

STUDENT HANDBOOK



VERMONT COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

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

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ACADEMIC CALENDAR (2012-2013)

Semester	Program	New Student Orientation	Semester/Residency Start Date	Residency End Date	Semester End Date	Graduation Date
Winter 2012	Writing	12/28/11	12/29/11	1/7/12	6/26/12	7/6/12
Winter 2012	Writing for Children	1/8/12	1/9/12	1/18/12	7/8/12	7/18/12
Winter 2012	Visual Art	1/27/12	1/27/12	2/5/12	7/26/12	8/3/12
Winter 2012	Music Composition	2/11/12	2/12/12	2/18/12	8/5/12	n/a
Winter 2012	Graphic Design	4/15/12	4/15/12	4/21/12	10/13/12	n/a
Summer 2012	Writing	6/26/12	6/27/12	7/6/12	12/28/12	1/7/13
Summer 2012	Writing for Children	7/8/12	7/9/12	7/18/12	1/9/13	1/19/13
Summer 2012	Visual Art	7/26/12	7/26/12	8/4/12	1/24/13	2/2/13
Summer 2012	Music Composition	8/5/12	8/6/12	8/12/12	2/9/13	n/a
Summer 2012	Graphic Design	10/14/12	10/14/12	10/20/12	4/13/13	n/a
Winter 2013	Writing	12/28/12	12/29/12	1/7/13	6/25/13	7/6/13
Winter 2013	Writing for Children	1/9/13	1/10/13	1/19/13	7/8/13	7/18/13
Winter 2013	Visual Art	1/25/13	1/25/13	2/3/13	7/25/13	8/4/13
Winter 2013	Music Composition	2/9/13	2/10/13	2/16/13	8/5/13	Aug. 2013
Winter 2013	Graphic Design	4/14/13	4/14/13	4/20/13	10/12/13	10/19/13

**Please consult individual programs for more specific information regarding residency schedules.*

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Vermont College of Fine Arts protects the right of faculty members, students and staff to freedom of inquiry, thought, expression, publication and peaceable assembly. Faculty may not be penalized by VCFA for expressions of opinion or associations in their private or civic capacity. They should, however, remember that the public may judge VCFA by their utterances and should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, and show respect for the opinion of others, making every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND LENGTH OF PROGRAM

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.

A final assessment of "CR" means 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 will 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.

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”:

- Student’s name
- Student’s address
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Dates of enrollment
- Status of enrollment (i.e., whether the student is, or is not, currently enrolled)
- Major field of study
- Anticipated date of graduation, if currently enrolled

- Degrees earned, if any, and date conferred
- Photographs and video images

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*, the college's secure "Self-Service" portal: (<https://vcfacommunity.vcfa.edu/Home.aspx>). 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. VCFA will not issue transcripts of a student's academic record until all debts with the college are cleared. For more information on how to request a transcript, 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. 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/>

ADMISSION TO VCFA

Admissions to the Master of Fine Arts 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.

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. An outside vendor is not required at official college and program functions where alcohol will be served but not sold.
- Public drunkenness and disruptive behavior in public places, including lounges, hallways, and stairwells is not permitted.
- The consumption of alcoholic beverages out-of-doors on the college campus is permitted on the condition that those involved conduct themselves in a discrete and responsible way. This policy applies to individual use 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.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Definition:

VCFA conducts its academic programs in accord with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which stipulate that:

- No student may be excluded from any program or any course solely on the basis of disability;
- Modifications in degree or course requirements may be necessary to meet the requirements of some disabled students;
- Auxiliary aides, 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 disabled students;
- 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);
- Group meetings, classes, seminars, and/or lectures may have to be relocated to permit access for students with mobility impairments;
- Counseling of disabled students toward more restrictive careers than non-disabled students is discriminatory; unless such counsel is based on strict licensing or certification requirements in a profession.

Implementation:

Upon acceptance to a Vermont College of Fine Arts program, every student is sent a form asking if the student has any disability that has been officially diagnosed by a licensed professional. Even if a student does not have a disability, or if a student chooses not to inform the College about a disability, the form must still be signed, indicating the student has read it, and returned it to the student's program office.

These forms will then be forwarded to the Program Director. Students who have not received this form should obtain one from his or her program's office and return it at the earliest opportunity.

