

York University

Film/Cinema and Media Studies

MFA Handbook

(rev. January 2026)

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Program Contacts

ACADEMIC Inquiries:

- Michael Zryd, Graduate Program Director (GPD)
- zryd@yorku.ca / 647-430-8680 / CFT 236
- Academic matters include questions about courses, research, faculty, supervisory and thesis defense committees, thesis projects and support papers, equipment/studio access, governance, academic integrity, academic resources

ADMINISTRATIVE Inquiries:

- Aishah Rashid, Graduate Program Assistant (GPA)
- filmgpa@yorku.ca / 416-736-2100, ext. 22174 / CFT 224
- Administrative matters include questions about admissions, registration and enrollment, petitions, student records, funding and financial assistance, tuition, schedules, classrooms, listservs, grant processes, GA and TA contracts, health insurance, and thesis/dissertation defence processes

1. Official Program Requirements from FGS (Faculty of Graduate Studies) Calendar

FILM/CINEMA & MEDIA STUDIES

The Graduate Program in Film, established in 1980, is the oldest film graduate program in Canada. It is anchored in the first Department of Film established in Canada (1970). The Graduate Program in Film offers MA and PhD degrees in Cinema & Media Studies, as well as an MFA in Film, which consists of two discrete fields: Production and Screenwriting. Students can combine their MA or MFA degree with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. All degrees are offered either full-time or part-time.

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN FILM PROGRAM

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

All graduate students earning a Master of Fine Arts degree in production or screenwriting must complete 18 graduate credits (six 3.0 credit courses), and a thesis, during their full-time residency of five terms or part-time residency of ten terms. Acceptable MFA thesis formats are complex digital or multimodal, in line with Faculty of Graduate Studies Regulations.

PRODUCTION STUDENTS

Required Courses

- FILM 5010 3.0: Production
- FILM 5400 3.0: Graduate Seminar

SCREENWRITING STUDENTS

Required Courses

- FILM 5110 3.0: Screenwriting
- FILM 5130A 3.0: Selected Topics in Screenwriting [this requirement will be waived]
- FILM 5400 3.0: Graduate Seminar

MFA students must take at least one-half (3.0) Cinema & Media Studies graduate-level course, or an equivalent approved by the Graduate Program Director.

Production students are eligible to take some Screenwriting courses, and Screenwriting students are eligible to take some Production courses, but in all cases must receive the explicit permission of the course directors to enroll.

MFA students may normally take up to two half (3.0) courses or one full (6.0) course from outside the Film program. Permission is required from the course director, the director of the graduate program in which the course is taken, and the Graduate Program Director.

All courses must be taken during the full-time residency of five consecutive terms or the part-time residency of ten consecutive terms.

Program Entry

The MFA program can be completed on a full- or part-time basis. Entry is fall term.

Program Length

The expected degree completion time for full-time master's students is 5 terms. For those students who complete degree requirements earlier than 5 terms, they must register and pay fees for a minimum of the equivalent of 5 terms of full-time study. All requirements for a master's degree must be fulfilled within 12 terms (4 years) of registration as a full-time or part-time master's student in accordance with Faculty of Graduate Studies' registration policies.

2. MFA Milestones Overview

Below is an overview and checklist of the term-by-term milestones for the MFA in Film. Please refer to this as you progress through your degree and ensure you are meeting these milestones. All of the information here is discussed in depth in the MFA Handbook.

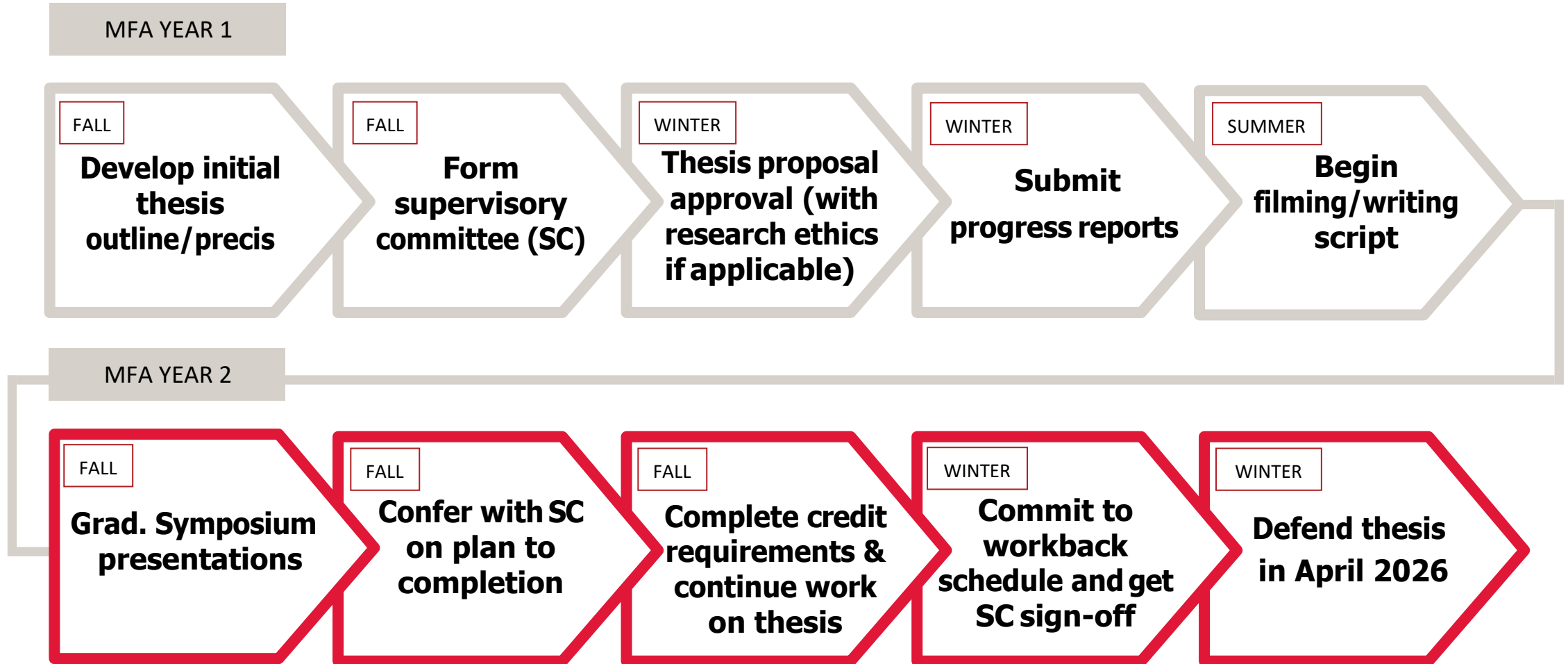
Please note that Students with Accommodations may be able to extend these milestone deadlines through discussions with their Supervisory Committee, GPD, and/or petitions to FGS.

Term & Focus	Required	Recommended Options
<p>Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation • Coursework • Establish Supervisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FILM 5400 3.0 Grad Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> FILM 5010 3.0 Production (only required for production students) <input type="checkbox"/> FILM 5110 3.0 Screenwriting (only required for screenwriting students) <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Precip (1 page) submitted for Supervisory committee formation <input type="checkbox"/> CGRS-M/OGS applications due December 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 1-2 courses in addition to your required courses • FGS grant workshop preparing for Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) and SSHRC Canada Graduate Research Scholarship (CGRS)
<p>Term 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coursework • Completion of Thesis Proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FILM 5400 3.0 Grad Seminar (cont.) <input type="checkbox"/> FILM 5010 3.0 Production (cont.) <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisory committee formally submitted to FGS Portal (January) <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis proposals formally submitted to FGS Portal (February) for Research ethics review <input type="checkbox"/> Progress Report (April) <input type="checkbox"/> CUPE 3903 Blanket TA Application (January 31) <input type="checkbox"/> Register for summer term (April 30) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 1-2 courses in addition to your required courses • 12-15 credits (4-5 half-courses) recommended coursework completed by end of term 2 • Apply for In-Kind and Cash Grants, if applicable (April-May)
<p>Term 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis development • Thesis shooting (Production) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Production students: Plan to shoot your thesis during the summer term of first year as Grads have priority access to our equipment and studios only in April-August. <input type="checkbox"/> Screenwriting students: write 1st full draft of thesis screenplay or series bible <input type="checkbox"/> Register for the fall term (August) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Institute course • Independent study course
<p>Term 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coursework Completion • Thesis (Postproduction) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete any outstanding coursework in Term 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue editing thesis film or revising screenplay <input type="checkbox"/> Grad Symposium presentation of Thesis-in-progress (late October) <input type="checkbox"/> Student and supervisory committee meet to establish and commit to thesis completion timeline using workback schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5 TA assignment (pending availability and eligibility, Term 4 and/or 5) • All 18 credits, or 6 x 3.0 courses, should be completed by the end of this term
<p>Term 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis finalization • Defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Submission of support paper drafts to supervisory committee for feedback (January) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete post-production or final screenplay edits on your thesis project <input type="checkbox"/> Defend your thesis in April 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5 TA assignment (pending availability and eligibility) (Term 4 or 5) • Progress Report due April if Thesis is not completed

If necessary, MFA students may defend their thesis in the summer term (Term 6). In these cases, students must register for the summer term and pay part-time tuition. If students defend and deposit their thesis and support paper early in the term, they are eligible for tuition refunds:

- Before the end of the first month of the term, 100% tuition refund.
- Before 6 weeks, 80% refund;
- Before the end of the second month of the term, 40%

MFA Degree Timeline



3. Academic Regulations

All graduate students at York are subject to official Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) academic regulations, which are posted to their website. <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/regulations/> In this section of the Handbook, we shall provide advice on how to navigate these regulations and also outline some Program-specific guidelines. More Program information can be found on the Graduate Program Resource eClass at <https://eclass.yorku.ca/>

FINDING A BALANCE

Over the five terms of the MFA degree, your challenge is to successfully balance a) your academic responsibilities (course work, attending events and workshops, and planning and creating your thesis project), b) your practice as an independent media artist/creator/writer/etc. c) your personal responsibilities to family, friends, and community, and d) your personal health and wellness. Our MFA is designed to be flexible within those five terms, and self-directed within the structure of academic milestones of the degree. It is essential for you to be pro-active, working with your supervisory committee, other faculty, and department staff to take full advantage of what the program offers. Plan to complete your studies within the funded 5-term period while avoiding burn out.

GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

You are in good academic standing when you are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of your degree requirements following these academic milestones. Students who do not meet these guidelines must consult with the GPD and Supervisor. If you do not remain in good standing, your funding and registration in the program may be affected.

Note the following FGS regulations on good standing:

- No coursework Incompletes (after two terms, Incomplete courses revert to F grades);
- Any combination of C grades or combination of C and F grades that would normally result in withdrawal for failure to maintain academic standards (<http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/regulations/courses-grading/>).
- Students must maintain continuous registration in the program.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND PETITIONS

Students with formal Accommodations for disability may be able to extend academic milestone deadlines through discussions with their Supervisory Committee, GPD, and/or petitions to FGS. For more information on York's Student Accessibility Services (SAS), see <https://students.yorku.ca/accessibility>. Students with disabilities are advised to make arrangements with SAS promptly since processing requests can take time.

Petition are defined by FGS as any "formal request for a change to an anticipated academic pathway or a waiver of an academic regulation or deadline." For more information, see <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/regulations/graduate-academic-petitions/>

REGISTRATION and ENROLLMENT

You "register" for a *term* but you "enroll" in a *course*.

Registration

You must **register** for each term until you complete all the requirements of the degree. If you are not registered for the term, you will **NOT** be able to enroll in courses, access equipment or libraries, or receive any financial funding.

FGS requires all students to maintain "continuous registration" to maintain good academic standing. This means all students are normally registered each term until they have completed their degree and defended

their thesis.

- You must maintain continuous registration **regardless of whether you are taking courses or not**. Unlike your undergraduate studies, tuition is charged per term rather than per course.
 - If circumstances arise that require students to take a leave of absence or withdraw, students must petition using the FGS Graduate Petition Portal <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/graduate-portals/#tab-student>
 - FGS registration policies can be accessed [here](#).

To register, go to the “[Registration & Enrolment](#)” page. Using your Passport York, sign in to the “FALL GRADUATE OR OSGOOD STUDENTS” academic session. After a few questions, confirm your phone, e-mail and submit—a confirmation will appear in the following page that states “You are now Registered as Active for this session.”

Enrollment

You may only enroll in courses once you have registered for the term. You may add your courses by the assigned CATALOGUE NUMBER in the course [timetable](#). Then:

- select “Subject”, followed by “Session”, then “Subject:” e.g., FILM GS, FA.
- When the list of film courses appears, scroll right to the bottom of the page for level 5xxx or 6xxx graduate courses.
- Find the course you would like to add, then click on the link to the right of the course name, titled “Fall/Winter 20**/** Course Schedule”.
- On the course description page, you will find the catalogue number to add, located in the THIRD box “Cat #.”
- Repeat the process again for each term you are enrolled in.

PROGRESS REPORT

Each year in April, ALL students MUST submit a Progress Report through the FGS Portal <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/graduate-portals/#tab-student> that is completed and signed by the student and supervisory committee. We encourage students/supervisors to use this as an opportunity to take stock of the past year and to flesh out plans for the upcoming academic year. Students who have not made satisfactory progress according to Program Milestone deadlines will be required to meet with the Supervisor and GPD to discuss progress and lay out specific deadlines. Failure to meet these deadlines may result in the student’s withdrawal for failure to make academic progress.

FGS IMPORTANT DATES

The Faculty of Graduate Studies outlines important academic dates

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/registration-enrolment/important-dates/>

These include the last day to withdraw from a course, the last day to register for a term without incurring a \$200 late fee, etc. Ensure this page is bookmarked and you are referring to it when you are adding/dropping courses or interested in registration/sessional/financial information.

PRINCIPLES OF RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

CMA and the Program have approved a document that outlines Principles of Respectful Engagement and Complaint Procedures that outlines the important of creating, supporting and maintaining safe spaces for teaching, learning and production, in accordance with the values expressed and embodied in the applicable policies, procedures and regulations of York University, for students, staff and faculty. See below in this handbook.

4. Coursework

REQUIRED COURSES

MFA in PRODUCTION

Required Courses

- FILM 5010 3.0: Production
- FILM 5400 3.0: Graduate Seminar

MFA in SCREENWRITING

Required Courses

- FILM 5110 3.0: Screenwriting
- ~~FILM 5130A 3.0: Selected Topics in Screenwriting~~
 - This current requirement will be waived, and any other graduate screenwriting course may be used as an equivalent
- FILM 5400 3.0: Graduate Seminar

All MFA students must take at least one Cinema & Media Studies (CMS) graduate-level half course (3.0 credits), or an equivalent approved by the Graduate Program Director.

ELECTIVE COURSES

MFA students must successfully complete 18 graduate credits (6 x 3.0 credit courses) as degree requirements. Since there are two required courses, Film 5400 3.0 and FILM 5010 3.0 or FILM 5110 3.0, there remain four 3.0 credit elective courses to complete, one of which must be deemed a CMS course.

Course offerings vary from year to year, with the exception of required courses. Elective courses offered in one year may not be offered in the next. **Graduate students do not generally take more than 3 courses in a term** due to the workload and the high level of academic performance expected.

Students may count a maximum of two 3.0 credit courses outside the Program toward their degree requirements. Extra courses may be counted upon appeal to the Graduate Program. Students may seek out [courses](#) in other AMPD Graduate Programs or the 50+ other Graduate Programs at York University. Common cognate programs include CMCT, HUMA, EN, DIGI, AHTH, VISA, TDPS, MUSI, SPTH, GFWS, ENVS, CDIS, HIST, PHIL, POLS, SOCI, STS, and others that may be related to your specific research area.

In order to take a course in another Grad Program, you must receive permission from the instructor and complete a [Request to Take a Course in another Graduate Program at York](#) form. Please reach out to the Graduate Program Assistant for more information.

PRODUCTION COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Course assignments are designed to be modest in scope, intended to be completed in a timely manner (e.g., a rough cut typically being screened on or before the final class of your course). These assignments should utilize modest CMA equipment and studio resources (typically no more than those required for a one-day shoot), and only minimal/essential out of pocket cash expenditures. The reason for such restraint is twofold.

First, large-scale course assignments require extra labour/time/resources from our overworked Equipment Room staff and compete with the needs of MF thesis and BFA end-of-year film shoots.

Second, hours you spent on overly ambitious course assignments can drastically interfere with progress on your thesis film, which should properly be the focus of your attention, time, resources, and expenditures.

SUMMER INSTITUTE COURSES

AMPD graduate programs generally offer one or two Summer Institute courses in May-June that feature a compressed course schedule (4-6 weeks) and may include a series of public lectures with leading scholars, filmmakers and curators working in multiple disciplines.

INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES

You may choose to take a maximum of two elective half-courses (FILM 5600, 5700, and 5800) during your MFA (generally in summer or your 2nd year). These will not count as your required CMS course. You will need to initiate a proposal as outlined below. For detailed information on independent study courses, consult guidelines posted in the Graduate Program Resources eClass <https://eclass.yorku.ca/>

FILM 5600 3.0 Field Placement

- This course enables you to secure a 3.0 one-term internship placement with a relevant employer (e.g., production company, artist-run centre, etc.), where you are supervised directly by your workplace supervisor.
- **Internship/field placements are normally secured by students, through their own initiative.**
- In consultation with your GPD, you create a detailed work plan, co-authored by student and workplace supervisor, which details the number of days and hours that will be worked (roughly 6-12 hours per week, for 12 weeks or equivalent); the duties being performed; details of training; internship goals; and description of how this internship relates to your professional development. At the conclusion of the internship, student and supervisor will each submit 250-500-word evaluations.

FILM 5700 3.0 Student Initiated Collaborative Inquiry

- This student-initiated collaborative inquiry (SICI) allows a group of students to create a supervised group study to explore a particular topic together, supervised by a faculty member, that is not already offered in current course offerings. Past SICIs have included MFAs working together with MAs and PhDs. Similar principles and procedures as FILM 5800 and FILM 5800A apply (see below).

FILM 5800 3.0 Independent Project and FILM 5800A 3.0 Directed Reading

- The Independent Project and Directed Reading courses are designed to address topics not covered by existing courses. Identify and initiate a topic (ideally thesis-related), identify a full-time faculty member and together create a detailed syllabus/work-plan of research/study, specifying learning objectives, a timetable of meetings and a list of assignments/readings, for approval by the GPD.
- Typically, the workplan/syllabus would identify readings/screenings that are the equivalent of a 3.0 half-course, plus a schedule of 3-4 one-hour meetings with your supervisor, typically over the course of a term.
- The Independent Project course can have a research-creation component, involving projects and assignments typical of a 3.0 production or screenwriting course.

5. Supervisory Committee

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE FORMATION

Each MFA committee consists of one Supervisor and one Committee Member, drawn from the [Graduate Program faculty](#). Some members of the Graduate Program may be outside the Department of Cinema & Media Arts ([CMA](#)). In some cases, students may have a 3-person committee, with a Supervisor from the Program, and two Committee Members or two Co-Supervisors and a Committee Member.

The Program uses a “matchmaking” process to form supervisory committees, with the GPD suggesting appropriate committees based on student and faculty input.

