petition the program at least two months prior to the residency so that alternate arrangements can be made.

A room and board fee will be charged for students staying on campus.

RESIDENCY OFFERINGS

Presentations will be given by faculty and visiting composers; students are expected to attend a minimum of 10 of these sessions and are encouraged to attend all of them. Additionally, every student has music critiqued in a master class during the residency. Students are required to upload music (and scores) for the master class prior to residency. Students are expected to attend all performances offered during the residency. In general, students are expected to participate fully in the residency.

Study exploration sessions and new group meetings are not open to students on leave or to guests.

FACULTY ASSIGNMENT

VCFA employs faculty in the arts based on their creativity, expertise, teaching ability, and academic credentials. While all VCFA faculty are part-time, and therefore bring to their teaching the benefits of simultaneous artistic careers and networks, they are also the committed long-term creators and guides of the program.

During the residency, after discussions, presentations, and study exploration sessions (informal interview sessions to discuss semester project ideas with faculty members), students submit a brief study proposal and faculty preference list. The faculty then makes a collective judgment about appropriate advisor selection. The Program is concerned that each student establish a relationship with a faculty member who is enthusiastic about his or her work and feels able to make a contribution toward the pursuit of that student's goals and development of talent. Thus, while every effort is made to ensure that student choice will be respected, the Program does not guarantee that any student will be able to work with any one particular faculty member. During the residency, students meet in groups and in individual conferences with their Faculty Advisors to discuss the semester project. Students are expected to work with a minimum of two different Faculty Advisors during their enrollment at VCFA.

EVALUATION

At the end of the residency each student evaluates the various residency activities and events. These student assessments of the residency period help the program office to plan the next period more effectively and to address suggestions that students may make.

SEMESTER PROJECT

The other essential component of the MFA in Music Composition program is the semester project. During the residency period students are paired with a Faculty Advisor; together, they design a six-month individualized study plan. The project is completed in the six months away from campus, with frequent and thorough dialogue with the Faculty Advisor. During the study planning process at residency, the student and the advisor will determine the method (e.g. Skype, e-mail, etc.) and schedule for communication during the semester.

The primary focus of the semester project will be the student's own creative work. The student will submit work to the Faculty Advisor every three to four weeks, respond to criticism and suggestions, and submit revisions of the material. The student will submit writing (paper, letter, journal, blog – format to be agreed upon by advisor and student) to accompany each monthly submission of work reflecting on process, influences, questions, etc. Following each monthly interaction, the Faculty Advisor will provide a brief summary of that month's interactions and guidance. At the Faculty Advisor's discretion, submission schedules and work methods may be modified to suit individual needs. Semester projects require a minimum investment by the student of 25 hours per week and a minimum of five substantial exchanges between student and Faculty Advisor. The semester project plans are filed with the MFA office. A process document (1,000 - 3,000 words) reflecting on the work of the semester, reporting on the activities that supported the composing such as studying outside pieces, attending concerts, considering influences, etc., will be submitted to the Faculty Advisor at the end of each semester.

Two semesters must include work written for resident ensembles (not necessarily all the work done in each of those semesters will be for the ensemble). Students may choose to write for an ensemble every semester.

During residency, students attend rehearsals and concerts by the resident ensembles.

The Faculty Advisor is the chief resource for the semester project. However, students are encouraged to become involved with local activities that can enrich and support their semester projects. While these activities do not substitute for work with the Faculty Advisor, they may be included in the evaluation of the project as evidence of increased experience and commitment.

THESIS SEMESTER

At the end of at least three successful semesters, and with faculty approval of the thesis composition proposal (submitted early in the final semester), the student undertakes the Thesis project. The Thesis project consists of two parts: the thesis composition and the reflective thesis paper. The reflective thesis paper (approximately 4000 words) discusses the student's compositional processes over the four semesters. This thesis document will be built upon the cumulative end-of-semester reflective papers and will include a summary of the student's view of the development of their work and directions the work has moved in, an exploration of relevant influences, and a statement of future compositional goals.

A Second Reader from the faculty will be assigned to review the thesis documents and provide feedback to the Faculty Advisor who will communicate with the student. The thesis composition and the reflective thesis must be reviewed and approved, in final form, by the Faculty Advisor and submitted at the final residency.

DEGREE/GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Degrees are awarded following positive recommendations of the Faculty Advisor and MFA Faculty Committee, review by the Program Director and academic dean, and approval by the president of the college.

A student's record must give evidence of the following:

- Full participation in five residency periods (four if transfer credit was awarded);
- Successful completion of four semester projects (three if transfer credit was awarded);
- Completion of a minimum of 30-40 minutes of fully developed music (for performance or professional media, depending on genres studied) using varied length and instrumentation;
- Presentation at residencies of selected music written during each semester;
- Work written during at least two semesters for resident ensembles;
- The Reflective Thesis and the Thesis Composition.

All financial obligations must be met before a diploma or transcript is issued.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

EVALUATION

Midway through the semester, students and faculty each complete narrative evaluations of the progress being made toward the project goals, the efficacy of the student-faculty relationship, and the quality and timeliness of the monthly discussions. At the end of the semester students and faculty submit narrative evaluations of the six months' work. These evaluations must be submitted by a designated time during the residency at the end of the semester being evaluated. A semester completion report and the faculty end-of-semester evaluations are sent to the Registrar's office for the student's permanent record.

Students are expected to submit written evaluations of their advisor at the end of each semester. Forms are provided by the program office and are to be returned at semester's end when transcript evaluations are submitted. Faculty receive their evaluations without student names included. Students have the choice to maintain confidentiality; if confidentiality is requested, the faculty member being evaluated has the assurance that the Program Director and the appropriate Faculty Chair will jointly provide a written synopsis of the evaluation and the faculty member has the option to respond in writing for any official record or file.

The student's academic progress and completion of degree requirements is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis by the Faculty Advisors, Program Director and the Faculty Chair. A review of each student's progress in the program is conducted at the opening faculty meeting of every residency. Any specific concerns will be outlined in a letter from the Program Director and the Faculty Chair and presented to the student during the residency.

If, at any time during a semester, a student's work is deemed by their advisor to be seriously inadequate, the advisor will communicate these concerns directly and the student will receive a written warning by certified letter from the Program Director and Faculty Chair outlining the areas of concern that need to be addressed during the remainder of the semester.

AWARDING OF CREDIT

Traditional grades are not used in the MFA programs at VCFA, and GPA's are not calculated. At the conclusion of a semester, a student's work that has been successfully completed will earn a final assessment of **CR** (Credit). **CR** is considered to be the equivalent of a B or better in a traditional grading system. The underlying assumption is that students at the graduate level should perform well, not just adequately. The awarding of credit is based on evidence of substantial effort, productivity, timeliness, and artistic progress.

If the student's work has proven to be inadequate to warrant the awarding of credit, a final assessment of **NC** (No Credit) will be recorded.

A student who has failed to comply with the terms outlined in their Semester Study Plan or whose work is deemed academically deficient may earn a temporary assessment of "Incomplete." An "Incomplete" must be concluded within a 30-day extension period (see Extensions below), if petitioned for and approved. If the work is then successfully completed, a final assessment of **CR** will be recorded. If the work is not successfully completed within the extension period, then a final assessment of **NC** will be recorded.

In the case of an academic or medical extension, a temporary assessment of "Incomplete" may be recorded. At the end of the extension period, a final credit determination will be made. (See Extension Policy below.)

If an enrolled student withdraws during the refund period of a semester, an assessment of **W** (Withdrawn) is recorded and no credit is awarded. If an enrolled student withdraws after the refund period of a semester, an assessment of **NC** (No Credit) is recorded and no credit is awarded.

Once all end-of-semester paperwork (final evaluations from both the student and their faculty advisor) is submitted by the Program office to the Registrar's office, final assessments and credits awarded are posted to each student's academic record, usually within one week. The earliest date students should expect their academic records to be updated and transcripts to become available is two weeks after the residency.

EXTENSION POLICY

A student unable to complete a semester's study plan may petition for a one-month extension. An extension is granted only in extenuating circumstances, upon recommendation of the Faculty Advisor, and with the approval of the Program Director and the Faculty Chair. All academic extensions begin the day after the residency ends. Requests for an extension must be made in writing to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair at least two weeks before the end-of-semester date. Students will pay a fee for a one-month extension.

Students granted an extension may not enroll for a new semester. After the extension period is complete, the student will be on "Leave of Absence" status until the beginning of the next semester.

Students and faculty will submit end-of-semester evaluations and students will submit end-of-semester work to the MFA office within 10 days of the end of the extension period.

A student who is completing his/her final semester on an extension may not receive a diploma until he/she has completed the extension and met all degree requirements. In this circumstance, the student will return for the next residency period to complete the final residency requirements and receive the diploma.

For purposes of financial aid certification or student loan deferment, students on extension status shall not be considered enrolled. No federal, state or institutional aid shall be awarded by the institution for an extension period.

Longer extension periods may only be granted, by petition to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, with approval by the academic dean, in the case of extreme medical or personal circumstances. In such circumstances appropriate documentation is required by a health care professional. The petition and accompanying documentation will be reviewed by the student's advisor and the program to see if a longer extension period is warranted and, if so, what time period may be deemed appropriate.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student may be placed on academic probation by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair if the student has failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals or working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, or if the student's work is deemed below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level. Conditions of probation will be detailed in a letter from the Program Director and the Faculty Chair delivered to the student at the residency that begins the semester. A student on probation will continue to be eligible for financial aid.

Following a semester of academic probation, a student's work will be reevaluated by their advisor and the Faculty Chair and, with the approval of the Program Director, the probationary status will either be lifted, in which case the student will continue their enrollment in good standing, or the student's enrollment will be discontinued.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Enrolled students may request up to two consecutive semester-long leaves of absence from the program without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing in the program. Students must submit a written request for a leave of absence to the program no later than a semester date published and communicated to all enrolled students; leave notice received after this date incurs a late fee.

Leave-of-absence status entitles the student to:

- Maintenance of files and records;
- Inclusion in all program mailing lists and receipt of program materials;
- Return to full participation in the program upon request of the student no later than three months prior to the residency which initiates the next semester.

Students may place in their records any documents, reports or examples of work completed during the leave period. Such material will be considered in decisions about degree candidacy and graduation date but will not be taken in lieu of program requirements or granted credit.

Students who have completed a semester and plan to go on leave-of-absence for the following semester should attend the first part of the residency that opens the leave semester. If such attendance presents a significant difficulty for the student, it is essential that the student discuss alternative arrangements with the Faculty Advisor and Program Director at least two months prior to the residency. Students going on leave who choose to attend the entire residency period may participate in all residency events with the exception of study planning activities. Students who wish to extend the leave of absence for a second semester must submit a second request in writing to the program office as detailed above. Students who take more than two consecutive leaves of absence are automatically separated from the program. Students thus separated from the program must apply for readmission by contacting the Program Director.

