



Masters of Arts in Teaching

Fine Arts Graduate Handbook

Graduate Handbook- Latest Version: April 1, 2025

Welcome to the Graduate Program and the College of Fine Arts at the University of Utah!

This handbook is intended to help you understand the requirements and deadlines that are essential to obtaining your degree. In addition to the information presented in this handbook, we ask that you become familiar with the policies and procedures established by the Graduate School in the University of Utah Graduate Catalog. The Graduate Catalog is the primary source of information regarding curricular and academic matters and is available online at: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/>.

If you have any questions, please talk with the Director of Graduate Studies or your Supervisory Committee Chair. We wish you much success in your graduate studies!

Fine Arts Graduate Handbook

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The Master of Arts in Teaching with an emphasis in Fine Arts (MAT-FA) is a professional, hybrid/online degree that allows working arts educators the opportunity to obtain a master's degree in two years without having to relocate or leave their families and professions.

What Makes the MAT-FA Program Unique?

The MAT-FA curriculum is a low-residency, six-semester program, and an undergraduate degree is required for admission. It provides candidates a deeper understanding of fine arts pedagogy, thereby strengthening their teaching practice. The MAT-FA graduate program focuses on preparing arts educators who are skilled in leadership, curriculum design, and advanced instructional strategies.

It is unique from other programs across the country for three reasons:

1. It is a hybrid/online degree.
2. It does not require candidates to obtain a Utah professional educator license.
3. It is located in the College of Fine Arts, thereby providing candidates with a deep understanding of the arts, in particular.

The MAT-FA attracts two main constituencies:

1. Professional teaching artists working in community and non-profit arts organizations such as museums, city youth year-round programs, after school programs, recreation centers, music studios, dance, and theatre companies.
2. Licensed K-12 educators seeking a master's degree that is specific to teaching the arts.

The MAT-FA concentrates on advanced coursework and focuses on pedagogical theory and collaborative practice that expands beyond the traditional classroom. Theory courses are foundational, and students take additional coursework in the areas of pedagogy, advocacy/inclusion, scholarly inquiry and the application of relevant arts teaching practices.

Designed as a six-semester hybrid professional program. A significant portion of each candidate's second year is devoted to practical implementation of current arts educational teaching methods. Graduate projects coursework support the selected area of focus, and the self-designed.

Final arts teaching projects serve as a culmination of each student's research and investigative journey during their studies. We welcome applicants from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, including professionals interested in transitioning into careers beyond the performing and professional artistic world.

Who to Contact:

Program Director and Associate Dean for Arts Education & Community Engagement:



Kelby McIntyre-Martinez

kelby.mcintyre@utah.edu

801-581-1708

Academic Coordinator and Advisor:



Mary Oliveira

mary.oliveira@utah.edu

801-587-0528

[Link to MAT-FA](#)

[Link to the Graduate School](#)

What can I expect from the MAT-FA?

The MAT-FA requires 30 semester hours of graduate-level course work in the teaching content area, the fine arts.

18 -credit hours are devoted to two 12-day summer intensives on the University of Utah's main campus and include additional online work to be completed prior to, and subsequent to, on-campus sessions.

Summer intensives provide colleagues opportunities to engage in and contribute to the greater vision and mission of what arts education is and can be and emphasize methods-based arts teaching techniques.

Cutting-edge arts teaching seminars convene local, national, and internationally recognized arts educators to work collaboratively with MAT-FA candidates, campus and community team teaching opportunities, and hybrid online reflective work.

The additional 12 credit hours required for the degree consist of online work be completed during the fall and spring semesters of each of the two academic years.

Online curriculum focuses on the areas of arts teaching theory and application via three individual arts teaching practicums that take place in collaboration with various local and national communities.

