



AHVS
Graduate Student Handbook
2026

University of Victoria
Department of Art History & Visual Studies
Graduate Handbook
Last Updated: May 2026

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RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

Faculty and students are bound by policies set by the University, Faculty of Graduate Studies, and this Department/School.

Faculty of Graduate Studies policies are given in the Graduate Calendar and in policy documents found on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website: uvic.ca/graduatestudies. In particular, students and faculty members should read the [Graduate Supervision Policy](#), which outlines the rights and responsibilities in the supervisory relationship.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MA Students

The MA in Art History and Visual Studies normally consists of 15 units, including a Research Paper, virtual exhibition, curatorial project or creative production relevant to the historical or contemporary practices specific to the area of research (AHVS 598). In the first eight months (September-April), all students will complete AHVS 501: Colloquium in Theories and Practices; AHVS 509: Workshop in Art Historical Writing, both are compulsory for all students, and normally four additional courses. An additional, fifth course will normally be taken in the second year (September-April).

AHVS 501 Colloquium in Theories and Practices	1.5 units
AHVS 509 Workshop in Art Historical Writing	1.5 units
Electives (5 x 1.5 units)	7.5 units
AHVS 598 Research Paper	4.5 units

An extended research paper, virtual exhibition, curatorial project or creative production relevant to the historical or contemporary practices specific to the area of research. To be defended in an Oral Exam

Students should consult with the graduate advisor and with their supervisor to select courses that will potentially help with their research, fill gaps in their backgrounds, expand cultural perspectives, or enrich interdisciplinary training. This is best done in the summer in person, on zoom, or by email. Students may also do so in the first days of the fall term; however, some courses may already be filled.

Courses from Outside the Department

Students may take up to 3 units (two 1.5 courses or one 3.0 course) in another department, including Cultural Resource Management courses, as electives. These courses must be at the graduate level or 400 level, related to the student's art historical and visual studies research, and be approved by the department. This is especially valuable for interdisciplinary research topics where faculty members in other departments have relevant expertise. Students may find it helpful to take a course with someone likely to serve on their supervisory committee. A [Graduate Registration form](#) is used to register for courses outside of the department.

Directed Studies AHVS 590

A Directed Studies course is a Master's level course on a topic determined in conjunction with the instructor or taught in conjunction with an undergraduate course offered during the term, with graduate-level assignments defined by the instructor in consultation with the student. In a limited number of cases, when the faculty member's workload permits it, a Directed Studies may be offered independent of an undergraduate course. When taking directed studies courses that are not taught in conjunction with undergraduate courses, students will meet regularly with the instructor to discuss assigned readings and

student progress. A [Pro Forma form](#) is used to register for directed studies courses. Directed Studies may be taken more than once for credit in different topics to a maximum of 3 units.

AHVS 598 Research Paper

AHVS 598 is the course number for the research paper or virtual exhibition, curatorial project or creative production relevant to the historical or contemporary practices specific to the area of research. When taking AHVS 598, students and supervisors should schedule regular monthly meetings.

Language Requirement

Although there are no additional language requirements for the MA-AHVS, students considering a doctoral degree in Art History and Visual Studies should be aware that a PhD in their field may require additional languages. Students are encouraged to consult their academic supervisor or graduate advisor to determine whether taking language courses in advance of applying to enter a doctoral program would be beneficial.

PhD Students

The PhD normally consists of a minimum of 39 units, with a course work component of 6.0 units (4 courses). Those who enter the AHVS department as PhD students coming from other universities must take AHVS 601 Colloquium in Theories and Practices and AHVS 609 Workshop in Art Historical Writing, and 2 additional courses (3.0 units) as part of their required course work. Students holding a Master's from our department and entering the doctoral program with AHVS 501 and AHVS 509 as credits, will take AHVS 609 and 3 additional courses (4.5 units). The courses should be directly related to the student's particular areas of art historical and visual studies interest; in some cases, courses may be taken outside of the department with permission from the supervisor and Graduate Adviser. Students must pass their courses with at least a B average.