A student readmitted within five years of being separated from the program will receive credit for previous work done in the program. If a student separated from the program for more than five years reapplies and is accepted into the program, credit for work previously completed will be granted at the discretion of the program.

IMPORTANT: Leave of Absence status as described above does NOT constitute an “Approved Leave of Absence” as defined by federal financial aid regulations. Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA’s financial aid counselor (877-612-2599).

WITHDRAWAL

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time. The date of withdrawal is defined as the day on which the Program Director or Registrar receives official notification of withdrawal by the student or such later date as the notification may indicate. See the Withdrawal & Refund Policy for more specific information.

DISMISSAL

Occasionally, a student may be dismissed from the program by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair in consultation with the Faculty Advisor if the student has consistently failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals and working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, refuses to participate fully in the residency, or is abusive of faculty, other students, and/or staff. If the work of a student is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level, his or her continuation in the program can be denied. No student may receive a determination of “NC” (No Credit) for two consecutive semesters and remain in the program.

The date of dismissal is defined as the date on which the student receives written notice of dismissal from the College. A student may reapply to the program after a minimum of one year. Acceptance is not guaranteed.

Failure to comply with any of the rules or regulations in this Handbook is grounds for dismissal from the program.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's work, and the person who plagiarizes does so with the clear intent to pass off the work of another as his or her own.

In most instances, a case of suspected plagiarism will be handled in the following way: A faculty member will report the suspected plagiarism to the Faculty Chair and the Program Director. If the Faculty Chair and Program Director, in consultation with the Faculty Advisor, find sufficient evidence of plagiarism, they will determine a penalty which may consist of one or more of the following: denial of academic credit, probation, suspension, or expulsion. While the procedure described above is the one the MFA in Music Composition program will follow in most instances, it is important to note that any faculty member or administrator who suspects a student of plagiarism may report the case directly to the Program Director and Faculty Chair, who might choose to use alternative means for handling some cases. In all cases, a decision will be communicated to the student within thirty days of the initial report to the Faculty Chair and Program Director.

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Students dissatisfied with some aspect of the Program are encouraged to seek a resolution to the problem. The first step toward such a resolution is discussion with the Program Director and the Faculty Chair. If no mutually-agreeable solution is reached, the student may take the matter to the academic dean.

For exceptions to program policies, students may present to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, in consultation with the student's Faculty Advisor, petitions related to these regulations or reconsideration of academic and administrative decisions.

The Program Director and the Faculty Chair, after consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee, will make a determination on the petition. Students may appeal this action to the academic dean whose decision is final.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

At each residency we record concerts and occasional other events, with participants' permission. These recordings (or excerpts from them) may be used for promotional purposes by the college. While students will have access to some recordings of complete concerts/events, any part of those recordings other than the student's original work may not be used in any way without the without written permission from relevant participants. We expect everyone in our community to act responsibly within the confines of copyright law and to serve as guardians of our creative and critical work

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

VISUAL ART PROGRAM MASTER OF FINE ARTS, VISUAL ART

Degree & Credit Hours	75
Learning Goals	75
Length of Program	75
Admission & Enrollment	
Admission	76
Enrollment & Deferment	76
Transfer Credit	77
Enrollment Status	77
Program Requirements	
Residency	78
Semester Projects	80
Degree/Graduation Requirements	81
Academic Progress	
Evaluation	82
Reviews	82
Awarding of Credit	85
Extension Policy	86
Academic Probation	87
Voluntary Extra Semester	88
Leave of Absence	88
Withdrawal	88
Dismissal	89
Committee Descriptions	89
Additional Policies	
Plagiarism	90
Academic Appeals	90

DEGREE & CREDIT HOURS

DEGREE

The Master of Fine Arts degree is awarded through the Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art Program at Vermont College of Fine Arts.

CREDIT HOURS

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. In the Visual Art Program, each semester is comprised of a 12-credit Studio Project and a 3-credit Visual Culture Project. A minimum of four successfully-completed semesters or the equivalent thereof (if a study is not completed in the usual sequence) for a total of 60 credits is required for the award of the degree, in addition to the fulfillment of all graduation requirements. If an applicant has been granted transfer credit, a minimum of three successfully-completed semesters (45 credits) is required for the degree.

In the event that the student is denied credit for a project, the student will be placed on probation for the following semester of enrollment and will focus entirely on that project. Upon completion of said project, the student may continue by registering for a full semester comprised of both Visual Culture and Studio Projects.

Each semester is approximately six months in duration. During this time, each student commits and is expected to devote a minimum of six hours per week to academic work and 20 hours per week to studio work.

LEARNING GOALS

The learning goals of the MFA in Visual Art program are as follows:

- Mastery of artistic accomplishment, both aesthetic and technical, in self-selected media
- Clear understanding of various criteria for making critical judgments about art based on its relationship to visual culture, art history, and the social context
- Substantive knowledge of visual culture and an understanding of methodology for doing historical research

LENGTH OF PROGRAM

All degree programs at Vermont College of Fine Arts must be completed within 150% of attempted credits.

TERMINAL DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in visual art and other fine arts.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION

Admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art program is based primarily on original work submitted by Bachelor's degree holders and assessed by the MFA Admissions Committee to be compatible with the program's design and ideals, and that the applicant would be able to successfully complete the degree requirements.

An applicant's portfolio must indicate sufficient quality of creative work and a level of commitment to their artistic practice to demonstrate that the applicant is ready to do graduate work in an MFA in Visual Art program. The applicant will also submit an application essay demonstrating strong potential to undertake critical inquiry of various artistic practices past and present, to engage with a range of intellectual traditions, to pursue self-reflective analysis and independent study.

Baccalaureate transcripts and letters of recommendation from persons familiar with the student's artistic practice and ability to work independently are required. All admission decisions are made by the MFA Admissions Committee which is composed of program faculty members and the Program Director. A \$75 application fee is required before an application is processed.

Applications may be reviewed without transcripts at the discretion of the program; however, acceptance in such cases is pending receipt of the official undergraduate transcript or art school diploma. A new student may not enroll and begin the residency until the official transcript or diploma indicating respective program completion is on file.

The Program occasionally considers accepting a student without a Bachelor's degree. Such candidates must show evidence to the MFA Admissions Committee of exceptional artistic work and strong writing and research abilities.

In exceptional cases, if the Admissions Committee feels that an applicant's practice needs five semesters in the program in order to successfully meet the requirements for graduation, a fifth semester might be required as a condition of acceptance.

Acceptance decisions are usually made four to six weeks after the application materials have been received.

When a candidate is denied admission the applicant may submit new materials for reconsideration at a later date.

ENROLLMENT AND DEFERMENT

Accepted applicants admitted into a particular semester may defer admission to a later semester without penalty, providing they make such a request at least three months prior to the residency. If, however, admission is delayed for as much as one year beyond the initial acceptance, the accepted applicant is required to reapply; readmission is not guaranteed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The Visual Art Program will consider up to one semester of transfer credit from a student transferring from another MFA in Visual Art program provided that (a) the student applies for admission to the program and is accepted; and (b) the Admissions Committee deems the student's work from the prior program to be at least equivalent in quality to that of VCFA students at a corresponding stage in their progress toward the MFA degree. Previous coursework must be from an accredited institution of higher education, and only coursework completed within three years of the transfer credit request will be considered. In addition to the materials required for the admissions review (official transcripts of previous undergraduate and graduate study are required), applicants for transfer credit should submit a statement describing their previous plan of study, evaluating their work at the previous MFA program and explaining their reasons for wishing to transfer to the MFA in Visual Art Program at VCFA. The earliest that a transfer credit decision will be made is at the point of acceptance into the program.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. A student enrolled in the Studio Project or both the Studio Project and the Visual Culture project has full-time status.

Currently enrolled students in need of enrollment verification should contact the registrar's office (registrar@vcfa.edu).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENCY

Every semester begins with an on-campus residency at Vermont College of Fine Arts located in Montpelier, Vermont. An integral component of the MFA in Visual Art Program, our required ten-day residencies bring students and faculty together on the Vermont College campus every summer and winter. During these intensive periods stimulating interaction builds bridges between existing and new artistic concerns and communities. Students present their critical research and studio practices to each other, to faculty, and to visitors, while planning their next non-residential period of study. By combining different levels of interaction and evaluation, affinities and ideas are generated at a remarkable rate and intensity. Each residency is dense with exchanges that offer an extraordinary range of input, feedback, and ideas. Each residency is composed of two distinct segments. The first half of the residency is devoted to the assessment and closure of the preceding semester, while the second half of the residency initiates the activities and projects for the new semester.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

1. Length of Residency. New students are required to attend the entire 10 days of their first residency. Continuing students are required to attend the final nine days of each residency. Graduating students are required to attend the final seven days of their final residency.
2. Orientation. The orientation of students is completed through a series of required meetings during the first half of their first residency.
3. Returning Group Presentations. All continuing students will report on their completed Visual Culture Projects of the past semester in their respective student group.
4. Slide Presentations. Students must bring to every residency slides from all semesters in the program and slides submitted for application. All students will present at least 20 slides of the semester's artwork to a group of fellow students. New students must bring 20 slides of their most recent work which will be viewed by at least one member of the student's Guidance Committee or a Faculty Co-Chair. Slides of work from a student's final semester and slides submitted for admission, supplied by the student, are kept permanently in the student's thesis binder.
5. Exhibitions. All students must bring to each residency original art created during the previous six months in order to participate in a group exhibition of student work. New students will bring work recently completed that best represents their practice prior to entering the program. Students returning from a leave-of-absence must bring work for critique and dialogue, or for review of credit if appropriate. See separate handout titled "Guide to the Residency" for more details on requirements. (When artwork is too large to bring to the residency, students must make other arrangements with the program office.)

The program strongly encourages students to bring additional work that the student wants critiqued. This work can be stored until the time of critique, then presented during the critique time.

Audio-visual or computer equipment used in exhibition of work must be provided by the student. All exhibitions are considered "working exhibitions" with the exception of the final one person graduate show. The final one person graduate show is mounted for exhibition, critique and credit determination. Refer to "Guide to the Residency" and "One-Person Exhibition Guidelines", (separate handouts,) for details on exhibition mounting requirements and restrictions for new, continuing and final semester students. Refer to Graduation

requirements for further details regarding the final one-person exhibition.

All artwork transferred to the VCFA campus is considered to be personal property of the student/artist for the sole purpose of academic review, credit determination and exhibition. This includes, but is not limited to, equipment used in displaying artwork such as LCD projectors, DVD players, televisions, etc. Vermont College of Fine Arts is not responsible for any damage to or loss of personal property. Therefore, it is recommended that each student inquire with their insurance agent as to coverage of personal property before attending the residency. If damage occurs through official handling of artwork or equipment by VCFA faculty, staff or invited guest, VCFA will accept responsibility for the damage. For more details see separate handout titled "Guide to the Residency".