Student input: During Term 1, students will have opportunities to familiarize themselves with potential supervisory committee members. Students are encouraged to start with the Film/Cinema & Media Studies [Graduate Program faculty](#), whose faculty research profiles can be found online. In FILM 5400 Grad Seminar, there will be an opportunity to hear short research presentations from CMA faculty and speak with some faculty. There may be a faculty member outside the Program with particular expertise for your topic. Students can look at faculty profiles and also search the [Discover York Academics](#) resource. Most faculty members at York University can be appointed to the Graduate Program if they are interested in serving on your supervisory committee. Students may contact individual professors with whom they may be interested in working, on the understanding that final supervisory committee decisions are made by the Program.

In September and October, students will write a 1-page Thesis Precis that will include: title, genre, 1-2 paragraph synopsis, description of form, and framing of topic in relation to other disciplines (Production MFAs should add a summary of proposed production schedule and crew). Students are encouraged to add an extra page of bibliography/filmography. During your MFA, you'll continually generate subtle variations on this 1-page Precis, useful for grant applications, pitches, and class presentations.

Faculty input: All CMA faculty will read the 1-page thesis precis (plus optional bibliography & filmography). In addition, each student will submit a confidential “wish list” of suggestions/requests for possible supervisors or committee members. The wish list is read **only** by the GPD. CMA faculty read the thesis precis (but not student wish lists) and respond by suggesting to the GPD which Thesis proposals they feel they could contribute to.

The GPD works from students' wish lists and faculty feedback to form tentative committees. The GPD may approach students and/or faculty with suggestions for possible committees. Keep in mind: due to complex factors, not all students may get their first choice for supervisory committees. However, the Program has a veto policy whereby no student will be forced to work with a faculty member they do not want to work with, and no faculty member will be forced to work with a student they do not want to work with. During their degree, students are also free to seek additional informal input from other faculty besides their committee members.

When supervisory committees are confirmed, students must formally submit their supervisory committee to the FGS [Graduate Supervisor and Supervisory Committee Portal](#) no later than January 31st. Students will be unable to proceed with any other academic milestones until their supervisory committees have been approved.

WORKING WITH YOUR SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Students are urged to examine FGS guidelines on Supervision and adapt the FGS “[Discussion Topics to Inform Productive Supervisory Relationships](#)” documents.

At your first meeting, it is essential to write up a detailed supervisory plan including a schedule of agreed-upon meetings and thesis progress benchmarks with your supervisory team. The schedule will ensure that you receive the support you need during your MFA. Be realistic about faculty schedules, and sensitive to

their other commitments. Identify agreed-upon deadlines in advance for feedback. You will update that schedule throughout your studies.

If you do not receive a response to emails directed to your supervisor and/or committee members within 2 weeks, send a polite nudge/reminder. If you do not receive a response to the reminder email, send a final nudge/reminder email and cc the GPD for follow-up. There may be circumstances preventing timely responses from faculty members that the GPD can investigate.

A recommended model could be that your full committee meets once a term, with monthly zoom/in-person meetings with your supervisor and zoom/in-person meetings with your committee member as needed. The Program suggests that all faculty members set up a monthly “office hour” time when students should check in on thesis and other academic progress. Send your supervisor drafts of your script/support paper/ rough and fine cut edit for feedback, and selected versions to your committee member. Sending links has become the preferred method for review, but your supervisor may arrange for in-person sessions.

Your committee should approve in writing the following stages of your thesis before you can proceed to the next stage:

- Thesis proposal
- For Production MFAs
 - Shooting script/production plan and schedule
 - Rough cut
 - Picture lock
- For Screenwriting MFAs
 - Treatments/outlines
 - Interim drafts
 - Final Draft
- Final draft of support paper

FEEDBACK

You are encouraged to recruit other faculty/colleagues/collaborators/fellow students for feedback. Some supervisors often prefer to be ‘first eyes’ on various stages of your scripts/edits/support papers— so make sure you coordinate any additional feedback with your supervisor. Graduate school is defined by a rich variety of feedback—from supervisor, committee members, classmates, and other faculty—which can sometimes be contradictory. Your job is to engage with and consider all feedback. The Program prioritizes critical engagement, and, in the end, you may agree to disagree with feedback you receive as long as you have thoroughly engaged with supervisory committee feedback.

CONFLICTS WITH YOUR COMMITTEE

If you find yourself in conflict with a member of your supervisory committee, we advise students first to engage directly with the faculty member in question. Students may wish to include other members of the supervisory committee in these conversations. Students may also bring their confidential concerns to the GPD or other members of the Program’s Grad Executive Committee. If these conflicts go beyond differences of opinion, and if students conclude that they have exhausted attempts at dialogue, a new faculty member may replace a previous member of the supervisory committee if an appropriate faculty member can be found. Cases of changing the membership of a supervisory committee are rare, but the Program prioritizes support for student success and will support student requests to change supervisory committees after conflict mediation has been attempted.

FACULTY LEAVES

Most faculty will continue to serve on your supervisory committees during their sabbaticals or other leaves and will make themselves available to you, within reasonable limits. If a member of your

supervisory committee is going on leave/sabbatical, check in with them on their availability. If a faculty member is not available, a substitute supervisor (likely a committee member) or new committee member can be appointed.

6. Other Academic Milestones & Training Opportunities

GRAD SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

In the 4th term, all 2nd year MFA students are expected to present a report on their work-in-progress at Grad Symposium, a two-day event in October/November. All MA and MFA students of their cohort are required to attend along with faculty members to provide constructive critical feedback to presenters.

- Presentations are normally 15 minutes in length, followed by a 10-minute discussion period moderated by your supervisor
- The presentation sums up your academic and thesis work to date.
 - Production MFAs are expected to screen an excerpt of a rough cut or selected rushes
 - Screenwriting MFAs are expected to present an outline of their thesis project
- Students should prepare slides and/or media files to be presented either from the student's laptop or sent to the Symposium chair in advance
 - The internet is notoriously unreliable in classrooms, so make sure all elements & clips are downloaded on your laptop or drive.
- Students should prepare and rehearse presentations in advance, both for content and also for timing.

Here is a possible outline of elements to present in your 15 minutes.

1. Introduction (1 min) - Succinctly summarize your thesis project -- title, genre, length, content, form, your cast/crew. If your project changed, briefly discuss earlier thesis plans
2. Influences & Inspirations (2 min) - Succinctly summarize your influences (cinematic, theoretical, artistic) and place this new film/script in the context of your previous work: is it a continuation or a departure?
3. Production / writing report (3 min) - Include what you accomplished this summer. Describe surprises, new discoveries, and lessons learned – successes and setbacks!
4. [for Production MFAs] - Excerpt from your rough cut - Make sure you frame the visual material, so the audience understands what they are seeing in context.
5. Conclusion (1 min) - Outline work left to accomplish and any issues you are still struggling with. Conclude with some specific questions you want the audience to engage with, which will set the agenda for the Q & A, ensuring that the discussion is useful for where your thesis currently is.

PROGRESS REPORT

Each year (typically in April/May) all students must submit a mandatory Progress Report to the Program office, via the [Progress Report Portal](#). This report provides the student, supervisory committee, and program office an official check-in to ensure that students are making good academic progress.

Students and supervisors use this as an opportunity to take stock of the past year, to detail their progress on academic milestones (courses, supervisory committee, thesis proposal), and to flesh out plans for the upcoming academic year, including a plan to complete the thesis production or screenplay by the end of second year.

The supervisor is required to comment on and approve this report and committee members may also provide comments. Students have an opportunity to respond to comments from the supervisory committee. The GPD reviews all reports.

Students who have not made satisfactory progress according to Program Milestone deadlines will be required to meet with the Supervisor and GPD to discuss progress and lay out specific deadlines. Failure to meet these deadlines may result in the student's withdrawal for failure to make academic progress.

TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA) OPPORTUNITIES

Although employment as a TA is not an academic milestone, nor required for MFA students, the Program attempts to provide students with opportunities to work as a TA in the Department of Cinema & Media Arts.

- TA assignments are contingent on students making strong academic progress and pending availability in undergraduate courses.
- Students may be assigned a 0.5 TA assignment either in Term 4 or 5, or in some cases, a full 1.0 TA assignment across Fall and Winter.
- TA assignments are made by CMA in consultation with the Program, student, GPD, and course directors (CDs).

TA assignments can only be offered to funded, full-time students making good academic progress.

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Students are urged to take advantage of pedagogical training available at York University through the Teaching Commons, FGS, YUGSA, Knowledge Mobilization Unit (KMb), and the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion (CHREI).

7. The Thesis

An MFA thesis consists of an original video/film or screenplay (weighted at approximately 75%) plus a support paper (weighted at approximately 25%)

Acceptable MFA thesis formats are *complex digital* or *multimodal*, in line with Faculty of Graduate Studies Regulations. <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/masters-thesis/>

For Production MFAs, a thesis is typically an original short film written and directed by the student, but can also be a moving image media installation, interactive media art piece or documentary, or a dossier/series of short films/media works. Other formats may be discussed with your supervisory committee and the Program Grad Exec.

Your thesis should be appropriate in scale, length, budget, and ambition to available resources. In general, limit your thesis film to 10-25 minutes in length. Our current resources, staff and facilities don't allow us to support feature production. Instead, you may use a short MFA Thesis film as a proof-of-concept that may expand towards that feature after degree completion.

For Screenwriting MFAs, a thesis is the final draft of an original feature-length screenplay or for a TV series, a script for an episode along with a series bible. Alternative screenwriting modalities may be considered by the supervisory committee in consultation with the Grad Executive. In all cases, the student is the sole author.

Ensure that the scope of your Thesis project is feasible for completion within the 2 years of the MFA

PLANNING YOUR THESIS - THESIS TIMELINE

The MFA is designed to support development of the Thesis project with several milestones to keep students on track.

