

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL PRACTICE

The master of fine arts (MFA) in social practice with a focus in public policy is a unique program that connects art, policy, and collective action. The program is designed for emerging artists and creative thinkers looking to develop skills in both the arts and public policy sectors during an intensive, two-year, 60-credit degree. The program brings together artists, designers, organizers, researchers, and policymakers to initiate learning opportunities and projects that address the critical questions of our time.

The program combines study in experimental, relational, and performative creative practices with academic research, collaborative work, and field-based experiential learning in Washington, DC—a global hub for policymakers, tech leaders, nongovernmental organizations, and cultural institutions. To support their creative work, students take academic coursework across the university, including the departments of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences and the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Administration.

Students who are especially interested in working with diverse populations and who wish to create a hybrid studio practice focused on issues of social justice, collaborative methodology, and ethical innovation are candidates for this MFA in social practice. We particularly seek applicants whose statement and/or portfolio demonstrates a broad-based creative practice, which can include professional work outside the arts; an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of working with diverse communities in an art context; and familiarity with more than one language.

Visit the program website (<https://corcoran.gwu.edu/social-practice/>) for additional information.

ADMISSIONS

Admission Fall – April 1 (February 1 for fellowship consideration) deadlines:

Standardized GRE is not required.
test scores:

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the PTE Academic is required of all applicants except those who hold a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree from a college or university in the United States or from an institution located in a country in which English is the official language, provided English was the language of instruction.

- Minimum scores for the MFA in Social Practice are:
- Academic IELTS: an overall band score of 6.0 with no individual score below 5.0; or
 - TOEFL: 550 on paper-based or 80 on Internet-based; or
 - PTE Academic: 53

Please note that students admitted to this program who are required to take an English for Academic Purposes course (EAP) must be available to complete the course in the summer prior to enrollment.

Recommendations (2) recommendations required:

Prior academic records: Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended must be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission.

If transcripts are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translation alone should be uploaded into your application.

Statement of purpose: In an essay of no more than 750 words, describing your artistic intent, conceptual foundation, research interests, and impetus to complete an MFA degree.

Additional Requirements: A portfolio of artworks is required.

Your portfolio should speak to why you want to study socially engaged art and your skills related to problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and commitment to social justice. We are interested in your breadth of experience and your potential to leverage art practice in the areas in and beyond the gallery and museum. The portfolio should consist of a maximum of 20 images or 10 minutes of time-based work.

For applicants without backgrounds in art, portfolios can include documentation of socially engaged work in any field, sketches and detailed proposals of future work, thorough descriptions of hypothetical systems, or any other media that you feel well represents your creative voice.

Portfolios should be submitted as a PDF. All parts of the portfolio submission should be clearly labeled and should include captions or project descriptions. Examples of information to include would be medium, date created, publication or exhibition date and venue, and motivation for making the work. If video work is submitted in the portfolio submission, it should be submitted in the portfolio pdf as a link accompanied by a brief project description that clearly states the role of the applicant in the making of the video, e.g., script writer, director, primary camera, editor, or any combo, etc.

Writing Sample: A 2-3 page writing sample.

Interview: Finalists will complete an interview with program faculty.

International applicants only: Please review International Applicant Information (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants> (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants/>)) carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Graduate Studies
The George Washington University
801 22nd Street NW, Phillips Hall 107
Washington DC 20052

For additional information about the admissions process visit the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Frequently Asked Questions (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-admissions-faq/>) page.

Contact:

askccas@gwu.edu
202-994-6210 (phone)

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Programs (<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#degreeeregulationtext>).

60 credits, including 45 credits in required courses (including thesis) and 15 credits in elective courses.

| Code | Title | Credits |
|-----------------|---|---------|
| Required | | |
| CSA 6010 | Social Practice Workshop (taken four times, once per semester, for a total of 16 credits) | |
| CSA 6015 | Social and Contextual Art Practices Seminar | |
| CSA 6016 | Research Methodologies for Artists | |
| CSA 6080 | Social Practice Field Studio (taken twice for a total of 6 credits) | |
| CSA 6097 | Topics in Public Strategies (taken four times, once per semester, for a total of 8 credits) | |
| PPPA 6006 | Policy Analysis | |
| Thesis | | |

CSA 6999

Thesis Research (taken twice for a total of 6 credits)

A thesis exhibition consisting of the execution of creative work along with a critical statement about this work must be completed under the supervision of a committee consisting of at least two full-time faculty members in the department.

Electives

3 credits in studio electives in any art or design area.

12 credits of supporting academic or studio coursework, in any area of the University, selected in consultation with the director of graduate studies.