

Academic Procedures

Every graduate student's program is composed of two elements: (a) course work and (b) required production assignments. You must successfully complete all work assigned in these two categories.

Course Work and Plan of Study

- Before enrolling, you are given a list of required and recommended courses.
- If you request advanced standing, you must do so before enrolling. After enrollment, advanced standing is granted only under exceptional circumstances.
- During your first semester, you and your program head must agree on a specific Plan of Study to be pursued throughout the degree period. This Plan of Study (PoS) may, with permission of the program head, vary from the norm in order to address a specific need, strength, or interest. Once the PoS is accepted by the program head and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), you may not alter it without the agreement of the program head and the DGS.
- The PoS will be completed electronically for each student showing specific program requirements and how far along the student is in meeting them. The PoS should be uploaded to the Student Notes and Files under your Advising Summary on MAUI by November 15 of your first year.
- Each semester, in connection with the advising meeting, updates to the PoS should be recorded in the Student Notes and Files under your Advising Summary on MAUI, which serves as the repository of records of your progress and status in the program.

Production Assignments

- The program head assigns production work; it will be evaluated (see below) and considered an important element of your program.
- During the academic year, you may wish to do production work outside your primary field – including professional opportunities outside the Department -- or undertake production work which you do not wish to be formally supervised and evaluated. You must have permission from your program head before you agree to such work.

Grading Procedures

Graduate classes in Theatre Arts are graded in one of two ways: traditional letter grades (A – F), or Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory (S/U).

- The Graduate College requires that students graduate with at least **18 semester hours** of graded (A – F) credit. Programs within the Theatre Arts Department normally require more than this minimum.
- Theatrical Analysis courses must be taken for a letter grade. Playwrights' Workshop and Design Seminar are always offered S/U. With permission of the instructors, students can take up to three courses S/U beyond those only offered S/U.
- For those classes using the S/U, students may opt for a letter grade if they so desire, and if the instructor agrees. By the first day of class each semester, you need to indicate which system you wish to use. If you opt for a letter grade rather than S/U, you may not change the grading system for that particular course during that semester.
- No matter which grading system is employed, criteria for grading should be made known to you in the class syllabus at the beginning of the semester. Requirements for satisfactory progress toward the degree should be spelled out to you by your program's faculty or by your adviser. If you are unclear about what your program's faculty considers satisfactory progress toward the degree, contact your adviser for clarification.
- To graduate from the Department, you must maintain **at least a 3.00 GPA as specified above**. Be aware that S/U grades are NOT figured into your overall GPA. Furthermore, if you have any U grades, you must either (1) petition the instructor to make up the course next semester or (2) petition your program faculty to substitute another acceptable class. Be aware that the faculty is under no obligation to grant these petitions.
- If you do receive a U grade, the instructor will send an explanation of the criteria for the grade to your advisor/program head for uploading to your Student Notes and Files on MAUI. This explanation may be needed for future reference if you petition to change the grade.
- A low GPA will jeopardize your standing with the Graduate College and can affect financial aid.
- You should realize that if you should wish to transfer grades to another institution you might have trouble getting equivalency for S/U grades. Credit is sometimes not given by other institutions for these courses.

Grading & Evaluations

Courses are graded A-F, S/U or optional A-F S/U at the discretion of the instructor. **You must observe both Graduate College and Departmental requirements specified above for how many courses need to be taken A-F or S/U.**

- A** indicates superior work
- B** indicates good work
- C** indicates that you barely passed the course. Such work is normally not acceptable in your primary area of concentration. If you receive a C, you may be required to repeat it in order to graduate.
- D** indicates work which does not meet degree requirements. If you who receive a D, you must repeat the course or an approved substitute.
- F** indicates you have failed the course
- I** indicates incomplete work. Faculty members who give you permission to take an incomplete grade will establish a time when the work must be completed; this must be approved by the program head.
- S** indicates the equivalent of B- or above.
- U** indicates that work is unacceptable and may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

Production Assignments

Both process and product are evaluated. Each program establishes its own criteria, but all programs share the following elements:

Process

- Were you prepared to execute your responsibilities fully and on time throughout the entire production period?
- Did you challenge yourself to do the best work possible?
- Did you work with peers collaboratively in a way that stimulated creativity?
- Were you able to sustain excellence in other areas of the program (such as classes and assistantship) while successfully completing required production work?

