



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Emerging Media MFA, Feature Film Production Program Handbook

**Nicholson School of Communication and Media**

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# Emerging Media MFA, Feature Film Production

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the College of Graduate Studies.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Introduction

The MFA in Feature Film Production is a terminal degree, the highest degree awarded to filmmakers or film artists. It is a highly selective and rigorous film production program for visual artists and film practitioners who demonstrate exceptional artistic and intellectual prowess, evidence of significant professional promise and a commitment to the expressive potential of digital filmmaking and the exploration of non-traditional modes of distribution. The MFA in Feature Film Production produces graduates with mastery of storytelling through the digital medium as it encourages the candidate to find his or her personal style. Entrepreneurial in spirit, the program emphasizes story, performance, aesthetic choice, business, and creative thinking. When participation is committed and complete, the program develops graduates who can compete in the worlds of national and international independent filmmaking.

The program is designed to present you with the challenges facing any independent film maker and to give you the foundational tools available to meet those challenges. In addition, the program requires the full application of your creative energies by limiting your choice of materials and the size of your budget. How you meet these challenges will be the true measure of your achievement in the program, and the information you gain will serve you well as you apply them throughout your career. Our faculty are experienced in film production and Cinema Studies. Their understanding of Independent Film and micro-budget production gives the program a strong combination of intellectual and professional rigor. They are eager to work with you, to share their experience and to learn from yours. You will find their commitment to you and your work to be exacting in standards, compassionate in understanding and supportive in problem solving.

The MFA in Feature Film Production is a cohort-style program and students must progress through the program by taking required classes in particular semesters. The program requires a minimum of 63 credit hours, including 30 required credit hours, 9 internal credit hours, 12 external credit hours, and 12 credit hours devoted to the thesis project. *This is not an online degree program.*

The MFA in Feature Film Production takes the unique approach of requiring the making of a micro-budget feature length film. Approaches to this thesis work can be in Narrative, Documentary, and Experimental modalities. A feature length film is defined in this program to be at least 60 minutes in length. Students also have the option of fulfilling this thesis requirement by producing a body of work in their chosen modality that is determined to be equivalent to a feature-film production by their thesis committee. Thesis projects that are not feature-length may be subject to external review by the Film Graduate Faculty to determine if they have met the standards for the thesis requirement.

Students will select a modality for their thesis film during their first two semesters in the program. While students may make a thesis film outside the narrative feature film model, all MFA candidates must take the core required courses that teach the customs and skills required of the narrative model. Upon completion of the degree, each Narrative and Documentary student will have produced a microbudget (<\$50,000) digital feature film. Each Experimental student will have produced a feature length film or a long-form equivalent body of work. In addition, students working in all modalities will prepare a marketing strategy for the film's distribution and exhibition. Budgetary limitations are encouraged in order to move students away from more traditional modes of production toward an approach that minimizes crew size, cast size, shooting time and production costs in favor of more careful planning, more personal filmmaking and more creative use of the means of production.

The thesis film requires intensive applied learning to be completed as a feature length project or equivalent body of work. Additionally, the thesis project has a strong research component both in the initial development phase and in the creation of the distribution and marketing plan for the project. This final stage of the curriculum serves as a bridge to the professional world and supports the entrepreneurial philosophy of the program.

## Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program. This program does not require a comprehensive exam.

Students declare their modality (Narrative, Documentary, or Experimental) when applying to the program. Students may change modalities only during the first two semester (20 credits) of the program. Students are encouraged to choose external electives that complement their work after discussion with the graduate program coordinator or their thesis chair. Students wishing to change modality after the second semester can only do so with the consent of both their Thesis Advisor and the Program Coordinator. Changes in modality after the first year are rarely approved and may require additional coursework and time spent in the program.

In addition to the completion of coursework, students are required to present progress reports on their thesis projects at fall and spring term critique sessions as scheduled by the program coordinator. The student's presence for all other students' presentations is strongly encouraged.

## Timeline for Completion

Below is a sample full-time schedule of courses. Courses may be taught face to face or online, depending on circumstances and decisions made by the university, school, or program. The schedule of courses will be different if a student is completing the program on a part-time basis. Slots for part-time students are very limited.

<b>Sample Full-time Schedule</b>		
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Expectations at Year One</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIL 5406 Theories of Film Production (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 5800 Research Methods in Film &amp; Digital Media (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 5419 Developing the Film Screenplay or other internal elective* (3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 5924 Graduate Seminar (required, 1 hour)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIL 6673 Arts &amp; Media Entrepreneurship (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>Internal elective* (3 hours)</li> <li>Internal elective* (3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 5924 Graduate Seminar (required, 1 hour)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of thesis chair and committee</li> <li>Completion of project screenplay or treatment</li> <li>Ready to begin preproduction budget, schedule, etc. in fall</li> </ul>
<b>Total Credit Hours: 10 credit hours</b>	<b>Total Credit Hours: 10 credit hours</b>	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Expectations at year Two</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIL 6454 Microbudget Production Design (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 6644 Microbudget Pre-Production (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 5924 Graduate Seminar (required, 1 hour)</li> <li>External Elective* (3 hours)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIL 6649 Microbudget Post- Production (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 6596 Advanced Directing Workshop for Film &amp; Digital Media (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 5924 Graduate Seminar (required, 1 hour)</li> <li>External Elective* (3 hours)</li> </ul> <p>During Spring of Year Two students are expected to present a thesis proposal defense to the thesis committee with the goal of being greenlit for summer production</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenlit for summer production at Thesis Proposal Defense</li> <li>FIL 6971 Thesis (required for Summer C Term, 3 hours)</li> </ul>
<b>Total Credit Hours: 10 credit hours</b>	<b>Total Credit Hours: 10 credit hours</b>	<b>Total Credit Hours: 3 credit hours</b>
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIL 5924 Graduate Seminar (required, 1 hour)</li> <li>FIL 6971 Thesis (required, 6 hours)</li> <li>External Elective* (3 hours)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIL 5924 Graduate Seminar (required, 1 hour)</li> <li>FIL 6619 Guerilla Marketing &amp; Models of Distribution (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>FIL 6971 Thesis (required, 3 hours)</li> <li>External Elective* (3 hours)</li> </ul> <p>During spring of year three the student is expected to defend their thesis film and complete their thesis dissertation according to university thesis guidelines.</p>	
<b>Total Credit Hours: 10 credit hours</b>	<b>Total Credit Hours: 10 credit hours</b>	<b>Total Credit Hours: 63 credit hours</b>