Curriculum:

SUMMER I Hybrid*

ATFA 6015-290 Theatre, Media, and Visual Art Teaching Materials and Methods (3 credits)

ATFA 6030-290 Music and Dance Materials and Methods (3 credits)

ATFA 6100-290 Arts Teaching Theory (3 credits)

FALL I Online**

ATFA 6200-290 Arts Teaching Applied Theory: Critical Investigations in Arts Learning (3 credits)

SPRING I Online**

ATFA 6300-290 Socially Engaged Arts Making (3 credits)

SUMMER II Hybrid*

ATFA 6500-290 Community Based Arts Teaching (3 credits)

ATFA 6800-290 Arts Teaching Seminar (6 credits)

FALL II Online**

ATFA 6900-290 Arts Teaching Project Design (3 credits)

SPRING II Online**

ATFA 6901-290 Arts Teaching Project Implementation (3 Credits)

**Hybrid courses use a mixture of face-to-face, online, and technology enhanced instruction.*

***Online courses do not have required weekly meetings.*

What are the MAT-FA Learning Outcomes?

1. Incorporate knowledge of arts-based instructional approaches to the design and the implementation of teaching in and through the arts.
2. Apply evidence-based strategies and methodologies to teach the arts in a variety of settings employing a constructivist approach.
3. Function as reflective arts education practitioners.
4. Demonstrate a consistent commitment to adapting, modeling, and implementing multiple learning methods in the art spaces.
5. Build relationships with individuals and families that support young people's growth and learning via community-based art making.

Application & Financial Supports

How to Apply:

Applicants for admission to the Fine Arts, MAT will be recommended by the Arts Education Committee and approved by the Graduate School at the University of Utah.

Application deadline is May 1. (*Priority deadline March 15*)

We expect that candidates will have a commitment to the demands of graduate study, as well as at least ONE of the following:

1. A bachelor's degree in a specific art form.
2. A state arts endorsement in theatre, dance, visual arts, film, or music.
3. A cognate education degree suitable to the study of arts teaching.
4. Commensurate arts teaching experience.

What are the Required Program Application Materials for the MAT-FA?

1. Statement of Purpose: You should use your statement to describe your background, interests, and goals in the study of arts education.
2. Résumé or Curriculum Vitae: This should include a list of your educational background and experience.

3. Letter of recommendation: One letter is required, but you have the option to submit a second letter.
 - Letters will be submitted online through the graduate school's online application system, SLATE.
 - Applicants will enter the names and email addresses for the individuals they are asking to provide recommendations.
 - These providers will receive emails requesting they fill out online recommendations.
4. Current background-check: Students must submit documentation of a cleared background check prior to recommendation for admission into the Master of Arts in Teaching - Fine Arts program.
5. Arts Teaching Portfolio:
 - Must include 3 lesson plans that demonstrate a focus on work in the traditional classroom and alongside community organizations and participants.
 - 1 arts teaching video (5-8 minutes in length), and images of youth work and/or performances conducted alongside various community members.
 - *Optional*: Additional creative work.
6. Arts Education Committee Interview: Top applicants will be interviewed by the Arts Education Committee prior to admittance.

Financial Supports:

There are graduate student grants and award opportunities available. *The following is a partial list.* More information can be found on the [University of Utah's Graduate School homepage](#) or by following the links below:

Important considerations:

To be considered half-time, graduate students must take 5 credit hours to receive federal financial aid. The MAT-FA has four, 3-credit online semesters.

Graduate Student Resources:

1. College of Fine Arts Individual Research Student Travel Award (Undergraduate & Graduate):
 - This travel fund is to support Individual Undergraduate or Graduate Students' travel to present or perform their scholarly or creative research at national or international venues.
 - There is a limit of \$500 max per academic year for each applicant, and funds will be disbursed on a first-come basis.

- Please e-mail a completed application form to the Associate Dean of the College of Fine arts and be sure to include one of the following:
 - a. A copy of the formal invitation to present.
 - b. A link to the conference/presenting organization's website listing you as a presenter/performer.
 - c. Include a paragraph from your program Director and faculty advisor explaining why this presentation or performance is important to your graduate career and/or education.
 - Please direct any questions about the Individual Student Travel Grants to the Associate Dean in the College of Fine Arts.
2. [University of Utah College of Fine Arts - Funding Opportunities](#): Click on the link for information regarding CFA funding opportunities.
 3. [Graduate Research Fellowships and Teaching Assistantships](#): Click on the link for information regarding fellowships and teaching assistantships.
 4. [Subsidized health insurance](#): Click on the link for information regarding graduate student health insurance.
 5. [Residency](#): Click on the link for information regarding residency for tuition purposes.