Product

- Does the product indicate that you are a promising artist or craftsman, whose vision and skills are appropriate for someone at your level of training?
- Does the product indicate that you are able to apply successfully the lessons learned in class?
- Does the product show you are growing as an artist or craftsman?
- Does the product indicate promise that you will be able to work successfully as a professional upon completing the program?

At least one member of your faculty will evaluate each production assignment. You are required speak personally with the evaluating faculty member either at the time of the assignment or, depending on program procedures, at the end of the semester; you are encouraged to speak with as many other faculty members as possible about their work.

Summary Evaluations

At the end of every semester, you receive a formal evaluation of your course and production work. Evaluations may be given in writing, discussed in person, or both. They deal comprehensively with all aspects of your work. At the end of every year, you receive a written evaluation of your work, a copy of which is placed in your Student Notes and Files on MAUI.

Graduate Committees, Comps, & Thesis Procedures

Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee is composed of the two or three primary faculty members for the program. Students may have up to four on the committee. Those committee members commit to see/read the creative work of the student, give feedback when asked (which should happen after every major project), and be present at the end-of-the year evaluation.

Comps

At the end of the second year, the student will complete a special assignment designed by each program and meet with their Graduate Committee for a comprehensive evaluation (comps) of work to date. This evaluation will determine whether the student will continue their work into their third year and proceed to do a thesis.

Thesis

- The Thesis Committee is normally identical to the Graduate Committee, except that Graduate College rules stipulate that there must be a minimum of two tenure-track faculty on the Thesis Committee, so sometimes tenure-track faculty must be added. Beyond these required members, the student may invite an additional faculty member to serve on the thesis committee as long as the total number of Thesis Committee members does not exceed four.
- The thesis topic or project must be pre-approved by the Thesis Committee. A written proposal must be submitted; it must be approved and signed by all the committee members. The roles of committee members, e.g., who reads/sees what parts when, are to be specified on the proposal so expectations of all are clear. In most programs, the completed and signed proposal should be uploaded to MAUI by the advisor/committee chair by the end of final exam week in the second year. In programs requiring more extensive written theses, students can take time in the summer after the second year to develop their proposal, but it must be approved and uploaded by the end of the first week of classes in the fall semester of the third year.

- During the semester(s) when the student is working on the thesis, the student registers for credit under THTR:7601 MFA Thesis (0-3 semester hours). Normally the total number of semester hours for the thesis is 3.
- Members of the committee normally provide feedback on the work several times during the process of completion per agreement on the proposal. All committee members evaluate the work at its completion.
- Final approval of the thesis normally involves a meeting (“**Final Examination**”) of the student with the Thesis Committee where committee members offer their evaluation and ask questions to which the student responds. The committee determines whether the student passes the thesis requirement, and specifies any necessary revisions to the thesis before final deposit. The committee decides which of its members need to check those revisions once they are completed. If appropriate, the committee assigns a grade to the thesis.
- The date of the Final Examination is usually set individually for each student and is tied to final approval of their thesis. A Request for Final Examination Form must be filed at the Graduate College at least two weeks prior to the thesis Final Examination meeting. At the Final Examination meeting, the Report of the Final Examination is signed by the Thesis Committee members. This must be submitted to the Graduate College within 48 hours of the meeting. The Final Examination Request/Report forms come as two pages of a fillable pdf and are available at <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/faculty-staff/academic-administrative-forms>. When the student and committee names are entered on the Request portion of the form, the information is automatically replicated on the Report portion.
- To certify that the thesis is ready for final deposit, the Thesis Committee must sign the Report of Thesis Approval (workflow form). The thesis cannot be cleared by the Graduate College without this signed report.
- The Graduate College sets deadlines each semester for students seeking to graduate that semester. These deadlines are posted on the Graduate College Web site. Please be advised that they begin early in the final semester, and each student is responsible for meeting them, including for the following:
 - Application for degree (apply on MyUI)
 - Non-doctoral Plan of Study Summary Sheet
 - Request for Final Examination. The Final Examination usually entails a final meeting of the student and the thesis committee at which the student defends the thesis.
 - Final Exam Report
 - Thesis deposit

