REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.F.A. DEGREE IN DESIGN

The Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Arts at the University of Oregon includes both academic and production components, differing from the M.A. essentially through additional credit hours in design and technology and the satisfactory completion of a design project with a written component. All M.F.A. projects are juried by the full faculty and must demonstrate high artistic ability. The M.F.A. requires a minimum of 81 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree, of which no more than 12 can be practicum credits (TA 609). 81 credits over a three-year period represents a minimum of nine credits per term, the minimum requirement for financial aid and a GTF appointment. Students most commonly enroll for 12 credits per term, including practicum credits, except for the term in which the final project is being executed when the minimum of 9 credits is recommended.

Minimum Course Requirements

• 4 credits in acting or directing
• 20 credits of theory, history, or literature at 500/600 level
• 8 credits in a related field, for example, textiles, art history, history of interiors, computer graphics
• 20 credits of design/technology classes including at least one class in each of lighting, scenery, and costumes
• 12 credits of practicum in design and technology (including 3 for the M.F.A. project)

General Requirements

• A minimum GPA of 3.0 or 3.5 for the GTF
• At least 12 credits of TA 600 level graded course work
• Completion of approved final project
• Completion and approval of written document of final project
• All required credits in courses must be graded, with the exception of production credits

A course is defined as one that offers at least three credits at the 500/600 level, listed in the Schedule of Classes and offered as a part of the curriculum.

Upon arrival, each student will take an assessment exam for the purpose of advising and setting a schedule of coursework for the first year. Advice may include a review of theatre history or other foundation courses. A letter recording the faculty recommendations of the assessment committee will be sent to the student and placed in their file to provide guidance for the first year of courses and production work. In subsequent years, students will meet with their advisors prior to registration for each term.
Transfer of Credit
Some courses taken for graduate credit at other schools may be transferred for credit at the University of Oregon, as long as the work has been taken within the seven year time limit and a grade no lower that B was awarded. Determination of the applicability of these credits to specific degree requirements is made by the faculty. A form for this purpose may be obtained from the Graduate School. It should be discussed by the student’s advisor and the Graduate Coordinator, then presented to the Department Head for signature. Final approval is given by the Graduate School.

Evaluation of Academic Progress
The best barometer of academic progress is through regular meetings with the student’s advisor to review course plans and progress in the degree program. Near the end of every spring term, the Graduate Coordinator or the advisor, after consultation with the full faculty, will issue a letter of evaluation. This letter will summarize faculty response to the student’s academic and artistic progress and address any specific issues that arise. A copy of this letter will be sent to the student and one will be copied for the student’s file in the department office. In the rare instance that a student’s academic progress is found unsatisfactory, specific guidelines for immediate improvement will be outlined for the next term of coursework, and if no such improvement is made, faculty have the right to withdraw all GTF support, including both teaching assignments and tuition waiver. Every spring term faculty also meet to award scholarships of varying scope and design to graduate students of outstanding merit in academic and artistic work, teaching, and departmental support.

Term Projects
To demonstrate a grasp of the artistic-practical application of the craft, all M.F.A. students will complete two to three projects per academic year until their final project. The student is responsible for initiating all projects. Projects should be selected to provide a broad base of experience.

Each term project, prior to beginning production, should be determined with the advisor for approval and validation. The student will be responsible for notifying the rest of the faculty of production dates three weeks in advance so that faculty can schedule seeing the project in their calendars.

At the conclusion of this preparatory phase of the program and before being advanced to the final project, the student will have demonstrated either through prior experience, extra-curricular preparation, or classroom work at the University of Oregon, a body of knowledge and/or skills delineated as follows:

• Knowledge of a representative cross-section of dramatic literature
• Knowledge of major stylistic periods in theatre history
• Methods of script analysis
• Exposure to a variety of professional theatre productions
• Scholarly writing skills
• Working knowledge of fundamentals of acting, directing, design, and technology
• Knowledge of major theoretical writings on design
• Background knowledge in the history of art, architecture, music, social/political history, theatrical style and aesthetics
• Working knowledge of scenic, lighting, and costume design and execution
• Skills in delineating and communicating design concept
• Skills in rendering techniques
• Skills in designing a range of dramatic genres/periods
• Skills in management and organization of the execution processes
• Skills in adjunct technology to execute designs

QUALIFYING PRESENTATION

During the second year in residence the student will submit a portfolio to qualify for their final project. The presentation will include the following:

• An oral statement outlining the reasons for pursuing this degree and a summary of the student’s professional objectives, and self-evaluation of progress towards these objectives

• Supportive and visual materials from class and production projects

The applicant will attend a faculty meeting to present his or her portfolio and to answer questions posed by the faculty. Following this presentation, the faculty will vote on the qualifications for the M.F.A. degree. The results of this vote and feedback on the presentation will be communicated to the student by the advisor and a written copy of the decision will be placed in the student’s file. If there are any academic or performance stipulations attached to the approval of the request, the advisor will make note of that in the applicant’s file. If the student achieves qualification, he or she will be assigned a final project during the next academic year.