6. Returning Group Presentations. During the first half of each residency, continuing students will report on their written work in their respective student group meetings.
7. Faculty Advisor Assignments. Faculty assignments for the semester's Visual Culture Project for each student will be made by the seventh day of the residency.
8. Artist-Teacher Assignments. Artist-Teacher assignments for the next semester of studio work will be planned before and during the residency and completed within two weeks after the end of the residency. The Faculty Co-Chairs will approve final Artist-Teacher assignment. Artist-Teachers oversee the studio project but do not determine credit.
9. Guidance Committee Assignments. Upon starting their first residency, all new students will be assigned a Guidance Committee consisting of two faculty members. Final Year and Candidacy reviews will occur with two faculty members present (Review Committee); ideally at least one faculty on the Review Committee will also be a Guidance Committee member.

On very rare occasions, the Program Director, with the assent of a Faculty Co-Chair, may grant student requests to change Guidance Committees. Petitions for change will only be considered during the non-resident portion of the semester between the student's first and second residency, and must arrive at the Program office at least eight weeks before the start of the second residency. The final decision as to the Guidance Committee's make-up will be determined according to the Program Director and a Faculty Co-Chair's perception of which Faculty will best serve the interests of the student and the program.

10. Visual Culture Project Plans. The academic study plan is completed by each student during the second half of the residency and approved by the designated Faculty Advisor by the end of the residency.
11. Guest Speakers, Artist-in-Residence, Faculty Lectures. Visiting artists, art historians, and/or critics will be invited to each residency to lecture about their own work or the work of others. Where appropriate, these guests will also conduct critiques of student work. Faculty members will also lecture during the residency and perform critiques of student work.
12. Residency Restrictions. Although some events are open to the public, other activities and facilities are for students only, and students may not be accompanied by spouses, friends or family at the residency. Our experience has been that the residency period is an extremely demanding time to which the student must give full attention. Nursing mothers may bring their babies to the residency. In extenuating circumstances, graduating students mounting their one-person exhibition may, with permission from the Exhibition Coordinator or Program Director, bring someone to help them mount the exhibition. Graduating students may also have an overnight guest on the night of the graduation ceremony.
13. Housing and Meals. All new students must reside in College-designated accommodations during the residency. Continuing and graduating students can opt to live off campus provided they notify the program office at least 12 weeks before the first day of that upcoming

residency. If a student lives on campus, all meals are provided under the room and board plan. Individual meals can be purchased at the cafeteria for those students opting to live off campus.

SEMESTER PROJECTS

Vigorous and productive dialogue between students and advisors is required each semester.

1. Studio Project Requirements. Students will research and propose to the program possible Artist-Teachers for each semester. Individual Artist-Teachers can mentor a student for a maximum of two semesters. The Artist-Teacher will provide technical and conceptual instruction to the graduate student. All students have until two weeks after the last day of the residency to finalize their choice of Artist-Teacher. The Artist-Teacher will meet with the student for five 2-hour sessions during the semester.

The completion of a significant body of original artwork under the direct supervision of the Artist-Teacher is required during the off-campus portion of the semester

In the student's final studio project, a one-person exhibition of the artwork accomplished during enrollment in the program is required. This exhibition must take place at the student's final residency and must contain work completed primarily in the final semester. (See separate handout entitled "Guidelines for One-person Exhibitions" for details.) The exhibition must evidence professional artistic ability, both technical and conceptual, and will be evaluated by a Review Committee for approval by the Faculty Committee. As part of this evaluation, the student will present the work during a review of the exhibition by the student's Review Committee. Slides of this work, provided by the student, become a part of the Program archives.

Artist-Teachers recommend but do not determine credit outcome. The Faculty Committee determines credit for each student's studio project.

2. Visual Culture Project Requirements. Each semester students will research and write essays on visual culture topics under the guidance of a Faculty Advisor. The Faculty Advisor will be a member of the MFA in Visual Art faculty.

First semester Visual Culture projects are focused on topics or themes that are preferably related to the student's artwork and are comprised of reading appropriate texts and writing critical analyses of these texts.

A historical, critical and/or aesthetic approach to visual culture will be the basis for the second and third academic studies. The choice of specific subject matter will be decided upon by the needs and desires of the student as approved by the Faculty Advisor.

In the final semester, the Visual Culture Project will entail writing a Process Paper in which the student will contextualize, within appropriate historical, critical and social frameworks, progress and production during the graduate studies.

DEGREE/GRADUATION

Candidates for graduation will demonstrate:

- An investment in an aesthetic and/or conceptual strategy or strategies for art-making.
- Substantive knowledge of visual culture and an understanding of research methodology.
- The capacity to make critical judgments about their own artistic practice and other contemporary art in relationship to visual culture and the social context.

Additionally, candidates for graduation will have completed:

1. Credit and Semester Projects. A minimum of 60 semester hours of graduate credit in art are required: 48 of these credits must be in Studio work and 12 must be in Visual Culture. Each semester is comprised of a 12-credit Studio Project and a 3-credit Visual Culture project. In the final semester the granting of Studio Project credit includes approval of the one-person graduation exhibition.
2. Residency Participation. Full participation is required in a minimum of five residencies.
3. Process Paper. The student will present the following in a black thesis binder:
 - A copy of the Process Paper (approved by the Faculty Advisor)
 - Slides in a slide sheet of the work from the final semester
 - The original application slides
 - A detailed list of the slides submitted including title, medium, date produced and the student's name
 - An artist statement
 - A complete bibliography from the four semesters.

This binder will become part of the Program archives. (See separate handout, "Writing the Process Paper" for details)

4. Critique. Students must formally critique the artwork of other students in her/his final residency.
5. Digital/Slide Presentation. In the student's final residency, the student will perform a slide or digital presentation of work completed during the program with critical commentary.
6. One-Person Exhibition. During the final residency the graduating student will present a one-person exhibition of works primarily completed during the last semester. This one-person exhibit should demonstrate mastery of technical and conceptual issues related to the work.
7. Faculty Distribution. Successfully completed semester projects with at least two different Artist-Teachers and Faculty Advisors are required for graduation. On very rare occasions, a Faculty Co-Chair, with the assent of the Guidance Committee, may grant a student's request to work with an Artist-Teacher for three semesters if there are compelling and extraordinary reasons to do so.
8. Graduation Ceremony. Each student recommended for graduation is strongly encouraged to participate in the program's graduation ceremony.

Final approval for granting the Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art degree is made by the Board of Trustees with the consent of the faculty.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

EVALUATION

Mid-Term Evaluations:

By a program-specified date, after the second studio visit, the Artist-Teacher and student will complete and send a copy of the Studio Project mid-term evaluation to each other, the Guidance Committee and the original to the Program Office. Additionally, the student must send a copy of this mid-semester evaluation to his/her Faculty Advisor.

By a program-specified date, the Faculty Advisor and student will complete and send a copy of the Visual Culture mid-term evaluation to each other, the Guidance Committee and the original to the program office.

Final Evaluations:

Written evaluations by the student, Artist-Teacher and Faculty Advisor are required for each study. Students send their Self Evaluations to the program office and appropriate copies to the Artist-Teacher and Faculty Advisor. Students send a copy of the Studio Self Evaluation to Guidance Committee members. If the final evaluations are not received by the program office by the start of the residency, the student may not enroll for the following semester and will be billed a "late processing fee."

Artist-Teachers and Faculty Advisors send a copy of their final evaluations to the student.

Forms will be provided for student evaluation of Faculty Advisor and Artist-Teacher. They will be used as part of the process for inviting Faculty and Artist-Teachers to return in subsequent semesters, and they will support Faculty in the assessment of their own skills as teachers. A copy of these confidential evaluations may be given to the Faculty without student signatures.

REVIEWS

Reviews of student work, led by a Review Committee comprised of two faculty members, ideally at least one of them serving on the student's Guidance Committee, help to monitor the students' progress in the program. Review Committee composition may change with each residency. The Review Committee evaluates the student's progress toward meeting both the study goals that the student has established and the program criteria for advancement or graduation. The Review Committee informs the Faculty Committee of the student's progress. The Faculty Committee, with consent from the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs, makes the final decision about the student's advancement in the program. A letter from the Faculty Co-Chairs about advancement in the program will be given to the student during the residency.

1. End of First Semester - Informal reviews of each student's work will be conducted by program faculty.
2. Final Year - These reviews are conducted by a Review Committee at the residency for students who have completed two visual culture projects and two studio projects and are not taking a leave of absence. (The time of this review for students who have previously taken an extension, leave of absence, or who have dropped a semester is detailed in "Extension Policy.") Students who are on an extension for the Visual Culture project may go through this review.) During this review, the student's work in the program will be evaluated on the basis of the Criteria for Advancement to the Final Year. Students returning from a leave-of-absence and entering their 3rd or 4th semester are required to go through a review even if they were reviewed at a prior residency.

To prepare for this review, the student must submit a statement of 500 - 600 words (no more than two double-spaced pages), which covers the topics in "Criteria for Advancement to the Final Year" (see below). The statement must address the student's artistic development since

entering the program and describe the direction artworks to be undertaken in the final year. This statement must reach the program office by a program specified date.

a. Criteria for Advancement to the Final Year:

- Satisfactory progress of studio/artistic practice since the student entered the Program.
- The successful completion of Visual Culture research projects each semester.
- Full participation in all residencies.
- Ability to complete program requirements for graduation in two more semesters.

b. Review Process:

- The student will present to the Review Committee a selection of images of her/his work starting from time of admission into the program.
- The student will discuss the work in terms of form, content, style, genre, relationship to social context, how the work is seen to have progressed/changed during the time in the Program, and ideas about how the work will develop in the final two semesters in the Program.

c. Faculty Committee Decision:

By the end of the residency and upon completion of this Final Year Review, the Faculty Committee, with consent of the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs, will make one of the following decisions:

- That the student continues in the Program with the expectation that her/his degree will be granted after two more successful semesters in the program;
- That the student continues in the Program with the expectation that her/his degree will be granted after three more successful semesters in the program;
- that the student be put on probation until he/she has completed another semester in the program so that the Faculty Committee has clearer evidence of what action should be taken;
- That the student takes a one-semester leave-of-absence;
- That the student be withdrawn from the Program.

Should the student be placed on a one-semester leave-of-absence, the student must apply for re-enrollment no later than 8 weeks prior to the following residency. A decision on re-enrollment will be determined by the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs within 4 weeks after receipt of the student's request and documentation. This must include a statement of intent addressing faculty concerns, visual documentation of the student's studio work, and other materials that the student deems appropriate. Results of this application for re-enrollment will either be approval for re-enrollment with stipulations or denial of re-enrollment. Should denial of re-enrollment occur, the student will be placed on a second and final leave-of-absence. Again, the student must apply for re-enrollment no later than 8 weeks prior to the following residency, supplying documentation as stated above. A decision on re-enrollment will be made within 4 weeks after receipt of the student's documentation, with the result either being approval for re-enrollment with stipulations, or withdrawal from the program.

3. Candidacy: This review is conducted by a Review Committee during the next-to-last residency for students who have completed three full semesters in the Program and are not taking a leave of absence or extension for any third semester projects.

