Student Handbook

Boston University School of Visual Arts

Updated Fall 2011

http://www.bu.edu/cfa/visual-arts
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Introduction
This handbook serves as a guide for all BFA, MFA, and MA candidates in the School of Visual Arts, and includes information about grading policies, advising, school resources, as well as links to important forms. Additional information can be found in the College of Fine Arts bulletins, located here.

While the information in this handbook is updated often, it is also extremely important to stay current with School of Visual Arts news by reading the weekly email newsletter, which features announcements about courses, registration, internship opportunities, and upcoming lectures.
Administration Guide

School of Visual Arts
The Visual Arts office is located on the fifth floor of the CFA building, in Room 552.
Office hours are Monday-Friday, 9a.m.-5p.m.

School of Visual Arts Staff:

Lynne Allen: Director
Jeannette Guillemin: Assistant Director
Logen Zimmerman: Department Administrator
Lynne Cooney: Exhibitions Director
Alana Silva: Administrative Coordinator
Michael Greenblatt: Technical Associate
Emily Wade: Visual Arts Resource Librarian

Dean’s Office
The administrative offices for the College of Fine Arts are on the second floor of the CFA building, room 230.

Benjamin Juarez: Dean
Julia Keith: Assistant to the Dean

Business Office
John Amend: Assistant Dean of Finance and Administration
Shaw Hubbard: Operations Manager
Paula Fiumara: Payroll Coordinator

Enrollment Services
Patricia Mitro: Assistant Dean for Enrollment Services
Meredith Mascolo: Assistant Director of Online Programs
Alyssa Baker: Manager of Student Services
Mark Krone: Manager of Graduate Admissions
Daniel MacLeod: Financial Aid Officer
Andrew Ryan: Manager of Student Records
Rebekah Pierson: Online Programs Coordinator

Information Technology
Kyle Cross: IT Manager
Mike Javorsky: IT Client Support Specialist
Academic Policies and Procedures

Forms
Click on heading to download available form online. Paper copies are available in the CFA Dean’s Office, Room 230.

Petition Form
Petitions must be presented for any of the following:
1. To change a program from the requirements listed in the bulletin.
2. To transfer credits from another academic institution.
3. To substitute a course for a course requirement.
4. For any reason deemed necessary by your faculty advisor.

Graduation Application
This form is to be completed prior to the final semester before a student anticipates graduating. It is then submitted to the Manager of Student Records in the Office of the Dean for approval and is accompanied by a degree requirement check.

Major Declaration Form
Used to declare academic majors. The form is traditionally completed in the second semester of the sophomore year.

Declaration of Minor Form
This is to be completed in consultation with a student’s minor advisor in CAS, COM, or SMG and submitted to the CFA Manager of Student Records. After courses are completed, students must also submit a Program Change Form to officially declare their minor.

WebReg Form
In order to receive an academic advising code, which is needed to access Registration options on the Student Link, students must obtain their advisor’s signature on this form.

Class Adjustment Form
Students use this form to add or drop classes in the following circumstances: To add a class when a class is full or to drop a class when dropping after the last day to add classes. This form requires the class instructor’s signature. Students may process all other adding and dropping needs on their own via the Student Link.

Overload Form
Used when a student wishes to take more than 18 credits during their sophomore and junior years. On rare occasions, freshmen are allowed to overload with special approval. Seniors are automatically allowed to take up to 20 credits without approval.

Incomplete Form
Used to outline a course completion plan when end-of-semester coursework is incomplete.

Additional Forms can be found here.
Grading Policies

Incomplete Grades
An incomplete grade (I) is not automatic and is given only at the discretion of the instructor of the course. Students qualify for this grade only after providing evidence of illness or another acceptable reason for absences and must agree upon a date of completion for coursework, which may not exceed one year. A Change of Grade Form must be signed by the instructor of the course and submitted to the Manager of Student Records in the Office of the Dean in order to change an incomplete grade to a letter grade once the student has completed required work.

J Grades
A grade of J may be given at the end of the first semester in courses that continue for a full year. J grades are also given in the case of students working on terminal projects that encompass more than one semester. A letter grade is not given until the end of the semester in which the project has been completed. This grade serves as the grade for the entire year. After 1 year, if a new grade is not entered, and “F” grade is assigned.