Term 1:

- Development of your thesis proposal in the core course (**FILM 5010** for Production MFAs and **FILM 5110** for Screenwriting MFAs)
- The 1-page **Thesis Precip** should form the basis of your SSHRC CGRS-M/OGS grant
- Formation of **Supervisory Committee**

Term 2:

- **Thesis Proposal** developed and approved by your committee by end of February.
- **Progress report**, due at the end of this term, outlines progress so far and a detailed plan for Thesis completion by end of Term 5

Term 3:

- Production MFAs: **Prep and shoot your Thesis film**
 - Equipment is prioritized for MFA students only between April - August
- Screenwriting MFAs: **write your 1st full draft of your thesis screenplay or television series**

Term 4:

- **Grad Symposium** presentation of Thesis in progress
 - Production MFAs: Screen excerpt or rushes
 - Screenwriting MFAs: outline of Thesis screenwriting work-in-progress
- Production MFAs: Editing of Thesis film
- Screenwriting MFAs: further revisions of your screenplay or television series

Term 5:

- Production MFAs: Picture lock your thesis film with at least a temp sound mix and complete final version for defence
- Screenwriting MFAs: Complete final draft of screenplay or television series
- **Thesis defence**

WORKBACK SCHEDULE

All students are strongly advised to create a workback schedule in collaboration with your supervisory committee. Used by many who manage projects of varying scales, a workback schedule begins with your target date of completion and works its way back to a date when you would start submitting drafts of your screenplay or edits of your film and support paper drafts.

- Break down your Thesis into smaller parts and assign deadlines to them (e.g., draft of Part X, due YYYY/MM/DD).
- Create a workback schedule from the final deadline for approval of your full Thesis by your supervisory committee to create sub-deadlines.
- Be sure to account for time for your committee to give feedback, normally 2-3 weeks, and for you to respond to feedback.
- It is vital that students stay in contact with their supervisory committee to outline manageable objectives for each term.

Some tools and structures that might help students with Thesis progress include:

- Form or join writing/work groups. Examples of writing group formats include
 - *feedback groups* in which peers share work in progress
 - *writing together groups* (online or in-person where peers simply commit to working on their final projects together)
 - *accountability groups*, where students meet regularly to outline plans and then provide updates on how plans went that week.
- York Libraries has specific supports for [graduate students](#), including [Writing and Publishing Guides](#), and the [Graduate Reading Room](#), a quiet space on campus for work. York's [Writing Centre](#) helps grad students too.

THESIS PROPOSAL

In Term 1, all students prepared a 1-page Thesis **Precis** for use in supervisory committee formation and the CGRS-M/OGS grant application.

By late February students must develop an expanded Thesis **Proposal** that is submitted to FGS for approval.

- The Thesis Proposal can expand past the constraints of the 1-page Precis to help students develop and formulate their Thesis project.
- Thesis proposals may not exceed 3500 words with suggested length of 2-5 pages (plus bibliography/filmography).
- The content of the proposal must be written using full sentences. Bullet points are not appropriate.
- FGS Regulations: “At a minimum, the proposal should contain a brief statement in non-technical language on the purpose/goals of the thesis/dissertation research, its relationship to existing work in the area, through an abbreviated literature review, the research [or creative] question(s), the proposed methodology(ies) with rationale, and the contribution which the researcher [or artist] hopes to make to the advancement of knowledge [or artistic exploration] in the field. In addition, the proposal includes a title, the name of the supervisor and the supervisory committee. The title

should indicate as clearly as possible the area of research [or creative work], but it is understood that this title may change. The recommended maximum length of a proposal is 3,500 words, but individual programs may require proposals of a greater length. Proposals must be reviewed and approved by a student's thesis or dissertation committee."

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/masters-thesis/>

RESEARCH ETHICS

- All Thesis projects are subject to approval by the Office of Research Ethics to ensure that human participants are protected in research projects.
- Thesis projects that are considered "creative practice" rather than "research" are exempt from research ethics protocols. Fiction films and screenwriting and experimental and documentary forms that are primarily personal expression are normally exempt.
- In some cases, documentary or experimental work that involves interviews with or filming of human subjects and that is pursuing research questions may require a research ethics protocol to be submitted with the Thesis Proposal.
- You may consult with the GPD and the Program's Delegated Research Ethics Committee for guidance. For more information on research ethics, see <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/research-ethics/>

**** If your Thesis is deemed to be research that involves human participants, the Thesis Proposal and Research Ethics Protocol must be approved by the Graduate Program Delegated Research Ethics Committee and FGS BEFORE fieldwork and/or primary research with human participants begins ****

CHANGING YOUR THESIS

Changing your thesis project is possible, and often a healthy response to the possibilities of the program, and your own evolving priorities. But students must consult with their supervisory committee through an in-person or Zoom committee meeting during which the student articulates their reasons for changing topic. Switching from a production to a screenwriting thesis is discouraged. Students who change their Thesis topic must develop a new Thesis Proposal, which must be approved by your committee and GPD through the FGS Proposal Portal before being approved by FGS. Note that if the thesis proposal on file at FGS diverges substantially from the thesis proposed for defence at the end of your degree, FGS may delay or refuse to approve the defense request.

COMMITTEE SIGN-OFF

Throughout your thesis creation process, your committee will offer you a range of vigorous and rigorous opinions, suggestions and criticisms regarding your thesis project and support paper. It is your responsibility to consider, engage, and test each idea seriously. However, at the end of the day, it is your responsibility to make final decisions about the form and content of your thesis project and support paper. In the (very rare) occasion when there is significant disagreement between committee members and candidate regarding a thesis project and/or support paper (for instance, a student feels their thesis is ready to defend, and the committee will not sign off), the GPD can step in to facilitate a solution. Solutions could include the program asking the student for one more edit/version or the defense going forward, with the supervisor or committee member stepping down from participating.

THESIS SUPPORT PAPER

You are required to prepare a support paper to accompany the Thesis project. It should be an approximately 5000-word document (20–25-pages at 12 pt., double-spaced, Times Roman) that critically examines:

- the inspiration and influences that shaped the creation of your thesis

- core theoretical/aesthetic concepts/question(s) that your thesis engages with, drawn from diverse fields of knowledge
- the relationship of your thesis to existing works by others, and to the evolution of your own work
- questions explored, problems struggled with, and lessons learned (practical, aesthetic, philosophical, ethical, etc.) during the creation of your thesis.

Your support paper should not be a mere production diary or memoir but can be based on notes that you take during your MFA degree. It should aspire to situate your creative process within relevant intellectual, creative and cultural debates, as they relate to your form and content, and to our larger contemporary media arts community. This is a place to wrestle with ideas that excite you; push yourself in terms of readings and theorists and jump into current debates regarding cinema and media today.

Note: While the 20–25-page support paper length is suggested, some may be longer with the agreement of your supervisory committee, and if the extra length does not delay the thesis defence.

York University requires that every support paper be submitted for posting online on [YorkSpace](#). Your support paper will then become publicly available. Do not include any information in your support paper that is sensitive (personally, politically, etc.) and that should not be available publicly.

Students may request a temporary embargo to delay publication of the support paper, normally for up to a maximum of three years, with a rationale. Talk to the GPA and fill out this [form](#). Retroactive and/or permanent embargoes may be requested if political or personal circumstances create potential risk for the filmmaker and/or persons named in the support paper.

Students should familiarize themselves with the FGS [Organization and Technical Requirements](#) for documents, including specific required elements e.g. cover page, abstract, table of contents, etc. You are urged to embed these formatting rules in your support paper in advance.

- If your support paper does not follow these standards, FGS will not accept your thesis documents until you make corrections. This can delay your completion; students may (and have in the past!) missed refund and convocation deadlines due to the substantial corrections they have had to go back to make.

Examples of recent MFA support papers can be found here (search by filmmaker):
<https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/26545>

If you want to restrict access to your film or screenwriting Thesis your support paper should not include links to your film/screenplay. However, you must include email/contact information in your support paper so scholars/readers can request access to your thesis.

Intended Audience

While you are aiming for academic depth, write your support paper for an imagined audience of fellow filmmakers, engaging the full range of critical, theoretical, aesthetic, philosophical, and practical issues that you and they both grapple with as artists working in the medium of cinema.

Appendices

Where appropriate, you may include appendices (storyboards, step outline, script, one-line shooting schedule, visual research, sketches, shot lists, festival plan, production diary excerpts) in addition to your 20–30-page paper.

Images

Feel free to use stills/photographs/illustrations/graphics in your support paper. However, FGS follows strict regulations regarding copyright and clearances, so for online publication, remove photographs that you do not have clearances/permission for (unless fair dealing applies).

Footnotes, Bibliography & Filmography

- The Program recommends Chicago Style (Notes Bibliography) for footnotes and bibliographies but you may use other formats after consultation with your supervisory committee. https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/tools_citationguide.html
- For guidance on citation, see York University Libraries SPARK resources: <https://spark.library.yorku.ca/creating-bibliographies-citing-sources-part-of-academic-culture/>
- Bibliographies should include texts/articles/books that you cite in your support paper but may also include works that influenced your research.
- Your Filmography may include works as influences in terms of form/content, including your own films.

Support Paper Sample Timeline

Typically, plan on writing 3 drafts to be submitted to your supervisory committee, incorporating their feedback and comments, with the final one requiring just a quick polish. Below is an ideal/sample timeline of 10 weeks (which is optimistic!):

- Write 1st draft, submit to committee: 3 weeks
- Notes/feedback on 1st draft from committee: 2-3 weeks
- Revise 2nd draft, submit: 1 week
 - Use Track Changes or highlighted text for faster review by the supervisory committee, who can focus on changes and new content
- Committee feedback on 2nd draft: 2 weeks
- Revise and complete 3rd/final draft: 4 days
- Committee officially signs off on this **final** draft (via email to GPD/GPA): 1 week

Possible Structure for Support Paper

Below is one possible model for what an MFA support paper can look like. But there is no singular model that is correct or appropriate for each project. Some are quite scholarly; others prioritize the experiences of process/creation; others adopt an experimental form/mode of address. Adapt this structure to the particular needs of your thesis film and your own passions/interests.

