



Student Handbook

Rev. Fall 2013

**Governors State University**

College of Arts and Sciences

Division of Liberal Arts

Independent Film & Digital Imaging

*The intent of the Student Handbook is to compile policies and procedures that apply to the graduate majors in the Independent Film and Digital Imaging Program. Occasionally, procedures of particular importance to you as a student will be presented in the Handbook even if they are not unique to this major. For general university policies and procedures, as well as course description and registration information, please consult the University Catalog and the University Student Handbook.*

## **INDEPENDENT FILM AND DIGITAL IMAGING: MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

The Independent Film and Digital Imaging (IFDI) faculty offer this handbook to prospective students and to our current students. It is hoped that the contents will aid you in understanding the program and its purpose is to provide guidelines in order to maximize your experience in our program. Students in our program will find this handbook useful at each stage of the process toward graduation. While every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive handbook, the following are only guidelines. A student needs to work closely, especially early in her program, with her advisor. Completion of all graduation requirements, while a concern of the advisor, is ultimately the responsibility of the student.

In addition, it should be noted that the IFDI program receives periodic review, permitting addition of new coursework, elimination of obsolete coursework, and/or change in program policy when appropriate. Any curriculum changes or policy changes required by reviews will be based on due notice and consultation with the academic and professional community. In order to “lock” in your curriculum you must sign a study plan with your advisor. The study plan is the contract between you and the program regarding the requirements for graduation. If you do not sign a study plan early in your studies it is possible that curriculum changes could affect your requirements for graduation.

Those exploring the possibility of entering our program and those seeking entrance should go to [www.govst.edu/mfa](http://www.govst.edu/mfa) and read admission material and download applications forms.

### **Independent Film and Digital Imaging**

The interdisciplinary Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Digital Imaging is a terminal degree in the applied arts of digital media production and imaging. The degree straddles the disciplines of Production in Media Communications and Digital Imaging in Art. Additional selective opportunities are available through English and Communications Studies.

Coursework for the Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Digital Imaging leads to specialized knowledge, creative development, and advanced technological skills in the applied digital arts of image making and media production. Beyond taking the required courses, students plan their specific programs in consultation with their advisors, adapting the degree path's selective sequences to their individual needs and interests. Graduates of the program will work in career areas such as higher education, filmmaking, graphic design, photography, 2D and 3D animation, motion graphics, web design, consulting, producing, media writing, TV production/direction, and training.

## **About GSU**

Governors State University and the Independent Film and Digital Imaging Program are dedicated to serving a diverse student population. Founded in 1969, GSU is located in University Park, Illinois, about 30 miles south of Chicago's Loop. It is convenient to major cities south of Chicago, including Joliet, Kankakee, and Orland Park. The university is part of a diverse, urban area and is dedicated to serving the needs of a wide-ranging population. Governors State University has a diverse student body, which will allow students to experience an education that is in touch with the larger, diverse society they will work in upon graduation. Statistically, the average age of a GSU student is 35 and 70 percent of our students are women, 36 percent are minority, and nearly 2 percent are international students. In addition, 28 percent of the faculty is minority (double the national average).

Governors State University is an upper-division university offering courses at the junior and senior undergraduate level and graduate level courses leading to a master's degree. There are five colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business and Public Administration, Education, Health Professions, and University College. The IFDI program is part of the Division of Liberal Arts which is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

## **About The IFDI Program**

Technical materials, equipment, and various computer programs may be required as part of the overall graduate program in addition to the books and materials required by individual courses. All graduate students are expected to be computer/internet capable, including submitting papers electronically, receiving emails, and participating in online course discussions.

## **Program Mission, Goal, And Objectives**

### **Mission**

The mission of the MFA program in Independent Film & Digital Imaging is to provide its students with the opportunity to pursue their creative and professional development as artists within a curriculum that is focused within the digital arts, yet diverse enough in its offerings to facilitate flexibility and individualized paths.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The following are the primary student learning objectives for the M.F.A. in Independent Film and Digital Imaging:

1. Students will undertake productions in the discipline of independent film and digital imaging, in laboratory, studio, and remote production. Undertakings include the making of gallery works and feature-length (one broadcast half-hour and longer) high definition video productions. Students will engage in exercises related to conception, development, composition, producing, photography, cinematography, directing, lighting, sound recording, sound mixing, still graphic design, motion graphic design, video editing, marketing and publicity.
2. Students will develop professional skills that enable them to be considered candidates as faculty in the applied multimedia disciplines of post-secondary education, and independent digital filmmakers and artists.
3. Students will master discipline-related theory and aesthetics and demonstrate this mastery through effective written and oral presentations.
4. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and evaluative abilities as they relate to interpretations of digital photographic arts and the cinema.

