

DRAMA

Graduate Student Handbook

Revised August 2026



Director of Graduate Programs: David Kennedy | dmkenned@ualberta.ca

Graduate Student Advisors: Rebecca Anderson & Dawn Hunter | dramags@ualberta.ca

Our Program

We are committed to the training and education of individuals who will provide vision for the future of theatre in Canada and beyond. We endeavour to foster in students a unique combination of practical and critical skills, with an adventurous, visionary attitude. Students are stimulated to examine the nature of theatre itself - its form and content. Our goal is to challenge our students to think independently, to develop their innate qualities of resourcefulness, innovation and imagination.

DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA



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Welcome to the Department of Drama!

Our department features live performance as the site of interaction and integration of all aspects of the discipline of theatre; all graduate students participate in this culture of research and creative activity. A lively interplay between programs enriches the student experience beyond the scope of any one program.

We value leadership. Our graduate students assume key leadership roles on the creative teams which plan and realize the many productions presented in the department and are well prepared to take on leadership roles when they graduate.

ADDRESS FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Students,

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Drama, I offer you a warm welcome to the department!

Congratulations on making the choice to study here in the Department of Drama at the University of Alberta. Grad students are a special part of our culture in this department; will bring new insight and lively interaction to our classrooms, studios, and creative atmosphere. You will engage in research and creative projects in ways you have never dreamed. You will astound us and challenge yourself. I hope you have hours of enjoyment in pursuing your studies!

The most important element in the alchemy of a Drama Department is its community. The camaraderie and friendships built in grad school are often lifelong. We look to challenge norms, to ask questions that provoke thought and action, and to contemplate deeply the human condition today in our post-truth, eco-challenged, and tumultuous times. But first, we must build a community that is respectful and open-minded. As graduate students, you are instrumental in building a community in which we can be our best selves and be our most responsive and creative. You belong!

April Viczko
Chair, Department of Drama
Professor, Theatre Design
e: aviczko@ualberta.ca

ACKNOWLEDGING TERRITORY

The University of Alberta, its buildings, labs and research stations are primarily located on the territory of the Nêhiyaw (Cree), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Nakoda (Stoney), Dene, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux), lands that are now known as part of Treaties 6, 7 and 8 and homeland of the Métis. The University of Alberta respects the sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems and cultures of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

This statement is the [officially endorsed](#) U of A acknowledgement of Indigenous territory developed for [Braiding Past, Present, Future: University of Alberta's Indigenous Strategic Plan](#).

In the Drama department, we are learning what it means to go beyond acknowledging territory to develop respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and lands. We hope you can contribute to this process in your graduate studies.

INTRODUCTION

This handbook will help you while you're starting out and in the future as a quick reference. However, you will also need to meet and consult with numerous faculty members, including your program coordinator, the director of graduate programs, and the department chair. All of the faculty members in the department are available and happy to help if you need assistance or would like to discuss a possible thesis topic or play.

This handbook is not exhaustive, but it will point you in the right direction. For help with questions that are not addressed here, take full advantage of the knowledge shared by your grad student colleagues and the department's faculty and staff.

Please note that Drama's graduate students belong to BOTH the Faculty of Arts as well as the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). Please visit the [current students section of the GPS website](#) as well. Becoming familiar with the "General Department of Drama Handbook" will also improve your understanding of the inner workings of the department and the resources available to you. Each program also has a handbook, available on the [Drama website](#) or from your program coordinator.

GRADUATE COORDINATORS

David Kennedy | Director of Graduate Programs

david.kennedy@ualberta.ca

The Director of Graduate Programs oversees the graduate division: working with GPS, and addressing issues relating to any of the grad programs, including scholarships and funding.

Dr. Selena Couture | MA & PhD Coordinator

office: FAB 3-118 | couture2@ualberta.ca

As the MA & PhD Coordinator, Selena is available to advise and oversee students in the MA & PhD programs.

Guido Tondino | MFA Design Coordinator

office: FAB 3-168 | phone: 780-492-6206 | gtondino@ualberta.ca

Guido is the academic advisor for MFA Design students. He is available to answer questions and address issues relating to the MFA Design program.

David Kennedy | MFA Directing Coordinator

david.kennedy@ualberta.ca

David is the academic advisor for MFA Directing students. Consult him for answers to any of your questions about the MFA Directing program, including courses, procedures, and production needs.