How much will the total program cost?

Students should use the [Tuition Calculator](#) for both resident and on-resident students on the Income Accounting Website (or in CIS).

Financial Aid Options:

Complete the Free Application for [Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) for the academic year students are attending school. Graduate students can only qualify for unsubsidized loans or graduate PLUS loans.

Campus Scholarships:

Students can apply for most campus scholarships through the [University of Utah's Scholarship Management Site](#). Complete a general application and apply for recommended opportunities. Some departments are not in the AcademicWorks system and will have their own application system. Check with that specific department for their scholarship requirements.

There are third-party scholarship resources on the University Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid website, The Bursar's Office, that has payment options for tuition. Visit the [Office of the Bursar](#).

Advising, Evaluation, & Retention

Advising:

Year 1 Advising:

First-year graduate students work with the MAT-FA Academic Advisor. The MAT-FA Academic Advisor serves as a guide, facilitator, and resource for the student's progress prior to the selection of their committee. Additionally, at the beginning of the 1st Summer semester, students will meet with their Academic Advisor to:

1. Identify proficiencies and deficiencies from transcripts and professional experiences.
2. Discuss curricular path and areas of interest. Complete and finalize registration for the Summer semester.
3. Throughout Year 1, graduate students should meet with MAT-FA faculty, Program Director, and Academic Advisor as needed and as questions arise.

Additionally, during Year 1, each graduate student will meet with Program Director and Academic Advisor for a formal evaluative session.

Year 2 Advising:

At the start of Year 2, Summer semester, graduate students begin their work on their final non-thesis arts teaching projects.

If there are concerns regarding a student's progress, the student will be advised of them early in the second year to maximize a student's potential for successful completion of the program. Students are strongly encouraged to seek out faculty for advice, particularly if a faculty member's expertise relates directly to one's area of interest or focus.

During the 2nd Summer semester, each student will meet with their Academic Advisor, Program Director, and Graduate Supervisory Committee for a formal evaluative session.

Evaluation:

While graduate students receive feedback and guidance throughout their studies, students are also expected to be self-motivated, directed, and responsible for seeking faculty contact and counsel.

Grades serve to provide an immediate and relative assessment of competency, reflecting one's general progress and standing in the MAT-FA. The evaluation process consists primarily of semester-by-semester advising, grading in all course work, faculty reviews, and supervision of final project-related work.

Students' academic work and over-all progress will be evaluated in the following ways:

1. Observation by faculty in all coursework.
2. Feedback from instructors in all coursework.
3. Informal one-on-one feedback on projects/work.
4. Academic Advisor and Program Director formal evaluative sessions during Year 1.

Retention:

Students meet monthly with the Academic Advisor which supports online graduate students' engagement with the program, persistence, and a sense of community. At the end of year one (three semesters of coursework) graduate students are evaluated by the Program Director and the faculty.

The evaluation will result in one of the following actions:

1. *Positive Faculty and Director Review:* This allows students to progress in the program.
2. *Counseled Out:* If a student's ongoing work in any area of the curriculum is unacceptable, they will be graded accordingly and placed on probation, or students may be advised out of the program as per the decision of the full faculty.
3. Students must maintain the following standards to remain in the Graduate program:
 - GPA: Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA (B average or higher).
 - Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA places that student on probation and will trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student.
 - At this point, the student is required to justify their continuance within the program. This review may result in dismissal from the program.
 - Once placed on probation, failure to raise one's GPA in subsequent semesters will result in dismissal from the graduate program.

Grades:

1. A grade below B- for any course work taken within the MAT-FA Program will place the student on probation and trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student.
 - The student is then required to justify their continuance within the program.