Following faculty approval of the qualifying presentation, a final project will be scheduled. This project will be presentation of University Theatre and will include full technical support and be directed by a faculty member or guest artist. Although the student’s input will be considered during the play-selection process, the choice of the actual project will be made as part of the regular play-selection process for University Theatre.

Students register for 3 credits of TA 609 Practicum for the preparation and execution of their final project and an additional 3 credits of TA 601 Research for the writing of the supporting document.
All preparation must be completed before the production phase of the project. Materials supporting this project will be developed in a thorough and timely process (see outline form at the end of this document).

The faculty will meet within one week of the final performance of the final project to assess the work. This may be delayed if dead week, finals, or vacation make such a deadline impossible. The student designer will present a summary of preparation and goals for the project as well as a brief critical analysis of successes and shortcomings of the process and the product. The student designer will also be asked to respond to faculty comments and questions. At the close of the meeting, the faculty will vote on acceptance of the project as sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the degree. The student’s advisor will inform the student designer of the results of this vote, and the names of the three faculty members to form the committee to review the final M.F.A. document. Two members of the committee will be design faculty.

If approved, the final project will be thoroughly documented in writing during the term immediately following the presentation of the project. Guidelines for the preparation of this document are provided below. The appointed committee will be responsible for approval of this document.

**Standards of Judgment**

The M.F.A. degree in theatre is a *juried* degree that will be evaluated at various stages of the student’s academic and creative progression toward candidacy. For this reason, the student’s continuation in the program will depend on the faculty’s personalized assessment of the student’s creative progress, commitment, and academic prowess. The basis for decisions will include classroom and outside project work.

**Failure of Candidacy**

At any phase, a juried opinion may remove the student from the program. Such a decision would be based on noted deficiencies in some facet of the student’s demonstrated work record and failure to demonstrate corrective growth based on previous evaluations.

**OUTLINES FOR PROPOSALS AND ANALYSIS**

**Scope of Project**

- Statement of design concept including reference to visual resources and documentation.
- Delineation of scope of project (i.e. number of costumes/sets/lights, amount of construction, necessary rentals or purchases, special projects, size of crew, budget)
- Time line for completion of each phase of the project.
Preparation Outline

Costumes

Prior to beginning construction, the student designer shall have completed all of the following:

1. Research of visual and written resources arranged in resource bible to substantiate design concept and choices including script analysis and relationship to other designs.
2. Full color renderings for each costume being constructed (approval by the director and design advisor)
3. A costume plot indicating all costumes and costume props and how these items are to be realized (construction, pulling, rental, purchase).
4. Selection and purchase of all major fabrics and materials needed to execute costumes and costume props.
5. A construction schedule calendar for organization and assignments of show personnel.
6. A journal of production meetings describing the design process.

During the construction process, the student designer will be responsible for the following:

1. Preparing or supervising patterns, mockups, and fittings for all major costume pieces.
2. Supervising construction crew for their portion of costume assignments.
3. Obtaining or supervising purchase of all additional materials needed for completion of the costumes.
4. Preparing a Wardrobe bible and organizing costume running crew for dress rehearsals and performances.
5. Attending rehearsals as needed to monitor cohesion of movement and costume needs.
6. Tracking expense records and keeping to assigned budget.
7. Keeping a journal of the process of execution including insights and problem solving.

Lighting

Prior to beginning of hanging and focusing, the student designer shall have completed the following:

1. A journal of meetings with the director and other designers establishing design concepts.
2. A conceptual cue sheet. This would outline basic cues in the play and what is taking place in them.
3. Storyboard renderings or photo morgue showing major lighting effects.
4. A completed light plot from which a master electrician could hang the design. This should include a hanging section, instrument schedule and color inventory.

5. A schedule outline dates for hanging, focusing and all technical rehearsals.

6. A list of personnel needed to run the show.

7. Submission of any expenditures for lighting effects.

During the production process, the student designer will be responsible for the following.

1. Overseeing focusing of all instruments
2. Estimating and tracking expenditures for lighting effects.
3. Training of board operator and other crew.
4. Coordinating cue-to-cue or first tech rehearsals.
5. Supervising the stage manager in regards to properly notating light cues in prompt book.
6. Keeping a journal of the process of execution including insights and problem solving.