To prepare for this review, the student will submit a two-part statement detailing her/his plans for the one-person graduation exhibition. This statement will address questions referred to in the "Criteria for Advancement to the Final Semester."

This statement is to be a maximum of 1000 words (no more than two double-spaced pages) and must reach the program office by a program specified date. The program office has specific guidelines and requirements on what must be addressed in this statement.

a. Criteria for Advancement to the Final Semester:

- The quality and quantity of the work in the penultimate semester indicate that the student's final semester will result in a one-person graduation exhibition and "Process Paper" of Master of Fine Arts quality, and provide a sense of completion to the student's work in the Program.
 - The student will supply a plan for the final semester's studio project sufficiently specific and focused to assure completion of the work necessary for the one-person graduation exhibition.
 - The student's written plan for her/his one-person graduation exhibition will clearly indicate that most of the work in this exhibition will be completed during the final semester.
 - The student must meet all the criteria for graduation, as detailed in the Program Handbook, with the completion of one more successful semester.
- b. Process:
- The student will meet with a Review Committee to discuss the above criteria; will show relevant images of artworks to the Review Committee done in past semesters in the program, and will discuss the work in terms of how it has developed and will culminate in a one-person exhibition of graduate quality. This discussion will also include specifics as to what the student plans to exhibit in the one-person show, how the show will have unity, and how the studio plan for the final semester will ensure completion of this work.
- c. Faculty Committee Decision:
- By the end of the residency and upon completion of this review, the Faculty Committee, with consent of the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs, will make one of the following decisions:
- The student continues in the program with the expectation that her/his degree will be granted with one more successful semester in the program;
 - The student continues in the Program with the expectation that her/his degree will be granted with two more successful semesters in the program;
 - The student is put on probation until he/she has completed another semester in the program so that the Faculty Committee has clearer evidence of what action should be taken;
 - The student takes a one semester leave-of-absence;
 - The student is withdrawn from the program.

Should the student be placed on a one semester leave-of-absence, she/he must apply for re-enrollment no later than 8 weeks prior to the following residency. A decision on re-enrollment will be determined by the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs within 4 weeks after receipt of the student's documentation, which will include a statement of intent addressing faculty concerns, visual documentation of the student's work, and other materials that the student deems appropriate. Results of this application for re-enrollment will either be approval for re-enrollment with stipulations, or denial of re-enrollment. Should denial of re-enrollment occur, the student will be placed on a second and final leave-of-absence. Again, the student must apply for re-enrollment no later than 8 weeks prior to the following residency, supplying documentation as stated above. A decision on re-enrollment will be made within 4 weeks after receipt of the student's documentation, the result being either approval for re-enrollment with stipulations, or withdrawal from the program.

4. One-Person Exhibition Review: This review of the student's one-person exhibition is for students who have completed a minimum of four full semesters and residencies in the Program at the student's final residency. It is conducted by a Review Committee comprised of two faculty members. In conjunction, an administrative review is conducted by the Program Director to confirm that the student has met all requirements for the Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art degree.

At the review, the student should be prepared to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the particular artistic strategies that they are deploying in their work and the arc of the development of those strategies by making a statement that references their graduating body of work;
- Situate their work in relation to other art practices, theories, and/or histories;
- Articulate their choice-making processes in regard to their theoretical, conceptual, and/or aesthetic frameworks.

5 Faculty Committee Decision: By the end of the final residency and upon completion of this review, the Faculty Committee, with consent of the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs, will make one of the following decisions:

- The student has met all the requirements for the degree and is approved for graduation;
- The student continues in the Program with the expectation that her/his degree will be granted with one more successful semester of studio enrollment in the Program;
- The student is put on probation until he/she has completed another semester in the program so that the Faculty Committee has clearer evidence of what action should be taken;
- The student takes a one semester leave-of-absence;
- The student is withdrawn from the program.

AWARDING OF CREDIT

Traditional grades are not used in the MFA programs at VCFA, and GPA's are not calculated. At the conclusion of a semester, a student's work that has been successfully completed will earn a final assessment of **CR** (Credit). **CR** is considered to be the equivalent of a B or better in a traditional grading system. The underlying assumption is that students at the graduate level should perform well, not just adequately. The awarding of credit is based on evidence of substantial effort, productivity, timeliness, and artistic progress.

If the student's work has proven to be inadequate to warrant the awarding of credit, a final assessment of **NC** (No Credit) will be recorded.

A student who has failed to comply with the terms outlined in their Semester Study Plan or whose work is deemed academically deficient may earn a temporary assessment of "Incomplete." An "Incomplete" must be concluded within a 30-day extension period (see Extensions below), if petitioned for and approved. If the work is then successfully completed, a final assessment of **CR** will be recorded. If the work is not successfully completed within the extension period, then a final assessment of **NC** will be recorded.

In the case of an academic or medical extension, a temporary assessment of "Incomplete" may be recorded. At the end of the extension period, a final credit determination will be made. (See Extension Policy below.)

If an enrolled student withdraws during the refund period of a semester, an assessment of **W** (Withdrawn) is recorded and no credit is awarded. If an enrolled student withdraws after the refund period of a semester, an assessment of **NC** (No Credit) is recorded and no credit is awarded.

Once all end-of-semester paperwork (final evaluations from both the student and their faculty advisor) is submitted by the Program office to the Registrar's office, final assessments and credits awarded are posted to each student's academic record, usually within one week. The earliest date students should expect their academic records to be updated and transcripts to become available is two weeks after the residency.

EXTENSION POLICY

Academic Extensions:

1. A student unable to complete a semester's study may petition for an extension of four weeks. An extension is granted when extenuating circumstances warrant upon the recommendation of the Artist-Teacher and/or Faculty Advisor and with the approval of the Program Director or a Faculty Co-Chair. All academic extensions begin the day after the residency ends.
2. The MFA in Visual Art Program office will accept a written request for a studio extension only from students who will have completed 2/3 or more of their semester's work before the residency begins and whose Artist-Teacher recommends that the extension be granted. If the original Artist-Teacher is not available to oversee the extension, a new Artist-Teacher will be assigned by the Program in consultation with the student to oversee the completion the project. The request must be made to the Program Director at least two weeks before the next residency begins.
3. The MFA in Visual Art Program office will accept a written request for a visual culture extension only from students who will have completed 2/3 or more of their semester's work before the residency begins and whose Faculty Advisor recommends that the extension be granted. It is strongly preferred that the work continue with the original Faculty Advisor. In cases where this is not possible, the program will assign a faculty member to work with the student for the extension period. The original Faculty Advisor will write formal notes evaluating the study through the end of the semester. Upon completion of the extension, the faculty member who oversaw the extension will write the student's final evaluation, taking into consideration the original Faculty Advisor's comments. The request for a visual culture extension must be made to the Program Director at least two weeks before the next residency begins.
4. If a student has been granted an academic extension for the visual culture project, the student may at the same time, start a new semester including a new visual culture project, except for students finishing the third semester who may not begin a new semester if on extension.
5. If a student has been granted an academic extension for the studio project, a new semester cannot be started until that extension is complete and credit has or has not been granted.
6. Students on extension for the studio project must complete the extension before going through the final year or candidacy review.
7. Students on extension for the visual culture project may go through the final year review.
8. A student who is completing his/her final semester on extension may not participate in graduation ceremonies or receive a diploma until she/he has completed the extension and met all degree requirements. In the case of such an extension for the studio project, the student must return to the following residency in its entirety to present the completed project. Upon successful completion of all requirements the diploma will be granted and the student may participate in the next graduation ceremony. In the case of such an extension for the visual culture project, a student is not required to attend the following residency. The diploma will be mailed to the student or the student can, if he/she so desires, return to the following semester's graduation ceremony and receive her/his diploma at that time.
9. Fees for extensions are listed in a separate handout, "Fees and Financial Policies."
10. For purposes of financial aid certification or student loan deferment, students on extension status will not be considered enrolled unless they are simultaneously enrolled in the following semester. No federal, state, or institutional aid will be awarded by the institution for that extension period. Students should consult with the financial aid office for further information.

Medical Extensions:

1. A student may request in writing a medical extension for up to one year.
2. Medical extensions are granted only in situations when a student has an incapacitating illness, near total disability, hospitalization, etc. - i.e., a medical emergency

documented by a health care professional. On rare occasion, it may also be granted if the student has an immediate family member (parent, child, spouse) with a medical emergency. An official note from a physician as well as a written request from the student is required before a medical extension is granted. These extensions differ from the academic four-week study extension in that these studies are extended by the length of time left in the semester at the time the extension is granted. These extensions end when the medical problem is resolved and the student can begin to work on her/his project(s) again. (In situations where these specifics do not apply, other arrangements will be made.)

3. If a medical extension is granted for the studio portion of the semester, it is strongly preferred that the work continue with the original Artist-Teacher. In cases where this is not possible, the student is responsible for finding a qualified Artist-Teacher and program approved A-T before the study is resumed. If a medical extension is granted for the visual culture portion of the semester, it is strongly preferred that the work continue with the original Faculty Advisor. In cases where this is not possible, the Program will assign a Faculty member to work with the student for the extension period. Upon completion of the extension, the Faculty member who oversaw the extension will write the student's final evaluation, taking the original faculty member's comments into consideration.
4. If the extension is no longer than four weeks and involves only the visual culture project and the student is not completing her/his third semester, the student may, with permission of a Faculty Co-Chair and Program Director, begin a new semester of both visual culture and studio work while on extension status. If the extension is for the studio project, the student may not begin a new semester until that project is complete.
5. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Program Director in writing when the request for a medical extension begins and when it will end, and to see to it that her/his own evaluation is sent to the Program office by the last day of the extension, and at the same time that copies are sent to the appropriate people.
6. A student who is completing his/her final semester on extension may not participate in graduation ceremonies or receive a diploma until she/he has completed the extension and met all degree requirements. In the case of such an extension for the Studio Project, the student must return to the following residency in its entirety to present the completed project. Upon successful completion of all requirements the diploma will be granted and the student may participate in the next graduation ceremony. In the case of such an extension for the Visual Culture Project, a student is not required to attend the following residency. The diploma will be mailed to the student, or the student can, if he/she so desires, return to the following semester's graduation ceremony and receive her/his diploma at that time.
7. For purposes of financial aid certification or student loan deferment, students on extension status are not considered enrolled. No federal, state, or institutional aid will be awarded by the institution for that extension period. Students are encouraged to contact the financial aid office for details.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student may be placed on probation by the Faculty Committee, with consent of the Program Director and a Faculty Co-Chair, if the student has failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals or working methods that are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, refuses to participate fully in the residency, or if the student's work is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level. If a student receives a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) for any enrolled credits, she or he will be placed on probation for the following term. Conditions of probation will be detailed in a letter from the faculty co-chairs. The probation letter will also explain what the student must do to return to satisfactory academic progress. A student on probation will continue to be eligible for financial aid.