Academic Actions

Academic Standing
Only one-tenth of the credits applied toward the undergraduate degree in the College of Fine Arts may be D grades. Grades of F do not count toward any degree. In the School of Music, in order for a student to pass a level of applied music study, a grade of C– or higher must be earned.

Low Grades
At the end of each semester the Visual Arts faculty and staff review records of all students with the Dean’s office at a special Academic Actions Meeting. In the event of low grades, any of the following actions may be taken:

Undergraduate Students
1. A semester’s grade point index (GPI) of 1.7 or below automatically places an undergraduate student on academic probation. A semester’s grade point index below 2.0 but above 1.7 may lead to placement on academic probation following faculty review.
2. A cumulative grade point average below 2.0 will place a student on academic probation.
3. D grades in more than 20 percent of any semester’s credits will place a student on academic probation.
4. F and I grades (combined) in more than 20 percent of any semester’s credits will place a student on academic probation.

Graduate Students
1. Students receiving a grade below B- in one graduate course are sent a policy letter expressing the faculty’s concern about the quality of their work.
2. Students receiving grades below B- in two graduate courses may be recommended for termination. The faculty may recommend additional counseling or other modifications in programs until a student’s grades improve.

Academic Probation
Undergraduate Students
1. A student on academic probation is ineligible for participation in student organizations and intercollegiate athletics until good standing is reestablished.
2. A student given the privilege of continuing work on a probationary basis is expected to improve his or her scholastic record so that all conditions of probation are removed by the end of the succeeding semester. Failure to accomplish this may be cause for dismissal. No student who has been on probation for two consecutive semesters may register without approval of the director of his or her school.
3. Normally a student must be on probation for two semesters before they are dismissed. In cases of exceptionally poor performance, this practice may be waived at the recommendation of the relevant faculty and director.

All actions concerning academic standing, probation, and dismissal may be appealed to the Dean of the College of Fine Arts.
Graduate Students
1. A grade below B- may place a graduate student on academic probation, as will a grade point index below 3.0 (B) on a cumulative basis. Grades of B- in two courses will, at the discretion of the faculty, place a student on academic probation.
2. Withdrawals from courses in which instructors have reported an unsatisfactory level of work may subject a student to academic action.
3. A student given the privilege of continuing work while on probation is expected to improve his or her scholastic record sufficiently so that probation is removed by the end of the succeeding semester of registration. Failure to accomplish this or to make significant progress toward such an accomplishment may constitute cause for dismissal. No student who has been on probation for two consecutive semesters may register for courses without specific approval from the Director of the School.
4. All actions concerning academic standing, grading, probation and dismissal may be appealed to the Director of the School. A final appeal may be made to the Dean of the College of Fine Arts.

D. Withdrawal from Classes
Students may withdraw from classes at any time before the specified deadlines given in the College of Fine Arts academic calendar. Withdrawals must have the approval of the class instructor and the student’s advisor. A Class Adjustment Form must be filled out and turned in to either the Office of the Dean or the Office of the University Registrar.

Normally, students are allowed to withdraw from courses without receiving a W grade at any time before the semester is 30% complete. After this, and until the completion of 50% of the semester, students may not withdraw without receiving a W grade. Students are not allowed to withdraw from classes after mid-semester.

Dean’s List
Awarded for a grade point average between 3.40 and 3.74 in a semester with at least 12 taken credits taken and no I or J grades received.

Dean’s List of Special Distinction
Grade point average of 3.75 or above in a semester with at least 12 credits taken and no I or J grades received. 

Students receiving I grades in the first half of a yearlong course can be added to the Dean’s Lists retroactively once the final grade for the year is given.

Attendance
Unless specific permission for absence is arranged with the instructor, students must attend class to receive credit for a course. The instructor may refuse to give a passing grade to a student whose unexcused absences are, in the judgment of the instructor, excessive. Absences exceeding 1/4 of the total class hours in a given semester are considered excessive in all School of Visual Arts studio courses. Individual courses, at the discretion of the instructor, may require even more complete attendance. A student whose absences are considered excessive shall receive a grade of F unless he/she qualifies for a grade of I (incomplete). Within the first week of classes, each instructor shall announce the attendance policy of his/her course and what will be, in his/her judgment, excessive absences for the course.