If you are new to the University of Victoria (UVic), you will take:

AHVS 601 Colloquium in theories and Practices	1.5 units
AHVS 609 Workshop in Art Historical Writing	1.5 units
2 electives (1.5 units each)	3.0 units

If you are from UVic, with credit for AHVS 501 and AHVS 509, you will take:

AHVS 609 Workshop in Art Historical Writing	1.5 units
3 electives (1.5 units each)	4.5 units

All students will take:

AHVS 693 Candidacy Exam	3 units
AHVS 699 Dissertation	30 units

Courses from Outside the Department

Students may take up to 3 units (two 1.5 courses or one 3.0 course) in another department, including Cultural Resource Management courses, as electives. These courses must be at the graduate level or 400 level, related to the student's art historical and visual studies research, and be approved by the department. This is especially valuable for interdisciplinary research topics where faculty members in other departments have relevant expertise. Students may find it helpful to take a course with someone likely to

serve on their supervisory committee. A [Graduate Registration form](#) is used to register for courses outside of the department.

Some students may be required to take additional courses to complete their academic background, a condition that will be stipulated at the time of admission to the PhD program.

It may be advantageous to take a course outside the department, especially if a potential outside member of the supervisory committee has highly relevant expertise for a student's training. The student should consult with the supervisor and graduate advisor regarding course selections and language training. On the advice of the supervisor, additional course work may be required, if deemed necessary by the department, at the time of admission. The graduate secretary has forms necessary for registration in directed studies and in courses outside the department. A [Graduate Registration form](#) is used to register for courses outside of the department.

Directed Studies

When taking Directed Studies courses (AHVS 690) students should meet regularly with the instructor to discuss assigned readings and progress on research. A [Pro Forma form](#) is used to register for directed studies courses.

Candidacy Exam ([see detailed department policy](#))

Consists of **three** parts:

- The **Major Field Examination**: take-home exam, five consecutive days; 25-page (7,500 words) critical literature review on a key theme or issue in the field to be determined in consultation with your supervisor. Normally completed between January and March of your second year.
- The **Secondary Field Examination**: take-home exam, five consecutive days, which would normally be Monday to Friday; detailed course syllabus on a key theme in the field and 15-page (4,500 words) explanation (which may include a sample lecture), to be determined in consultation with the supervisor. Normally completed between November and January of your second year.
- The **Special Topics/Dissertation Proposal Examination**: Two weeks before the oral exam, you are to submit a 10-page (3,000 words) dissertation proposal to your committee (plus footnotes, bibliography, and images) based on the departmental format for proposals; for the oral exam, prepare a 20-minute presentation of the proposal, which will be followed with two rounds of questions. At the end of the question period, the student will leave the room and the committee will discuss the oral presentation. Normally completed by mid-April of your second year.

Registration in **AHVS 699** is only permitted upon completion of **AHVS 693**.

Language Requirement

In consultation with the PhD student's supervisory committee, the supervisor will determine the necessary language requirements based on the area of study and will communicate in writing to the student how these requirements are to be met and the timeframe for their completion. We acknowledge that certain areas of study may require much more extensive language training than others. The oral examination for the dissertation **may not take place until any determined language requirements have been satisfied**.

Fieldwork

Substantial fieldwork is expected of all PhD candidates.

Oral Examination

See the [Faculty of Graduate Studies Oral exam guidelines](#).

CO-OP

AHVS graduate students have the option to participate in the co-op education program which enables them to acquire knowledge, practical skills for employment, and workplace experience. A work term consists of four months of full-time paid employment. Students alternate a term of study with a term of co-op work.

To qualify for the Co-op designation upon graduation:

- **MA students must complete two work terms**
- **PhD students must complete three work terms**

To qualify for the Work Experience designation upon graduation:

- MA and PhD students must complete one work term

Admission, retention and graduation requirements for [Co-operative Education Programs](#) are determined by the individual academic units. Consult the calendar entries in these areas for further information.

Students have full-time student status during their work term.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

MA

Normally in the first year, students will identify a faculty member willing to supervise their research paper in a topic of interest that fits the current profile of departmental expertise. Supervisors should play an active role advising new students in selecting courses and helping them to identify potential topics for their research paper, virtual exhibition, curatorial project or creative production relevant to the historical or contemporary practices specific to the area of research (AHVS 598).

For Masters students eligible to compete for a SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship (GPA 7.0 and above), the supervisor should be identified early in the fall term (no later than October 1st).

Everyone in the program should find a supervisor in time to prepare a proposal for AHVS 598 by the deadline in early April. Draft proposals are prepared during AHVS 509. Completed proposals are read at a committee meeting of full-time department faculty members which convenes in early April to discuss whether the proposals are acceptable. At this time, potential members of supervisory committees are also discussed. All members of the Master's supervisory committee must be on the Faculty of Graduate Studies

membership list or be specifically approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The supervisory committee must have at least two members one of whom is the primary supervisor:

Member #1: The primary supervisor -- **must be from the home academic unit**

Member #2: May be a co-supervisor – they may also be a committee member from inside or outside the home academic unit.