Preliminary Review:

After consultation with the student, the Program Director makes one of several recommendations:

- The student submits appropriate professional assessment and documentation of a disability from a qualified, licensed professional to the Disabilities Services Coordinator. The licensed professional will provide a comprehensive report, including diagnoses and recommendations for academic or other accommodation. Specific College guidelines for documentation can be obtained from the Disabilities Services Coordinator and should be made available for evaluators to follow. All evaluations must be as current as possible, conducted within a reasonable time prior to their submission. VCFA does not conduct nor pay for such assessments.
- That professional assessment and documentation is not indicated or required but the student should seek out appropriate academic assistance from faculty and program staff.
- That there does not seem to be reason to suggest assessment or assistance.

Accommodation Profile:

Upon receiving appropriate documentation of a disability as described above, the Disabilities Services Coordinator will, if a student so requests, develop an educational profile recommending 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 Disabilities 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 Disabilities 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 or treatment will be treated as confidential information. Access will be granted only to the Disabilities Services Coordinator and those involved in the student's education. It will be shared only to the extent that it contributes to developing an individual educational profile for the student. Information will be shared with others only with the written permission of the student.

Appeal:

Any student dissatisfied with the adjustments 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 clear remedial action. Based on this statement, the Academic Dean will either activate changes to the individual accommodations, or resolve that the profile as developed is appropriate. The Academic Dean level of appeal will be final.

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Vermont College of Fine Arts will take appropriate action regarding students who violate the College's campus and conduct regulations or disrupt the learning and campus environment. The officer responsible for handling disciplinary actions at VCFA is the Academic Dean, or his/her designate.

Students are expected to cooperate with and be respectful of all VCFA personnel as they carry out their duties.

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 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.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES:

Emergencies:

In an emergency 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 drunkenness, and other offenses included in this Handbook. If the student requests it, VCFA will then follow the non-emergency disciplinary procedures to determine non-temporary discipline. VCFA Security may act to enforce the College's disciplinary determinations.

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 and to Security. The Program Director and Security will investigate the allegations and determine the facts of the case, which will be reported to the Academic Dean.
- Interview With Student: The Academic Dean, Program Director and Security, as appropriate, will meet with the student to review the facts of the case, to allow the student to respond to the allegations and to present his/her version of the alleged events.
- Disciplinary Action: Following the meeting with the student, the Academic Dean, Program Director and Security, as appropriate, determine if disciplinary action is warranted. If so, such action may include making continued enrollment conditional upon cessation of the offending behavior. The decision will be 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.

Appeal:

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

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.

DORMITORY PROCEDURES

The VCFA Academic Programs are responsible for overseeing students' dormitory housing. Students who encounter housing problems should report them promptly to the Assistant Program Director.

In addition, the Campus Services Office is available to assist with hospitality-related services during residencies. The Campus Services Coordinator lives in Dewey Hall and contact information is provided in your dorm packet. The Director of Campus Services has an office on the first floor of College Hall.

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 Security 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 on the 1st floor of Dewey. Please do not leave used linens in hallways or in rooms. Please do leave pillows, blankets, and mattress pads in rooms.
- Upon checking out of a room, please turn off heat in rooms and close windows.
- Before leaving, students must return their keys to a key drop box. A \$75 lost key fee will be applied to any student who does not return a key on the day of departure.
- No student may change assigned rooms without permission from the Program staff.

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 wait for assistance. Please see the Smoking Policy for more information regarding smoking on campus.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

No medical services are provided by VCFA. Any personal injury occurring on campus, or other sponsored sites, must be reported immediately to Facilities/Security staff (x8888 or 802-828-8888) who will contact Emergency Medical Services.

FACILITIES OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The goal of 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 and security regulations and practices, provides security during residencies, oversees parking on campus and strives to maintain a safe atmosphere conducive to a healthy learning environment.

State laws and building codes prohibit set-ups (tables, chairs, et cetera) in hallways. All requests for set-ups and/or audio-visual equipment should go through the program offices.

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 six to eight weeks prior to the beginning of each new semester. Payments may be made by check or online 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. Only the amount remaining due after deducting financial aid may be divided into monthly payments. The monthly payment option is the only deferred payment option available for students. See the Payment Plan Policy 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.

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, though it must be made clear that funds are limited. Graduate students are eligible for several different kinds of student loans. Information is available on the college's website. Some limited merit scholarships are available through individual programs. Application for financial aid in no way affects admission decisions. Students are urged to apply to outside financial sources.