## **Career Information**

The program's intention is to graduate successful educators, filmmakers, and digital artists – an aim which is substantiated by a range of employment projections from the Occupational Outlook Handbook. The Handbook indicates that “employment of postsecondary teachers is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through 2014.” Individuals holding terminal degrees will hold a formidable advantage over others holding intermediary degrees (i.e., the MA), as candidates lacking the terminal degree are often excluded in the preliminary phases of job searches in higher education. While the Handbook does not provide further data broken down by discipline, it separately projects that there will be major growth in the film and television production industries, which suggests that employment in higher education in our discipline will be higher than disciplines in which professional prospects are stable or on the decline. The following information provides the broader context: “Wage and salary employment in the motion picture and video industries is projected to grow 17 percent between 2004 and 2014, which is faster than the 14 percent growth projected for wage and salary employment in all industries combined. Job growth will result from the explosive growth of demand for programming needed to fill an increasing number of cable and satellite television channels, both in the United

States and abroad. Also, more films will be needed to meet in-home demand for videos, DVDs, and films over the Internet. Responding to an increasingly fragmented audience will create many opportunities to develop films.”

While the Handbook acknowledges “there is concern in the motion picture industry over the number of films that are being made abroad,” the Illinois legislature has addressed this concern through its own system of tax incentives, and that same legislative initiative includes the call for the training of Illinoisans that underwrites this proposal. Illinois needs to generate its own filmmakers, not import them. It needs to develop its own solid production infrastructure, not export its most capable talent to other markets.

## **Admission**

### Admission Criteria

Applications for admission are due by the fourth Friday in March in any given year. Applications for admission are available from the GSU Admissions Office and the Division of Liberal Arts Office. Due to limited space availability, this program can only accept fifteen students in either track (independent film / digital imaging) each year. Applicants will be ranked for admission on the basis of their academic potential and admission criteria.

In addition to meeting university admission criteria, applicants must:

1. provide evidence of an undergraduate major in media, multimedia, communications, English, speech, or liberal arts.
2. have a minimum cumulative undergraduate G.P.A. of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. Graduate courses can be substituted but the cumulative G.P.A. must be a 3.5 or better.
3. have appropriate prerequisite course work with a minimum prerequisite G.P.A. of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The GSU equivalent course is given in parenthesis. The following courses (in semester credit-hours) or their equivalents are minimum prerequisites for entry into the M.F.A. program.
  - a. English composition (3)
  - b. Speech course or oral communication (3)
  - c. Applied digital technology (3)
4. submit a supplementary application packet which includes:
5. a portfolio: for students in digital imaging, this entails a CD-ROM of stills; for students in digital filmmaking, this entails a sample of a prior production on DVD, tape, or URL for streaming video
6. supplemental information form,
7. a current resume,
8. three letters of recommendation, and
9. a personal essay or statement of intent with respect to goals for the

- degree, and artistic philosophy
10. provide official TOEFL scores (if applicable);
  11. submit the payment of the \$50 application fee; and
  12. participate in personal interviews conducted by the M.F.A. admissions committee.

### **Recommended Preparation**

Admission to the program is restricted to a maximum of 15 students in either track at any given time on a “rolling” basis. Admitted students will have maintained a GPA of 3.5 over the course of completing an undergraduate degree. All students must submit a portfolio demonstrating advanced proficiency and creative promise.

While admission to the program does not require an undergraduate major in Film, Video, or Photography, an undergraduate major in these or in one of the following fields is: media, multimedia, communications, English, speech, or liberal arts. In addition, students are expected to have demonstrable competence in digital technology and in oral and written communication.

Information related to the program and special application materials for the Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Digital Imaging program are available from the GSU Office of Admission and Student Recruitment and on the university website at [www.govst.edu/](http://www.govst.edu/).