PhD

In the first year, PhD students develop a dissertation topic in consultation with their supervisor. Students who intend to apply for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) PhD fellowship should get started as early as possible during the summer. During the first year of study, preliminary dissertation proposals are prepared in AHVS 609 and are due in early April. [See the Proposal Guidelines.](#)

The composition of the supervisory committee will be discussed at the meeting of all faculty members, in April. All members of the Doctoral supervisory committee must be on the Faculty of Graduate Studies membership list or be specifically approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The supervisory committee must have at least three members, one of whom is the primary supervisor, one may be a co-supervisor. At least two of the members must be from the home academic unit. One of the members must be from outside the home academic unit:

Member #1: The primary supervisor must be from the home academic unit

Member #2: May be a co-supervisor or a committee member from inside or outside the home academic unit

Member #3: A committee member from inside or outside the home academic unit

Meeting With your Supervisor and Supervisory Committee

The expected minimum frequency with which students and supervisors normally meet, either by direct meeting, by virtual meeting, or through detailed correspondence, to discuss the student's research, is monthly (i.e. supervisors and students are encouraged to meet monthly). Student and supervisor must maintain regular communication. At the beginning of each term, individual graduate students and supervisors should work out what schedule for regular meetings best suits them and record their communication plan on the student's Progress Report. Student Progress Reports are circulated each term by the graduate secretary with a clear deadline. Supervisors review and approve the progress reports. The supervisor is responsible for guiding students with respect to the frequency of meetings with members of the supervisory committee. PhD candidates are required to meet annually with the supervisory committee for the PhD review. See [PhD Annual Review guidelines.](#)

The student should also remain in regular contact with the graduate advisor as their studies progress. While the departmental and university-wide infrastructure is in place to facilitate graduate studies, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to learn how to manage their progress.

For further information on the expectations and responsibilities in the supervisory relationship consult the [Faculty of Graduate Studies Graduate Supervision Policy](#)

EXPECTED TIMELINES FOR COMPLETION

After the proposals are accepted in April, starting in the Fall term, students will complete the Student Progress Report form which contains a communication plan and submit it to the Graduate Secretary. These reports will be kept in the student's departmental file.

Study beyond 5 years for the MA and 7 years for the PhD requires a Program Extension. Students will need to complete a [Request for Program Extension](#) outlining a detailed timeline for completion, number of terms to be extended and a reason/rationale for the extension. The request will be reviewed and approved by the supervisor and Graduate Advisor before being submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for approval. Requests for extensions to programs must be made prior to the time limit expiry date for the student's program. Registration fees will return to the full program fees for all terms of the extension.

EXPECTED TURNAROUND TIME FOR FEEDBACK

Expected maximum length of time required for supervisors and members of the supervisory committee to return comments on the AHVS 598 extended research paper, virtual exhibition, curatorial project or creative production relevant to the historical or contemporary practices specific to the area of research or PhD dissertation should normally not exceed 20 business days (4 weeks) from time of receipt.

WHAT TO DO WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

When problems arise in a graduate student's circumstances which impede coursework and other requirements they have accepted to fulfill by entering the program, their supervisor and the graduate advisor must be informed without delay so that options can be discussed and necessary modifications can be made. If discussions with the supervisor and/or Graduate Advisor are not helpful, the student will meet with the department Chair; should the matter need to go beyond the Chair, the student can approach the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Student Counseling, the Ombudsman, or the Equity Office, according to the nature of the problem. Depending on circumstances, students may also wish to consult the Graduate Calendar for information on Leaves of Absence with permission and withdrawal from graduate programs <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/grad/index.php#/policy/ByGu4jQWU?bc=true&bcCurrent=19%20-%20Leaves%20of%20absence%20with%20permission%20and%20withdrawal%20from%20graduate%20programs&bcGroup=Registration&bcltemType=policies>

LETTER REQUESTS

See [guidelines on requesting letters](#) of reference from faculty.

EMAIL GUIDELINES

See [guidelines on email correspondence](#).