\*Students must take a total of 9 credit hours for Internal Electives and 12 credit hours for the External Electives requirement. Students should consult with their Thesis Advisor on which electives are best fit for them and when they should take those courses during the program. The schedule above is just an example. Once a student has begun taking thesis hours they must continue to do so each term until graduation.

# Thesis

There are two components to the thesis project: (1) the film itself; and (2) the written submission, also referred to as the Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD). The student is required to satisfy the demands of both components and they are typically prepared simultaneously.

All MFA in Feature Film Production candidates are responsible for understanding which rights UCF will retain in the film and how the student (and the student's producers, assigns, licensees and/or designees) can retain certain rights. Please review the [Ownership of Intellectual Property Policy](#) in the current UCF Graduate Catalog.

## Thesis Requirements

### University Thesis Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

#### **The following requirements must be met by thesis students in their final term:**

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final thesis document by final submission deadline

Students must format their thesis according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

## Preparation for Thesis

### Electing Your Film Thesis Advisor

Students should select a Thesis Advisor during their second full-time semester in the program. This individual must be someone on the approved graduate faculty list for the Department of Film and Mass Media, found online in the Graduate Catalog listed under the [Graduate Faculty](#) section. The Thesis Advisor will chair the Thesis Advisory Committee and must have a terminal degree. Before undertaking the thesis project, the Thesis Advisor must agree to serve in this capacity for the student. Faculty reserve the right to decline participation to serve as a Thesis Advisor. Please consult with the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist if you have any questions about electing a Thesis Advisor ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

The Thesis Advisor works with the student to begin focusing the thesis film project. The Thesis Advisor serves as a mentor, providing guidance on research and development of the thesis film project, the written Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD), course selection, meeting various benchmarks, and other areas of academic and professional interest. It is important to secure a Thesis Advisor early in the program.

### Selecting Thesis Advisory Committee Members

Each student must have a Thesis Advisory Committee in addition to the Thesis Advisor. The Thesis Advisory Committee must consist of at least three members, including the Thesis Advisor, who are approved members of the [Graduate Faculty or Graduate Faculty Scholars](#) as found online in the current UCF Graduate Catalog. This committee will provide continual guidance for the student and be the principal mechanism for the evaluation of the student's thesis and performance in any general examinations. In addition to the Thesis Advisor, at least one member must be Graduate Faculty. Graduate Faculty Scholars may serve as a member or co-Chair of a Thesis Advisory Committee but may not serve as the Chair. Graduate Faculty members must form the majority of any given committee. All Thesis Advisory Committee members must be in fields related to the thesis topic.

Students must fill out and submit a Thesis Advisory Committee Form once all committee members have been identified and agreed to serve. Students can obtain this form and additional details from the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)). The UCF College of Graduate Studies reserves the right to review appointments to a Thesis Advisory Committee, place a representative on any Thesis Advisory Committee, or appoint a co-Chair. Students may request a change in membership to their Thesis Advisory Committee with the approval of the Film Program Director. Any change to a student's Thesis Advisor Committee requires submission of an updated Thesis Advisory Committee Form to the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist.

All committee members vote on acceptance or rejection of the final thesis. The thesis proposal and final thesis must be approved by a majority of the committee.

### Registering for Thesis

Students must register for at least 3 credit hours of Thesis in consecutive terms until they have reached 12 credit hours of thesis. Once a student reaches the required 12 credit hours of thesis, the student may begin taking 1 credit hour of thesis each term until they have completed the project, successfully defended their thesis, and graduated, if needed. Please read the [Continuous Enrollment Policy](#) in the current UCF Graduate Catalog for more information.

The student must complete a Restricted Registration Form each semester to register for thesis hours. This form must be signed by the Thesis Advisor. The student may obtain and submit the form to the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist via email ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)). Please contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist for the deadline to submit Restricted Registration Forms for the semester you intend to register.

## **The Thesis Proposal Defense**

The making of a feature length film requires attention to a myriad of details in order to bring the film maker's artistic vision to the screen. To free the artist from being overwhelmed by production detail, the student's thesis proposal aims to ensure thorough planning prior to the production period. While unforeseen challenges are certain to be a part of the production experience, thoughtful time spent addressing the basics will ensure a less exhausting and more successful shoot.

By the start of the student's fourth full-time semester in the program, or by the completion of 30 credit hours for part-time students, they are required to submit a formal thesis proposal for approval. The student first submits the proposal to their Thesis Advisor and Thesis Advisory Committee members and then, when approved by the majority of the committee, the student prepares a Thesis Proposal Presentation to be delivered to their Thesis Advisory Committee.

The Thesis Proposal Defense provides the student with an opportunity to demonstrate preparedness and passion for the project, and receive feedback that must be addressed prior to moving forward with the thesis project.

Collectively, the Thesis Advisory Committee members are charged with determining the student film maker's readiness for the next stage of production based on a review of the material and the student's presentation. The committee is charged to pay special attention to the planning and preparation segments of the proposal.

Following the presentation, the Thesis Advisory Committee makes a recommendation to the Film Graduate Coordinator and the Thesis Advisor on whether the project should move forward, and details its recommendations with specificity.