Office of Admission and Student Recruitment  
Governors State University  
1 University Parkway  
University Park, Illinois 60466  
708.534.4490

### **Graduate Student Status**

Those interested in admission to the MFA in IFDI should apply as degree-seeking students. Graduate degree-seeking students are those who meet the established admission requirements of the University, college, and specific program for which the Master's Degree is sought. Admission to a graduate major does not carry with it, nor guarantee, admission to degree candidacy in the major.

Those who are not ready to apply for full admission to the MFA-IFDI may apply to GSU as a Graduate Non-degree seeking student, and can take the prerequisite courses, IFDI 502, IFDI 544, or courses in the selective areas before admission to the program. Graduate Non-degree seeking students are defined as those who hold a bachelor's or higher degree and have not declared a major at the time of admission. No more than six (6) credit hours earned as a graduate Non-

degree seeking student shall be transferable toward the requirements of any graduate degree program, and such transfer will be subject to the degree requirements in effect at the time of admission to the specific major. Graduate Non-degree seeking students may not take graduate level courses designated by division faculty as reserved for Master's degree candidates only.

Students may also join the M.A. paths in Media Communications or Art prior to applying for the MFA.

Some students may be added to a wait list prior to admission, or may be asked to complete a specified number of courses prior to admission. In such cases, students will be informed of the admission procedure by letter from the program coordinator.

### **Introduction to Graduate Studies at GSU**

Although guidance is available and students are encouraged to seek help, it is ultimately the responsibility of the student to know the policies, procedures, and requirements related to completion of the masters degree.

The GSU Graduate Studies Policy describes Graduate education as the pursuit of knowledge and the means to knowledge at an advanced level. Graduate education is distinct and different from basic levels of education both in kind and in degree. It demands of students engaged in it greater intellectual maturity and autonomy, a deeper responsibility for their own learning, more intense study, and the mastery of different and more complex skills. Concomitantly, graduate education demands of faculty engaged in it a deeper knowledge and greater skill within a given discipline, a greater commitment to the development of students' intellectual autonomy, and a more rigorous effort to imbue students with the values and standards of the discipline or profession.

A graduate degree is a distinction to be earned. Award of the degree symbolizes both the student's accomplishment and the University's endorsement. A student receiving a Master's Degree must have demonstrated:

1. an in-depth knowledge of significant theories, issues and findings, and mastery of appropriate skills, within his/her discipline;
2. the ability to apply such knowledge and skills;
3. the ability to read, interpret and evaluate research literature and to relate results to selected areas of interest;
4. the ability to analyze problems and to critique attempted solutions, especially within his/her own discipline;
5. the ability to integrate knowledge from a variety of disciplines;
6. the ability to design and implement a research, scholarly, or creative



7. project; and  
the ability to communicate scholarly thought to professional colleagues through writing and discussion.

### University Links

University Catalog: <http://www.govst.edu/catalog/>

College of Arts and Sciences: <http://www.govst.edu/cas>

MFA - IFDI Web Page: <http://www.govst.edu/mfa>

University Student Handbook: <http://www.govst.edu/studenthandbook/>

### Degree Requirements

#### Minimum Degree Requirements

Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher to complete requirements for the MFA. A grade lower than “B” taken in any course will not be counted toward graduation.

Prerequisite courses:

Note: Courses taken below the 5000-level are not counted toward the total number of required Graduate credits. *The column after the course title identifies the semester in which the course was most recently offered, and is meant to be a rough guideline for projecting your degree, not a fixed resource. Please consult the on-lines schedule in the weeks prior to the new semester for the most up-to-date list. F = Fall, SP = Spring, SU = Summer, CS = Consult Schedule*

MCOM 440 / MCOM 4740 – Television Production or equivalent to be determined by advisor	F SP		
ART 325 / ART 3325 – Advanced Problems in Design or equivalent to be determined by advisor	F		

Common Core - Required Courses: (21 minimum hours)

IFDI 800 / IFDI 8100 – The MFA in Independent Film and Digital Imaging – Survey Course (3)	F		
IFDI 502 / IFDI 5702 – Digital Film Production (3)	F		
IFDI 544 / IFDI 5544 - Photographic Digital Imaging (3)	F		
IFDI 880 / IFDI 8800 – Internship (6-9)	F SP SU		
IFDI 890 / IFDI 8990 – Applied Masters Thesis Project (6-9)	F SP SU		
Subtotal:			