Format of AHVS 598, PhD dissertation. Oral examinations

MA

See the [Format guidelines for the MA AHVS 598](#) extended research paper, virtual exhibition, curatorial project or creative production relevant to the historical or contemporary practices specific to the area of research.

Oral exams are normally scheduled in the final term of the MA program, with most taking place in April. Once the committee has approved the AHVS 598 extended research paper, virtual exhibition, curatorial project or creative production relevant to the historical or contemporary practices specific to the area of research, the MA paper/project must be submitted at least 7 days in advance of the oral exam. Normally, no exams can be scheduled after the third week in April. Note that scheduling oral exams during the May to August term can be challenging due to faculty members' research and vacation schedules.

PhD

The dissertation format requirements for final submission to the Faculty of Graduate Studies are here: <https://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/forms-policies/data/sample-samplepages.pdf>.

Oral exams are scheduled once the committee has agreed that the dissertation is ready for examination. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Oral Exam Guidelines for the timeline and process for submitting the dissertation: <https://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/oral-exams/oral-exam-guidelines/index.php>

GRADUATE STUDENT FUNDING PRACTICES AND POLICIES

Graduate students receive funding from many different sources, including: fellowships, scholarships, and teaching assistantships. Individual faculty members occasionally have funds to hire students at an hourly rate for an Employment Based Research Assistantship (ERA) to assist with their research. UVIC has policies and guidelines for each of these funding sources, and academic units also have distinct policies for graduate funding. **Graduate students should ensure they are aware of the policies governing their funding.**

UVic Graduate Fellowships can be combined with donor awards (unless restricted by the donor), UVic Graduate Entrance Awards, British Columbia Graduate Scholarships (BCGS), and any federal research council (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR) scholarships.

Donor awards (unless restricted by the donor) can be combined with any federal research council (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR) scholarships.

Graduate students who have questions or concerns about their funding can seek advice and guidance from the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

For information on tuition and fees, and how to plan your budget and manage your account consult the UVic webpage on tuition and student fees.

<https://www.uvic.ca/students/campus-services/tuition-fees-budgeting/index.php>

The AHVS Awards Committee will automatically consider AHVS graduate students accepted into the programs for:

- **UVic Fellowships:** MA: \$10,000 for one year non-renewable; PhD: \$18,000 for two years non-renewable.
- **UVic Graduate Entrance Award (GEA)** of \$5,000 may be awarded to new students who enter with a minimum admission GPA of 7.00/9.00 for domestic students or *First Class* for international students.
- **International PhD Entrance Fund (IDEF)** of \$5,000 may be awarded to international student *entering* a PhD program.

These awards are funded through the Faculty of Graduate Studies with recommendations by the department and are normally awarded to graduate students of high academic standing.

You may apply for **Teaching Assistantships (TA)**. These opportunities will be circulated to AHVS graduate students via email, normally in June of each year. [See AHVS TA Appointments Priority Policy](#). Employment Based Research Assistantships are administered by individual faculty members. For information on availability you may consult the Graduate Advisor or contact faculty members directly.

TRAVEL GRANTS

AHVS graduate students can apply for a Travel Grant from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Students' Society (GSS) to support travel to conferences, workshops, or research activities. In addition to this funding, the department is able to provide students with funding up to \$200. These grants are available once per year per student until the annual budget has been exhausted.

Jeffrey Rubinoff Scholar in Art as a Source of Knowledge

The scholarship is awarded to a PhD student in the field of Modern and Contemporary Art History. In addition to four years of funding, the scholar will have the opportunity to travel and attend the annual Company of Ideas Forum which is held annually in June and hosted by the Jeffrey Rubinoff Foundation at the Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park on Hornby Island, BC.

Company of Ideas Forum

Funding is available through the department and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, for several graduate students to attend the forum which is held annually in June and hosted by the Jeffrey Rubinoff Foundation at the Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park on Hornby Island, BC.

KALMAN AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE STUDIES

Students may apply to receive \$ 1,500 to support their travel and other expenses for activities in which they can expand their learning experiences and professional networks.

Funded learning experiences include:

- Attendance at heritage-related courses, seminars, workshops and conferences in locations outside Canada or the student's country of residence, whether offered by the University of Victoria or by other institutions.
- An internship with an international government entity or with a heritage firm or professional (Canadian or international) working outside Canada.
- Self-directed study (ie AHVS 491A) in heritage conservation in a location outside Canada or the student's country of residence.

Sheila and John Hackett Travel Award

Students may apply in the fall for funding to travel to the European Union and the UK for research purposes.