VOLUNTARY EXTRA SEMESTER

A student under special circumstances may request enrollment for an extra semester prior to graduation. The merit of such a request will be evaluated by the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Enrolled students may request up to two consecutive semester-long leaves of absence from the program without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing in the program. Students must submit a written request for a leave of absence to the program office no later than eight weeks prior to the start of the new semester. Students who are granted a leave of absence must either 1) return for the first half of the residency preceding the leave and bring work completed during the semester for display and credit assessment, OR 2) wait for assessment of credit upon their active return to the program following their leave of absence.

Leave-of-absence status entitles the student to:

- Maintenance of files and records;
- Inclusion in all program mailing lists and receipt of program materials;
- Return to full participation in the program, upon written request by the student no later than two months prior to the residency that initiates the next semester. A \$50 non-refundable deposit must accompany this request. This deposit will be credited toward the student's account.

Students who wish to extend the leave of absence for a second semester must submit a second request in writing to the program office as detailed above.

Students who take more than two consecutive leaves of absence are automatically separated from the program. Students thus separated from the program must apply for readmission by contacting the Program Director.

A student readmitted within five years of being separated from the program will receive credit for previous work done in the program. If a student separated from the program for more than five years reapplies and is accepted into the program, credit for work previously completed will be granted at the discretion of the program.

IMPORTANT: Leave of Absence status as described above does NOT constitute an “Approved Leave of Absence” as defined by federal financial aid regulations. Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA’s financial aid counselor (877-612-2599).

WITHDRAWAL

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the Program at any time. The date of withdrawal is defined as the day on which the Program Director or Registrar receives official notification of withdrawal by the student or such later date as the notification may indicate. See the Withdrawal & Refund section of “Financial Matters” for more information.

DISMISSAL

A student may be dismissed from the program by the Program Director or Faculty Co-Chairs on the advice of the Faculty Committee if the student has failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals or working methods that are inconsistent with the program design and purposes; refuses to participate fully in the residency, or if the work of a student is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level. No student may receive a determination of "NC" (No Credit) for two semester projects and remain in the program.

The date of dismissal is defined as the date on which the student receives written notice of dismissal from the College. A student may reapply to the program after a minimum of one year

Failure to comply with any of the rules or regulations in this Handbook is grounds for dismissal from the program.

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

1. Faculty Committee. The Faculty Committee consists of all Core Faculty. The Faculty Co-Chairs may also invite visiting Faculty to sit on the Faculty Committee if appropriate.
2. Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee consists of at least one Faculty Co-Chair and Faculty member(s). The Program Director also serves on the Committee in an administrative capacity. It is chaired by the Program Director and makes admissions decisions for the Program.
3. Guidance Committee. Upon entering the program, each student is assigned by the Program Director a Guidance Committee, which consists of two Core Faculty members. This committee oversees the academic progress of the student throughout her/his tenure in the Program. Some of the Guidance Committee duties include: meeting with all assigned new student "guidees," viewing slides of these students' work, and conducting the Final year, Candidacy and One-person Exhibition reviews. Throughout the student's tenure in the program, Guidance Committee members may rotate off doing active committee work. If this occurs, another Faculty member will temporarily fill-in or replace the original member.
4. Review Committee. Final Year, Candidacy and One-person Exhibition Reviews are conducted by two faculty members who comprise the Review Committee. Ideally, at least one member of the Review Committee will serve on the student's Guidance Committee.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's work, and the person who plagiarizes does so with the clear intent to pass off the work of another as his or her own.

In most instances, a case of suspected plagiarism will be handled in the following way: A faculty member will report the suspected plagiarism to the Faculty Co-Chairs and the Program Director. The Co-Chairs will determine if there is sufficient evidence of plagiarism. If the decision is that there is sufficient evidence of plagiarism, the Program Director will consult with the Co-Chairs and will be responsible for determining and communicating the appropriate penalty. The penalty may consist of one or more of the following: denial of academic credit, probation, suspension, or expulsion. While the procedure described above will follow in most instances, it is important to note that any faculty member or administrator who suspects a student of plagiarism may report the case directly to the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs, and that the Director and Co-Chairs might choose to use alternative means for handling some cases. In all cases, a decision will be communicated to the student within thirty days of the initial report to the Faculty Co-Chairs and Program Director.

ACADEMIC APPEAL

Any Faculty or Faculty Committee action which has a negative impact on a student's academic standing must be communicated to the student in writing within two weeks of the effective date of the action. The student may appeal such actions, or written assessment of the quality of the student's work in the Program, by submitting a written request for reconsideration to the Program Director and Faculty Co-Chairs within two weeks of receipt of the notice communicating the action or receipt of written assessment. If the action by Faculty occurs at the residency, and the student chooses to appeal the action, the appeal must be made at least one day prior to the end of that residency. The Faculty Co-Chairs must respond within two weeks of receipt of the student's request for reconsideration. If the student is dissatisfied with the Faculty Co-Chairs' decision, the student may submit written appeal within two weeks of receiving the Faculty Co-Chairs' decision to the Academic Dean of the Vermont College of Fine Arts whose decision will be final. (For non-academic grievances and/or appeals see the college-wide policy section of this handbook.)

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

WRITING PROGRAMS

MASTER OF FINE ARTS - WRITING

and

MASTER OF FINE ARTS - WRITING FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS

Degree & Credit Hours	92
Learning Goals	92
Length of Program	93
Admission & Enrollment	
Admission	94
Enrollment & Deferment	95
Transfer Credit	95
Enrollment Status	95
Program Requirements	
Residency	96
Semester Project	98
Picture Book Options	99
Extended Degree Options	100
Degree/Graduation Requirements	103
Postgraduate Semester	103
Academic Progress	
Evaluation	104
Awarding of Credit	104
Extension Policy	105
Academic Probation	105
Leave of Absence	106
Withdrawal	106
Dismissal	107
Additional Policies	
Plagiarism	108
Academic Appeals	108
Copyright Policy	108

DEGREE & CREDIT HOURS

DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts in Writing degree through the MFA in Writing and the MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults programs.

The MFA in Writing degree represents the study of literature from the writer's, not the critic's or the scholar's, perspective. It is not a technical or narrow degree. The reading and analytical components of each semester project, and the variety of lectures offered during the residencies, provide opportunities for unusually well-integrated and humanities-based curricula, without sacrifice of direct manuscript work and criticism. Thus the graduate of either program is especially well-prepared in literature as well as in writing and should be an attractive candidate for teaching positions. However, no one should be encouraged to enter or continue in the Program if he or she seeks the degree mainly for employment purposes; no program should pretend to offer guarantees. The goal of both programs is not to credential but to help students with their writing and their education.

The Programs offer four regular degree options in the following major genres: poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction and writing for children. In addition, there are five extended-degree options which include: two concentrations (translation and picture book writing) and two minors (dual-genre and dual-program), in addition to an elective Cross-Discipline Semester.

CREDIT HOURS

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. The regular degree options in the Writing programs require a minimum of 64 credit hours (four 16-credit semesters) for the award of the degree. The following exceptions apply: in the rare case when a student is granted acceleration and may then graduate upon completion of 48 credit hours; and extended degree program options require 80 credit hours (five semesters) to complete.

LEARNING GOALS

The learning goals of the MFA in Writing program are as follows:

- Creative ability in the field, both technical and aesthetic
- Critical ability in the field
- Knowledge of the literature or “culture” of the field

The learning goals of the MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults program are as follows:

- To lead students to their full creative potential as writers for children and young adults
- To sharpen and further students' analytical reading and critical writing skills
- To cultivate knowledge and appreciation in students for the literature in their field
- To foster an ongoing creative writing community within which students can continue lifelong writing

LENGTH OF PROGRAM

All degree programs at Vermont College of Fine Arts must be completed within 150% of attempted credits. See Academic Progress and Length of Program in the college-wide section of the handbook.

TERMINAL DEGREE

Vermont College of Fine Arts recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in writing and other fine arts.

ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION

Admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Writing programs is based primarily on the quality of original work submitted by Bachelor's degree holders and the judgment by the MFA Faculty Committee that the applicant's preparation and goals are compatible with each program's design and ideals.

An applicant's manuscript must indicate sufficient quality of creative and critical work, level of commitment, and sophistication of writing skills to demonstrate that the applicant is ready to do graduate work in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or writing for children. Manuscripts, personal essays and critical essays are not returned to the student. Applications may also be submitted online. The application essay must give evidence of strong background in literature, the humanities, the ability to work independently, as well as the readiness to receive and use criticism of his or her work.

Exceptional writers may be accepted in two genres either within the MFA in Writing Program or between the MFA in Writing Program and the MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults Program.

Students who do not initially apply in more than one genre, or who are initially rejected in one of two genres, may, after mid-term of the first or second semester of graduate study, apply to study in a second genre. The decision to approve or deny the application will be made by the Program Director(s) and Faculty Advisory Committee(s) in consultation with the Faculty Chair(s) and the student's current and past advisors.

Baccalaureate transcripts and two letters of recommendation from persons familiar with the student's writing are required of all applicants. All admission decisions are made by the MFA Faculty Committee which is composed of core faculty members in each program and the Program Director. A \$75 application fee is required before an application is processed.

Applications may be reviewed without transcripts at the discretion of the program; however, acceptance in such cases is pending receipt of the official undergraduate transcript. A new student may not enroll and begin the residency until the official transcript or diploma indicating respective program completion is on file.

The Program occasionally considers accepting a student without a Bachelor's degree. Such candidates must show evidence to the MFA Faculty Committee of exceptional academic, literary and/or publishing background.

A decision on an application is usually made within two to four weeks after application materials have been received.

When a candidate is denied admission, the applicant may submit a new manuscript and be reconsidered at a later date.

ENROLLMENT AND DEFERMENT

Students admitted into a particular semester may defer admission to a later semester without penalty, providing they make such a request at least three months prior to the residency. If, however, enrollment is delayed for as much as one year beyond the initial acceptance, students may be required to submit a new manuscript and again be considered by the Faculty Committee. Readmission is not guaranteed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The Writing Programs will consider one semester of transfer credit from a student transferring from another MFA in Writing program provided that (a) the student applies for admission to the program and is accepted; and (b) the Faculty Chair or his/her appointed representative from the Faculty Advisory Committee deems the student's writing to be at least equivalent in quality to that of VCFA students at a corresponding stage in their progress toward the MFA degree. Previous coursework must be from an accredited institution of higher education. In addition to the materials required for the admissions review (official transcripts of previous undergraduate and graduate study, as well as creative and critical writing samples and letters of recommendation), applicants for transfer credit should submit a personal essay describing their previous plan of study, evaluating their work at the previous MFA program and explaining their reasons for wishing to transfer to VCFA. The earliest that a transfer credit decision will be made is at the point of acceptance into the program.

ACCELERATION

The growth of each student's writing is the Program's primary concern, and it is generally felt that two years is a necessary period for significant change and development. In highly unusual circumstances, we may, occasionally, grant acceleration, allowing a student to complete the degree requirements in three semesters instead of four, or four semesters instead of five for dual-genre students; OR in one semester less than required in their normal course of study. In order to be considered for acceleration, a student must have completed a year's credited graduate work in either creative writing or literary studies and/or have achieved substantial quality publication. Students should understand these criteria are necessary but not sufficient in and of themselves to assume the granting of acceleration, and that approval of such petitions is rare.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. A student enrolled in either MFA in Writing program has full-time status; part-time study is not offered.