- This review may result in dismissal from the Graduate Program.
 - 2 grades below B- for courses taken within the MAT-FA Program will result in an automatic dismissal from the Graduate Program.
1. A grade below C- in a required graduate course cannot be applied towards a graduate degree and the course must be repeated.
 2. For credit/no-credit courses offered in the MAT-FA Program, students must receive grade of CR (credit).
 - If a student receives a grade of NC (no-credit), the course must be repeated.
 - A NC grade will place the student on probation and trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student.
 - The student is then required to justify their continuance within the program.
 - This review may result in dismissal from the Graduate Program.
 - Two NC grades for course work taken within the MAT-FA Program will result in dismissal from the Graduate Program.

Probation:

1. Students placed on probation are ineligible for MAT-FA Program merit- based scholarship support until they again meet Program's academic standards.
 - Once a student meets the Program's academic standards; the student is considered "in good standing," although their probation will remain on their record.
2. The ultimate/culminating goal and focus of the Graduate Program is mature, in-depth artistic and scholarly research. It also requires that students act as good citizens in dealing with the faculty, other students, and the program at large.
 - If the full faculty agrees at the end of the first year of study that the collective quality and depth of the work completed to date is below the Arts Teaching Program's expectations, that student may be strongly encouraged not to continue in the Graduate Program.

Student/Faculty Code:

Student Rights and Responsibilities: [University Policy 6-400](#): Student Rights and Responsibilities - Regulations Library - The University of Utah.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities: [University Policy 6-316](#): Faculty Rights and Responsibilities - Regulations Library - The University of Utah.

Final Project & Graduation

Final Arts Teaching Non-Thesis Project:

The MAT-FA degree culminates with a final arts teaching/non-thesis project that is developed and implemented as a cap-stone during course work. Additionally, to successfully graduate from the MAT-FA, students must complete an arts teaching portfolio that is reviewed and graded by their committees.

Students complete an exit interview with their committees and answer questions pertaining to the artifacts presented in their arts teaching portfolios.

Final Project/Non-thesis Purpose:

1. Research and design authentic formative and summative assessment strategies that are aligned with selected arts teaching strategies and methods.
2. Work in collaboration with a community partner to design interdisciplinary arts lessons and/or community engaged experiences.

These assessments and interdisciplinary arts lessons/ experiences are implemented in ATFA 6901 as the final arts teaching project. ATFA 6900 and ATFA 6901 occur during the final year (two semesters) of a student's program of study and requires approximately 2-4 hours per week of supervised experience beginning fall semester. Each arts educator will receive formal and informal coaching, observation, and feedback in the design of interdisciplinary arts lessons and/or community engaged experiences and of arts teaching assessments during class.

Arts Teaching Project Proposal:

Students will propose and design their final arts teaching project in ATFA 6900. It will be implemented in ATFA 6901.

During 6900, graduate supervisory committee members meet with each student mid-Fall for a formal review of the project proposal. At that time, committee members provide mentorship, resources, and guidance. Committee members officially vote to approve, not approve, or approve pending revisions/edits at the end of the Fall semester.

Approved projects:

Students are provided a permission code to register for the program's final semester.

Approved projects pending edits/revisions:

Students who have met more than 80% of the final project criteria will be provided the opportunity to include the required evidence, research, and pedagogical preparation and

resubmit before the Spring semester. If approved, students will be granted a permission code for 6901.

Non-approved projects:

It is evident that those students have not produced enough evidence, research, and pedagogical preparation to successfully implement their final project in 6901. They will not be granted a permission code to advance in the program and will be advised to request a leave of absence from the program for two-three semesters.

Upon their return, students will need to implement revisions and resubmit their final project for approval.

Leave of Absence:

Officially admitted domestic graduate students who have registered for and completed university credit class(es) may request a leave of absence to postpone their studies for up to one (1) year. The request must be approved by the student's supervisory committee and/or the Department Chair/Director of Graduate Studies. Visit the University of Utah's [Office of the Registrar](#) page for more information on requesting a leave of absence.

Final Project Timeline:

The timeline for the final arts teaching project is the final two semesters (fall/spring) of the program of study. Students create, design, write, and prepare assessment tools during the fall in ATFA 6900 when the project is approved for implantation.

The 10-hour arts teaching final project is implemented in the identified community spring during ATFA 6901.