AHVS Graduate Students Applying for a SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship-Masters Program

Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents who have achieved the equivalent of a 'first class' average, as determined by each university, in each of their last two years of undergraduate study, are eligible to apply in their first year of graduate study at the MA level for a substantial scholarship funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The deadline for the online application is normally December 1st.

<https://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/finances/search-funding/award-pages/canada-graduate-scholarships---masters.php>

AHVS Graduate Students Applying for a SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship-Doctoral Program

PhD students are eligible to apply in their first, second and third year of graduate studies. The deadline for this highly competitive scholarship is early in the fall (October); hence, eligible students should begin working with their supervisors and the graduate advisor to develop a strong application and research proposal as early as possible. International students are eligible to apply for this scholarship if they are enrolled in their doctoral program of study at UVic at the time of application.

<https://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/finances/search-funding/award-pages/canada-graduate-scholarships-doctoral.php>

DONOR AWARDS

The department nominates graduate students in the fall for the following Donor Awards. GPA and eligibility based on the criteria of the awards is taken into account when making the award decisions.

1. Awards for Art History and Visual Studies graduate students:

[Audrey St. Denys & M. E. Johnson Scholarship](#)

Scholarships are awarded to undergraduate or graduate students in the Faculty of Fine Arts, including Art History and Visual Studies.

[Flora Hamilton Burns Fellowship](#)

Donated by Flora Hamilton Burns in memory of Emily Carr. This fellowship may be awarded to a highly-qualified graduate student in Art History and Visual Studies.

[Jeffrey Rubinoff Art as a Source of Knowledge Graduate Scholarship](#)

Awarded to academically outstanding graduate students in Art History and Visual Studies.

[Jeffrey Rubinoff Scholar in Art as a Source of Knowledge Scholarship](#)

Awarded to academically outstanding graduate students in Art History and Visual Studies, with preference given to students with demonstrated financial need.

[Henriette Ann Schmidt Graduate Scholarship](#)

One or more scholarships are awarded to outstanding graduate students in Art History and Visual Studies specializing in the study of Aboriginal or Indigenous arts. Preference will be given to students studying Pre-Columbian art.

[Stephen & Eunice Lowe Legacy Scholarship](#)

Scholarships are awarded to either academically outstanding undergraduate or graduate students studying Asian Art in Art History and Visual Studies. Preference will be given to students studying the history of Chinese Art.

2. [Awards open to all UVic graduate students:](#)

Albert Hung Chao Hong Scholarships

Carol Ann Mitchell Graduate Scholarship

General Graduate Scholarships

Iranian Student Graduate Memorial Scholarship

Joyce Green and James Johnson Scholarship

Martlet Chapter IODE Graduate Scholarship for Women

Cassels Shaw Graduate Fellowship

Howard E. Petch and David F. Strong Research Scholarship

Victoria Canada-China Friendship Association Scholarship

Wendy Diane Esdale Graduate Scholarship

Women in Development Graduate Scholarship

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FUNDING/EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS

External funding:

<https://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/finances/external-scholarships/index.php>

UVic Graduate Bursaries:

<https://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/finances/graduate-student-funding/index.php>

UVic Co-Op and Career Services (includes job opportunities for students):

<https://www.uvic.ca/coop/coopandcareer/>

Work Study Program:

<https://www.uvic.ca/registrar/safa/work-study/index.php>

RESOURCES

AHVS Student Resources (forms, AHVS guidelines, useful links)

<https://www.uvic.ca/finearts/ahvs/graduate/resources/index.php>

International Students

<https://www.uvic.ca/international-experiences/index.php>

Residences (includes off campus listings as well)

<http://www.uvic.ca/residence/>

Faculty of Graduate Studies

<http://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/>

Graduate Admissions and Records

<http://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/admissions/>

UVic Library

<http://www.uvic.ca/library/index.php>

Graduate Students' Society

<http://gss.uvic.ca/>

UVic Bookstore

<http://bookstore.uvic.ca/>

Student Wellness Centre

<https://www.uvic.ca/student-wellness/index.php>

SupportConnect – Mental Health Support for Students. Anytime. Anywhere.

<https://www.uvic.ca/student-wellness/wellness-resources/supportconnect/index.php>

COVID-19 Student Information

<https://www.uvic.ca/covid19/index.php#ipn-info-for-students>

Centre for Accessible Learning:

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/index.php>