Continuance, Probation & Dismissal

- All students are on probation for your first year. This means you may be dismissed at the end of either semester if you are not making normal progress. If a student in good standing ceases to make normal progress, as outlined above, you may be placed on probation for 1 semester before being considered for dismissal.
- At the time of the summary evaluations each term, you are informed whether you may continue in your programs, are being placed on probation, or are being dismissed.
- Normal progress is required in order for you to be in good standing. Under exceptional circumstances, the program faculty, with the approval of the DGS, may grant continuance even when normal progress has been interrupted.
- You may be placed on probation for many reasons. Among them are:
 - (1) not making normal progress toward the degree;
 - (2) not completing creative and/or production work satisfactorily;
 - (3) not progressing toward the degree at an appropriate rate;
 - (4) not sustaining satisfactory progress in course work and creative work.
- When placed on probation, you are informed in writing what you must do to re-establish good standing. Normally, you have 1 semester to comply. If you do not comply, you may be dismissed.
- If you are placed on probation after the first year may lose your assistantships or other departmental support.

Appeal

- Students dismissed from the graduate program may appeal in writing to the Department Executive Officer (Mary Beth Easley) and the Director of Graduate Studies (R. Eric Stone), who will rule on the case.
- If you wish to appeal the decision of the DEO and DGS, you may do so according to the "Academic Grievance Procedures" of the Graduate College
- Dismissed students who are supported by assistantships lose that support until and unless you are formally reinstated into the program.
- If you are placed on probation, you may follow the same appeal process.

Academic Misconduct

The policy of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is kept on the [CLAS](#) site.

Accelerated Degree Policy

Minimal Requirements for the MFA Degree at The University of Iowa (Graduate College):

- 24 semester hours in residence
- 48 semester hours total
- Thesis

Minimal requirements for the MFA Degree in Theatre Arts (as approved by the National Association of Schools of Theatre):

3 years in the program (may include an off-campus internship)

61 semester hours, including the completion of a stipulated series of academic core courses.

Core courses may be waived only if a satisfactory substitution is made. All substitutions must be approved by the course instructor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the student's graduate committee.

Thesis

Satisfactory overall progress in artistic development.

Theatre Arts students may complete the requirements for the MFA degree in fewer than 3 years if:

They fulfill the minimal Graduate College Requirements for the degree and demonstrate satisfactory overall progress in artistic development.

and

They have graduate transfer credits from this or other institutions, acceptable to the program head and faculty.

and/or

They have experience in the profession (e.g., productions, publications) which their program accepts as equivalent to specific courses or other requirements normally required for the degree. Those courses must be individually waived on the student's plan of study and agreed to by the student's graduate committee, the Department Executive Committee, and the DEO.

The amount of reduction depends on the number of courses waived and the time it takes the student to complete the remaining requirements. In any case, the student must complete at least 24 semester hours of graduate credit in residence, 48 semester hours of graduate credit total.

Normally, the conditions to be met for graduation in fewer than 3 years (and/or with fewer than 61 semester hours) should be set out in the acceptance letter from the DEO to the student. A

student already in residence may petition for accelerated status at any time. In either case, the student's graduate committee, the Department Executive Committee, and the DEO must approve the terms of the accelerated program.

Questions?

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