Research Considerations:

Institutional Review Board (IRB):

For projects involving research with human subjects, including interviews, video recording, etc., students must first apply to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for project approval if this project is considered by your school or community to be outside of the cleared educational work approved under parental consent.

This process can take up to 2 months to complete and must be approved before starting any data collection. [Visit the IRB website](#) and discuss this with your professor or the Program Director.

MAT-FA Arts Teaching Portfolio:

Your MAT-FA Portfolio is your culminating product that holds all your scholarly, pedagogical and artistic accomplishments during your time in the program. Your assigned committee

will review your portfolio and ask you questions regarding your artifacts, choices, and the justification behind their organization and placement.

Portfolios are to follow a program template and incorporate specific arts teaching methods, theories, and standards. Portfolios will be graded according to a specific program rubric.

Faculty will be looking for evidence in the following areas:

1. Incorporate knowledge of art based instructional approaches to the design and implementation of teaching in and through arts:
 - Teacher displays solid knowledge of the works performed with regard to period and style of the artwork and the skills and/ or knowledge required of students for success in art-making.
2. Apply evidence-based strategies and methodologies to teach the arts in a variety of settings:
 - Teacher's plans and use of resources align with learning outcomes and are suitable for the group of students/participants.
 - The learning activities are varied and represent different challenges for students.
 - The class/art making structure is clear, and time allotments are reasonable.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to adapting, modeling, and implementing multiple learning methods in the arts spaces.
4. Teacher modifies their approach to the art form as dictated by artistic outcomes or by student/participant reaction, with some success in keeping students/participants engaged and improving in performance.
 - Teacher adjusts instruction to keep all students/participants in the class engaged, using varied techniques for interpreting the art.
5. Build relationships with individuals, and/or families that support growth and learning of participants via community-based art making:
 - Frequent contact is made with parents, families, and/or and community members about both the fine arts program and individual student/participant progress, discussing specific benefits, challenges, needs, etc.
 - Families and community members are included in art making activities.
6. Organization: The organization of the artifacts in the portfolio includes all elements/details as outlined in the directions. In addition, the artifacts contain all required pieces. The artifacts present a creative and engaging explanation regarding the purpose of the artifacts and their placements.

Note: Portfolios will be graded according to a specific program rubric.

The class structure is clear, and time allotments are reasonable:

1. Demonstrate a commitment to adapting, modeling, and implementing multiple learning methods in the arts spaces.
2. Teacher modifies their approach to the art form as dictated by artistic outcomes or by student reaction, with some success in keeping the students engaged and improving in performance.

Oral Graduate Committee Defense:

A formal oral graduate committee defense is conducted by faculty committees. This occurs the final spring semester of the program. Questions regarding the organization of their portfolio, their final arts teaching project, and assessment findings are included in the interview.

Program of Study:

The Graduate School requires candidates for master's degrees to devote a minimum of 30 credit hours to their graduate courses (i.e., courses numbered 5000 and above) and thesis.

- Some departments require more than 30 hours.
- A minimum of 20 hours must be in course work, with the balance in 6970 thesis hours or alternative to the thesis (when allowed by the department).
- All coursework counted toward the degree must be approved by the student's supervisory committee.
- The candidate is required to maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA in course work for the master's degree.
- A grade below C- is not accepted by the University toward a graduate degree.
- Departments may have additional grade restrictions that must be maintained. These restrictions will be explained in the department's handbook.
- Each master's program requires a distinct, complete set of course work. See [MAT-FA Program of Study](#) for required course work.
- Course work used to meet the requirements of one master's program may not be used to meet the requirements of another.
- Courses taken through alternative delivery methods, e.g., via EDNET or the Internet, are approved on a programmatic basis through the Graduate Council.

- MAT-FA Supervisory Committee MAT-FA supervisory committees are set committees by art form and/or specific expertise. During the first summer intensive, students learn who will be serving on their committee.
- Each committee consists of three faculty members.
- The committee will review the final arts teaching portfolio and conduct an oral defense.
- If a graduate student's preliminary work is deficient, the supervisory committee may require supplementary undergraduate courses for which no graduate credit is granted.