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 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.

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 & 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.

The semester begins on the first full day of the residency for each program. If a student withdraws within two weeks of the 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 2012 semester by program are as follows:

Writing (Winter 2012)

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

WCYA (Winter 2012)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	1/9/12 – 1/22/12	100%
3 & 4	1/23/12 – 2/5/12	75%
5 & 6	2/6/12 – 2/19/12	50%
7 & 8	2/20/12 – 3/4/12	25%
After week 8	3/5/12 and beyond	0%

Visual Art (Winter 2012)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	1/27/12 – 2/9/12	100%
3 & 4	2/10/12 – 2/23/12	75%
5 & 6	2/24/12 – 3/8/12	50%
7 & 8	3/9/12 – 3/22/12	25%
After week 8	3/23/12 and beyond	0%

Music Composition (Winter 2012)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	2/12/12 – 2/25/12	100%
3 & 4	2/26/12 – 3/10/12	75%
5 & 6	3/11/12 – 3/24/12	50%
7 & 8	3/25/12 – 4/7/12	25%
After week 8	4/8/12 and beyond	0%

Graphic Design (Winter 2012)

Weeks	Dates	Refund
1 & 2	4/15/12 – 4/28/12	100%
3 & 4	4/29/12 – 5/12/12	75%
5 & 6	5/13/12 – 5/26/12	50%
7 & 8	5/27/12 – 6/9/12	25%
After week 8	6/10/12 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 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 will not receive diplomas or transcripts until all amounts due to the college have been paid.

FOOD SERVICE

The 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.

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.

GRIEVANCES/APPEALS (NON-ACADEMIC)

Students dissatisfied with a non-academic college decision or a condition of College life are encouraged to seek a resolution to the problem. The first step toward such a resolution is discussion with their Program Director and/or Faculty Chair. If no mutually-agreeable solution is reached, the student will take the matter to the Academic Dean.

For academic grievances/appeals, see the academic regulations of your program.

GUESTS, CHILDREN & PETS

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's rooms without permission from the Program Director. Children are permitted on campus only with the advance permission of the student's program office. Children must be accompanied at all times by their parent or guardian.

Guests of students may rent rooms, if available, for overnight stays connected with graduation or other special ceremonies. VCFA Security may remove persons who appear in campus facilities or in the dormitories without permission or invitation. Pre-approval is required for pets.

LIBRARY

The VCFA Library offers an international catalog listing periodicals, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, reference and children's books.

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.

LOST & FOUND

VCFA's "Lost & Found" is located in the Campus Services Office in College Hall (802-828-8580).

PARKING

Student parking of properly registered vehicles is permitted in the lot beside Alumni Hall on College Street and in the lot behind Bishop-Hatch, Noble, and Glover dormitories. Of these, the Alumni Hall lot is preferred. Short-term parking passes are required; these passes can be obtained from your Program office. From April 15 to November 15, 24-hour parking is also available on the city streets around the College, unless otherwise posted. However, throughout the winter months, overnight parking on Montpelier streets is not permitted in order to accommodate snow removal. Vehicles blocking access will be towed and the owner will be responsible for all towing and storage fees.

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 Security will ask participants in noisy gatherings to respect the College's quiet policy.

SECURITY

VCFA Security provides 24-hour campus-wide security coverage during residencies in order to secure College facilities and assist students. The Facilities/Security staff may be reached by dialing x8888 on campus phones or (802) 828-8888.

Security staff will provide escort to students on campus, upon request. Security 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 Security/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.

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.

STUDENT ID CARDS

Enrolled Vermont College of Fine Arts students will receive a student ID card at their first residency. This card is used in the VCFA Library, for admission to the T.W. Wood 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.