1. Cover page, Abstract, Table of Contents
 - a. You must follow FGS [Organization and Technical Requirements](https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/masters-thesis/) for this part of the support paper <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/masters-thesis/>
 - b. Abstract should be maximum 150 words: include title, length, form, content, genre/idiom, scale/timeline of production, and a succinct overview of thesis project.
2. Introduction
 - a. Expand on the content of your abstract and address larger ideas through focusing on questions that are specific to your thesis project
3. Background on your specific theme/topic
 - a. why/how you came to choose this theme/topic; background on theme/topic; how your relationship to theme/topic evolved/changed through your process
4. Background on your specific form
 - a. why/how you came to choose your form; traditions/histories/debates related to your form; specific films/filmmakers or other artists that influenced/inspired/shaped your form
5. Your own artistic background
 - a. introduce and discuss your previous work, both in film and other mediums if relevant; does your thesis grow out of or depart from your previous work?
 - b. your influences: which filmmakers/artists/practices have significantly shaped your practice? Do you feel part of a specific community of makers?
6. Production MFAs: Prep/production/Post
 - a. An account of stages of your creation process, e.g.,

- i. field research trips/location scouting
 - ii. workshopping of formal techniques (e.g., camera or production design tests)
 - iii. audition/rehearsal processes
 - iv. visualizing your film: working with your DOP
 - v. crew responsibilities and processes -- engaging with your collaborators
 - vi. descriptions of shooting key scenes, especially moments which surprised you
 - vii. working with key collaborators (editor, composer) in post
 - viii. promotion/distribution/festival plan
7. Ethical Issues
 - a. Explore any ethical issues you navigated in creating your thesis, e.g., questions of perspective, appropriation, voice, rights, libel, collaboration, trust, authorship
8. Conclusion

THE DEFENSE

All MFA students “defend” their Thesis project in an oral examination. The thesis examining committee consists of at least three voting members, normally both members of the supervisory committee and a faculty member at arm’s length from the Thesis. Thesis examination regulations can be found here: <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/masters-thesis/>

- MFA defenses are open to our MFA community (fellow students, faculty, alumni, friends and family).
- Production MFA defenses typically begin with a screening of the thesis film.
- At the oral defense, candidates often choose to begin with a short statement and/or slide presentation (5-10 minutes) that summarizes the key points about their journey of creating the project, and any updates since delivery of support paper. Think of it as a “filmmaker’s/screenwriter’s commentary” on what you are defending.
- The oral examination is typically 90 minutes in length and involves two rounds of questions, starting with the arm’s length examiner, followed by the Chair, then the supervisor, followed by an open discussion. The first round typically addresses the thesis film/screenplay, while the second can engage with your support paper. The tone is ideally relaxed and rigorous, critical and interactive, supportive and vigorous, encouraging critical dialogue that engages with the form, content and context of your thesis project. Expect a rich conversation that explores your work in detail.
- An examination committee can pass your thesis a) with no revisions; b) pending specified revisions; or in very rare cases it can be c) referred pending major revisions. In most cases, revisions are requested to the support paper rather than the Thesis film/project/screenplay.
- The best preparation for your defense is to attend other defenses -- and your fellow students appreciate the support!

PLANNING THE THESIS DEFENCE

WORKING PHASE

After Grad Symposium, in the 4th term of study, is an ideal time for you to meet with your supervisory committee to determine a feasible defence target date based on the work completed so far. Defence deadlines, outlined in [FGS Important Dates](#), should be consulted for 5th term defences.

In consultation with the supervisory committee, a workback schedule should be planned where drafts of support papers/scripts/film(s) are submitted to the supervisory committee for feedback.

DEFENCE PLANNING PHASE

The defence planning process begins when the supervisory committee notifies the Program Office via email that they are signing off on your thesis material. From there, the Program Office will need a **minimum** of 6 weeks to administratively organize the thesis defence. Below is a high-level outline of the administrative process of setting up the defence:

- Supervisory Committee notifies Program Office they are signing off on student thesis materials
- GPA sends student a Microsoft Form to fill out
 - This will ask you to provide an abstract of your support paper and confirm the length of your paper/script/film
- GPA & GPD review form and GPD begins reaching out to possible arm's length examiners
- GPA works with Examining Committee to finalize a date/time for the defence
- Recommendation of Oral Examination is submitted to FGS via Flowable at least 20 business days before the defence date

PRE-DEFENCE PHASE

Once the defence has been set up by the Program Office:

- The supervisor will submit all thesis material to the arm's length examiner for review at least 3 weeks prior to the defence date, though 4-5 weeks in advance of the defence is preferred
- NO changes to the examining materials are permitted after this submission. This includes updates to the support paper, film, and scripts

POST DEFENCE PHASE

After the defence:

- The examining committee will inform you of the oral examination results
- The examining committee signs off on your Oral Exam Report
- GPA submits report to FGS within 48 hrs. of the defence
- Once the report is processed by FGS, you will be sent a communication with instructions on how to upload your thesis support paper to YorkSpace using the ETD

SUBMITTING YOUR SUPPORT PAPER TO FGS

The submission of the support paper to YorkSpace via the ETD is considered the final step of the defence process. Continuous registration is required until the paper has been submitted and approved by FGS.

Please note, once the support paper has been uploaded to YorkSpace it becomes widely accessible to the public. Please keep this in mind if there is sensitive or personal information in your work.

If your work is highly sensitive in nature, you can submit a request for an Embargo [here](#). You must submit your support paper to YorkSpace for the Embargo to go into effect.

It is not necessary to upload your script or film to YorkSpace, only your support paper.

It is recommended to include the following sentence in your support paper: "Scholars, researchers and fellow filmmakers who wish to view my thesis film / read my screenplay can contact me at: filmgpa@yorku.ca. Please explain your interest and confirm that it is for personal / private research purposes only, and that you will respect my copyright and not screen my film publicly in any manner."

TIMELY COMPLETION

This is a five-term program, and the expectation is that students will adhere to the program milestones and complete their thesis in the 5th term. If necessary, it is possible to register part-time for a 6th term (usually Summer of MFA2) or subsequent term to defend your Thesis. You will be responsible for paying tuition

after the 5th term, though FGS has a refund schedule that will refund some tuition depending on when you have completed all degree requirements and defended the Thesis.

The expectation is that you will maintain **continuous registration** until you have completed your degree, even if you are past your 5 funded terms. If you are unable to complete your degree within 5 terms, please be in touch with the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Assistant.

The crucial factor for a timely completion is early engagement with your committee. Shared planning and updating realistic schedules for research and writing, while balancing the other requirements and opportunities in the degree, is crucial.

After your last funded 5th term:

- Your status will automatically change from full-time student to part-time student. This may impact your ability to apply for and receive certain awards/bursaries as most are reserved for full-time graduate students only.
- You will need to register for the term on time; failure to do so will result in a \$200 penalty.
- You will need to pay the part-time tuition fees, which are around \$950. When/if payments are not made on time, interest will be applied to any outstanding balances at a rate of 1.09%. (This rate is subject to change at any time by the University).
- Registered students maintain access to the equipment room and library and yorku.ca email.
- If you defend your thesis within the first two months of your 6th term, you may be eligible for a tuition refund. Typically, a 100% refund is generated if you successfully defend and deposit all post-defense paperwork by the end of the first month of the term. Please note that although you will receive a refund during this period, there is still a \$15-30 non-refundable administrative fee you will need to pay. For the most accurate refund dates, please refer to the [FGS Important Dates](#) page.

Top 6 Reasons why MFAs don't finish

1. Feature fever – short films turn into feature length projects
2. Scale of production - going too big with cast/crew/gear/locations)/production design, budget
3. Too much focus on course work and doing BIG COMPLICATED course assignments. Get them done and move on!
4. Procrastination - don't delay going to camera – or locking picture!
5. Festival dreams - trying to make THE calling card that plays Sundance. Our MFA is a sandbox not a podium
6. Thesis support paper ambition (wanting to write THE definitive essay) and anxiety (don't fetishize “academic standards”)

8. Production MFA Thesis Films

FUNDING YOUR THESIS FILM

The Program does not have designated funds to support MFA Production thesis projects. Below are some opportunities and considerations regarding funding Thesis productions.

- MFA students can access York **Program equipment and facilities**, which is prioritized for grad students from April – August
- All **student funding** you may receive in connection with your MFA studies can be used toward the thesis film, e.g., York Graduate Fellowship
- **Student awards** like CGRS-M/OGS can be used for thesis films but because award results are not announced until the end of Term 2, **students should not budget their production presuming they will receive a CGRS-M or OGS award.** Have a plan for a low budget version.
- Students are free to raise funds from other sources (e.g., crowdfunding, private foundations) to fund their thesis films, as long as they maintain full copyright and full decision-making over content, which will likely eliminate broadcast licenses and distribution advances.
- **Students are prohibited from using arts council funding** toward the production of a Thesis film. This prohibition exists for Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Councils; check the regulations if you are applying to other arts councils.
 - If the arts council feels that you are using their grant funds towards a Thesis film, they can request return of grant funds. Moreover, a violation of that rule may affect your future with a major institution for potential future funding.
 - Note that students *are* eligible for arts council funding for stand-alone projects *separate* from student filmmaking. For these applications, you may request a letter from the GPD confirming that your thesis film is distinct from the stand-alone project grant application.
- The Program has a number of **in-kind grants and small cash awards**, adjudicated by a faculty jury, that are specifically designated to support Thesis Film productions. Applications from first year MFA students are due in April for summer filming and production.
- **Academic Excellence Fund (AEF)**: Students conducting fieldwork, film shoots, including travel to archives, conventions, etc. may apply to FGS for AEF funds, which can provide up to \$2000 per academic year to support your research. Due to the popularity of the AEF, it is unlikely that students will get a full \$2000 grant.
 - AEF has application windows for each term (Fall, Winter, and Summer).
 - Students must have an approved Thesis proposal on file at FGS to be eligible for AEF funding
 - Students must retain receipts for AEF expenses in case of audit.
- **Bursaries**: Full time students in financial need may apply annually for FGS Bursaries. Application is made by filling out the Student Financial Profile ([FAAS](#)); financial need is determined by FGS using terms of reference set by OSAP. F/W Bursary SPF is due in January and Summer Bursary SPF is due in early June; check FGS for details.
- **In-Kind Grants**: MFA students are encouraged to apply for in-kind grants to help finance their production thesis film. Applications will open during the start of summer term (third term) and must be used for thesis development **within** the third or fourth term. In-Kind grant providers and services are listed below:

In-kind grant provider	Service provided
Alter Ego	Color-grading
Picture Shop (previously Technicolor)	Post-production services (color, VFX, Online edit, etc.)
Wisacre	Props rental
MBSE (previously SIM)	Lighting and Grip (Tapes and gels are excluded)
Keslow Camera (formerly SIM Camera)	camera+ accessories (lenses, etc.)
HABIBI Film Rentals	Film equipment rentals

- All eligible students are encouraged to apply for FGS [Internal Awards](#) <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/awards-and-scholarships/> MFA students may be eligible for the following commonly applied to awards but must check their own eligibility and deadlines (watch for FGS News monthly email):
 - [Lawrence Heisey Graduate Award in Fine Arts](#)
 - [St. George's Society of Toronto Endowment for Graduate Student Award](#) -
 - [Zdenka Volavka Research Fellowship](#)
 - [Jacques Israelievitch Scholarship in Interdisciplinary Arts](#)
 - [Abella Scholarship for Studies in Equity](#)
 - [Armand and Denise LaBarge Graduate Scholarship in Multiculturalism](#)
 - [CCCJ–John Lockwood Memorial Award](#)
 - [David Hunter Jorgensen Memorial Award](#)
 - [Mamdouh and Susan Shoukri Graduate Award](#)
 - [Penelope Jane Glasser Graduate Scholarship](#)
 - [Pierre Elliott Trudeau Fellowship at York University](#)
 - Note that there are other FGS [Internal Awards](#) specific to area studies (e.g., Canada, Asia, Greece, Caribbean and Latin America, etc.) or specific research areas

FILM 411

The [website](#) is a resource for both undergraduate and graduate students, with production forms, lists, information, templates, booking calendar, insurance regulations, equipment room procedures etc. Policies specific to the MFA program are [here](#) but other parts of the resource may be applicable to MFA students.

To shoot on campus, see the appropriate section in Film411 <https://flm411.ampd.yorku.ca/space-bookings/>

ACTRA

For both your course assignments and your thesis film, the ACTRA student agreement allows you to:

- work with union actors without the requirements to compensate them
- gives you the freedom to work jointly with non-union and union actors, at the same time, on the same project

For thesis films, download the appropriate forms and ACTRA # available on [film 411](#). Assignments and course projects typically do not need an ACTRA #, only thesis films.

CASTING is done through online casting resources such as [Mandy](#), your own direct outreach to actors, or [Casting Workbook](#), a vital resource as it posts your breakdowns directly to agents, potentially reaching a more established pool of actors.

INSURANCE

Every MFA student is automatically enrolled in York's general insurance policy that covers almost everything for your production - except vehicles - while you are a registered student in our program -- from small shoots for classroom projects to full coverage for larger-scale thesis films, including your equipment, locations, and art department. It is a professional policy that equipment suppliers and locations like the City of Toronto require. You must fill out a form available here <https://flm411.ampd.yorku.ca/insurance/> and get the approval of your course director and GPD to be covered.

Please note, as of September 1st, 2025, Risk Management will no longer be arranging for Accident on Set (AoS) coverages for ACTRA talent and will request that students who choose to use ACTRA talent in their productions go through the application process directly with AoS. Risk Management at York University will continue with the regular review of student films and the issuance of certificates of insurance for liability (rentals, film locations, etc.) and help students navigate the AoS process.

GRADUATE EQUIPMENT & STUDIO POLICIES

Each year, our Equipment Room staff services several hundred class assignments, dozens of camera/lighting/sound workshops, and production packages for over 200 graduate and undergraduate films. Each booking requires prep, check out, check in, and maintenance. Our studio staff are committed to supporting graduate production in whatever ways are possible, as long as requests are within reason, and coordinated with the capacities of our equipment room.

You can book equipment/studios for course assignments (typically 1-2 per course max, 1 weekend per assignment), thesis workshopping (within limits and pending availability, 1-2 short bookings per term) and thesis production.

Studio Staff:

- Production Area Coordinator: Jon Hedley (jhedley@yorku.ca)
- Equipment Administration Coordinator: Stephanie Adamson (sadamson@yorku.ca)
- Film Technician: Marcos Arriaga (marriaga@yorku.ca)
- Film Technician: Gilbert Kwong (gilbertk@yorku.ca)
- York University Motion Media Studio (YUMMS) coordinator at Cinespace: Christina Dovolis (chrdovo@yorku.ca)

Equipment Room Hours (CFT 136):

- For the most up-to-date hours, please refer to signage posted outside CFT 136 or visit [Film411/Connect2](#) online

Booking Equipment:

- Please refer to [film 411](#) for information on what equipment is available and how to book it
- For thesis workshop and thesis film shoots, your supervisor might be asked to send staff an email confirming the agreement of the booking.

Thesis Film Shoots

- Larger, higher-end camera packages are available to Grads for their thesis shoots during the April-Aug summer window of Grad priority, for a single block of up to 5 days (plus 1 day pickup + 1 day return), and in special cases, approved by the GPD, for a maximum of 2 blocks of up to 5 days each (plus 1 day pickup + 1 day return).
- The DOP must be approved by the Supervisor & GPD. Email the Equipment Administration Coordinator (sadamson@yorku.ca) with their CV and short statement of their training/experience, cc to supervisor and GPD, as well as email approval from supervisor, and a production plan that indicates you have adequate crew, vehicles, production insurance, and well-planned shooting schedule to support these large packages.
- Students wishing to travel with York U gear to shoot must contact the equipment room directly for availability and approval **at least 3 weeks** ahead of their scheduled pick-up.

Production Studios:

Can be **booked for up to 2 days at a time** for course assignments and thesis workshopping during the fall and winter terms, and up to 10 days during the summer term for thesis shoots

- CFT 115 - 800 sf w/ black curtains, lighting grid, one room standing set
- CFT 104 - 800 sf w/ black curtains, lighting grid
- CFT 130 - 2000 sf w/ black curtains

- YUMMS at Cinespace - 3800 sf studio w/ 2-room standing set, motion capture facility, green screen, 2 classrooms

Sound and Online Suites

Can be booked in up to 2 blocks per year of up to 4 consecutive days:

- CFT 129 -- Mixing/Foley w sound booth, mixing board
- CFT 137A -- Mixing board
- CFT 123L & 123M -- online grading w/Da Vinci Resolve
- CFT 109 -- Grad Edit corridor with 7 computers, equipped with Adobe Premiere, After Effects and Photoshop, Avid Media Composer, Final Cut, Pro Tools, and Resolve.

CREDITS ON YOUR THESIS FILM

As creator, and in most cases, producer, you hold the copyright to all the films you make during your MFA, including class assignments and your thesis film. Your credits are expected to accurately reflect both your role(s) and the contributions of all your collaborators, following the best practices of independent film production.

- All class assignments and thesis films must include the text "Made in York University's Film MFA Program," including a York University logo, in the final credits. Up-to-date York logos are available [here](#).
- All York In-kind grants and cash grants, and any other funding awards received for your thesis film during your MFA, must be appropriately acknowledged in your credits, as per the terms of each award. You must also acknowledge Tri-Council (SSHRC, OGS, CGRS-M) funding.
 - o SSHRC signatures/logos can be found [here](#).
- Students who wish to acknowledge the contributions of committee, faculty and staff members in their credits often do so by including their names in their 'Special Thanks' list. It is not appropriate to assign any creative role, e.g., 'story editor,' to a faculty member.

9. Summary: Planning Your MFA

MFA - YEAR 1

Term 1 (Fall) – September to December

Required Courses

- FILM 5400 3.0 Grad Seminar** meets biweekly in Fall/Winter. Required course for all MA and MFA students. Emphasizes professional development (grant writing, research ethics, etc.).
- FILM 5010 3.0 Production** meets biweekly in Fall/Winter and is a required course for Production MFAs. Emphasizes thesis project development.
- FILM 5110 3.0 Screenwriting** is a required course for Screenwriting MFAs that analyzes the writing of fictional and non-fictional scripts from the perspectives of script idea, story, character, dialogue and background atmosphere and includes practical assignments in scriptwriting and student presentations of work in progress.

Elective Courses

- Enroll in 1-2 other courses. 15 credits (5 half-courses) is recommended as coursework to complete by the end of the first year of your MA.

Supervisory Committee

- Students submit a 1-page Thesis Precis to the GPD/GPA that will be distributed to faculty and assist in Supervisory committee formation.
- Students should look for faculty members who would be appropriate for your supervisory committee.
- Students will submit a “wish list” of faculty members for supervisor and committee member roles. See Supervisory Committee Formation above.

Awards

- All eligible students are expected to apply for Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Master’s (CGRS-M)/Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), due Dec 1 of each year. The 1-page Thesis Precis will be the foundation for your grant application.

Term 2 (Winter) – January to April

Courses

- FILM 5400 3.0 Grad Seminar** continues to meet biweekly in Winter.
- FILM 5010 3.0 Production** continues to meet biweekly in Winter.

Elective Courses

- Enroll in 1-2 other courses.

Supervisory Committee

- Students must formally submit their supervisory committee to the FGS [Graduate Supervisor and Supervisory Committee Portal](#) by January 31st.