**Scenery**

Prior to the construction phase, the student designer shall have completed all of the following:

1. Research and documentation of visual and written resources to substantiate design concept.
2. Journal of all design conferences with the director, other designers and technical director.
3. Preliminary designs in sketch, story board and/or model form
4. Scale plans, elevations, and construction drawings approved by the design advisor, technical director and director.
5. Scale color model showing scenic shifts and/or color renderings of a measured perspective.
6. Painter’s elevations showing paint and fabric swatches.
7. A scenic inventory by unit, including set properties, furniture, etc.
8. Budget outline of all planned expenditures prepared in concert with the technical director.
During the construction process, the student will be responsible for the following:

1. Journal of all design conferences with the director and technical director.
2. Daily contact with the director and the technical director.
3. A journal of the process of execution, including insights and problem solving.
4. Supervise artistic fabrications where skills are beyond the expected of shop personnel.
5. Attend rehearsals periodically as needed to monitor developments.

THE FINAL M.F.A. PROJECT DOCUMENT

The advisor will work closely with the design student in preparing the draft of the final project document, which should be formatted according to the most recent edition of the MLA Handbook. Other members of the committee should be given the opportunity to read and comment as the draft progresses. Midway through the process, no later than week five in the term for writing, the design student and the committee will meet to review the progress of the draft. The advisor will provide written recommendations and expectations to guide the design student in the completion of the final project document.

The final draft of the document should be given to the committee members by week eight of the writing term. Each member of the committee will indicate their approval of the completed document with their signature. Once the two members have signed, the advisor recognizes the completion of the document by adding their signature.

The content of the M.F.A. project document should include:

1. A description of the project, identifying the particular goals established by the designer.
2. A design analysis of the script and a detailing of design concepts as established by the director and designers.
3. A detailing of research of the playwright, time period, and other cultural influences. This may include critical analysis and production reviews of other productions of the same script or of the author’s other work, relevant artistic or theatrical theories, movements, or designs influential in the formation of the concept.
4. A description of design concepts and modifications in those concepts that occurred during the process.
5. An analysis of the results, both in terms of the process and the product. This should include a statement of observed growth and an identification of future goals.
Appendices should include:

**Costumes**
1. Costume plot
2. Copies of designs with swatches evident
3. Visual record of executed designs
4. Inspirational imagery: color copies of specific works of art, photos, etc.

**Lighting**
1. A quarter-inch light plot (or scaled computer-generated plot)
2. A hanging section
3. An instrument schedule
4. “Magic” or “Cheat” sheet
5. Color inventory
6. Schematic of any special effect create
7. Visual record of executed design
8. Optional story board renderings

**Scenery**
1. A scale floor plan and a scale centerline section
2. A photo of the preliminary scale model
3. A full color rendering or photographs of a full color scale model
4. Painters’ elevations
5. Complete working drawings
6. Thumbnail sketches
7. Visual record of executed design
8. Inspirational Imagery: color copies of specific works of art, photos, etc.

**PROJECTED TIME LINE FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE**

NOTE: M.F.A. final projects should be completed by the end of the eighth term in residence so that the final project document can be completed by the end of the ninth term. Degrees will only be awarded to students who have completed all requirements for the final project and the degree.
**Term 1-4:** required and elective coursework as determined by assessment committee and student, term projects to build qualifying portfolio, apply for any transfer credits

**Term 5-6:** coursework, qualifying presentation

**Term 7-8:** coursework, approval of prospective final project by faculty

**Term 8-9:** coursework, M.F.A. final project, document preparation, register for TA 601 Research for credit for preparation and presentation of the final document

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**TRACKING PROGRESS TOWARDS YOUR DEGREE**

**COURSEWORK**

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One course</td>
<td>Acting/Directing</td>
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<td>Five Courses</td>
<td>History, Theory, Literature</td>
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<td>Two Courses</td>
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<td>Five Courses</td>
<td>Scenery</td>
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<td>Design &amp; Tech</td>
<td>Costumes</td>
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<td>Lighting</td>
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<td>Research/Thesis</td>
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<td>12 credits TA 600 level graded coursework</td>
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<td>Electives</td>
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**PRODUCTION/PORTFOLIO**

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<th>Term</th>
<th>Production/ Practicum credit</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Faculty informed</th>
<th>Evaluation mtg. with advisor</th>
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# M.F.A. FINAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Projected Date</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with advisor to discuss qualifying presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty meeting for qualifying presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment for M.F.A. final project</td>
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<td>Pre-Production deadlines determined</td>
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<td>Opening</td>
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<td>Faculty Meeting to Assess Final Project (one week after closing)</td>
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<td>First Draft of document to Advisor</td>
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<td>Rough Draft to Committee</td>
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<td>Midway meeting with Committee</td>
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<td>Week five of writing term</td>
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<td>Final Document to Committee</td>
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<td>Final Document and Appendices to Department</td>
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