

Media Arts and Sciences PhD Graduate Student Handbook 2024-2025 Edition

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I. Purpose of Handbook

This graduate handbook is to serve as a departmental supplement to ASU Graduate College policies and procedures (<https://graduate.asu.edu/policies-procedures>) and ASU's Student Services Manual (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/index.html>). It is the responsibility of all MAS students to ensure that they are adhering to these policies as well. In instances where AME policies are more restrictive than Graduate College or general ASU policies, AME policies must be followed.

II. Program Overview

Media, Arts and Sciences doctoral students train in translating, transporting and combining knowledge across disciplines for the development of innovative, experiential media systems and accompanying theoretical models. The PhD program structure includes transdisciplinary media courses through the School of Arts, Media and Engineering; elective-course credits relating to the student's research interests; and substantial research and dissertation hours devoted to collaborative research within the School of Arts, Media and Engineering network. Active participation in the School of Arts, Media and Engineering transdisciplinary research teams allows media, arts and sciences doctoral students to gain and contribute expertise in knowledge fusion for digital media.

a. Learning Outcomes of the MAS PhD

Students graduating with an MAS PhD from AME will:

- Have a broad understanding of experiential media theory, design, and practice
- Successfully integrate knowledge across disciplines for the creation of media systems of societal significance
- Have the computational and creative skills necessary for participating in media system development and implementation
- Create and coordinate interdisciplinary teams for the development of an experiential media system
- Test and evaluate media systems in real-life situations
- Generalize the knowledge resulting from the development of a system into broad theoretical principles for experiential media
- Generate high quality publications, presentations, inventions and products
- Be qualified to obtain positions in a variety of media, scientific, engineering and cultural venues

III. Program Guidelines

a. Registration Requirements

Graduate students must be registered for a minimum of one hour of graduate level credit that appears on the Program of Study or in an appropriate graduate level course (such as Continuing Registration credits) whenever university facilities or faculty services are used. This includes registration during any semester or summer session in which comprehensive examinations are taken or a dissertation proposal, or dissertation is defended, even if graduation occurs in a later semester.

International students must also meet visa registration requirements. For more information see: <https://students.asu.edu/international/support/visa>

It is recommended that RAs & TAs should enroll for no more than 15 *course* credit hours per academic year (9 hours one semester and 6 the other). It is preferable, if possible within the parameters of the student's plan of study, that such students enroll in only 12 *course* credit hours per academic year (6 hours per semester) with the addition of appropriate research/thesis/dissertation credits. There is no limit on the number of *research* hours for which a student may enroll, so long as such enrollment is consistent with Graduate College policies. Please work with the graduate coordinator for suggestions on course loads.

b. Supervisory Committees

Every graduate student must choose a faculty advisor upon admission into the MAS program, with that faculty member's approval. Once students have matriculated into the program, they may, if needed, seek a new faculty advisor who is more appropriate to their research. The faculty advisor is responsible for supervising the student's progress through the MAS program and the student's contribution to the School's research. It is the responsibility of the student to form committees for comprehensive exams and their dissertation. Students should refer to Graduate College policies in determining the make-up of their committees. Please see the sections on comprehensive exams and dissertations for more information on AME committee requirements. View eligible faculty advisors: <https://graduateapps.asu.edu/graduate-faculty/degree/G12>

c. Key People and Faculty

Todd Ingalls, Graduate Chair: Todd.Ingalls@asu.edu

Megan Cauthen, Graduate Coordinator, (Megan.Cauthen@asu.edu)

The AME graduate coordinator assists students with registration, iPOS, and general University questions. The Graduate Chair leads curriculum and program development.