Projects aim to be "yellow-lit" so that the student will have a chance to complete financing. Evidence of strong preparation will be key to obtaining a yellow light. Films lacking preparation or funding will be "red-lit" and cannot advance into production. "Green-lighting" can only happen when the student has financing in place, has submitted all documentation required as outlined in the most current MFA in Feature Film Production Handbook, and has scheduled the first production meeting.



## Format of the Thesis Proposal

### Thesis Proposal Contents

Each student's approach to production will be unique and the specific contents of the Thesis Proposal may vary. The student will confer with their Thesis Advisor to agree on requirements for the formal Thesis Proposal. There are certain literacies developed throughout the curriculum, however, that are common to all students and require evidence of competency. Considerations for the Thesis Proposal include the following elements:

Evidence of Aesthetic Literacy	Evidence of Financial Literacy	Evidence of Production Literacy
Filmmaker's Statement Literature Review and Screening List Script Shot Lists Storyboards Animatics Set Diagrams Visual Palettes Transcripts Notebook/Journal Sketches Photographs Ripomatic Video/Camera Test Casting Sessions	Business Plan Budget Assumptions Complete Budget Final Cost Report Proof of Funding Pitch Materials Corporate Documents Profit Sharing Plan Grant Application(s) Cash Flow Statement Weekly Cost Reports Investor Documents Private Placement Memo Crowdfunding Campaigns	Theory of Production Literature Review Shooting Schedule Completion Timeline Including Post Copy of Film upon Completion Crew Lists Location Lists Contracts Sample Call Sheets Sample Production Reports Release and Consent Forms Chain of Title Copyright Registration Retention of a Lawyer LLC Documentation Deal Memos Contracts/Writers Agreements Proof of Insurance Film Scenes (Demonstrate Directing) Set Location Permit Schedule SAG Signatory Documents Equipment List/Sources Art Department Schedule Day out of Days Director's Assembly

### Submitting the Initial Thesis Proposal

The student should submit his or her initial Thesis Proposal to the Thesis Advisor and to each thesis committee member by an agreed upon date and format established in consultation with the Thesis Advisor. The Thesis Advisor and each committee member will review the student's proposal and comment on its contents within ten business days of their receipt of the thesis proposal materials. The student then works on recommended areas of improvement with the Thesis Advisor and committee members.

With the guidance of the Thesis Advisor, the student establishes milestone dates to ensure readiness for the final Thesis Proposal presentation to the Thesis Advisory Committee. It is important for the student to be proactive during this time, developing a plan to secure necessary permissions, letters of intent, clearances, and source approvals. The onus is on the student to communicate fully and often with the Thesis Advisor and to drive a schedule that will help the student be successful. Be advised that many professors do not work during the summer term and may not be available to assist the student with thesis work during this time.

### Sample Timeline from Proposal to Production

	<b>Year 2: August - October</b>	<b>Year 2: November</b>
<b>Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Thesis Advisor to form thesis committee.</li> <li>• Continue working on refining thesis proposal. See Film MFA Student Handbook.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit completed/signed Thesis Advisory Committee Form to Graduate Program staff.</li> <li>• Submit completed/signed Restricted Registration Form (for spring thesis hours) to Graduate Program staff.</li> <li>• Continue working on thesis proposal.</li> </ul>
<b>Thesis Advisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm with student role as thesis advisor; help with formation of thesis committee.</li> <li>• Continue helping student with requirements of thesis proposal. See Thesis Advisor Handbook.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign off on Restricted Registration form.</li> <li>• Continue helping student with thesis proposal.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send reminder to student &amp; Advisor about Thesis Proposal Presentation including the calendar, links to student and T&amp;D handbooks, and any thesis proposal related documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process Thesis Advisory Committee Form.</li> <li>• Process Restricted Registration Form.</li> </ul>
	<b>Year 2: December (Before the end of the semester)</b>	<b>Year 2: January</b>
<b>Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule Thesis Proposal Presentation meeting (to be held by the end of March). Confirm with all Thesis Advisory Committee members.</li> <li>• Continue working on thesis proposal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize thesis proposal documents.</li> <li>• Send Thesis Advisory Committee a reminder about the meeting and confirm attendance.</li> </ul>
<b>Thesis Advisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with student to confirm that the Thesis Proposal Presentation meeting has been set and establish goals for the first term in thesis hours.</li> <li>• Continue helping student with thesis proposal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm with student that Thesis Proposal Presentation is progressing.</li> <li>• Review/approve Thesis Proposal materials before student emails materials to Thesis Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up with student to confirm that Thesis Proposal Presentation date has been set.</li> <li>• Help with meeting logistics (secure location for Thesis Proposal Presentation meeting, send directions to committee, etc.)</li> <li>• Provide list to Green Light Authorizer of upcoming Thesis Proposal Presentation meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm with student and advisor that Thesis Proposal Presentation is on track and packet has been emailed to committee.</li> </ul>

<b>Green Light Authorizer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm with student/advisor/program staff that <b>Thesis Proposal Presentation</b> have been set for the next term.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Year 2: February</b>	<b>Year 2: March</b>
<b>Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present the thesis proposal to the Thesis Advisory Committee.</li> <li>Update the Thesis Advisory Committee on anything that has happened since the packet was distributed.</li> <li>Set meeting with student, advisor, and Green Light Authorizer for final meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed changes are worked on and presented to Green Light Authorizer.</li> </ul>
<b>Thesis Advisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take notes during the Thesis Proposal Presentation meeting.</li> <li>Set meeting with student, advisor, and Green Light Authorizer for final meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with student on proposed changes for Green Light Authorizer.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rubrics and notes are copied and placed in student's file.</li> <li>Remind Thesis Advisory Committee that the recommendation is due to the Green Light Authorizer within 2 weeks (14 days) of Thesis Proposal Presentation meeting.</li> <li>Confirm with student/advisor that Green Light Authorizer final meeting has been set.</li> </ul>	
<b>Thesis Advisory Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks the student questions and completes the rubric forms and provides notes from the meeting to the Graduate Program Staff.</li> <li>Votes as a group and puts together a recommendation for the Green Light Authorizer within 2 weeks (14 days) of the meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>Green Light Authorizer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive recommendation from Thesis Advisory Committee within 2 weeks (14 days) of Thesis Proposal Presentation meeting.</li> <li>Send recommendation with rationale to student/advisor.</li> <li>Set meeting with student, advisor, and Green Light Authorizer for final meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews proposal and notes and provide a green, yellow or red light recommendation to the student.</li> </ul>