Currently enrolled students in need of enrollment verification should contact the registrar's office (registrar@vcfa.edu).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENCY

Every semester begins with an on-campus residency at Vermont College of Fine Arts located in Montpelier, Vermont or one of the overseas options in MFA in Writing. The requirements of the residency are as follows:

ATTENDANCE:

The ten-day residency period, which occurs every six months (in January and July) is a principal component of both MFA in Writing programs. Required to initiate a semester's work, it provides the student with a breadth of exposure to balance against the more specific focus of the semester writing projects, an opportunity to choose a Faculty Advisor, time to prepare the study plan with faculty guidance, general direction in the development of an individualized curriculum, and a source of stimulation and support. Students and faculty come to the Vermont College of Fine Arts campus to participate in an intensive session in literature and contemporary letters, applied criticism (through workshops) and informal exchange with other writers.

Note: Students second semester and above in the MFA in Writing Program may elect to attend an overseas residency – summer in Slovenia or winter in Puerto Rico – in lieu of the Vermont residency. WCYA students (2nd semester and above) have the option to attend a summer residency in Bath, England in lieu of the Vermont residency.

All enrolled students are expected to participate fully in the entire residency period. Such participation is required for the semester's credit and for the granting of the degree. If a student cannot participate fully he or she must petition the MFA Program at least one month prior to the residency. Exceptions will be considered and approved for one-time only situations deemed appropriate and affecting a student's arrival or departure from the residency by no more than one day.

Students may reside off-campus during residencies and, for billing purposes, must notify the office of such accommodation eight weeks prior to the residency. First semester students are encouraged to reside on campus so that they may experience the residency and become acquainted with students and faculty to the greatest degree.

Although readings are open to the public, other activities and facilities are for students and faculty only, and students may not be accompanied to the residency by spouses, friends or family. The residency period is an extremely demanding time to which students must give full attention. Guests are allowed for special occasions only such as New Year's Eve, 4th of July celebrations and graduation. Students must receive permission from the MFA office for guests to stay overnight in a dorm; if approved, there is a guest and linen fee.

Students taking a leave from the Program (see the Leave of Absence policy) often wish to participate in the residency and are welcome to do so. Students on leave, however, cannot participate in the workshop due to the size limitations we place on these sessions. The Program cannot guarantee a room on campus. If housing is available, students will be charged the room and board fee. Students on leave are reminded that a new semester cannot be initiated without full residency participation.

RESIDENCY OFFERINGS:

Lectures in literature and contemporary letters are presented by the faculty, visiting writers and graduating students. Descriptions are sent in advance of the residency so that students may select and prepare for them. The lecture descriptions include a list of works that the student is expected to be familiar with in order to attend and benefit from them. Students are required to attend a minimum of eight graduating student or faculty lectures each residency period; MFA in Writing students are also required to attend a minimum of two visiting writer events per residency.

The workshops, which generally meet on alternate days through the residency, encourage the development of analytical skills and critical abilities. Workshops are led by faculty members and, on occasion, visiting writers or alumni assistants. Workshops are not open to students on leave or to guests. Every student has material discussed in a workshop during the residency unless participating in a “special” or “alternative” workshop that has a different design. Students are asked to submit representative new work completed during the semester project; new students may include work submitted with the application. Four pages of poetry are required; fiction, creative nonfiction, and writing for children's writers may submit a maximum of 20 double-spaced pages work. MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults writers may submit up to two picture books or 10-15 pages of graphic literature. Manuscripts submitted to the workshops must be clean, proofread copy. Workshop materials are sent to students and faculty in advance of the residency period and it is expected that serious attention will be given to reading thoroughly and preparing for each day's workshop session.

The residency schedule includes a variety of special presentations and activities. Each faculty member and graduating student gives a public reading of his or her work. Additionally, visiting writers and/or visiting illustrator and a Distinguished Visiting Faculty or Writer-in-Residence are brought to the campus to participate in residency activities and give readings or presentations. Special discussion sessions are often held on publishing, teaching criticism, translation, revision, drama or others areas of both general and specific interest.

FACULTY ASSIGNMENT:

VCFA employs faculty in the arts based on their publications, expertise, teaching ability, and academic credentials. All VCFA faculty are part-time, and therefore bring to their teaching the benefits of simultaneous artistic careers and networks, but they are also the committed long-term creators and guides of the program. Core faculty representing many years of program continuity are regularly supplemented with Visiting Faculty, bringing new visions and skills to the program.

Prior to the residency, students are encouraged to read published work by members of the faculty for that semester. During the residency, after discussions and informal interview sessions with several faculty members, students are asked to submit a faculty preference list. The faculty then makes a collective judgment about appropriate advisor selection; each faculty member normally works with five students during the semester. The programs are concerned that each student establish a relationship with a faculty member who is enthusiastic about his or her work and feels able to make a contribution toward the pursuit of that student's goals and development of talent. Thus, while every effort is made to ensure that student choice will be respected, the programs do not guarantee that any student will be able to work with any one particular faculty member. During the residency students meet in groups and in individual conferences with their Faculty Advisors to discuss their semester projects.

End of first year review: Those students beginning their degree year will also be counseled to assist them in developing their overall curriculum in the Program and in preparing to demonstrate that they have met the requirements for the degree. Unless the faculty member requests it, students should not expect faculty to read and comment on large amounts of material during the residency period.

RESIDENCY EVALUATION:

At the end of the residency each student writes a narrative evaluation describing his or her various activities during the residency. Student assessments of the residency period help the MFA office to plan the next period more effectively and to address whatever suggestions the students may make.

PRIVACY:

Vermont College of Fine Arts supports students in a learning process that encourages them not only to explore the reading and writing of literature but to debate, express, and experience a broad array of social, cultural, political, and religious ideas and perspectives. Students are encouraged to take risks in their work, to experiment with voice and personae, and to broaden their lives as writers and thinkers. Because the MFA in Writing Program fosters an environment of open dialogue and expression both personal and artistic, it strives

for an atmosphere of trust and reliance, and values a close community in which many lasting friendships are formed. The fact that everyone in the program comes together twice a year for ten intensive days of workshops, lectures, panels, conferences, and social events in a small campus setting, further contributes to this sense of community and camaraderie. We believe the intense, open atmosphere of our residencies is essential to our students' education, for it ensures they are introduced to classmates of all backgrounds and personalities and helps accustom them to the deep, visceral types of exposure that come with being writers. At the same time, however, we want to be sure that we all respect and appreciate each others' personal and professional boundaries and that personal information and experiences as well as literary and academic work are not shared outside of this community.

SEMESTER PROJECT

The second essential component of the MFA in Writing programs is the semester project. During the residency period students choose a Faculty Advisor and design a six-month independent study plan. The project is completed in the six months away from campus, with frequent and thorough dialogue through correspondence (also audio files, conferences, email, and other supplementary methods) with the Faculty Advisor.

The primary focus of every semester project will be the student's own creative writing. The student will submit work to the Faculty Advisor every three to four weeks, respond to criticism and suggestions, and submit revisions of the material. All students will receive equivalent faculty time and attention regardless of genre or discipline. At the Faculty Advisor's discretion, submission schedules and work methods may be modified to suit the individual needs of novelists. An important part of each project is the reading commitment. The student's preliminary bibliography is part of the study plan and is compiled with the advice of the Faculty Advisor. The list should include books that answer the needs and address the background of the student, as well as either broad reading in contemporary letters, a focused examination of a few writers, an exploration of the traditions of literature, or theoretical studies in a genre. Each first and second semester student project must include critical essays in reading, the form of which can vary. Reading and analytical work are especially important in the third semester when the student is writing a critical thesis and demonstrating readiness for the degree. Semester projects require a minimum investment of 25 hours per week. The semester project plans are filed with the MFA office.

The Faculty Advisor is the chief resource for the semester project. However, students are encouraged to become involved with local activities as well, such as library events, readings, and workshops. Some students include teaching and/or editorial work as part of their projects. This type of involvement does not become a substitute for work on their writing and exchange with the Faculty Advisor. These activities may be included in the evaluation of the project and as evidence of increased experience and commitment.

The critical thesis, completed in the third semester, will be planned and completed with direct input from the Faculty Advisor. It is expected that the advisor will review at least two drafts of the critical thesis prior to final approval. A first draft must be submitted to the advisor by the mid-semester date. Criteria for the thesis and format guidelines are found on the program website and must be strictly adhered to.

At the end of at least three successful semesters, and with Faculty Advisor approval of the critical thesis, the student proceeds into the final semester project. This project focuses primarily on creative writing and revision as the student completes an original book-length manuscript of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction or writing for children. The manuscript must be reviewed and approved, in final form, by the Faculty Advisor and submitted by the end-of-semester date. Again, this semester's project will include a reading component. In preparing the creative thesis, students will be collecting, revising and reflecting on work written during their semesters in the program. This process is intended to provide students the occasion of handling a body of their own work and discovering the shape of a volume. Guidelines for the creative thesis can be found on the program's website and must be strictly adhered to.

Also in the final semester, students prepare a lecture with input and approval from their advisor. The lecture will be delivered at the final residency. The student will also be preparing a public reading of their work, also to be delivered at the final residency.

In rare exceptional circumstances, students may petition for an alternative to the lecture; for instance, students who are unable to deliver a lecture for legitimate physical or psychological reasons. In most cases, it is expected that it would be a project related to one of the many roles of the writer in the community. Possibilities for projects that address, examine, or enact the role of the writer in the community include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Delivering the lecture in an alternative format.
- Teaching writing in a school, community center, retirement home, prison, or other venue.
- Working in publishing.
- Working for an arts organization (writing grants or organizing readings series, etc.).
- Writing a second critical thesis.

Documentation and Evaluation: An alternative project must be approved by both the advisor, the Faculty Advisory Committee, and the Program Director and described in the semester study plan. It will be documented in a manner approved by the Advisory Committee (possibilities include a videotape, an ongoing journal and/or written materials from the project itself such as book reviews or syllabi). In addition, the student will submit a written report (approximately 5 pages) describing and evaluating the Lecture Alternative Proposal.

PICTURE BOOK OPTIONS:

GUIDELINES FOR THE PICTURE BOOK INTENSIVE SEMESTER:

A student enrolled in the WCYA program may apply for the Picture Book Intensive Semester. This picture book concentration can be completed during one of the four semesters in the MFA program, though third semester students need to petition for consideration due to the demands of the critical thesis work. Students accepted into this concentration late in their tenure or dual-genre students may be required to complete a longer course of study. Alumni may apply to enroll in the Picture Book Intensive semester and would not be required to attend the second residency but could fulfill the panel discussion criteria remotely. See below for more details.