VCFA CONTACTS/EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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

DORMITORIES

Noble	1st Floor	828-8559
	2nd Floor Landing	828-8861
	3rd Floor	828-8859
Dewey	1 st Floor	828-8871
	2 nd Floor	828-8872
	3 rd Floor	828-8873

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Facilities Operations (Security)		828-8888
Ambulance	911 or	229-4913
Police	911 or	223-3445
Central Vermont Hospital		371-4100
Washington County Mental Health		229-0591

PROGRAMS

Graphic Design	828-8896
Music Composition	828-8534
Visual Art	828-8614
Writing	828-8839
Writing for Children & Young Adults	828-8637

SERVICES

Admissions	828-8535
Bursar	828-8737
Campus Services	828-8899
Financial Aid	1-877-612-2599
Library	828-8512
Registrar	828-8724

LOST & FOUND

Campus Services, College Hall	828-8580
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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

**GRAPHIC DESIGN PROGRAM
MASTER OF FINE ARTS, GRAPHIC DESIGN**

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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

Full-time enrollment at Vermont College of Fine Arts is defined as a minimum of twelve credits per semester. Fifteen graduate semester hours are granted for the successful completion of each semester. Sixty credit hours are required for the awarding of the degree. In the rare case when a student is granted acceleration, they may graduate upon completion of forty-five credit hours.

LEARNING GOALS

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

- Development of design skills in form, content, and craft
- Critical ability as appropriate to a lifetime of further development
- Knowledge of design discourse and the culture of the field
- Designers as generators of content and agents of change

The Master of Fine Arts Degree in Graphic Design is considered a terminal degree and affords graduating students the necessary credentials to teach at the higher education level. 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 the MFA in Graphic Design program is not to credential but 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.

ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION

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

An applicant's portfolio should highlight their visual strengths and problem solving abilities. The portfolio may be a chronicle of a designer's development over time and should tell the story of their visual interests and experience. The portfolio should demonstrate some general consistency of form (i.e. web design, typography, package design, motion graphics, etc.) which will give Committee reviewers an idea of what format the student may prefer to work in during their master's study.

The applicant will submit a statement of purpose that demonstrates a commitment to the advancement of design skills and investigation at the level appropriate for graduate study. The statement should also indicate strong potential to undertake critical inquiry of various artistic practices, past and present, to engage with a range of design conventions and intellectual traditions, and to successfully pursue independent study.

Baccalaureate transcripts and letters of recommendation from people familiar with the student's design practice and ability to work independently are required. All admissions decisions are made by the Admissions Committee, which is comprised of program faculty members and the Program Director. A \$75 application fee is required before an application can 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 or a diploma indicating completion of required degree is on file with VCFA.

The program will occasionally, under special circumstances, consider accepting a student who does not hold a Baccalaureate degree. Such candidates must demonstrate strong evidence of exceptional artistic work paired with writing and research abilities appropriate to graduate level study.

Admissions decisions are generally made within three to five weeks from receipt of a completed application packet.

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 the following semester.

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 one year beyond the initial acceptance, students will be required to submit a new portfolio and again be considered by the Admissions Committee. Readmission is not guaranteed.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The Graphic Design program will consider one semester 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; and (b) the faculty, through a portfolio review, finds sufficient evidence of a semester's worth of progress. Previous coursework will have been completed at an accredited school of art and design, and must have been completed 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 (a) course descriptions for the graduate credits for which transfer credit is requested; and (b) a statement describing the previous plan of study, evaluating his or her work in the previous Graphic Design program, and explaining his or her reasons for wishing to transfer to the MFA in Graphic Design 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 Graphic Design program has full-time status at 15 credits; part-time study is not offered.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

RESIDENCY

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

Overview:

The seven-day residency period, which occurs every six months in October and April, serves as a principal component of the Graphic Design Program. It provides students with a breadth of exposure to balance against the more specific focus of the semester design projects, time to prepare the study plan with the help of faculty advisors, general direction in the development of an individualized curriculum, and is a source of stimulation and support. The residency engages students in vibrant discourse with a broad community of designers and educators committed to relevant, inventive, dynamic design. Students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in design history, theory, and research in order to develop and deepen their fluency in visual culture. The merger of creative practice with critical inquiry results in designers uniquely equipped to realize personal, artistic vision in an ever-evolving, interdisciplinary field.

Attendance:

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.

Residing Off-Campus:

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. Students residing off-campus during residencies can inquire with the Program about purchasing a meal plan separately.

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 from the program (see the Leave of Absence policy) are expected to attend the first part of the residency that opens the LOA semester in order to participate in critiques of design work from the previous semester. 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 for partial residencies.

Residency Offerings:

Faculty, visiting designers, and graduating students will all give presentations at each residency. Students are expected to attend a minimum of 10 of these sessions and are encouraged to attend all of them. Additionally, faculty will hold individual, small, and large 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.

Critiques and workshops are not open to students on leave or to guests. Every student has design work critiqued during the residency. Students are asked to bring representative samples to each residency for this purpose.