*Note: not all courses are offered in all years or all trimesters. Many courses are offered just once per calendar year. Students are strongly advised to arrange appointments to consult with their advisors prior to beginning the program.*

Ethics, Theory and Aesthetics -

Select three or more of the following: (9 minimum hours)

IFDI 540 / IFDI 5040 – Film Seminar* (3)	F SP		
IFDI 541 / IFDI 5542 – History of Photography (3)	SP		
IFDI 542 / IFDI 5420 - Film and TV Documentary (3)	CS		
IFDI 840 / IFDI 8400 – Graduate Film Seminar* (3)	SP		
IFDI 842 / IFDI 8420 – Critical Practices in Contemporary Photography (3)	SP		
IFDI 870 / IFDI 8700 – Independent Study (1-4)	F SP SU		
IFDI 885 / IFDI 8850– Digital Imaging Thesis Development Seminar (3)	SP		
ART 520 / ART 6520 – Art in Context (3)	CS		
ART 810 / ART 8810 – Studies in Art (3)	SP		
COMS 511 / COMS 5100 – Communication Ethics (3)	F SU		
Subtotal:			

Applied Courses - Select five or more of the following: (15 minimum hours)

ART 500 / IFDI 5000 Topics in Art* (3)	F SP SU		
MCOM 505 / COM 5005 – Media Symposium (1)	CS		
IFDI 509 / IFDI 5509 – Electronic Drawing and Design	CS		
IFDI 520 / IFDI 5720 – Audio Production (4)	SP		
MCOM 525 / MCOM 5725 – Desktop Publishing (3)	F		

ART 528 / ART 6528 - Digital Motion Graphics (3)	SP		
IFDI 531 / IFDI 5731– Screenwriting (3)	SP		
IFDI 534 / IFDI 5734 – Video Production Editing (3)	SP		
IFDI 535 / IFDI 5735 – Documentary Filmmaking (3)	W		
IFDI 549 / IFDI 5549 - Photography: Combined Color Process (3)	SP		
MCOM 539 / MCOM 6739 – Advanced Studio Production (4)	F		
IFDI 554 / IFDI 5554 – Documentary Photography	F		
IFDI 546 / IFDI 5460 – Advanced Video Editing (3)	SP		
IFDI 570 / IFDI 5070 – Media Workshop* (1-4)	F		
IFDI 577 / IFDI 5777 – Cinematography	SP		
ART 605 / ART 6605 - Digital Mixed Media Technique (3)	CS		
IFDI 609 / IFDI 6609 – Advanced Electronic Drawing /Design (3)	CS		
IFDI 630 / IFDI 6730 – Directing Drama for Film / TV (3)	SP		
IFDI 644 / IFDI 6644 - Advanced Digital Photographic Imaging (3)	SP		
MCOM 660 / MCOM 6760 – Non-Broadcast TV Operations (3)	SU		
IFDI 670 / IFDI 6700– Independent Film Workshop	CS		
IFDI 725 / IFDI 7725 – Advanced Producing for Film / TV (3)	SP		
IFDI 730 / IFDI 7730 – The Screenplay Project (3)	SP		
ART 830 / ART 8830 – Graduate Photography and Digital Imaging (3)	SP		
Subtotal:			

\* course may be taken more than once for credit – consult advisor

Electives: Up to 9 (nine) credit hours taken at Governors State, drawn from the Liberal Arts and at the 500 level and higher, may be counted toward total credit hours allowable for graduation.

	CS		
	CS		
	CS		
Subtotal:			

Total: 60 credit hours	
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Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Admission to Candidacy**

A student must complete 12 credit hours or more with a grade of B or better to achieve candidacy.

## **Statement of Expectations**

A student's progress in the program may be interrupted for failure to comply with academic standards or if a student's interpersonal or emotional status interferes with being able to function well within the program. Students must demonstrate professional knowledge, technical and interpersonal skills, professional attitudes, and professional character. Students should demonstrate the ability to accept and integrate feedback, be aware of their impact on others, and accept personal responsibility.