As in the other semesters, the students will submit five packets to their advisors. Along with the creative work in the packets, students will write three short essays (4-5 pages) and one longer essay (10 pages), and prepare for the panel discussion. At the residency following their Picture Book Intensive semester, these students will take part in a panel discussion in which they summarize their research and discoveries in picture book writing and/or discuss craft issues related to picture book writing. In addition, students who choose this concentration will be required to participate in the picture book workshop at the residency at the beginning of the term. Picture Book Intensive students will also participate in an online discussion forum.

Fourth-semester students enrolled in the Picture Book Intensive will complete the picture book critical work in the form of preparation and presentation of the 45-minute lecture required of all graduating students. The lecture will be scheduled in tandem with the panel presentation.

External candidates may also apply to the Picture Book Intensive. Upon successful completion of the semester, an external candidate will receive 16 graduate credits. Acceptance to the program is based on the same criteria for the MFA program and the workload is comparable to a regular MFA semester (25 hours per week

dedicated to the program). To complete the Picture Book Intensive, students must complete one semester (including initial residency) and the following requirements:

- Submit five packets of writing to their advisors; the packets will include both creative and critical work; the critical component will consist of three short essays (4-5 pages) and one longer essay (10 pages), and preparation for a panel.
- Take part in a panel discussion at their second residency in which they summarize their research and discoveries in picture book writing and/or discuss craft issues related to picture book writing. The student may participate via Skype (or other remote access method) or submit their panel presentation to be read by another student.
- Participate in the picture book workshops at the beginning residency.
- Participate in the online discussion forum.

If at the completion of the Picture Book Intensive an external candidate wishes to transfer into the MFA program, a petition letter is submitted to the Program Director. Petitions are reviewed by the Director, Faculty Chair and the Advisory Committee. Other supporting materials may be requested for the review, such as a creative sample, critical essay, etc. Typically, students who have completed the Picture Book Intensive will be able to use this semester as their first semester in the program upon transfer. However, in some cases, a student may be required to complete four semesters in the MFA program.

EXTENDED DEGREE OPTIONS:

GUIDELINES FOR DUAL-GENRE:

Exceptional students may be accepted in two genres either within the Writing Program or between the Writing Program and the Writing for Children & Young Adults Program. Students accepted into the dual-genre option between the Writing Program and the Writing for Children & Young Adults Program should note that these two programs are staffed by distinct faculty groups and the residencies for the two programs occur at different times.

Students who do not initially apply in more than one genre, or who are initially rejected in one of two genres, may, by mid-term of the first or second semesters, apply to study in a second genre. The decision to approve or deny the application will be made by the Program Director(s) in consultation with the Faculty Chair(s) and the student's current and past advisors. The Faculty Advisory Committee may be consulted, as needed.

Dual-genre students must work in both genres within the first three semesters, unless they petition and are approved for an alternative schedule.

Dual-genre students will complete a mandatory five-semester course of study (80 credits), though students accepted into this option late in their tenure may be required to complete a longer course of study.

After being accepted into dual-genre study, the student will select a primary and a secondary genre and develop a plan of study objectives that outlines the completion of at least five semesters' work, the balance, progression, and order to be decided by the student in consultation with, and with the approval of the Program Director in consultation with the Faculty Chair(s). Any changes over the course of the student's study, including, in particular, any change in the designation of primary and secondary genres, should be made only in consultation with the Program Director, Faculty Chair(s) and the student's immediate and most recent advisors.

Three of the five semesters of study must be devoted to the student's primary genre and two to the student's secondary genre. Students may not submit work in more than one genre per semester, with one exception: in the student's final semester, s/he must submit for the advisor's approval a creative thesis in each of his/her

genres. However, the student may submit work in only one genre in the monthly packets during his/her final semester. If the advisor is qualified to evaluate the student's work in both genres, s/he will read but not critique the creative thesis in the genre that is not the focus of the semester's work. If the advisor is not qualified to evaluate the student's work in the genre that is not the focus of the semester's work, the Program Director(s) will assign a second reader for that creative thesis and this reader will determine whether the thesis meets program requirements. The requirements for a creative thesis are identical for single-genre and dual-genre students. If the student's final advisor (or the second reader assigned to evaluate a thesis) does not approve one or both of the theses, the student will have the opportunity to take an extension or, if considerable revision is necessary, an extra semester to bring the thesis or theses up to acceptable quality. Usually, the student will write a critical thesis in one genre and a graduating lecture in the other genre, but the student may choose to write a critical thesis and/or a graduating lecture that addresses both genres s/he is studying. The critical thesis may be written in either the student's third or fourth semester of study; the lecture must be written during the student's final semester of study.

The dual-genre option is a five-semester program of study reserved for those students who are judged advanced enough in two genres to produce satisfactory theses in both after only three semesters of study in one and two semesters of study in the other. Dual-genre students are not required to produce more writing or submit more packets per semester than single-genre students.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONCENTRATION IN TRANSLATION:

A student in the MFA in Writing Program who is majoring in poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction may choose translation as an area of concentration. As with the dual-genre option, this concentration will require the completion of an additional semester (for a total of five) of study. This additional semester will involve both the study and the practice of translation and it may be undertaken any time after the second semester. A translation student will also be required to participate in translation workshops during at least two of six residencies. When a student is not fluent in the language of the original work, he/she must arrange to consult and /or collaborate with someone who is; we encourage students to seek out advisors who are also fluent in the language which the student has chosen to translate.

Except for the requirement that those seeking a Concentration in Translation must have participated in at least two translation workshops, the requirements for the first four semesters are identical to those of students enrolled in the traditional four-semester program of study; i.e., they will write a critical thesis in their third semester and present a reading and lecture at the residency following their fourth semester. However, like those enrolled in a dual-genre program of study, they will not graduate until the residency following their fifth semester.

The typical sequence of study for a Concentration in Translation is as follows. Variations can be petitioned for on a case-by-case basis.

1) THE FIRST FOUR SEMESTERS:

a) Translation Workshops. During at least two of their six residencies, the students who choose the concentration in translation will be required to participate in workshops that are specific to translation or incorporate translation in some fashion. The workshops would typically rotate among those faculty members who are practicing translators, proficient in another language, and/or familiar with a range of translations. Workshops may be co-led by both a faculty member and a translator invited to take part in a particular residency. Depending on their topics, these workshops may be structured differently. For example, a workshop might consist of six two-hour sessions and involve both specific evaluation of the students' submitted translations and general discussion of translation history and theory.

b) Lectures and Panels during the Residency. In addition to the workshops, the program will

regularly offer lectures by faculty members, panel presentations by fifth-semester students (see #2 below), and question-and-answer sessions with visiting translators.

2) THE FIFTH SEMESTER:

- **Packets.** The student will submit to his/her advisor five packets of the student's translations of works by an established author or authors.
- **Translation Project.** The culmination of the fifth semester will be a collection of translations of work by one or more authors. If the collection consists of poems, it must be at least 20 pages in length; if it consists of fiction or creative nonfiction, it must be at least 40 pages in length.
- **Translation Essay.** The student will also write a research-oriented essay, at least 2,500 words in length, excluding quoted material, and of publishable quality, on some aspect of translation. Ideally, this essay should relate in some significant way to the student's translation project and perhaps even serve as an introduction to that project. There are many topics and approaches that are possible for the translation essay. The possibilities include a comparative study of the translations of a particular writer, a survey of various theories of translation that the student studied and either applied or rejected during the translation project, and a discussion of the principal concerns facing a translator of the student's particular author or genre. The student is encouraged to work with his/her advisor to select a topic and approach that will most aid his/her progress as a translator.
- **Reading.** At their final residency, the fifth semester students will present a 20-minute reading of translations they completed during the semester.
- **Presentation of Research.** At their final residency, the fifth-semester students will also take part in a panel presentation in which they summarize their essays on translation and discuss the ways they addressed the problems they faced while producing their translation projects.

GUIDELINES FOR A CROSS-DISCIPLINE SEMESTER:

A student enrolled in the MFA in Writing or MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults may apply for an additional semester of concentrated study as an elective in any area outside of his or her regular studies or designated program (e.g., a student in MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults may apply for a semester in any genre offered by MFA in Writing and vice versa; or, a poetry student in MFA in Writing may apply for a cross-discipline semester in creative nonfiction). Students in MFA in Writing may also pursue a cross-discipline semester in translation.

A student must apply for such a semester by the mid-term date prior to the semester one will enroll for, and must be accepted. The application will consist of 10-15 pages of poetry or 20-25 pages of prose as well as a brief statement about what the student hopes to pursue and achieve during this term. As with every other semester in the programs, a semester study plan is required and mid-term and end-of-semester evaluations must be submitted by the student and advisor, as the same guidelines and procedures apply for the award of 16 credits at the end of the term.

It should be noted that a cross-discipline semester is an elective course of study and does not replace a semester of the student's existing discipline toward the degree. Additionally, this cannot constitute application for or acceptance in dual-genre study as the work undertaken applies to this one semester only and not to the critical or creative thesis work.

DEGREE/GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Degrees are awarded following positive recommendations of the Faculty Advisor and MFA Faculty Committee, review by the Program Director and Academic Dean, and approval by the President of the College.

A student's record must give evidence of the following:

- Full participation in five residency periods (or six for dual-genre/program, cross-discipline, translation or Picture Book Intensive students who opt for the term as a fifth semester);
- Successful completion of four semester projects (or five for dual-genre/program, cross-discipline, translation or Picture Book Intensive students who opt for the term as a fifth semester);
- A lecture presented during a residency period;
- A public reading of his/her work during a residency period;
- An original book-length manuscript of high quality; minimum length for poetry is 32 pages, fiction/creative nonfiction and writing for children is 75 pages; in the writing for children area, picture book writers will complete a minimum of eight 32-page picture books; and graphic literature writers will complete a minimum of 60 pages;
- The critical thesis (minimum of 5000 words in length);
- Work with at least three different Faculty Advisors during the course of the Program;
- Broad reading in literature and contemporary letters.

The criteria used in the granting of the degree include creative writing ability, an understanding of the perennial questions of literature, familiarity with contemporary letters, experience in applied criticism, and knowledge of form. It is expected that mastery in these areas will be demonstrated in each residency and semester project evaluation, as well as specifically through the bibliographies, lecture evaluation, critical thesis, and creative thesis.

All financial obligations must be met before a diploma or transcript is issued.

POSTGRADUATE SEMESTER

The MFA in Writing Programs offer a postgraduate semester for writers who have completed the MFA or a Ph.D. at any accredited college or university, including Vermont College of Fine Arts. Occasionally, a writer with an M.A. in English or Literature might also be considered. Writers may work in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, translation, or writing for children and young adults.

As a postgraduate student, a writer may use the time as an opportunity to work closely with a particular faculty member or to focus on a specific writing project, a manuscript, or particular elements of the craft. Because a postgraduate student is not enrolled in the degree program and, therefore, not required to meet the usual degree guidelines, a greater degree of flexibility allows one to design the semester to work entirely around specific interests and goals.