Faculty Advisor Assignments:

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

Prior to the start of each residency, students will receive materials such as faculty bios that will help them become familiar with the graphic design faculty. 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 faculty questions about teaching styles and approaches, and aid students as they decide which faculty they would like to study with in the upcoming semester.

Mid-residency, students submit a Study Proposal Form indicating how they might successfully work with each of at least three prospective faculty advisors. The Study Proposal Form will be taken into account 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 it is preferred that students work with a different faculty member each semester unless the direction of their specific work dictates otherwise.

Residency Evaluation:

At the end of the residency each student and faculty member completes a survey of the residency describing his or her various activities in preparation for and during the residency. Student and faculty assessments of the residency period assist the Program office in planning and allow the Program office to address any concerns and suggestions.

SEMESTER PROJECT

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 schedule. 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 summarizes the nature of the individual work embarked upon for the six-month semester, as well as agreed upon methods of communication. The project 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. 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 students and faculty advisors. The semester project plans are filed with the MFA office.

The faculty advisor is the primary resource for the semester project. However, students are encouraged to become involved with 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.

THESIS SEMESTER

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, primarily visual, developed over the four semesters and organized to reflect an increasing focus on a particular theme or topic which has arisen over the course of study. This creative work will be supplemented with, or in some cases integrated with, a written document articulating the central ideas of the thesis and tracing the student's progress in discovery and expression. This written document is informed and supported by the student's work from each semester.

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
- successful completion of four semester projects with full credit awarded each semester
- successful completion of the final thesis semester project
- work with at least 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 can choose to maintain confidentiality and, if confidentiality is requested, the faculty member being evaluated has the assurance that the Program Director and the Faculty Chair will jointly provide a written synopsis of the evaluation. At this point, 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. An end-of-first year review is conducted at the residency beginning a student's third semester. In the beginning of the first semester, the faculty will review student progress for all students about to undertake the third semester. 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 student will receive a written notification 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 at VCFA. Successfully completed work 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 indicates substantial effort, productivity, 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.

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 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 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 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. 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 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 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 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 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 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 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

MUSIC COMPOSITION PROGRAM

MASTER OF FINE ARTS, MUSIC COMPOSITION

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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 most fully realize 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.

TERMINAL DEGREE

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

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 composed 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 providing 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.

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 the first part of the residency that opens the leave semester in order to participate in readings of 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 the faculty, visiting composers, and graduating students; students are expected to attend a minimum of 10 of these sessions and are encouraged to attend all of them. Additionally, faculty will offer master classes to critique student work; students are required to participate in at least two of these sessions. Students are expected to attend all performances offered during the residency. In general, students are expected to participate fully in the residency.

Master classes, study exploration sessions, and new group meetings are not open to students on leave or to guests. Every student has music critiqued in master classes during the residency. Students are asked to bring representative samples to residency.

FACULTY ASSIGNMENT

VCFA employs faculty in the arts based on their creativity, 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.

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 writes a narrative evaluation of the residency describing his or her various activities in preparation for and during the residency. Additionally, student assessments of the residency period help the MFA office to plan the next period more effectively and to address suggestions that students may make.

SEMESTER PROJECT

The second essential component of the MFA in Music Composition program is the semester project. During the residency period students choose a Faculty Advisor and 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.) 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 the ensembles in each semester. During residency, students will attend rehearsals and readings 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 and do evidence 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 halfway through the third semester), the student proceeds into the final semester project. The final semester project focuses on the thesis composition and the reflective thesis paper. The reflective thesis paper (approximately 4000 words) discusses the student's compositional processes over the 4 semesters. The thesis document will be built upon the reflective semester papers and will include a summary of the student's view of the development of their work and directions the work has moved in, and will contain a statement of future compositional goals.

The thesis composition and the reflective thesis must be reviewed and approved, in final form, by the Faculty Advisor and submitted by the end of semester date. The work of each graduating student will be featured in a performance 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;
- successful completion of four semester projects;
- 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;
- presentation/performance at graduation residency of work written for thesis;
- the reflective thesis (minimum of 4000 words in length);
- work with at least two 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

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 monthly discussions. At the end of the semester students and faculty submit narrative evaluations of the six months' work. These evaluations 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 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 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. An end-of-first year review is conducted at the residency beginning a student's third 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 about to undertake the third semester. 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 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 at VCFA. At the conclusion of a semester, a student's work that has been successfully completed will earn a final assessment of "CR" (Credit), or if it has proven to be inadequate to warrant the awarding of credit, a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) will be recorded. "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.