Supervisory Committee Approval:

MAT-FA supervisory committees are set committees by art form and/or specific expertise. During the *2nd Summer Intensive*, students learn who will be serving on their committee. Each committee consists of three faculty members. The committee will review the final arts teaching portfolio and conduct an oral project defense.

If a graduate student's preliminary work is deficient, the supervisory committee may require supplementary undergraduate courses for which no graduate credit is granted.

Supervisory Committee Approval: The supervisory committee, indicating the final teaching project and portfolio has been approved, verifies in Grad Tacker the successful conclusion of the oral defense.

Additional Program Information & Supports

Transcripts:

Candidates submit their transcripts (unofficial is fine), which include grades for all semesters, to the College of Fine Arts along with the Report of the Final Examination for the Master's Degree, Master's Application for Admission to Candidacy form.

The MAT-FA candidate should bring The Report of the Final Examination for the Master's Degree, Master's Application for Admission to Candidacy form, and Grade Change forms with them to the exit interview/defense.

Candidates should work with the MAT-FA Program Coordinator to assure that these forms are available when needed.

Graduation:

For information on graduation timelines and application [visit the University of Utah's Graduate School homepage](#)

[The University of Utah – Graduate School Student Resources](#): Includes important dates, forms, financial resources, and general information.

Graduation Timeline: The program curriculum is set up so that you follow a two-year timeline and graduate (if the curriculum is completed in order) the same spring semester you complete your final arts teaching project, arts teaching portfolio, and exit interview/defense.

Final Fall Semester Program: Supervisory Committee Curricula and Approval The oral defense takes place during finals week of the final spring semester.

Explanation of Graduate Forms:

Apply to Graduate for Spring by November 1 – [Click here to apply](#)

Make sure your committee signs off on the coursework required for graduation prior to January 17. [Follow your progress on Grad Tracker](#).

Minimum GPA:

Candidates for graduate degrees are required to maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA in course work counted toward the degree. A grade below C- is not accepted by the University toward a graduate degree.

Departments may have additional grade restrictions that must be maintained. These restrictions will be explained in the department's handbook.

Transfer Credits:

Transfer credits are only accepted under special circumstances and must be approved by the Graduate School and the Director of the MAT-FA.

Time Limit to Degree:

The MAT-FA is designed as a two-year degree, but under extenuating circumstances candidates may be allowed an extension. The Program Director of the MAT-FA must approve any proposal for an extension beyond the two-year program.

Graduate Student Advisory Committee Student Advisory Committees (SACs):

SACs are student groups established within each department/school to promote communication and interaction among students, faculty, staff, and administrators. They provide students with more opportunities to offer their voices and perspectives at the department/school level.

SACs are both a social and an academic organization within their department and as such they advance involvement opportunities, encourage participation in departmental activities, and work together with others to build the campus community.

Some of the roles of the SACs are to:

1. Promote academic and social activities. Examples include lectures, demonstrations, faculty involvement opportunities, freshman-mentoring programs, assisting with departmental orientation process, publishing a newsletter, etc.
2. Encourage collaboration with other student organizations.
3. Provide service opportunities.
4. Assist in the faculty RPT process.
5. Build campus community at the University.

Click on the link for current [College of Fine Arts SAC representatives](#).

Leave of Absence/Family Medical Leave Policies:

[University of Utah's policy regarding leaves of absence](#)

Any leave of absence from the Program must be proposed in writing and approved by the Director of the MAT-FA and the Director of Graduate Studies. Officially admitted domestic graduate students who have registered for and completed university credit class(es) may request a leave of absence to postpone their studies for up to one (1) year.

Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action:

The University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and 34 CFR part 106. The requirement not to discriminate in education programs or activities extends to admission and employment.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, or both.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual misconduct including sexual harassment, we encourage you to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the **Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action**, 135 Park Building, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, 801-581-8365, oeo@utah.edu.

[Submit an online report](#) through the Office of Equal Opportunity - The University of Utah.

For further information, please see: [University Policy 1-012: University Non-discrimination Policy - Regulations Library - The University of Utah.](#)