A student who is a graduate of the MFA in Writing Program at VCFA (and, thus, has already completed five residencies) may choose to do the semester only and not attend the residency. A writer who is not a graduate of our program would be required to attend the residency period, an intensive time of workshops, lectures, reading, panel discussions and many other stimulating offerings. During the residency a writer chooses an advisor – postgraduate students generally receive their first choice for an advisor – and completes a preliminary study plan outlining the work for the semester. This course of study will develop more fully as the semester unfolds and advisor and student get to know one another and the student's work better. Flexibility is a key to making the most of this period of intensive work.

The semester work takes place on a schedule designed between the student and advisor and through methods

they deem best suited to their exchange. This may be through email, phone conferences, hard copy packets, audio files, or a combination of methods.

Both student and advisor must complete mid-term and end-of-semester evaluations. A student receives 12 credits upon successful completion of the postgraduate semester.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

EVALUATION

Midway through the semester, students and faculty each complete narrative evaluations about the progress being made toward the project goals, the efficacy of the student-faculty relationship and the quality of the written exchange. At the end of the semester students and faculty submit narrative evaluations of the six months' work along with faculty proposals and recommendations for further work in the Program. These reports, examples of the student's writing during the semester, and two sample critical essays, must be sent to the MFA office two weeks prior to the residency period. A semester completion report and the faculty end-of-semester evaluations are sent to the Registrar's office for the student's permanent record.

Students are expected to submit written evaluations of their advisors at the end of each semester. Forms are provided by the office and are to be returned at semester's end when transcript evaluations are submitted. Students' evaluations of faculty are confidential and are shared with faculty anonymously.

Student academic progress and completion of degree requirements is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis by their Faculty Advisors, Program Director and the Faculty Chair. An end-of-first year review is conducted at the residency following the student's second semester. On the first day of the residency, the faculty at large or in a student's designated genre will review student progress for all students completing the second semester. Any specific concerns will be outlined in a letter from the Program Director and the Faculty Chair and then presented to the student.

If, at any time during a semester, a student's work is deemed by their advisor to be seriously inadequate, the student will receive a written warning from the Program Director and Faculty Chair outlining the areas of concern that need to be addressed during the remainder of the semester.

AWARDING OF CREDIT

Traditional grades are not used in the MFA programs at VCFA, and GPA's are not calculated. At the conclusion of a semester, a student's work that has been successfully completed will earn a final assessment of **CR** (Credit). **CR** is considered to be the equivalent of a B or better in a traditional grading system. The underlying assumption is that students at the graduate level should perform well, not just adequately. The awarding of credit indicates substantial effort, productivity, and artistic progress.

If the student's work has proven to be inadequate to warrant the awarding of credit, a final assessment of **NC** (No Credit) will be recorded.

A student who has failed to comply with the terms outlined in their Semester Study Plan or whose work is deemed academically deficient may earn a temporary assessment of "Incomplete." An "Incomplete" must be concluded within a 30-day extension period (see Extensions below), if petitioned for and approved. If the work is then successfully completed, a final assessment of **CR** will be recorded. If the work is not successfully completed within the extension period, then a final assessment of **NC** will be recorded.

In the case of an academic or medical extension, a temporary assessment of "Incomplete" may be recorded. At the end of the extension period, a final credit determination will be made. (See Extension Policy below.)

If an enrolled student withdraws during the refund period of a semester, an assessment of **W** (Withdrawn) is recorded and no credit is awarded. If an enrolled student withdraws after the refund period of a semester, an assessment of **NC** (No Credit) is recorded and no credit is awarded.

Once all end-of-semester paperwork (final evaluations from both the student and their faculty advisor) is submitted by the Program office to the Registrar's office, final assessments and credits awarded are posted to each student's academic record, usually within one week. The earliest date students should expect their academic records to be updated and transcripts to become available is two weeks after the residency.

EXTENSION POLICY

A student unable to complete a semester's study may petition for a one-month extension. An extension is granted only in extenuating circumstances, upon recommendation of the Faculty Advisor, and with the approval of the Program Director and the Faculty Chair. All academic extensions begin the day after the residency ends. Requests for an extension must be made in writing to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair at least two weeks before the end-of-semester date. Students will pay a fee for a one-month extension.

Students granted an extension may not enroll for a new semester. After the extension period is complete, the student will be on a withdrawn status until the beginning of the next semester.

Students and faculty will submit end-of-semester evaluations and students will submit end-of-semester work to the MFA office within 10 days of the end of the extension period.

A student who is completing his/her final semester on an extension may not receive a diploma until he/she has completed the extension and met all degree requirements. In this circumstance, the student will return for the next residency period to complete the final residency requirements and receive the diploma.

For purposes of financial aid certification or student loan deferment, students on extension status shall not be considered enrolled. No federal, state or institutional aid shall be awarded by the institution for an extension period.

Longer extension periods may only be granted, by petition to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, with approval by the Academic Dean, in the case of extreme medical or personal circumstances. In such circumstances appropriate documentation is required by a health care professional. The petition and accompanying documentation will be reviewed by the student's advisor and the Program to see if a longer extension period is warranted and, if so, what time period may be deemed appropriate.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student may be placed on academic probation by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, on the recommendation of the Faculty Advisory Committee, if the student has failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals or working methods which are inconsistent with the Program design and purposes, or if their work is deemed to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level. Conditions of probation will be detailed in a letter from the Program Director and the Faculty Chair delivered to the student at the residency that begins the semester. A student on probation will continue to be eligible for financial aid.

Following a semester of academic probation, a student's work will be reevaluated by their advisor and the Faculty Chair, and with the approval of the Program Director, the probationary status will either be lifted, in which case the student will continue their enrollment in good standing, or their enrollment will be discontinued.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Enrolled students may request up to two consecutive leaves of absence from the program without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing in the program. Students must submit a written request for a leave of absence to the program no later than a semester date published and communicated to all enrolled students; leave notice received after this date incurs a late fee.

Leave-of-absence status entitles the student to:

- Inclusion in Program mailing lists and receipt of Program materials;
- Return to full participation in the Program upon request of the student no later than three months prior to the residency which initiates the next semester.

Students may place in their records any documents, reports or examples of work completed during the leave period. Such material will be considered in decisions about degree candidacy and graduation date but will not be taken in lieu of Program requirements or granted credit.

Students on leave-of-absence status are welcome to return to the residency for an end-of-semester review with their Faculty Advisor or the Program will suggest a telephone conference between the student and their advisor. Students on leave who choose to attend the entire residency period may participate in all residency events with the exception of workshops. We cannot, however, guarantee a room on campus. Occasionally, students going on a leave-of-absence may request to attend the residency following their current semester in lieu of the residency beginning the next semester for which they enroll. If the request is approved, the student is expected to attend the entire residency period and participate in workshops.

Students who wish to extend the leave of absence for a second semester must submit a second request in writing to the program office as detailed above. Students who take more than two consecutive leaves of absence are automatically separated from the program. Students thus separated from the program must apply for readmission by contacting the Program Director.

A student readmitted within five years of being separated from the program will receive credit for previous work done in the program. If a student separated from the program for more than five years reapplies and is accepted into the program, credit for work previously completed will be granted at the discretion of the Program.

IMPORTANT: Leave of Absence status as described above does NOT constitute an "Approved Leave of Absence" as defined by federal financial aid regulations. Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA's financial aid counselor (877-612-2599).

WITHDRAWAL

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the college at any time. The date of withdrawal is defined as the day on which the Program Director or Registrar receives official notification of withdrawal by the student or such later date as the notification may indicate. See the Withdrawal & Refund section of "Financial Matters" for more information.

DISMISSAL

Occasionally, a student may be dismissed from the College by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, on the recommendation of the Faculty Advisory Committee, with approval of the Academic Dean if the student has consistently failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals and working methods which are inconsistent with the Program design and purposes, refuses to participate fully in the residency, or is abusive of faculty and other students. If the work of a student is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level, his or her continuation in the Program can be denied. No student may receive a determination of "NC" (No Credit) for two consecutive semesters and remain in the program.

The date of dismissal is defined as the date on which the student receives written notice of dismissal from the College. A student may reapply to the program after a minimum of one year.

Failure to comply with any of the rules or regulations in this Handbook is grounds for dismissal from the program.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's work, and the person who plagiarizes does so with the clear intent to pass off the work of another as his or her own.

As a program in creative writing, we are well aware of the various and important ways that artists are influenced and inspired by the work of others. The literary imitation is a genre with a long and distinguished tradition, one that explicitly acknowledges the ways in which writers learn from writers. Moreover, we all know, cherish, and have ourselves written poetry and prose that quote from, allude to, or are suffused by the atmosphere of other creative works. But we also value respect for authorship. We include the Vermont College of Fine Arts plagiarism policy in our handbook not to induce fear or to inhibit the free exchange of ideas, but to protect the work of all writers, including each student who matriculates in our program.

In most instances, a case of suspected plagiarism will be handled in the following way: A faculty member will report the suspected plagiarism to the Faculty Chair and the Program Director. If the Faculty Chair and Program Director find sufficient evidence of plagiarism, they will present that evidence to the Faculty Advisory Committee. If the majority of the Faculty Advisory Committee agrees that there is sufficient evidence of plagiarism, they will recommend a penalty, if warranted, to the Program Director and Faculty Chair. The Program Director will consult with the Faculty Chair and Academic Dean and will be responsible for determining and communicating the appropriate penalty. The penalty may consist of one or more of the following: denial of academic credit, probation, suspension, or expulsion. While the procedure described above is the one both MFA in Writing programs will follow in most instances, it is important to note that any faculty member or administrator who suspects a student of plagiarism may report the case directly to the Program Director and Faculty Chair, and that the Director and Chair might choose to use alternative means for handling some cases. In all cases, the Academic Dean will be consulted and a decision will be communicated to the student within thirty days of the initial report to the Faculty Chair and Program Director.

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Students dissatisfied with some aspect of the Program are encouraged to seek a resolution to the problem. The first step toward such a resolution is discussion with the Program Director and the Faculty Chair. If no mutually-agreeable solution is reached, the student will take the matter to the Academic Dean.

For exceptions to program policies, students may present to the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, in consultation with the student's Faculty Advisor, petitions related to these regulations or reconsideration of academic and administrative decisions. The Program Director and the Faculty Chair, after consultation with the Advisory Committee, will make a determination on the petition. Students may appeal this action to the Academic Dean whose decision is final.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

At each residency we record lectures by both faculty, graduating students, and visiting writers, with their permission, and make these available to students on the program Commons. It is expected that these recordings are for personal use only. They may not be distributed, quoted, or used in any manner beyond this without written permission of the author. The same is true of the poetry and prose submitted for workshop discussion, semester work, as well as correspondence between students and faculty. We expect everyone in our community to act responsibly within the confines of copyright law and to serve as guardians of our creative and critical work.

Vermont College of Fine Arts reserves the right to change any provision, requirement, statement of policy or procedure, service or facility detailed in this handbook. This handbook does not constitute a contractual agreement between the student and VCFA.