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.)

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 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 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 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, on the recommendation of the Faculty Advisory Committee, 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.

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 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 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 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

At each residency we record and sell lectures by faculty and others, with their permission. 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 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

VISUAL ART PROGRAM MASTER OF FINE ARTS, VISUAL ART

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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.

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 Vermont College 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 student and Advisors and 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:

- Aesthetic and conceptual mastery, in self-selected media.
- Substantive knowledge of visual culture and an understanding of historical research methodology.
- A clear understanding of various criteria for making critical judgments about art based on its relationship to visual culture, art history, 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

EVALUATIONS

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 students 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.
 - a. 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 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 at VCFA. At the conclusion of a semester, a student's work that has been successfully completed will earn a final assessment of "CR" (Credit), or if it has proven to be inadequate to warrant the awarding of credit, a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) will be recorded. "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.

Credit for the Visual Culture project is determined by the Faculty Advisor. Credit for the Studio Project is determined by the Faculty Committee with Faculty Co-Chair approval. This determination is based in large part upon the recommendation of the Artist-Teacher. A student is automatically separated from the program if he/she receives a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) for two projects during his/her tenure in the program.

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

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 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

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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 Master of Fine Arts 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 MFA in Writing graduate 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 MFA in Writing Program goal 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 (5 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.

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 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 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 must be submitted in duplicate, if submitted as hard copy, and 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 do independent study, 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 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 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 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 Faculty Committee of exceptional academic, literary and/or publishing 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 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 will 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 are required), 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 the MFA in Writing programs at 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. 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.

SPECIAL STUDENT STATUS

The Program has had requests from those who wish to attend only the residency period without enrolling in the Program or beginning a semester project. A limited number of such applicants may be admitted as "special students" who may participate fully in all residency events. Special students must undergo the usual application process and be granted admission by the same criteria used for full participation. Special students are accepted only if there is room in the residency for such participants.

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 Writing Program has full-time status; part-time study is not offered.

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 ten-day residency period, which occurs every six months (in January and July) is a principal component of the MFA in Writing Program. 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, a practicum in applied criticism (through workshops) and informal exchange with other writers (students, faculty and special guests).

All enrolled students are expected to participate fully in the entire ten-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.

After his/her first residency, 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 expected to reside on campus so that they may experience the residency and become acquainted with students and faculty to the greatest degree. If a first semester student lives in the immediate area and wishes to stay off-campus, they must petition the MFA office eight weeks prior to the residency.

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. 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 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 a 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 lecture offerings each residency period.

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. 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 requested; fiction, creative nonfiction, and children's writers may submit a maximum of 20 double-spaced pages. Manuscripts submitted to the workshops must be clean, proofread copy. Worksheets 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 a distinguished Visiting Faculty Member 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 creativity, 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 nonresident portion of the semester. 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.

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. Students are also reminded that they are extremely valuable resources for one another and should not restrict themselves only to faculty opinion.

EVALUATION:

At the end of the residency each student writes a narrative evaluation of the session describing his or her various activities in preparation for and during the residency. Additionally, 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.

SEMESTER PROJECT

The second essential component of the MFA in Writing Program 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 tapes, conferences, email, and other supplementary methods) with the Faculty Advisor.

The primary focus of the 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. In the fiction department, students working on novels and those working on short stories will receive equivalent faculty time and attention. 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 genre. 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. Each student project must include critical essays of reading, the form of which can vary. 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 libraries, readings, and workshops. Some students do 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 do evidence 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, which focuses primarily on writing as the student completes preparation of 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 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 occasional instances, students may petition for an alternative to the lecture. 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:

1. Teaching writing in a school, community center, retirement home, prison, or other venue.
2. An internship with Hunger Mountain (or another journal or press).
3. Working in publishing.
4. Working for an arts organization (writing grants or organizing readings series, etc.).
5. A second critical thesis (this option will only be considered for those students who, for legitimate physical or psychological reasons, are unable to give a lecture).