Thesis Development

- Students must submit a full Thesis Proposal, approved by the Supervisory Committee, to the Faculty of Graduate Studies [Graduate Proposal Milestone Portal](#) by the end of February
- If the Thesis is deemed to involve research with human participants, the proposal must be accompanied by a [TD2 Research Ethics Protocol](#), to be approved by the Graduate Program Delegated Research Ethics Committee
-

Progress Reports

- Students are required to submit a Progress Report through the [Graduate Progress Report Portal](#) in April/May.

Teaching Assistantship (TA)

- Students interested in being employed as a TA in their second year must submit a CUPE 3903 Blanket Application by January 31.

Term 3 (Summer) – May to August

Courses

- Students may take additional courses during the summer term, including Summer Institutes and/or independent study courses (see Coursework section of Handbook)

Thesis Development

- For Production students, it is crucial for the successful completion of your MFA within five terms that you plan to shoot your thesis during this summer term. Graduate students only have priority access to CMA equipment and studios in April-August.
- Screenwriting students should write their 1st full draft of their thesis screenplay or television series within this term.

Awards

- Production MFAs are encouraged to apply for In-Kind and Cash Grants to support Thesis projects

MFA - YEAR 2

During your 4th & 5th and subsequent terms, you will be faced with the challenge of successfully completing your MFA: completing your course work, presenting at Grad Symposium, teaching as a TA (optional), and most importantly, finishing completing your thesis project and support paper, in preparation for your defense. Planning in MFA2 is critical.

Term 4 (Fall) – September to December

Courses

- MFA students require 18 credits or 6 half-courses. Students should complete any remaining course work by the end of their 4th term (for full-time students). This allows the final funded term of the degree (Term 5) to be focused on completing the thesis and working towards a defense/oral examination. Please note that since a thesis defense is considered the last step in a student's academic journey, students cannot take a course and defend their thesis within the same term. This means, if a student takes a course in their 5th term, they will have to register and pay for a 6th term to hold their defense.

Teaching Assistantship (TA)

- If you are making strong academic progress, and pending availability in undergraduate courses in the Department of Cinema & Media Arts, you may be assigned a 0.5 TA assignment *either* in Term 4 or 5 or in some cases a full 1.0 TA assignment across Fall and Winter.
- TA assignments are made by CMA in consultation with the Program, student, GPD, and course directors (CDs).
- Students are urged to take advantage of pedagogical training available at York University through the [Teaching Commons](#), [FGS](#), [YUGSA](#)

Grad Symposium

- All students must present their Thesis-in-progress at a two-day Graduate Symposium in late Fall (usually late October/late November). Besides a 10-15 minute presentation that sums up your work to date, you should include an excerpt of your rough cut, or at least, selected rushes.
- Before and/or after Grad Symposium, meet with your supervisory committee and establish/commit to Thesis completion timeline

Awards

- Term 4 is normally the last term to apply for AEF funding, which must be spent while you are a registered student.
- Any students interested in applying for PhD degrees are urged to apply for [SSHRC Doctoral Awards](#)/Ontario Graduate Scholarship ([OGS](#)), due in October.

Term 5 (Winter) – January to April

Teaching Assistantship (TA) - (see above)

Thesis Completion & Defence

- Meet with supervisory committee to finalize thesis project and create a workback schedule in January to defend your thesis in April

Progress Report

- Students that did not hold their thesis defense within the term must submit a Progress Report in April/May. Students who defend the Thesis before the end of the term or in the first term of Summer may not be required to submit the final Progress Report.

10. Graduate Program Governance

At York University, Graduate Programs fall under the academic governance of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS), although all Grad Programs are anchored in a resource Faculty. Film/Cinema & Media Studies (CMS) is anchored in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design (AMPD). Within AMPD, Film/CMS is aligned with the Department of Cinema & Media Arts (CMA), but it is important to remember that from a governance standpoint, the Graduate Program and Department are separate, with different general rules and meeting structures.

Department meetings are held several times a term between September and May whereas the Program holds two regular Grad Council meetings each year, one in late Fall and one in May (special Grad Council sessions may be held in Department meetings for short term course approval or other emergency business).

The Grad Program works closely with CMA and is housed in the Department. Most TA (Teaching Assistant) work is employment for undergraduate (UG) courses in CMA.

All CMA faculty members are appointed both to teach undergraduate students in AMPD and to teach and supervise graduate students in the Graduate Program of CMS/Film through FGS. Many faculty members are appointed to multiple Grad Programs at York University, and Film students are invited to avail themselves of the wide range of Grad faculty at York University (and beyond). Graduate faculty outside Film/CMS may be appointed as Full or Associate members of the Program if they are serving on your supervisory committees. In special cases, faculty outside York may be appointed as Adjunct Members of the Program through FGS. Graduate Faculty Membership information can be found on the [FGS website](#).

Opportunities for CMS graduate student involvement in governance

Graduate Film Student Association (GFSA): the GFSA is a student-run organization that responds to student priorities and interests. It is independent of the Grad Program and relies on the energies of students to coordinate representation in other bodies (see below), events, and other activities. GFSA has a bank account at Alterna Savings and is eligible for funding from the Grad Program (through CMA), YUGSA (York University Graduate Student Association), FGS (through the Professional Development Initiatives component of the AEF ([Academic Excellence Fund](#)), the [Graduate Student Wellness Initiative Fund](#), and in some cases by request from the offices of the Dean in AMPD for events, conferences, and other initiatives. GFSA leadership varies but usually elects a President and Vice-President in addition to other officers and representatives. The GFSA President(s) is a voting member of the Grad Program Executive Committee (Grad Exec). Past GFSA activities have included organizing conferences like the Film & Media Studies Association of Canada (FMSAC) Graduate Colloquium, social events, screenings, TA training seminars, etc. The GFSA is responsible to appoint or elect a representative to access YUGSA funding. The Grad Program consults with GFSA on student representation to Grad Council meetings. Student reports are solicited from students in each cohort of the MA and MFA programs, and senior and junior students in the PhD. If the GFSA does not nominate students, the Program will solicit volunteers.

FGS Council - Students run for election to FGS Council and/or may also be elected to [Subcommittees of FGS Council](#), including Academic Planning & Policy Committee (APPC), Awards, Petitions, and Appeals & Academic Honesty Committee.

AMPD Council includes graduate student representatives (through nomination or self-nomination), and its Grad Committee annually elects one Master's and one Doctoral student to represent grad students in grad programs in AMPD.

There are also opportunities for student membership to York University Senate and other committees. Students are urged to read the monthly FGS News digest and communications from YUGSA for information on involvement in York University governance.

11. Program, FGS, AMPD, University, and other resources

PROGRAM COMMUNICATIONS

Students are responsible for keeping their email up to date in the York system to receive important email from the Program GPA, GPD, FGS, and faculty. Note that students may have a second email address for TA work that is different from their student email. All students are required to be on the following listservs:

- FILM-GRAD-NOTICE@yorku.ca for all registered students, updated each term.
- FILMGRADS-MFA-xx@yorku.ca for your Production and Screenwriting cohort.
- FILMGRADS@yorku.ca is a general listserv for students and alumni for academic and professional jobs, York-related screenings or other events, and news about students, faculty, and alumni.

In addition, students and alums may 'opt-in' to the following listservs:

- **GRADFILMCFMAKERS**: production-related announcements for **filmmakers, screenwriters, and artists**, e.g., submissions for film and media festivals, artists residencies, pitch competitions, workshops, casting calls, and notices where filmmakers/media-makers are the primary audience.
- **GRADFILMCFPAPERS**: notices for which **scholars, critics, and programmer/curators** are the primary audience, e.g., calls for papers or CFPs for panels, conferences, books, journals, and other publications, and information about programming/curatorial opportunities.
- **GRADFILMEVENTS**: non-York-related **events in Toronto or online** e.g., screenings, festivals, readings, performances, etc.

General instructions on York listservs:

1. Email listserv@yorku.ca
2. Leave the subject line BLANK
3. To **subscribe**: In the body of the message, write the following:
subscribe [listname, e.g., gradfilmCFMakers] [your last name] [your first name]
e.g.: subscribe gradfilmCFMakers McQueen Steve
4. To **unsubscribe**: In the body of the message, write the following:
signoff [listname, e.g., gradfilmCFMakers]
e.g.: signoff gradfilmCFMakers

AWARDS AND FUNDING

Teaching Assistantships (TA): All graduate students must submit a blanket online application for CUPE Unit 1 Teaching Assistant employment to be considered for TA work in Term 4 or 5 in the 2nd year, pending availability.

Graduate Assistantships (GA): Full-time students may apply for CUPE Unit 3 GA positions that may arise at the university. These positions are usually NOT directly related to your own research. GA positions appropriate for CMS students are often advertised through Program listservs and a central listing can be found <https://cupejobs.uit.yorku.ca/>

Research Assistantships (RA): RA opportunities provide students with research experience as part of the Program's Degree Learning Objectives, guided by a faculty RA supervisor and/or major research project. While RA opportunities are not considered employment, they provide a stipend for student activities. RA opportunities are usually provided by faculty members in relation to their research projects.

Bursaries: Full time students in financial need may apply annually for FGS Bursaries. Application is made by filling out the Student Financial Profile ([FAAS](#)); financial need is determined by FGS using terms of reference set by OSAP. F/W Bursary SPF is due in January and Summer Bursary SPF is due in early June; check FGS for details.

All eligible students are expected to apply for Canada Graduate Research Scholarships – Master’s (CGRS- M)/Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), due on December 1 each year.