Arts, Media and Engineering faculty bring expertise in areas such as dance, music, engineering, computer science, art, and more. Explore and read about our faculty here: <https://artsmediaengineering.asu.edu/people/faculty?dept=144374&id=2>

V. Program Structure

a. Program of Study

The MAS PhD is a post-bachelor's program requiring 84 credit hours. This breaks down to:

- 39 of the credit hours of coursework
 - 18 credits of required courses
 - 12 credits of restricted electives
 - 9 credits from any graduate level course
- 33 research credits
- 12 dissertation credits

Based on the discretion of the MAS faculty committee, students may be allowed to apply up to 30 course credit hours from a previously awarded master's degree towards the MAS program degree requirements. In most cases the number will be 21 unless the student has completed the MS in Media Arts and Sciences. Please note: these credits can not apply for research hours.

b. Course Requirements

Required courses (18 credit hours):

AME 520 Movement and Computing (3)
AME 530 Philosophy of Media Technology (3)
AME 531 Experimental Media Philosophy (3)
AME 532 Creating Interactive Media (3)
AME 533 Design for Media Arts (3)
AME 534 Machine Learning for Media Arts (3)

Students must take AME 530: Philosophy of Media Technology and AME 531: Experimental Media Philosophy in their first year.

Restricted Electives (12 credit hours):

These courses should be selected from any graduate-level AME or MDC course, with the approval of the student's advisor.

With the approval of the AME Graduate Chair and the student's advisor, one of the required courses (3 credit hours) can be substituted by an independent study course (AME 790 Reading and Conference).

Electives (9 credit hours): The 9 hours of elective credit can be from any graduate level courses offered at ASU. The selection of the courses will relate to the student's research interests and will require the approval of the student's advisor.

c. Research and Dissertation Hours

Research (33 credit hours)

MAS PhD students are expected to be research active throughout the realization of their degree. It is thus expected that students will be enrolled in a minimum of three research hours per semester [ex: (4 years X 6 credits per year) + (1 years X 9 credits) = 33].

Dissertation (12 credits hours)

A student must register for 12 credits of dissertation hours. Those credits must be split between at least two semesters. A student can register for dissertation credits only after the comprehensive examination has been passed.

d. Filing the Program of Study (iPOS)

Students must submit their iPOS using the MyASU online system. Students cannot submit an iPOS without a faculty committee on file. The student's advisor, Graduate Coordinator, and the Graduate College must all approve a student's iPOS. A fully approved program of study is required to be on file before a student can petition to take their comprehensive exams/dissertation. The Plan of Study cannot have grades of I, D, E, or Z in final submission.

The ASU Graduate College requires graduate students to submit their iPOS in their first enrolled semester: <https://graduate.asu.edu/plan-of-study>

e. Master's in Passing

A master's in passing (MIP) is available for MAS PhD students. In order to receive the MIP, students must complete 33 AME credit hours and successfully complete at least three credit hours of AME 593 with a grade of B or better.

To start the MIP process, the student must have a completed and approved iPOS for the MAS. Once approved by the graduate coordinator and Graduate College the

graduate coordinator will submit the petition for the MIP. Any student who is interested in pursuing the master's in passing should contact the graduate coordinator for more information.

f. Satisfactory Progress

The ASU Graduate College establishes policies on satisfactory progress towards your degree (<https://graduate.asu.edu/key-policies>). AME has additional requirements of maintaining a 3.25 GPA (please see the section on academic probation for more details).

VI. Examinations

a. Comprehensive Examinations

Description: This exam is conceived as an integrative alternative to a traditional area-centric comprehensive exam. Students are required to demonstrate competency in the integration of the areas covered through AME research and coursework through answering complex and customized questions devised by the student's committee.

The comprehensive exam committee must include the student's research advisor, two other AME faculty members and may include one additional member outside of the AME program.

Exam eligibility: The comprehensive exam should be completed within the second year of the program. In order to be eligible, students must be registered and have completed at least the required core courses before taking the comprehensive exam. Students are encouraged to complete most of their AME course requirements before taking the exam. This requirement is meant to ensure students understand the different aspects of experiential media development before taking the exam. Additionally, the Graduate College requires that an approved program of study be on file before the student completes the exam.