Documentation and Evaluation: An alternative project must be approved by both the advisor and the Faculty Advisory Committee 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 CONCENTRATION/ GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN THE PICTURE BOOK:

A student who is enrolled in the MFWC&YA program may choose picture book writing as an intensive area of concentration. The picture book concentration can be completed during one of the four semesters in the MFA program (excluding the third semester due to the demands of the critical thesis work), though students accepted into this concentration late in their tenure or dual-genre students may be required to complete a longer course of study. A student enrolled for a post-graduate semester may also elect to devote that semester to the study of picture book writing.

The concentration can be pursued as a first, second, or fourth semester; as in the other semesters, the students will submit five packets to their advisors. In the packets exchanged, along with the creative work, students will write three short essays (4-5 pages) and one longer essay (10 pages), and prepare for a panel. At the residency following their picture book 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 both the beginning and concluding residencies. There is also an online component to the picture book concentration: during the semester, students will critique one another's creative and critical work in a biweekly online discussion forum.

Fourth-semester students enrolled in the picture book concentration will complete the picture book critical work in lieu of the preparation and presentation of the 45-minute lecture required of all graduating students. A 4th-semester student can choose to do the 45 minute lecture, but this would be in addition to the required picture book critical work components.

Students who satisfactorily fulfill all of the preceding requirements will receive a certificate indicating completion of the concentration as part of their degree studies, and their transcripts will list both the major genre (Writing for Children & Young Adults) and a concentration in picture book writing.

External candidates may also apply to this intensive picture book concentration and complete the semester as a Graduate Certificate in the Picture Book. Upon successful completion of the semester, an external candidate will receive a certificate as well as 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 Graduate Certificate in the Picture Book, students must complete 1 semester, 2 residencies 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.
- participate in two picture book workshops, one at the beginning and one at the concluding residency.
- participate in an online component during the semester; students will critique one another's creative and critical work in a biweekly online discussion forum.

If at the completion of this graduate certificate program a student wishes to transfer into the MFA program, a petition letter is submitted to the Advisory Committee who will make a determination on the request. Other supporting materials may be requested by the Advisory Committee (creative sample, critical essay, etc.). Typically, students who have completed the Graduate Certificate in the Picture Book 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 PROGRAM OPTIONS

GUIDELINES FOR DUAL-GENRE:

Exceptional students 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 accepted into the dual-genre option between the MFA in Writing and the MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults programs 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, after 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 Faculty Advisory Committee(s) in consultation with the Faculty Chair(s) and the student's current and past advisors.

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

Dual-genre students must work in both genres within the first three semesters.

After being accepted into dual-genre study, the student will select a major and a minor 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, Faculty Chair(s) and Faculty Advisory Committee(s). Any changes over the course of the student's study, including, in particular, any change in the designation of major and minor 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 major genre and two to the student's minor 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 Faculty Advisory Committee(s) will assign a second reader for that creative thesis and this reader will determine whether the thesis meets program's 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) fails to 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 semester 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. The only difference between the two programs of study is that dual-genre students must complete a fifth semester of study and submit two creative theses.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONCENTRATION IN TRANSLATION:

A student 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 anytime 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.

A student who satisfactorily fulfills all of the following requirements will receive a certificate indicating completion of the concentration, and his/her transcript will list both the major area of study (Poetry, Fiction, or Creative Nonfiction) and "Secondary Concentration in Translation."

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:

a) Packets. The student will submit to his/her advisor five packets of the student's translations of works by an established author or authors.

b) 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.

c) 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.

d) Reading. At their final residency, the fifth-semester students will present a 20-minute reading of translations they completed during the semester.

e) 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).

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, translation or picture book certificate students);
- successful completion of four semester projects (or five for dual-genre/program, translation or picture book concentration students);
- 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 8 32-page picture books;
- 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.

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 or three 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 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 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.

Student's 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 beginning a student's third 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 about to undertake the third semester. Any specific concerns will be outlined in a letter from the Program Director and the Faculty Chair and presented to the student during the first week of the residency.

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 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 at VCFA. At the conclusion of a semester, a student's work that has been successfully completed will earn a final assessment of "CR" (Credit), or if it has proven to be inadequate to warrant the awarding of credit, a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) will be recorded. "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.

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.)

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 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 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 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 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 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

Occasionally, a student may be dismissed from the Program by the Program Director and the Faculty Chair, on the recommendation of the Faculty Advisory Committee, 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 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 the MFA in Writing 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, and that the Director and Chair 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 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 and sell lectures by both faculty and graduating students, with their permission. 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.