Academic Policy Quick Links
Online Grade and Course Credit Guide
General CFA Policy Guide
Undergraduate Course Requirements
Course Audits on Student Link
Advisement and Academic Requirements

Upon entering the School of Visual Arts, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. Students are urged to keep in close communication with their faculty advisors in all matters pertaining to program planning and advisement. Students must meet with their advisor to pre-register classes for the following semester. All formal requests, petitions, and other forms must carry the signature of the student’s advisor, whether or not the advisor approves of the action requested. Once a student has selected a major, they may follow their academic requirements on the student link. Also, once a major is declared, the chair of the relevant department becomes the student’s faculty advisor. The advisors of the following areas are:

For all questions relating to student advisement, contact Assistant Director Jeannette Guillemin.

Curriculum

Choosing a Major
In their freshman year, students take foundation courses in drawing, painting, and sculpture, as well as Art History and English Composition. After freshman year, Graphic Design students begin to take courses towards their major, while painting and sculpture students continue to take preparatory courses, entering their respective majors junior year. (See Major Page)

5-Year Program (BFA/MA)
In order to graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in any of the Visual Arts majors, it is required that students complete the two year foundation program, their required major courses, as well as eight liberal arts electives. Undergraduate students that major in Sculpture, Graphic Design, or Painting that are also interested in state licensure to teach art in public schools may combine an undergraduate studio degree program with the Master of Fine Arts in Studio Teaching. The Studio Teaching program includes all Massachusetts licensure requirements. Combining the BFA and MFA degree programs may be accomplished in five years by taking liberal arts elective requirements during summer sessions. Summer courses need advanced approval by submitting a Petition Form and course description to the Visual Arts office.

The Boston University Dual Degree Program
Through this program, students have the option to simultaneously pursue two undergraduate degrees at Boston University. Visual Arts students interested in pursuing dual degrees should plan a 5-6 year course of study due to the demands of the Visual Arts curriculum. If students are interested in pursuing this option, they should meet with their faculty advisor and Assistant Director Jen Guillemin. A Program Change Form would also need to be completed and signed by an advisor.

Minors
Minors are offered in many academic areas in other Boston University Schools and Colleges. If interested in pursuing a minor, students should contact the school or college of interest for their specific minor requirements. A Minor Declaration Form would also need to be completed and signed by an advisor (see forms section above).

Graduate Students

Thesis Information

Painting and Sculpture
Students majoring in Painting or Sculpture must produce a significant body of work both in quantity and quality. From this, the faculty will select a number of pieces that will be presented as part of a group exhibition. The exhibit, held in the spring, will meet the requirement of a thesis exhibition for those students who are represented in the exhibit. Students who do not meet the faculty’s standards for the thesis exhibition will not be allowed to exhibit and will not be awarded the degree until they have completed the thesis exhibition requirement.

Graphic Design
Students must produce a written proposal and a visual project suitable for exhibition. The proposal and project are carried out under the supervision of an advisor, the School’s Director, and the Graphic Design faculty. Students who plan to graduate in a given year must submit the proposal in a timely manner so that any adjustments to the proposal
may be made and approvals obtained in time to complete the project by the exhibition date. An approved proposal and 
the exhibition of the project in a group show held in the spring will meet the requirement of a thesis project for the 
Graphic Design MFA candidate.

**Art Education**
Students must complete a substantive written thesis that will demonstrate their ability to do significant research in the 
field of art education. The candidate must enroll in CFA AR961 and AR962 (Directed Study in Art Education) and must 
be enrolled during the development of the thesis. A thesis proposal is written under the supervision of an advisor. The 
proposal is reviewed and approved by an advisor, the School’s Director, and the Art Education faculty. The final thesis is 
submitted in three copies, one to the Art Education faculty and two to the Mugar Memorial Library.

**Studio Teaching**
Students must complete a written curriculum project that will demonstrate their ability to organize a sequence of 
learning appropriate to a given age level in the area of teaching art. Students must be enrolled in CFA AR865 (Art 
Curriculum Planning) during the semester in which the project is submitted. The final draft of the project is submitted 
to the Art Education faculty.

**Graduation Procedures**
Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Master of Arts (MA), and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees are officially conferred three 
times a year, in January, May, and September. All students must apply to graduate by the date specified in the 
semester calendar.
Prior to filling out an application to graduate, students should review their degree audit with an advisor to make sure 
that all requirements have been met. The College of Fine Arts Manager of Student Records will conduct a review of 
each student’s transcript prior to the date of graduation. In cases where the graduation deadlines have passed, the 
Manager of Student Records will furnish the student with a letter certifying the completion of degree requirements 
provided the student has completed necessary procedures.