All eligible students are encouraged to apply for FGS Internal Awards. MFA students may be eligible for the following commonly applied to awards but must check their own eligibility and deadlines (watch for FGS News monthly email):

- [Lawrence Heisey Graduate Award in Fine Arts](#)
- [St. George’s Society of Toronto Endowment for Graduate Student Award -](#)
- [Zdenka Volavka Research Fellowship](#)
- [Jacques Israelievitch Scholarship in Interdisciplinary Arts](#)
- [Abella Scholarship for Studies in Equity](#)
- [Armand and Denise LaBarge Graduate Scholarship in Multiculturalism](#)
- [CCCJ–John Lockwood Memorial Award](#)
- [David Hunter Jorgensen Memorial Award](#)
- [Mamdouh and Susan Shoukri Graduate Award](#)
- [Penelope Jane Glasser Graduate Scholarship](#)
- [Pierre Elliott Trudeau Fellowship at York University](#)
- Note that there are other FGS Internal Awards specific to area studies (e.g., Canada, Asia, Greece, Caribbean and Latin America, etc.) or specific research areas
- Students at all levels in the Program should familiarize themselves with the many MITACS awards available. <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/awards-and-scholarships/mitacs-awards/>

IN-KIND GRANTS

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for in-kind grants to help finance their production thesis film. Applications will open during the start of summer term (third term) and must be used for thesis development **within** the third or fourth term. In-Kind grant providers and services are listed below:

In-kind grant provider	Service provided
Alter Ego	Color-grading
Picture Shop (previously Technicolor)	Post-production services (color, VFX, Online edit, etc.)
Wiseacre	Props rental
MBSE (previously SIM)	Lighting and Grip (Tapes and gels are excluded)
Keslow Camera (formerly SIM Camera)	camera+ accessories (lenses, etc.)
HABIBI Film Rentals	Film equipment rentals
Canada Film Equipment	Anything in their catalogue

ADDITIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- [Centre for Rights, Equity and Inclusion](#) runs many workshops, including [Rights Equity Diversity Inclusion \(REDI\) summer workshop series](#)
- Knowledge Mobilization training: MobilizeYU - <https://innovationyork.ca/knowledge-mobilization/mobilize-yu/>

HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES AT YORK

- Principles of Respectful Engagement and Complaint Procedures (Grad Program in Film/Cinema & Media Studies and Department of Cinema & Media Arts)
- FGS Wellness and Counselling services <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/grad-wellness-counselling/>
 - FGS has a Wellness Consultation & Counselling Service that individual students can access for in-person or online appointments. <https://aws-portal.owlpractice.ca/yorkcounselling/booking>
 - The Graduate Student Wellness Initiative Fund subsidizes the costs to develop or implement initiatives related to the promotion, awareness, or enhancement of mental health and well-being for the graduate student community at York University <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/grad-wellness-services/graduate-student-wellness-initiative-fund/>
 - See the website for more information on certificates and other resources
- Student Counselling & Development Office <http://counselling.students.yorku.ca/>
- Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <http://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>
- Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion (REI) <http://rights.info.yorku.ca/>
- The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education (The Centre) <http://thecentre.yorku.ca/>
- Sexual Assault Survivors' Support Line and Leadership (SASSL) <http://sassl.info.yorku.ca/>
- Office of Student Community Relations <http://oscr.students.yorku.ca/>
- Employee Well-Being <http://hr.info.yorku.ca/>
- Tait McKenzie Fitness Centre http://www.yorkulions.ca/sports/2013/4/12/GEN_0412133336.aspx?tab=taitmckenziecentre

12. Principles of Respectful Engagement and Complaint Procedures

YORK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA AND MEDIA ARTS
GRADUATE PROGRAM IN FILM/CINEMA & MEDIA STUDIES

Approved by CMA DEDI Committee March 26, 2025, and by the Department April 9, 2025

Introduction and Purpose

The Department and Graduate Program in Cinema & Media Arts (CMA) at York offer a comprehensive curriculum in all aspects of film and media arts. Courses in the creative crafts of cinematography, editing and sound, and digital production are offered alongside studies in the concepts and practices of film and media arts studies. Students work in a full range of digital and film formats, utilizing industry-standard production and post-production facilities, to produce work of a fully professional calibre. CMA combines technical instruction with a strong emphasis on the critical and creative study of film and media arts, as tools for storytelling, social engagement, and self-expression.

The purpose of this document is to explain how York University helps to create, support and maintain safe spaces for teaching, learning and production, in accordance with the values expressed and embodied in the applicable policies, procedures and regulations of York University, for students, staff and faculty. This document also draws from the Directors Guild of Canada and the Canadian Industries Creative Code, as well as definitions from the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act. The ensemble of these sources provides a comprehensive Code that applies in various ways to everyone who uses York University facilities, participates in CMA projects, and participates in CMA classes, research labs, workshops, events, and/or other initiatives. This Code applies to (a) conduct on university premises, and (b) conduct not on university premises but which has a real and substantial link to the University (e.g. filming a CMA production on location, participating in an off-campus CMA event).

The following University policies, procedures and regulations govern the conduct of all participants in CMA (students, faculty, staff):

- **Human Rights Policy and Procedures:** <https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/human-rights-policy-and-procedures/>
- **Policy on Sexual Violence:** <https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/sexual-violence-policy-on/>
- **Policy on Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations:** <https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/disruptive-andor-harassing-behaviour-in-academic-situations-senate-policy/>
- **Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities:** <https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/code-of-student-rights-and-responsibilities-presidential-regulation/>.

The last link listed is a regulation that embodies a philosophy and practice that are intended to balance student accountability and support with education. We recommend that all CMA community members familiarize themselves with it first. As it is reviewed and updated regularly, please review it even if you have read the regulation previously.

Code of Conduct

All CMA participants (students, staff, faculty, CMA guests) are entitled to a safe and respectful learning and working environment. All participants must remain mindful of these expectations and take responsibility for their speech and behaviour. The standards of behaviour set out in the applicable policies and regulations identified above are the governing standards. By way of illustration, please remember to:

- Always act out of respect and concern for the well-being and free expression of others
- Actively listen to others and thoughtfully participate
- Respect physical and emotional boundaries
- Respect others' identity, experiences, and pronouns

Participants are entitled to an environment free from racist, xenophobic, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, ageist, and related behaviours and attitudes. Any harassment, bullying, discrimination, shaming, intimidation, sexual or gender-based violence, or physical violence will not be tolerated. Examples of such behaviours include:

- Ethnic, racial or religious slurs
- Sexist language
- Any comments including jokes that tend or are intended to demean, ridicule or offend a person for their physical appearance, gender/sex identity, sexuality, class, caste, age, or abilities
- Displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials in print or electronic form
- Bullying
- Inappropriate sexual touching, advances, suggestions, or requests
- Sexual harassment
- Verbal abuse
- Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace
- Taking photographs or audio-visual recordings without consent of people on a set or location

We take participant concerns and safety very seriously. Please report immediately any issues and/or concerns that arise so that they can be addressed within an appropriate timeframe. The procedure for reporting incidents follows below.

We also realize people can accidentally or unintentionally hurt others with their language/actions. If a person finds that they have overstepped certain boundaries with their language/actions they are expected to accept respectful correction (or correct themselves). Failure to do so may result in more serious repercussions.

Procedure to Make a Complaint

There are several avenues for reporting unacceptable behaviour to the University, depending on their status (e.g. student, staff, etc.) at the University:

- If participants, facilitators, collaborators, or staff are subject to any kind of unacceptable behaviour as outlined above, a first step can be contact the course director. A call or in-person meeting can be set up via email.
- Complaints concerning student behaviour can be made directly to the Office of Student Community Relations (OSCR) which administers the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- Complaints concerning the behaviour of someone in a leadership role (e.g., course instructor), contact the Chair and/or the Graduate Program Director of the Department / Graduate Program of Cinema and Media Arts.

Depending on the gravity of the situation, the outcome could range from a written warning to greater potential consequences such as if the matter goes before a University Tribunal, local law enforcement, or to a formal investigation as an employment matter.

Tips for Making a Complaint

As soon as possible after an incident please make a note of the following information:

- Date and Time of Incident
- Location of incident
- Details of incident
- Task being performed when incident occurred
- Your name
- Names of persons involved, including witnesses (if known)
- Ensure to include your contact information (e-mail address and phone number) with your complaint.

Confidentiality

Protecting confidentiality and privacy is important, both to the person bringing forward the complaint, and the person(s) the complaint is made against.

Your complaint will be kept in confidence among the required parties needed to address the complaint. An incident report will be generated for tracking purposes only and will be held in a secure area. The parties in question will be consulted and appropriate action will be taken.

You are also responsible for maintaining the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of the complaint. Only share information about the complaint with people who need to know about it.

Questions

Any questions regarding the CMA Code of Conduct may be sent to the CMA Chair, Graduate Program Director, and/or the Chair of the CMA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Resources

- Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion (REI): <http://rights.info.yorku.ca/>
- FGS Wellness and Counselling services (for Graduate students): <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/grad-wellness-services/>
- Student Counselling & Development Office (for Undergraduate students): <http://counselling.students.yorku.ca/>
- The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education (The Centre): <http://thecentre.yorku.ca/>

12. Terminology Cheat Sheet

AMPD – The School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design

CD – Course Director

CMA – Department of Cinema and Media Arts

CMS – Cinema and Media Studies

FGS – Faculty of Graduate Studies

FGS Proposal Milestone Exercise – If you are in a thesis/dissertation stream, your proposal must be submitted to FGS for ethics clearance. This is called a “Proposal Milestone”.

FILM – Graduate Film Program

GA – Graduate Assistant (unionized under CUPE 3903 Unit 3)

GFSA – Graduate Film Student Association

GPA – Graduate Program Assistant

GPD – Graduate Program Director

RA – Research Assistant (non-unionized position)

Reader – Also referred to as *committee member* by FGS, and you will see this term when you submit your Supervisory Committee via the Grad Portal. The terms “reader” and “committee member” are interchangeable.

RO – Registrar’s Office

Supervisor – Principal faculty member who will oversee your thesis/MRP/dissertation.

Supervisory Committee – comprised of your *supervisor* and *committee member (aka reader)*

TA – Teaching Assistant (unionized under CUPE 3903 Unit 1)

YUGSA – York University Graduate Student Association