# Thesis Proposal Presentation

## Formal Thesis Proposal Presentation

Setting Up the Thesis Proposal Presentation:

Students preparing for their Thesis Proposal Presentation are responsible for communicating with each member of their thesis committee at the beginning of the semester during which the thesis proposal presentation will take place. Based on the availability of committee members, the student will schedule the date and time of the presentation. Once determined, the student or Thesis Advisor will reserve the space. The student is responsible for delivering the thesis proposal packet electronically (requirements detailed above) to all members of the Thesis Advisory Committee no less than 2 weeks in advance of the Thesis Proposal Presentation. Ultimately, the student is responsible for planning and producing the Thesis Proposal Presentation.

The following documents, which should be included in or along with the thesis proposal packet emailed to the committee, must be *completed and approved* during the Thesis Proposal Presentation in order for the student to be permitted to move forward with production (aka “green light”):

- Complete feature length script (60-90 pages)
- Shooting Schedule (does not include specific dates)
- Shot list, storyboard, and/or other evidence of visualization
- Full Crew List (signed agreements, as many as possible)
- Full Cast List (signed agreements, as many as possible)
- Proof of financing that matches budget or a percentage of it at least – 80% (bank statement)
- Proof of insurance (school or individual certificate)

Students with thesis work that requires alternative forms of production documentation or alternative production processes must consult with their Thesis Advisor and committee members during the semester preceding their thesis proposal presentation (typically in the fall of the second year) to determine the documents needed for the thesis proposal packet and the Thesis Proposal Defense, in addition to the terms by which the project will be evaluated for red, yellow, or green light status. The required documents should be adapted from the list above where possible.

## Production Approval Timeline

<b>Thesis Proposal Defense</b>	No fewer than 9 weeks prior to the first day of principal photography.
<b>Greenlight</b>	Within 10 business days after Thesis Proposal Presentation
<b>Notify Film Operations of Proposed Production Dates</b>	No fewer than 6 weeks prior to the first day of principal photography.
<b>Submit Sound Stage Application</b>	No fewer than 2 weeks prior to the first day of principal photograph.
<b>Submit Equipment Requisition</b>	No fewer than 3 business days prior to desired checkout date.
<b>Principal Photography</b>	The bulk of scheduled production – does not include promo, camera tests, pickups, or reshoots.

*To avoid compounding scheduling issues, students are strongly encouraged to submit all the above items as early as possible and not to wait until the minimum deadlines.*

Graduate students must notify Film Operations of their proposed production schedule no less than six weeks from the first day of principal photography. Students must be GREENLIT before they can lock-in the specific dates for their final production schedule, and they must be GREENLIT before they can begin submitting equipment and facility reservations for principal photography. All graduate students are expected to coordinate with their classmates to avoid overlapping their production dates. No more than two graduate-level projects may be in production at any given time. Any overlap time between productions must be approved by the Film Operations

Manager. Additional information on production insurance, set safety guidelines, and how to procure equipment and facilities for your production can be found in the NSCM Film Production and Exhibition Handbook located in the [Policies and Procedures section](#) of the [Film Operational Portal website](#).

Students with thesis projects that necessitate nontraditional production timelines are expected to follow the established production approval timeline unless an alternative timeline is established. Alternative production approval timelines must be discussed and agreed upon by the student, their Thesis Advisor, and Film Operations during the semester preceding their thesis proposal presentation (typically in the fall of the second year) or as soon as possible in the development process.

All graduate students are required to meet with the Film Operations Manager prior to locking-in their production dates for principal photography.

## **Evaluating the Formal Thesis Proposal**

The goal of the student is to receive a recommendation for a "yellow light" by the Thesis Advisory Committee so that the filmmaker may go forward to finalize financing and begin production. Collectively, the Thesis Advisory Committee is charged with confirming a student's readiness for the next stage based on its review of the material and the interview with the student. "Green-lighting" the project can only happen when the student has financing in place; only the Film Program Director may green light a project, in consultation with the Thesis Advisor.

The Thesis Advisory Committee evaluates the project and makes specific recommendations in the following categories:

- Script / Research
- Vision / Visual Treatment
- Schedule and Logistics
- Budget and Financing
- Market / Audience
- Fit with Student's Professional Goals

### **The Script, Treatment, or Conceptual Approach**

The Thesis Advisory Committee may consider the following:

- Are the screenplay and scope of the production suitable for the proposed budget (e.g. number of speaking parts, number of locations, etc.)?
- Is the concept and/or story clear, engaging, or compelling?
- Does the pace of the story feel appropriate for the proposed exhibition format (e.g. cinema, online platform, gallery)?
- What questions of character, plot, or concept are raised or left unanswered by the project?
- Is the screenplay or other developmental materials appropriate for or attractive to the kinds of creative collaborators required by the content and scope of the project (e.g. actors, crew, financiers)?
- Are there production challenges in the screenplay, treatment, or concept that the student fails to acknowledge? Does the student appear to be prepared to tackle such challenges or any others that arise during production and postproduction?
- What does the project mean to the student? Why do they want to do this project at this time in their career?