Examination and Completion: The student's comprehensive examination committee will develop the question the student is assigned. If applicable, a reading and resource list will be provided by the committee. The list will include work/ideas related to the question and will be broadly related to the student's thesis goals. The goal of the list is to enable the student to contextualize the comprehensive exam and develop a broad understanding of the problems in experiential media design.

The student is expected to present an integrated response to the exam that includes the knowledge/insight present in the reading list. The student will also need to present their response to their committee. These presentations are open to the rest of the AME community (faculty, staff and students) as well. Important points for students to remember are:

1. The exam question will not be discipline specific but related to a broad societal concern. Therefore, the students are encouraged to not develop a discipline specific response (e.g. an algorithm that is engineering centric vs. an arts thesis project).
2. The student is **not** expected to develop a fully functioning experiential media system, as this is counter to the AME philosophy that encourages teamwork towards the solution of complex human problems.
3. The student is free to discuss her/his exam with peers and seek a wide range of sources to develop a response. This can be done in conjunction and dialogue with their colleagues who are more versed in certain elements of the system design. The sources need to be cited in the response. We champion the idea that complex problems are beyond the ultimate solution of an individual alone.

The format of the response to the question prepared by the comprehensive examination committee is up to the individual student in consultation with their committee, with the constraint that it must include some form of written component. All responses should be submitted to the committee by the assigned deadline and with adequate time for the committee to review them before the presentation. The question given to the student will specify a deadline for the written materials to be distributed to the committee.

Metrics: The approved evaluation criteria submitted in the comprehensive examination question will be utilized in considering the quality of the response. The comprehensive examination committee will assign a pass, pass with revisions, or fail grade to the student based on internal deliberations. It will be the responsibility of the comprehensive examination committee chair to communicate these results to the student and work out appropriate schedule in the circumstance of a pass with revisions grade. Also, in the situation of a pass with revision grade, the student will receive written feedback from the AME faculty explaining their critique and identifying specific areas for improvement.

If the student receives a failing grade they will need to go through the process of petitioning for a new exam. The student has two opportunities to pass the exam. Per ASU Graduate College policy, re-examination may be administered no sooner than three months and no later than one year from the date of the original examination.

b. Dissertation

The dissertation stage consists of four sub-stages:

1. Forming the dissertation committee
2. Writing the proposal and approval by dissertation committee
3. Realization of the proposed media system and writing of document
4. Defense

Dissertation committees

Upon successful completion of their comprehensive exams, students may form their dissertation committee and prepare their dissertation proposal. Dissertation committees must include at least three faculty members from the MAS Graduate Faculty list (<https://graduateapps.asu.edu/graduate-faculty/degree/G12>).

The chair or co-chairs must be approved for this role on the graduate faculty. The chair leads, mentors, and advises students through their research. Committee members work in unison with the student and chair, acting as additional support toward successful research. The committee serves as the comprehensive exam committee, dissertation, and dissertation defense committee.

Other committee members need only appear on the list. Students can also submit a request to have an ASU faculty member on their committee even if they are not on the graduate faculty list. This can be in substitution of one of the three committee members from the list. Students can also petition to have up to two members external to ASU, in addition to the required three members. The School and the Graduate College must approve both of these requests. The student submits the committee through their iPOS in My ASU. Students should consult the graduate coordinator to begin the petition process.

Dissertation Prospectus

The proposal must show innovation and significant contribution to experiential media development, further the research activities of the student's groups, and show possible paths for extensibility of his/her work beyond the scope of the dissertation. The proposal may suggest a new research approach to the AME common research agenda or suggest a new application for the agenda. The proposal must also show that the interdisciplinary group necessary for realizing this task has been identified and is committed to realizing the project and that the student has the necessary knowledge and background for the realization of the project. Proposals must be submitted to the dissertation committee at least 15 days ahead of the dissertation proposal defense date. The prospectus should be completed within 4 years of the program.