## **Graduation Requirements**

To graduate with an MFA degree, a student must meet the following minimum university degree requirements:

1. Complete the number of credit-hours specified by program requirements (minimum 60) by taking graduate-level courses of which at least six credit hours are designated as a master's final project.
2. Complete a minimum of 12 graded credit-hour graduate-only courses (numbered 800-999).
3. Complete all course work for the degree requirements with a grade of "B" or better.
4. Be in academic good standing with a minimum 3.0 cumulative G.P.A.
5. Be admitted to master's degree candidacy at least one semester before the semester in which the degree is to be awarded.
6. Complete a master's final project and internship
7. Complete all course work for the degree, except the final project, within four years of admission to candidacy. The final project must be completed within five years of admission to candidacy.
8. Complete no more than 50 percent of the credit hours counted toward degree requirements from the same faculty member, including credit-hours related to the master's final project.
9. Apply to degree requirements no more than eight graduate credit hours awarded for experiential learning through the established procedures.
10. Apply to degree requirements no more than six graduate credit hours earned as an undeclared student.
11. Satisfy the residency requirement.

12. Remove all grades of incomplete (I or E) by the graduation processing date.
13. Complete the collegial and university procedures that cover implementation of the above requirements.

In addition to the requirements stated above, an MFA degree student must:

1. Demonstrate that all degree requirements have been met as stipulated in the approved study plan.
2. Meet all financial obligations to the university.

### **Academic Honesty**

The following statements are taken directly from the online version of the University Catalog (<http://www.govst.edu/catalog/appendix.htm>).

The following procedures are appropriate ways to use the ideas and work of others when fulfilling academic requirements:

- a. When someone else's work or scholarship is used to fulfill academic requirements, the source should be given credit. It should not be stated or implied that this work is a person's own work.
- b. When using material from a publication (e.g., book, journal, article, film, etc.) that material should be enclosed in quotation marks, or otherwise set off, and the source of the material acknowledged.
- c. When paraphrasing published material (e.g., using it almost word-for-word) the source should also be acknowledged unless the information is common knowledge in the field.
- d. Unpublished data or ideas of another person should be utilized only with the consent of that person.
- e. Material should be prepared jointly with one or more other individuals only with the permission of the instructor. The contributions of all individuals to this material should be clearly acknowledged when it is submitted.
- f. Having someone else prepare material that is to be submitted should only be done with the instructor's permission to do so.
- g. The same piece of work should not be submitted for credit in more than one course without the permission of all instructors involved.
- h. Hypothetical data should be submitted only with the permission of the instructor to do so and should be clearly labeled as such.
- i. One should refuse to make work available to another person who

- intends to submit part or all of that work as if he/she had written it.
- j. Students may neither give, request, nor utilize assistance during an examination without the instructor's permission.

These ethical guidelines are in no way intended to discourage people from studying together or from engaging in group projects.

## **Technology**

In accordance with University, all students must demonstrate a basic competency in technology. At a minimum, students must be able to: use Microsoft Word to create papers and other assignments, conduct searches on the internet and use library databases to access journal articles and books, send and receive electronic mail with attachments, and utilize WebCT/Blackboard for web enhanced courses. All students are encouraged to check their University assigned email account (i-mail) frequently for messages from the University and from the MFA in IFDI. If a student wishes, i-mail accounts can be forwarded to other electronic mail accounts.

## **Advising and Regulations**

The advisor's functions will include:

1. Student study plan consultation. The study plan is a guide that must be followed for the degree and/or certification program.
2. Initial review and recommendation of transfer credit or the waiving of requirements based upon prior graduate study.
3. Pre-registration advisement.
4. Review of student program toward degree completion. If it becomes apparent that another skills course or an elective is needed, the advisor will meet with the student in order to modify the study plan. Depending upon the circumstances either the advisor or the student may initiate the request for revision.
5. Alternative career plan advisement.

Student's responsibilities include:

1. Making contact with the advisor as needed. Be cognizant that faculty advisors serve ten-month contracts with the university and are generally unavailable for meetings for two months of the year and between semesters. All faculty otherwise maintain five hours per week on campus during which student meetings may be scheduled.
2. Updating all pertinent information in your student record, e.g., change of

- address, name, major, etc.
3. Completing your study plan before the conclusion of the first semester at GSU (preferably during IFDI 800) and updating the study plan when changes are made.