### **The Budget and Schedule**

The Thesis Advisory Committee may consider the following:

- Does the budget make sense for the length and scope of the work?
- Does the plan for financing – or the financing itself – seem reasonable and realistic? (Financing must be in place for a green light to be awarded. This requires proof with a bank statement or other financial document.)

- Does the budget address the needs of the screenplay and scope of the production, including such items as plans for casting, travel, and housing? Are postproduction, marketing, and exhibition costs included?
- Does the schedule include contingencies for rain days, re-shoots and any other possible delays?

### **Thesis Advisory Committee Recommendation**

After the Thesis Proposal Defense, the Thesis Advisory Committee will make a recommendation to the Graduate Coordinator and the Thesis Advisor as to the student's approval status: Green light, Yellow light, or Red light. The decision will be provided in writing by the Thesis Advisor, addressed to the Graduate Coordinator and to Film Operations, no later than 14 business days following the Thesis Proposal Presentation. Thesis Advisory Committee members are expected to give the student their individual opinions, judgments and advice as well. These individual comments can be included with the final recommendation. A copy of the final recommendation should be sent to the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

Following the Thesis Proposal Defense, student's next step should be to thoughtfully consider the comments of the Thesis Advisory Committee members and, in the case of a yellow or red light, prepare a response to the issues raised. The student's response should identify their priorities, with specific timelines for completion that relate to the project's next steps.

The student is required to email the report, and any supplemental material the student chooses, to the Thesis Advisor and Graduate Coordinator no later than one week's time from the student's receipt of the thesis committee's recommendation. The Graduate Coordinator will review the written responses to the Thesis Advisory Committee's comments and discuss the status of the thesis proposal with the student and their Thesis Advisor. Any supplemental materials and comments should be sent to the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

Green light status is needed for the student to move forward with locking-in production dates and procuring resources from Film Operations. A yellow light allows the student to continue with preparation for production, but they must meet the conditions and timeline put forth by the Thesis Advisory Committee before their status is upgraded to green light.

When a student receives a red light from the Thesis Advisory Committee, it will be accompanied by a clear list of what must be submitted by the student to their Thesis Advisor to move forward with the thesis project. The Thesis Advisor will then be responsible for working with the student to assign due dates for each requested item and may schedule a collaborative meeting with the Graduate Coordinator to review the student's response(s) and timeline forward. If necessary, a second presentation before the Thesis Advisory Committee may be scheduled.

The Thesis Advisory Committee understands that its judgment in this matter needs to take into account the standards its members hold for themselves as well as those inherent in the medium of the student's project and in the University community of scholars and artists.

### **Financing the Thesis Film Production**

Students making narrative feature films will be required to develop a business plan, crowdfunding campaign, or other approved plan for fundraising and any other materials relevant to acquiring the financial means needed for completion of the work. It is the student's responsibility to finance their film production, and a variety of resources are available throughout the Central Florida community. Students should plan for raising substantially less funding than desired.

## **Thesis Film Production**

The filmmaking process itself contributes to how the thesis will be evaluated. How the film is made, the quality and character of the production experience, and its organization may be observed on the set by the Thesis Advisor, Thesis Committee members, or other members of the University community. The thesis project will be reviewed by the Thesis Advisor throughout the production process and held to criteria agreed upon by the student and the Thesis Advisor. Should the Thesis Advisor find any aspect of the in-process production unsafe or in violation of the law, they have the right to require the halting of the production until the student adequately addresses the issue(s).

To ensure an ongoing exchange of information and production support, the student is required to communicate with their Thesis Advisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator (depending on the time of year the production takes place) throughout the production according to specific protocol explained below.

### **Protocol for Communicating with the Department of Film and Mass Media**

In order for Thesis Advisors and the Graduate Coordinator to monitor and assess the completion of principle photography on a narrative feature film, the student is obligated to include their Thesis Advisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator (depending on the time of year the production takes place) in various production milestones, which include production meetings and the completion of production paperwork. These specific production milestones are addressed below and may be adjusted based on the needs of individual projects, as negotiated by the student and their Thesis Advisor.

### **Production Meeting**

The student must schedule a production meeting at least one week prior to the start of principle photography and must invite their Thesis Advisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator (depending on the time of year the production takes place). Invitations must be extended to the appropriate advisor at least one week prior to the meeting, in writing via email. The student, the project's Producer, and the First Assistant Director (if applicable) are required to attend the production meeting. Invitations should also be extended if subsequent production meetings are called, but are not required.

### **Production Forms**

Prior to the initial production meeting, the student's Thesis Advisor will work with the student to approve which forms will be required to be submitted (and to whom) during production. It is recommended that the student (or appropriate crew member) submit a daily production report to the Thesis Advisor or Graduate Coordinator at the end of each production day. Any forms submitted to the Thesis Advisor or Graduate Coordinator during production should be sent to the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

### **Tech Scout**

It is the responsibility of the Producer of each thesis film to ensure that the Thesis Advisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator is notified by e-mail of the time and location of the production's initial tech scout. Notification should be provided at least one week in advance of the meeting date. Every effort should be made to find a time that allows for the Thesis Advisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator to be in attendance at the tech scout. The attendance of the MFA student at the tech scout is required. At the meeting, a current list of locations secured to date should be provided, in addition to a proposal for where remaining locations will be found.

### **Set Protocol**

The student, in partnership with their Producer, must assign clear roles, responsibilities, and areas of authority for those on the set, honor those assignments, and establish clear and consistent modes of communication.

## Visits to the Set

Any film faculty member is welcome at any time on any set of a graduate student film in production. Faculty should check with the Graduate Coordinator for call sheets and maps on the day they wish to visit. It is the responsibility of the Producer of each student film to update the Graduate Coordinator with current maps and call sheets, and to inform them of any and all changes that impact shooting times, such as delayed start dates, delayed call times, changes in location, restrictions for the location, etc.