Realization of proposed system and written thesis

PhD dissertations must result in:

- An operating, innovative experiential media system inspired by a need of societal significance (societal impact must be shown), which has been developed by an interdisciplinary team and has been tested in real-life situations.
- An accompanying written dissertation that presents the theory behind the system, presents the system structure and the development procedure, places the system and theory in the context of previous and current work, explains and supports the need for the system and its intended uses, presents the evaluation and validation procedures and results, suggests paths or models for generalizing the knowledge resulting from the system and its development procedure and paths for extending the work beyond the scope of the dissertation.

c. Defense

The dissertation committee reviews progress on both the system and written dissertation and, when appropriate, contacts the graduate coordinator for scheduling the defense date. The 1st reading and defense dates must be at least 30 days apart. A close to final version of the system and dissertation must be submitted to the committee at least 15 days ahead of the 1st reading date. Committee members will provide written feedback to the student by the 1st reading date. The final version of the system and dissertation must be submitted to the committee 15 days ahead of defense date.

VII. Limitations

a. Time Limit

A full time MAS PhD student is expected to finish her/his degree within 5 or 6 years from the start date. The maximum length of time allowed for degree completion for MAS PhD students is 10 academic years from the start date. A student must file a petition with the unit to extend their degree completion past 10 years:

<https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/petition-graduate-education.pdf>

b. Continuous Enrollment

Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit hour for the duration of the program. Students may file for a leave of absence up to 2 semesters of non-enrollment. During leave, the student is not required to pay tuition or fees, but are not permitted to use university resources, facilities, libraries, or faculty time.

c. Dates and Deadlines

ASU's academic calendar (<http://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar>) and the Graduate College (<https://graduate.asu.edu/current-students/policies-forms-and-deadlines/graduation-deadlines>) list many deadlines that are important for graduate students. It is the responsibility of all MAS students to be familiar with these deadlines and to ensure they meet these deadlines.

VIII. Policies

a. Policy on Academic Probation and Dismissal of Graduate Students

A student who has been admitted to the Media Arts and Sciences program, either on a regular or provisional basis, must maintain a 3.00 or higher grade-point average in all courses taken for graduate credit.

Probation

A student will be placed on academic probation if any of the following instances:

1. The student's cumulative GPA for all graduate courses taken at ASU falls below 3.00.
2. The student receives a D or E in a required deficiency or in a course at the 400-level or above.

And/or

3. For reasons other than above, the student fails to make satisfactory progress toward a degree.

Dismissal

A student will be recommended for dismissal from a graduate program if any of the following apply:

1. The student is on academic probation for reason 1 above and fails to bring their GPA to 3.00 or above by the time the next 9 course credit hours are completed.
2. The student receives a D or E while on academic probation for any reason.

3. The student fails to obtain at least a 3.00 GPA in all courses cited as deficiencies upon admission to the program.
4. The student fails to meet any other conditions imposed as part of the probation.

And/or

5. A provisionally admitted student fails to meet the required provision(s) of admission.

Appeals

A student may appeal any action concerning academic probation and dismissal by petitioning the Graduate Chair of AME.

If either of the first two conditions above have not been satisfied, a letter to the student placing them on academic probation is prepared by the Graduate Chair and signed by the School director. Copies are sent to the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts Academic Affairs office. The student's faculty advisor will also receive a copy of the letter.

If the student was admitted on a provisional basis or was previously on academic probation and has not met the conditions stated, a letter to the student recommending dismissal from the program is prepared by the Graduate Chair and signed by the School director. This letter, copies of the original probation/provision letter, and any other relevant documentation will be sent to the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts Academic Affairs office, the student's advisor, and the ASU Graduate College

b. Conflict Resolution

In the event of conflict, the student should first approach the graduate coordinator. If the conflict is not resolved, the matter will be addressed by the graduate program chair. If no resolution, the conflict will move to the Herberger Dean's office.