**Grades**
All course grades must be submitted prior to a student’s graduation. All grade changes for Directed Study and/or any 
other course(s) in which the student has received a grade of I (incomplete) must be submitted by the appropriate 
faculty. Students will not be allowed to graduate with any incompletes.

**Credits**
All undergraduates must complete at least 132 credits of coursework in order to meet the BFA degree requirements.

**Graduation with Latin Honors**
Among graduating seniors in each school and college, five percent will be awarded degrees summa cum laude, ten 
percent degrees magna cum laude, and fifteen percent cum laude. “Break points,” which are the grade point averages 
(GPA) corresponding to each of these categories, will be determined for each graduating class in each school and 
college at the end of the seventh (penultimate) semester by applying these percentile ranges to the list of eligible 
graduates arranged in order of GPA. Students falling in the designated percentile ranges on the basis of their GPA after 
seven semesters will be certified for degrees with the corresponding Latin honors. Students who, by virtue of strong 
academic performances during their final semester, advance their GPAs beyond a breakpoint will be awarded degrees 
with the correspondingly higher Latin honor. Students whose academic performance during the final semester causes 
their GPAs to fall below a break point will retain the Latin honors as originally determined after seven semesters. In no 
case will students be awarded Latin honors for grade point averages below 3.0.

**Advising and Academic Quick Links**
[Registration Information](#)  
[Student Record Information](#)
Financial Aid Quick Links

Boston University Financial Aid Office
Graduate Financial Aid Information
FAFSA Website
Internship Policies

Juniors and seniors are eligible to register for a two-credit internship course by working between 80-150 hours over the course of 6-14 weeks. Students must complete and submit an Internship Proposal outlining the goals and objectives before beginning their placement. Visual Arts students may pursue up to two internships for course credit during their academic study.
While sophomores and freshmen are ineligible for the internship course (AR 572), they may be considered for a one-credit internship option if the internship site requires course credit. Freshmen and sophomores would complete the one-credit internship form and submit it to the internship coordinator. This credit would not apply toward degree requirements.

Steps for obtaining an Internship for Credit (AR 572):
1. **Find a Placement** – Find an internship placement through independent research or by taking advantage of campus resources including checking postings on the [Visual Arts Resource Library blog](http://example.com), or the [Boston University Career Center](http://example.com).
2. **Get Approval** – Complete and submit an internship proposal form. Determine the goals, objectives and deliverables for the internship and have it signed by a faculty advisor and the internship coordinator in the Visual Arts office.
3. **Confirm Placement** – Once the internship is approved for credit, arrange schedule with intern site and make sure to meet with hour requirements for credit. If the site requires documentation for internship-for-credit, email the internship coordinator with the contact supervisor’s name and email address.
4. **Register** – Be sure to register for the internship class, AR 572 to receive credit. Summer interns will register in the fall semester and present work at the start of the semester.
5. **Keep a Journal and/or Portfolio** – Document what you do at your site regularly. Whether it’s a blog, a matted portfolio or typed journal entries, all interns will need to present their final work to a faculty advisor and the internship coordinator. Be prepared to talk about your experience and show your work.
6. **Get Supervisor to Complete the Internship Evaluation** – Upon completion, make sure that your supervisor completes the form in the internship proposal packet.
7. **Schedule Presentation Meeting** – At the completion of the semester and/or internship, set up a meeting with the faculty advisor and internship coordinator to present your work and discuss your placement.

**Internship Quick Links**
- [Two credit internship proposal](http://example.com)
- [One Credit internship form](http://example.com)
- [Internship guide (PDF)](http://example.com)
School of Visual Arts Resources

Libraries

The Visual Arts Resource Library
The Visual Arts Resource Library (VARL) is a non-circulating collection of books, exhibition catalogues, directories, magazines, slides, and sound recordings available for SVA students and faculty. New books are added annually, and acquisition recommendations are always welcomed. In addition to housing a 6,000-volume reference collection, which includes many rare and unique items, the library frequently hosts events, including the school’s Artist Development Series, a lecture and workshop series targeted at career development education for young artists.