## Reports

The student's Thesis Advisor will determine which reports and forms (call sheets, daily production reports, script supervisor's wrap reports, injury reports, missing and damaged reports, weekly cost reports, dailies, etc.) are to be used throughout the production. Templates for production reports can be found through the [Film Operation Portal website](#). Any reports submitted to the Thesis Advisor or Graduate Coordinator should be sent to the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## Production and Exhibition Support Services

### Film Operations

Film Operations is a full-service technological and logistical unit charged with supporting students who are engaged in the production and/or the exhibition of a film/video project. The principal point of contact for Film Operations is the service desk located inside of the Film Equipment Room - Nicholson School of Communication and Media Building, Room 157 (aka Film Operations Desk, or FOD). Please call (407) 823-2138, email [filmoperations@ucf.edu](mailto:filmoperations@ucf.edu), or visit Film Operations online at the [Film Operational Portal website](#).

### Equipment and Facilities

The Department of Film and Mass Media is housed in a purpose-built Broadcast and Film Production Facility with a dedicated pre-production suite, specialty classrooms, studios and sound stages, recording booths, editorial rooms, computer labs, and screening rooms. A multimillion-dollar inventory of film and video production equipment is available to support projects large and small. Additional information on production insurance, set safety guidelines, and how to procure equipment and facilities for your production can be found in the NSCM Film Production and Exhibition Handbook located in the [Policies and Procedures section](#) of the [Film Operational Portal website](#).

See the ***Narrative Feature Production Approval Timeline*** section for critical deadlines related to procuring resources for the production of a Thesis Film.



# Final ETD and Thesis Film Requirements

## Requirements for the Written Thesis Submission: ETD

The written Thesis is considered distinct from the Thesis Film and any rights designated or associated therewith.

The written thesis is the final document that satisfies the academic requirements for achieving the MFA degree. It is referred to as the ETD, or Electronic Thesis and Dissertation. The University provides clear guidelines for how the written thesis is required to be formatted and submitted. These may be found online at [graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/). The written Thesis becomes a part of the body of scholarship available to others interested in the making of micro-budget feature films. The ETD is submitted to the University and made available for download online, and consists of a single, bookmarked PDF file (with accompanying DVD if appropriate) with the following minimum components:

- Frontmatter
- Title page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Dedication (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures/List of Tables (as necessary)
- Body
- Introduction (Filmmaker's Statement)

Statement should include response to the following questions:

- What were your intentions when you first entered the program and began your film project, and what problems, challenges, and obstacles (intellectual, formal, artistic, logistical) did you encounter along the way?
- How did you address these problems?
- What have you learned from them? Be specific and provide thorough details.
- How has this experience helped you define your voice as an emerging film maker?

Picture (in one of the following forms):

- The work in its entirety (on DVD); or a link provided for online viewing
- Up to three excerpts not to exceed 30 seconds each (on DVD); or a link provided for online viewing
- Five or more screen captures/still images with descriptive captions (integrated as part of the PDF file)

## Research Materials

- Screenplay
- Documentary or experimental treatment

It is recommended that you retain the pagination of the original screenplay as these page numbers correspond to other documents, but you should incorporate the screenplay and include the new ETD pagination as well. One suggestion is to have the original screenplay pagination in the upper right-hand corner, and the ETD pagination in the center bottom.

Marketing Plan to include:

- Full page poster showing the central image and graphic treatment to be used for one-sheets, postcards and other marketing materials; and
- Marketing report that includes research of film festival opportunities, timeline and budget for festival distribution, and proposals and targets for further distribution (i.e.: theatrical, cable, DVD, etc.)

## Appendixes

- Budget
- Final Production Schedule and Day Out of Days
- Chain of Title (with Copyright Form PA)
- Music synchronization Licenses
- Credit List
- Call Sheets
- It is requested that you include a complete version of the call sheet for the first and last day of the shoot, along with just the front page for all the other days. These should be in PDF format.
- Production Reports
- Final Cost Report (includes budget and actuals)
- Copies of contracts signed between the production company and all outside parties. If the same contract was used multiple times, include a sample of the contract along with a list of the individuals who were contracted that includes each individual's role in or function on the film, and the date the contract was executed. These should include:
  - Crew deal memos
  - Cast contracts
  - Location agreements
  - SAG agreement if applicable
  - Licensing agreements for music, images, logos, etc.
  - Atmosphere contracts
  - Payroll contract if applicable
  - Permits
  - Insurance certificates
  - Equipment rental contracts
  - Independent Contractors' agreements
  - Lawyer Contract (s)

Any sensitive items, including specific dollar amounts, may be redacted at the film maker's discretion.

Students with thesis work that requires alternative forms of production documentation or alternative production processes must consult with their Thesis Advisor and committee members during the semester preceding their defense to determine the documents needed for Final ETD, in addition to the terms by which the Thesis Advisor will approve the document to move forward for the format review. The required documents should be adapted from the list above where possible.

## Format Review

The University publishes a date each semester indicating the deadline for submitting your written thesis for format review ([calendar.ucf.edu/](http://calendar.ucf.edu/)).

The UCF thesis editor will be reviewing your document to ensure its compliance with the formatting guidelines published in the most current Thesis and Dissertation Manual. Current guidelines may be found online: [graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/). It is also appropriate to share your ETD with your Thesis Advisor and others for review. Using an online site such as [onehub.com/](http://onehub.com/) or [dropbox.com/](http://dropbox.com/) makes sharing large files easier.

If at the time of format review you have missing items, please insert a placeholder page for each missing item, describing what is missing and when it will be inserted.

To view the online ETDs of Film MFA alumni, the navigation is:

[ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/cf.jsp](http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/cf.jsp) > type in last name of the film maker > change the next drop-down box to "Author" > click search

For example:

Knight, Ima - Knightro's Big Adventure

## **Requirements for the Film Submission:**

### **The Picture**

For the MFA in Feature Film Production degree, students are expected to submit a completed feature length film or its equivalent (60 minutes or more in length) in Fine Cut form with all pictures, sounds and credits in place. **THIS IS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED A WORK IN PROGRESS CUT.** The film should be in such a form that it is ready for film festival submission and for the student's oral defense with the Thesis Committee.