Please review registrar forms for more information about filing petitions, enrollment changes, withdrawal (including medical/compassionate), overrides, and appeals:

<https://students.asu.edu/forms/registration>

c. Student Code of Conduct

The student code of conduct enforces standards expected of students within the University. These standards are in place to encourage personal development and safety. Violation of these standards may result in disciplinary action. Learn more about regulations and responsibilities: <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>

d. Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students. Academic integrity guidelines are in place to maintain the integrity of the university. Violations include, but are not limited to: cheating, deceit, plagiarism, and fabrication. Violation of these policies may result in dismissal, disqualification, grade penalties, and more. Review academic integrity policies here: <https://provost.asu.edu/node/20>

IX. Funding and Resources

a. Research Assistant and Other Funded Positions

Any AME research assistants or other funded students are expected to meet their academic obligations and the research obligations outlined in their offer letter.

AME research and teaching assistant appointments include the expectation that TAs and RAs will work throughout the funded period, except for official university holidays. This includes the expectation that RAs work during the winter and spring breaks unless other arrangements have been made with their supervisor.

TAs and RAs that work quarter-time, or 10 hours a week, receive financial support, 100% coverage of non-residential tuition, and 50% of the remaining tuition for the semester. TAs and RAs that work half time, or 20 hours a week, receive financial support, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance.

In the event of concerns with the assigned instructor, conflict must first be communicated with the assigned instructor. If no resolution, meet with the graduate coordinator, and last the graduate chair.

Students must also follow the ASU TA/RA handbook, available at <https://graduate.asu.edu/ta-ra-handbook>

b. TA and RA Evaluations

TAs and RAs are evaluated at the end of each semester. TAs are evaluated by their assigned faculty.

All MAS students should be evaluated at the end of the academic year by their advisor. This process requires that students outline their academic and research goals and their plan for finishing their program. The evaluation is based on:

- *Academic progress*: MAS students are expected to maintain a 3.0 grade point average or above in graduate coursework.
- *Progress in research output and deliverables*. It is expected a student's research record will be achieved in a gradual, well-distributed manner throughout the course of the student's PhD studies. The student's annual progress should show satisfactory progress towards achieving this record.
- *Absence from service*: Per the TA/RA handbook, students must consult with their supervising faculty regarding absences. Excessive absences are cause for termination.
- *Termination before end of appointment*: Assistantships may be terminated for, including but not limited to: change in program, poor performance, and violation of the student code of conduct.

c. Access to Facilities

All MAS students have access to AME facilities once they have completed the required training and have agreed to the lab policies. Lab orientations are held at the beginning of the academic year. Any questions about lab usage or required training should be directed to the technical team member who is responsible for that lab.

If students violate lab usage policies or inappropriately use the facilities, they will lose access to AME labs and facilities.

d. Travel Funds

AME is not always able to provide funds for student travel to conferences and festivals. If funding is available, priority will be given to students who are presenting a major research product. Second priority will be students who are presenting a standard research product. AME does not provide travel funds for students to present minor or supportive research products.

Students are strongly encouraged to also apply for travel funds from ASU's Graduate and Professional Students Association (GPSA) (<https://gpsa.asu.edu/>), the Graduate College, the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts' Student Enrichment Grant, and any other available sources.