### **Student Study Plan**

Students are required to develop a student study plan before the end of the first semester of enrollment in the college. You should, at the earliest opportunity, make an appointment with your advisor to develop a study plan. Student study plans must be approved by the advisor. Changes in the student study plan must be approved by your advisor. You should bring a copy of your student study plan to all meetings with your advisor. When requesting registration advice by email, please send a digital copy of your current study plan to the advisor along with the request.

### **Transfer Credit**

The following requirements apply to courses being transferred from colleges and universities accredited by regional accrediting agencies.

**Transfer of Prior Credits.** Credit earned in courses taken before enrollment as a degree-seeking student at Governors State University or earned as an undeclared student at Governors State University will be accepted in accordance with the following rules. Transfer credits that are accepted toward degree requirements will be entered in the student study plan.

1. The number of transfer hours accepted shall not exceed 25 percent of the total hours required in the major. For this program, a maximum 15 hours may be accepted in transfer from another school.
2. Only credits earned with a grade of "B" or better or "P" (pass) will be considered for transfer credit.
3. Transfer credits earned ten or more years before the student's admission to a degree program at Governors State University will not be accepted toward the degree requirements unless approved by the appropriate academic dean.
4. No more than six credit hours earned as a master's level undeclared/non-degree student may be applied toward degree requirements.
5. No more than nine credit hours earned as graduate credit beyond the bachelor's degree requirements, earned as an undergraduate degree-

seeking student at Governors State University may be applied toward master's degree requirements.

6. Transfer credits are applied toward specific degree requirements on a course-by-course basis by the academic advisor.

Transfer credit should be reviewed before admission to Governors State University to avoid duplication of course work. The review of transfer credit must be completed no later than the end of the first semester of enrollment as a degree-seeking student.

You must formally apply for transfer credit through your advisor when you develop your initial study plan. To obtain transfer credit you must produce an official transcript indicating the institution you attended, the course(s), and the grade(s) earned. The advisor and professor who usually teaches the course at GSU must approve the request. The Dean or an appointed designee will make the ultimate decision. You will have had to earn a "B" or better for transfer credit to be awarded. The transfer credit will appear on your study plan.

You may also request a waiver of a particular requirement based upon previous graduate work. A waiver does not reduce the number of credit hours you need to obtain a degree but may allow you to substitute an elective for a required course. You must initiate the request for a waiver with your advisor. The waiver will be granted if the advisor, the faculty member who usually teaches the course and the chairperson approve the request.

**Transfer Credits Earned After Admission.** Credits earned in courses taken at another institution after admission to a degree program will only be accepted if permission to apply such credit toward degree requirements was obtained from the student's academic advisor and the dean before taking course work at the other institution. Only courses with grades of "B" or better will be applied toward degree requirements.

### **Requirements for a Second Master's Degree**

If you have previously earned a master's degree at Governors State University or another institution, you may earn a second master's degree at the university, provided that all specified requirements for both degrees are fully met. A student who wishes to earn a second master's degree must:

1. apply and be admitted to the second master's degree program;
2. meet university, college, and/or major degree requirements for the subsequent degree;
3. complete all requirements of the subsequent degree program as stipulated in the student study plan;
4. meet the requirements of the university's residency policy for the subsequent degree by taking a minimum of 24 hours at Governors State University. Hours applied toward the first degree may not be included in



- hours required to meet residency requirements for a second degree; and
5. credits earned and applied toward any degree previously earned may not be applied toward a second or additional degree. Students pursuing two or more degrees simultaneously may not apply the same credit to more than one degree.

### **Student Course Load**

For a graduate student, 9 hours is considered full-time enrollment. 8 or less hours is considered part-time.

The maximum course load you may carry for each semester is 16 hours. Overloads will not be permitted except in unusual circumstances. An approval of the dean is needed for overloads.

### **Readmission**

If you have been readmitted to the MFA in IFDI you must complete a new student study plan and follow the catalog in effect when you return.