Fine Cut details are as follows:

- Locked picture edit;
- Full head and tail credits in place;
- All effects or composite shots complete and in place;
- Temporary score in place, along with a plan of action to achieve final score (e.g. composer agreement or other details for how music will be addressed).
- Rough Sound Mix (the sound mix must include all elements necessary to evaluate the film mixed at a level that allows proper playback; however, it is not expected that final audio mix will be turned in);
- Rough Color Correction (images and visual color balance must be completed enough to permit evaluation and critical review of the film, but it's not expected that the final color correction will be turned in).

Within six months following commencement, the graduate is expected to organize a public exhibition or screening of their work and deliver a DCP copy of their finished film (locked picture edit, final and main end credits in place, final sound mix and final color correction) to the Equipment Room. DCP files should be accompanied by the most current marketing images and graphics, as well as any behind-the-scenes or promotional materials the student wishes to share. These films will be digitally stored in NSCM Images and clips from graduate work may be used by the program for promotional and marketing purposes.

### **Body of Work**

Students also have the option of fulfilling the feature film thesis requirement by producing a body of work in their chosen modality that is determined to be equivalent to a feature-film production by their thesis committee. The appropriate requirements for each student's body of work will be different and should be established by the thesis committee prior to the Thesis Proposal. Bodies of work should demonstrate advanced professional competence in the student's chosen production approach and provide evidence of considerable depth of knowledge and achievement in this practice. Historical approaches to the body of work thesis requirement have included:

- Non-theatrical film and video installations
- A series of experimental shorts, essay films, or web series
- A television series pilot episode
- Mixed media practices (such as a series of shorts and installations)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Thesis projects that are not feature-length may be subject to external review by the Film Graduate Faculty to determine if they have met the standards for the thesis requirement.

## Oral Defense

The University publishes a date each semester indicating the deadline for conducting your oral defense ([calendar.ucf.edu/](http://calendar.ucf.edu/)).

Once the thesis film project is completed, the student must screen the fine cut film for all members of his/her Thesis Committee and meet with them for final approval. A final oral review before the Thesis Committee occurs at the end of the MFA program. The thesis defense is an oral examination during which time the students' Thesis Advisor and committee members may question the student about any facet of the artistic process, from the research to the viability of the script, to the methodologies utilized. Additionally, students should be prepared to discuss learning outcomes based on their experience in the MFA program. The oral defense is open to the University community.

All students are required to submit a Thesis Defense Announcement at least one week prior to the date of their oral defense. Students must contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist to obtain the announcement template and for other details pertaining to the announcement at least two weeks prior to the date of their oral defense ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## MFA Critique Requirements

MFA Critique Events for full-time MFA students are held at the end of the Fall and Spring terms. Each student is required to prepare a presentation to graduate faculty and guests about their progress on the thesis project. Critique events are also an opportunity for students to present current challenges they are facing with the thesis project, either creatively or logistically, for feedback from an audience broader than the members of their thesis committee.

Student presentations are grouped by year (third year all together, then second year, then first year all presenting together). Presentations should be brief, but should contain enough detail to assure faculty that you have met program benchmarks. Presentations may consist of PowerPoints, film clips, photos, handouts, whatever you wish to present that will convince us you are making progress. You may invite key creative crew members to participate or answer questions from faculty. MFA Critiques are a valuable opportunity for all MFA students to receive critical feedback at each stage in their progress through the program.

# Criteria for Internship

Internships may be obtained as electives, but would be recommended during the summer between the first and second year of the program. The basic criteria for designation as an internship course at UCF includes student experiential learning which:

- Relates directly to a student's academic major or major-related career goal
- Occurs in business, industry, non-profit, educational, or governmental agencies
- Involves collaboration between campus and business community that aims to increase students' work, personal, and academic competencies
- Provides appropriate supervision both on site through a professional with related training and skills and through guidance from faculty
- Involves structure for learning, including application of classroom content and assignments for reflection that would result in the development of student competencies and go beyond simple assignment of a student completing a set number of hours experience in a setting outside the academic classroom
- Involves a minimum of 45 hours per credit per semester at the participating work site to provide real-world experience and to promote interaction between students and professionals toward the development of professional attitudes and behavior (more hours may be required; fewer hours may be justified by the concentration of the experience or the learning objectives)

All Directed Research, Independent Study and Internship must be accompanied by a syllabus with expectations and due dates. This document serves as a contract between the instructor of record and the student for the grade is determined. Please contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist for additional details ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## Graduate Research

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. Students are responsible for being informed of rules, regulations and policies pertaining to research. Below are some general policies and resources.

Research Policies and Ethics Information: UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For polices including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g. surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see their website: [research.ucf.edu/](http://research.ucf.edu/) > Compliance.

## Financial Support

### Graduate Financials

Students with qualifying assistantships or university-wide fellowships will receive financial packages that include an assistantship or fellowship stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance. Qualifying fellowships are accompanied by tuition waivers. Qualifying assistantships include single appointments of at least .50 FTE (20 hrs/week) or two appointments of at least .25 FTE (10 hrs/week). Tuition remission is in the form of either tuition waivers or tuition payments that cover in-state (resident) tuition. Non-resident students with financial packages are not charged out-of-state tuition or the non-resident financial aid fee.

For additional information about funding for graduate school, please visit the [College of Graduate Studies Funding](#) website.

If you are interested in applying for loans or externally funded need-based awards, visit the [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) website and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available January 1 each year.