X. University Resources

Students have access to the following resources:

- ASU Library: <https://lib.asu.edu/about/mission>
- Graduate Academic Support Center and Writing Center:
<https://tutoring.asu.edu/student-services/graduate>
- Career and Professional Development Services: <https://eoss.asu.edu/cs>
- Student Clubs and Organizations: <https://eoss.asu.edu/clubs/involved>
- International Students and Scholars Center: <https://issc.asu.edu/>
- ASU Housing: <https://housing.asu.edu/>
- Pat Tillman Veterans Center: <https://veterans.asu.edu/>
- Graduate and Professional Student Association: <https://gpsa.asu.edu/>
- ASU Parking and Transit Services: <https://cfo.asu.edu/transportation#>
- Student Business Services: <https://students.asu.edu/tuitionandbilling>
- ASU Sun Devil Card Services: <https://cfo.asu.edu/cardservices>
- On-campus convenience store, P.O.D Market:
<https://sundevildining.asu.edu/hours-and-locations/tempe/pod-market>
- Sun Devil Dining: <https://sundevildining.asu.edu/hours-locations/tempe>
- Sun Devil Dining Meal Plans: <https://sundevildining.asu.edu/meal-plans>
- On-campus Banks and ATMs: https://eoss.asu.edu/mu/whats_in/banks
- Sun Devil Campus Book Store:
<https://www.bkstr.com/arizonastatestore/home>
- Office of the University Provost: <https://provost.asu.edu/>
- University Technology Office: <https://uto.asu.edu/>
- Graduate College: <https://graduate.asu.edu/>
- Emergency Information: <https://cfo.asu.edu/emergency>
- Campus Safety: <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/Safety>
- Emergency Response Guidelines: <https://students.asu.edu/safety/crisis>
- ASU Health Services: <https://eoss.asu.edu/health>
- ASU Counseling Services: <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>
- Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services:
<https://eoss.asu.edu/accessibility>
- Best Practices for Graduate Student Wellbeing:
<https://graduate.asu.edu/blog/best-practices/10-best-practices-graduate-student-wellbeing>

ASU prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment and retaliation. To view ASU's policy please see <https://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd401.html>.

Title IX protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. As required by Title IX, ASU does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities that we operate, including in admission and employment. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator or to the U.S. Department of Education, Assistant Secretary, or both. Contact titleixcoordinator@asu.edu or 480-965-0696 for more information. Office located at 1120 S. Cady Mall, INTDSB 284. For information on making a report please go to www.asu.edu/reportit/.

Appendix A: MAS Degree Planning Sheet

Sample Plan Of Study

Year 1			
Fall	AME 530: Philosophy of Media Technology	Spring	AME 531: Experimental Media Philosophy
	AME 532: Creating Interactive Media		AME 533: Design for Media Arts
	AME 792: Research		AME 792: Research
	<i>submit initial iPOS</i>		
Year 2			
Fall	AME 534: Machine Learning for Media Arts	Spring	AME graduate-level course
	AME 520: Movement and Computing		AME graduate-level course
	AME 792: Research		AME 792: Research
	<i>update iPOS</i>		<i>Comprehensive exams</i>
Year 3			
Fall	AME graduate-level course	Spring	AME graduate-level course
	Elective		Elective
	AME 792: Research		AME 792: Research
			<i>Dissertation prospectus</i>
Year 4			
Fall	Elective	Spring	AME 792: Research
	AME 792: Research		AME 792: Research

	AME 799: Dissertation		AME 799: Dissertation
Year 5			
Fall	AME 792: Research	Spring	AME 792: Research
	AME 799: Dissertation		AME 799: Dissertation
			<i>Defend dissertation</i>
▪ It is recommended that MAS students complete six course credits each semester and three to six research credits each semester. Students may register for up to nine course credits in a semester with advisor approval. ▪ MAS students must complete three elective courses. ▪ MAS students must complete 33 research hours and 12 dissertation hours. ▪ Student must pass the comprehensive examination before registering for AME 799 Dissertation hours.			

Checksheet

Class	Semester	Credits
Required Courses		18
AME 520: Movement and Computing		3
AME 530: Philosophy of Media Technology		3
AME 531: Experimental Media Philosophy		3
AME 532: Creating Interactive Media		3
AME 533: Design for Media Arts		3
AME 534: Machine Learning for Media Arts		3
Restricted Electives		12
Electives		9

Research		33
Dissertation		12