### **Independent Study**

Graduate students may take a maximum of six (6) hours of Independent Study within a degree program. All Independent Study projects must be described in a written proposal prior to listing the Independent Study on an Advance Registration Form. The Independent Study proposal must be approved by the supervisor of the Independent Study project and the division chairperson prior to registration. Students without approval will not be allowed to receive credit for independent Study projects on their study plans. Independent Study may not be taken as a substitute for regularly scheduled courses and will not be used to replace courses needed for the degree except in unusual circumstances. Approval of the division chairperson is needed in these cases.

### **Residency Requirements**

In completing the requirements for a degree, students must earn at least 50% of the credit hours required for their degree (as specified on their individual study plans) through on-campus work. For the purpose of this policy, on-campus work

is defined as all coursework taken at the Governors State University main campus, at sites within the Illinois Prairie #5 District or degree-granting sites currently approved for the M.F.A. in IFDI.

### **Internship and Thesis/Project**

As part of this degree program, students will pursue both an internship and thesis/project.

The student independently pursues a field-related internship and develops an agreement with the assistance of the internship site coordinator. Upon approval of the coordinator, the student may register for IFDI880 Internship with a GSU coordinator. The GSU coordinator must be a full-time faculty in ART, MCOM, or IFDI.

In the thesis/project, the student selects a committee consisting of a thesis / project advisor and two additional faculty members, and then develops a proposal acceptable to the committee. Faculty advisors and readers must be drawn from full-time faculty in IFDI, ART, or MCOM. Students may register for IFDI 890 once the committee has approved the student's proposal. The student then completes a project/production with the guidance of the thesis/project advisor. A paper must accompany all projects submitted for evaluation. Once the project is completed and approved by the committee, a grade is assigned.

## **GRADUATION**

In order to graduate students must complete coursework, project/internship, and have the recommendation of the faculty. In addition, students must complete these requirements within the specified time limit and complete an application for graduation.

### **Time Limits**

All course work for the degree, except the Master's Final Project (project/and internship), must be completed within four (4) years of a student's admission to candidacy within the IFDI program. The internship must be completed within five years of admission to candidacy.

### **Application for Graduation**

You must apply for graduation by the date listed in the Schedule of Classes of the semester in which you anticipate graduating. Student Progress Forms, which

accompany the Application for Graduation, must be accurately completed and submitted to the Registrar's Office.

## ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

### Grievance Procedure for Student Retention

If a student has a serious complaint about a faculty member, the student could choose to invoke either a collegial or university grievance procedure. Often such complaints result from a failure of communication on one or both sides or a simple misunderstanding. Student complaints may relate to academic or non-academic (e.g. discrimination, harassment, or other unfair treatment not related to academic issues). We encourage you to resolve any grievances informally by talking with the faculty member in question and attempting resolution. If informal resolution proves impossible, you should follow the appropriate formal grievance procedures, as informal. These procedures can be found in GSU's Student Handbook under the section entitled, "***Student Grievance Procedures/Conduct Code***". The Handbook is online at [http://www.govst.edu/sas/t\\_hb.aspx?id=2869](http://www.govst.edu/sas/t_hb.aspx?id=2869). You can pick up a hard copy in Student Life.

### Graduation

Application for Graduation: Students should apply for review of their degree requirements within the first month of the last semester before graduation. (The deadline is posted in the academic calendar found at <http://www.govst.edu/academiccalendar/>). Students should complete an Application for Graduation form and a Student Progress Report form, available in the Registrar's Office (this deadline is also posted in the academic calendar, normally falls in the first week of the semester of graduation). Upon completion of these forms, students should arrange to meet with their academic advisor to review the student study plan and verify expected completion of degree requirements. Students should have no more than 16 credit hours outstanding toward degree requirements, either as incomplete work or as current enrollment at the time of application. The application is approved by the advisor, division chair, and dean and should be forwarded to the Registrar's Office two months before the end of the last semester of enrollment. Students must meet all financial obligations to the university. A fee is billed to the student, covering the

cost of application processing, diploma, cap and gown, and commencement. Commencement Participation in commencement is limited to students who have been certified by the registrar as having completed all requirements for the degree.

### **Diplomas**

Diplomas are awarded upon verification of completion of all degree requirements and satisfaction of all financial obligations to the university. Diplomas are inscribed with the type of degree, the date, and the student name on record at the time the degree was conferred.