## Financial Support Requirements

Graduate students must meet certain requirements each term that they receive fellowships or assistantships. In brief, to receive and maintain these types of financial support packages, a student must:

- maintain good academic standing
- be enrolled full time

A more detailed description of the financial support requirements can be found on the [College of Graduate Studies Funding](#) website.

## University Fellowships

Most university fellowships are reserved for incoming degree-seeking graduate students who plan to enroll full time. For a listing of merit-based fellowships that are offered through the [College of Graduate Studies](#), as well as a listing of various general graduate funding opportunities.

## Graduate Presentation Fellowships

The College of Graduate Studies provides Presentation Fellowships for students to present their research or comparable creative activity at a professional meeting or conference. To review the award requirements and apply online, see [Presentation Fellowship](#).

## Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantship appointments offer opportunities for students to engage in research, teaching, and other projects during their graduate study. These are paid appointments that promote the missions of the University. For eligibility, students must be accepted as a graduate student in a degree program and be enrolled full-time.

For more information concerning graduate assistantships, please visit the [College of Graduate Studies](#) website and contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## Graduate Teaching

Graduate students may be appointed as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) to carry out responsibilities as classroom teachers (instructors of record), co-teachers or classroom assistants, graders, lab assistants, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction as their assistantship assignment. Mandatory training requirements must be met for a student to be hired in the position of Graduate Teaching Associate, Assistant or Grader. The training, offered by UCF's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, covers course design, learning theories, ethics, and other topics relevant to preparing GTAs for their responsibilities. Training is free of charge, and we recommend ALL graduate students take advantage of it, whether they have teaching assignments or not.

Please visit the [College of Graduate Studies](#) website for more information on the training requirements and to register.

Students who are non-native speakers of English and do not have a degree from a U.S. institution must pass the SPEAK test before they will be permitted to teach as Graduate Teaching Associates or Graduate Teaching Assistants. The SPEAK test is not required for students who will be appointed as a Graduate Teaching Grader. Additional information including how to register for the test can be accessed through the [College of Graduate Studies](#) website.

## **GTA Performance Assessments**

At the completion of each semester in which a student is employed as a GTA, the student's faculty GTA supervisor will meet with the student and complete the GTA Performance Assessment Form. These assessments are intended to facilitate and document the mentoring of graduate student teachers, promoting a review and discussion of the strengths and weaknesses in the student's performance in preparation for future employment.

## **Vacation and Leave Expectations**

Expectations concerning vacations, days off and leave vary greatly depending upon the assistantship type and the details of the individual circumstances. Please speak to your supervisor at the beginning of your appointment to clarify what these expectations are.

## **International Students**

For information about the types of employment available to international students, and the requirements and restrictions based on visa type, see the [UCF Global](#) website.

# **Graduate Student Associations**

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/). For individual department or graduate program organizations, please see the Graduate Coordinator.

# **Professional Development**

## **The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning**

The [Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning \(FCTL\)](#) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. FCTL provides classes and programs designed to assist graduate students with the educational issues they face in the classroom as teaching assistant or as instructors. These resources include assistance in course design and syllabi development, learning theories, and the use of different technologies in the classroom or on the internet.

## **Pathways to Success Workshops**

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers the following free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit [graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/](https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/).

## **Graduate Research Forum**

The Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF's diverse colleges and disciplines.

The Research Forum is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information, contact [researchweek@ucf.edu](mailto:researchweek@ucf.edu).

## Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

**Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant** – This award is for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)

**Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching** – This award is for students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

**Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis** – It recognizes graduate students for excellence in the master's thesis. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field. The university award will be forwarded to a national-level competition sponsored by the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) when the thesis discipline corresponds to the annual submission request.

For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see the College of Graduate Studies administrative website: [graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/).

**NSCM Graduate Student Awards** – NSCM sponsors internal graduate student awards that are similar to the College of Graduate Studies awards. For more information, please contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

**NSCM Graduate Student Travel Funding** - All graduate students within NSCM are eligible to receive up to \$500 in travel funds per fall/spring term to assist in attending film festivals and conferences. Students may only receive funding once per semester and once per research paper/creative body of work. For additional information, please contact the NSCM Graduate Admissions Specialist ([nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu)).

## Job Search

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at [career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/).

For specific services or resources provided by the academic program, please contact the graduate program director or academic advisor.



## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

## Useful Links

- [MFA in Feature Film Production Program Website](#)
- [Nicholson School of Communication and Media Website](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [CREATE](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [NSCM Film Equipment and Facilities Website \(Film Operational Portal\)](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

# Graduate Faculty

## **Beckler, Zachary**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
Contact Info: [Zachary.Beckler@ucf.edu](mailto:Zachary.Beckler@ucf.edu)

## **Gerstein, Mark**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, committee only  
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## **Ingle, Lori**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, committee only  
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## **Jones, Robert**

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Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, committee only  
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## **Kritzer, Elizabeth**

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Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
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## **Mills, Lisa**

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Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
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## **Peters, Philip**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
Contact Info: [Philip.Peters@ucf.edu](mailto:Philip.Peters@ucf.edu)

## **Peterson, Lisa**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty Scholar, committee only  
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**Rhodes, Gary**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
Contact Info: [Gary.Rhodes@ucf.edu](mailto:Gary.Rhodes@ucf.edu)

**Ritter, Timothy**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
Contact Info: [Tim.Ritter@ucf.edu](mailto:Tim.Ritter@ucf.edu)

**Sandler, Barry**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
Contact Info: [Barry.Sandler@ucf.edu](mailto:Barry.Sandler@ucf.edu)

**Shults, Katherine**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
Disciplinary affiliations: Film and Mass Media  
Graduate Faculty, Thesis Advisor eligible  
Contact Info: [Katherine.Shults@ucf.edu](mailto:Katherine.Shults@ucf.edu)

**Smith, Kevin**

College: Nicholson School of Communication and Media  
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Graduate Faculty, committee only  
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