Karl Fortress Audio Archive at VARL
Karl Eugene Fortress (1907–1993) was a painter and printmaker who headed the School of Visual Arts printmaking department from 1956 to 1973. Beginning in the early sixties, he undertook a major artist interview project, creating 269 “audio-portraits” of prominent American artists. Fortress believed that art students needed and wanted to learn about the inner lives of artists in addition to their techniques and craftsmanship. His interviews focused on the artists’ career development, their sources of influence and inspiration, their self-understandings of purpose, and their reflections on teaching and learning.
Fortress gave the School of Visual Arts cassette copies of his interviews, which are are the source of the Resource Library’s collection. The list of interviews in the library’s collection includes many prominent American artists of the twentieth century, including Romare Bearden, Thomas Hart Benton, Louise Bourgeois, Helen Frankenthaler, Philip Guston, Alex Katz, Jacob Lawrence, Jack Levine, Robert Motherwell, and Alice Neel. All original Fortress recordings as well as digital transfers of many of the interviews are held at Boston University’s Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center.

In addition to Fortress’ recordings, DVD copies of the School of Visual Arts’ Contemporary Perspectives Lecture Series are also available for access in the Resource Library. This growing list of sound and video recordings features Sandy Skoglund, Willie Cole, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Hanneline Rugeberg, and Chuck Close.

The Mugar Memorial Library
Boston University’s main library is located at 771 Commonwealth Avenue. Students may check out books for four weeks with the option to renew twice, unless those materials have been called for reserve. Reserve books may be borrowed for two hours, overnight, or for three days, depending upon the loan rule. Reference librarians are available to assist students in locating appropriate resources. Mugar Memorial Library is a member of the Boston Library Consortium and provides access to the holdings of many other research collections in the area.

The Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center is the rare book and manuscript repository for Boston University. Located on the fifth floor of the Mugar Memorial Library, it is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. for researchers interested in its non-circulating materials. The rare book vault houses over 100,000 volumes spanning from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Manuscript holdings include the personal archives of over 1,700 public figures from the fields of literature, journalism, theatre, film, music, politics, and diplomacy. Also, there are large manuscript collections of military history, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franz Liszt. Exhibits of these materials are displayed throughout the Gotlieb Center and the Mugar Memorial Library.

The Art History Visual Resources Collection is in room 306 of the College of Arts and Sciences building, located at 725 Commonwealth Avenue. It has an extensive collection of visual arts slides of artwork from prehistoric times to the present day. Students may borrow slides for school presentations and related projects only. For more information, call 617/353-1447.

Library Quick Links
Visual Arts Resource Library
Eyebrary Blog
Online Internship Guide
Mugar online catalog
Gotlieb archive
Visual Resources Center (Art History Department)
Visiting Artists and Lectures
Contemporary Perspectives Lecture Series
Each semester, the School of Visual Arts’ Contemporary Perspectives Lecture Series presents a series of lectures by various professional artists, including renowned painters, sculptors, printmakers, graphic designers, art educators, and art critics. Undergraduate and graduate students benefit from exposure to the lecturers’ work, engaging with them in dialogues about the art-making process, as well as benefiting from individual studio visits and critiques. Visiting artist lectures are free and open to the public, and attendance is mandatory for Visual Arts students. More info

Artist Development Series
The School of Visual Arts is committed to ensuring that its students have a competitive edge in the art world. Each year, the Artist Development Series conducts events geared towards developing new skills by bringing in working artists, gallery professionals, and other creative experts to facilitate discussion and answer questions. Past events have included intensive workshops by artist Carson Fox, presentations by Christian Roman (CFA ’91) and Paul Topolos of Pixar, panel presentations by alumni, and visits to local galleries. More info

Information Technology
College of Fine Arts Office of Information Technology (CFA IT)
In addition to services offered by the central IT office of Boston University, College of Fine Arts Students have access to the knowledge and resources of the college’s independent IT team. CFA IT provides a variety of services including monitored lab space for classes and independent use, photocopying and laser printing on-demand, and high-quality inkjet printing in addition to standard technical support. Students and Faculty may also borrow equipment from CFA IT, including cameras, computers, peripherals, and projectors.

Information Technology Quick Links
Technology Support Ticketing System
Equipment Reservations
Print and Copy Requests