Lin Snelling | MFA Theatre Practice Coordinator

office: 3-111 | phone: 780-492-1094 | snelling@ualberta.ca

Lin is the academic advisor for MFA Theatre Practice students. She is available to answer questions and address issues relating to the MFA Theatre Practice program.

David Ley | MFA Theatre Voice Pedagogy Coordinator

office: 3-122 | phone: 780-492-8720 | dley@ualberta.ca

David is the academic advisor for the MFA in Theatre Voice Pedagogy program.

A full list department leadership, faculty, guest artists, staff, administrators and student services is available here: [Department of Drama People Pages](#)

General Information

REGISTRATION

A list of Drama courses and descriptions will be sent to you by email and posted on the Drama website in early spring. Your program coordinator must approve your list of courses in writing (over email, cc Graduate Advisors, Dawn and Rebecca, at dramags@ualberta.ca) and then you can register yourself in [Bear Tracks](#) or the Graduate Advisors can help you.

Students in thesis-based programs must be registered full-time for the entirety of their program (9 credits per term in Fall and Winter). GPS will register you automatically in thesis credits in spring and summer terms to maintain your full time registration.

Courses in Drama and Other Departments

Drama courses

- Specific course offerings for each year are posted in the department by the end of the spring term for the upcoming fall term.
- Each program has course-specific requirements, most courses are general graduate seminars that are open to students from any grad program. These courses are always enriched by a diversity of students from a variety of artistic and academic backgrounds.

Courses in other departments

- You are welcome to propose taking a course from another department. If approved by your program coordinator/supervisor, you are responsible for searching out other department's course listings (by visiting other department's main offices or their webpages, or Bear Tracks). The Faculty of Arts Graduate Student webpage partially lists the available courses as well. Once you have found a course that suits your interests and area of research, and fits into your schedule, there are two main ways for you to enroll:
 - » First, if the extra-departmental course is already a graduate level offering, you can register as you would for any other course. Be sure to consult with your supervisor and program coordinator to ensure that the course fits into your program, and is approved.
 - » Second, if the course is numbered as a (senior) undergraduate course, you will have to contact the instructor and inquire whether they are willing to accommodate you, and possibly create additional assignments for you as a grad student. This upgrade is necessary because you are not allowed to receive graduate credit for an undergraduate course. If necessary, you may have to make arrangements within the drama department (see Graduate Advisors and your supervisor) to enroll in Drama 606 (see glossary, 2.1), which will give you a graduate course number. Forms are available from the Graduate Advisors and must be completed (with all signatures) before they will register you.

Special Projects Courses

- Drama 605: Independent Study course. To register, your proposed instructor must fill out a Drama 605 form and have it signed by the course instructor, program coordinator and Chair. Give your signed form to the Graduate Advisors prior to start of term and they will register you. Each program may have different rules re. DR 605.

- Drama 606: If you wish to take an undergraduate course at the graduate level, you need to register for Drama 606. You must fill out a Drama 606 form with the course instructor explaining how the course expectations will be elevated to the grad level. This form must be signed by the course instructor, your program coordinator, and the Chair. Give your signed form prior to start of term to the Graduate Advisors and they will register you.

Non-U of A Courses

- Exceptionally, students may want to take a non-U of A course for Credit. The Western Canadian Graduate Deans Agreement provides one avenue for this (see [WDA](#)). Transfer Credits may also be an avenue (see [Transfer Credits](#)). Contact the Graduate Coordinator for this.

As soon as possible, you should begin consulting with a variety of potential supervisors to explore your ideas and options. See the Drama webpage for faculty and their areas of specialization for guidance in choosing a supervisor and committee members. You should also meet with your program coordinator, and supervisor as soon as you have one, to discuss a timeline of drafts and revisions through which your proposal(s) will be prepared to progress to the committee level.

PERSONAL PHOTOCOPYING

- ONEcard photocopying is very convenient. There are ONEcard copiers all over campus, including in Rutherford Library. The closest place to deposit money into your ONEcard account is at the ONEcard office in HUB mall. You can also monitor your account and deposit funds online at www.onecard.ualberta.ca.
- There are less expensive places to do your copying. The Graduate Students' Association office, Triffo Hall, offers cheap do-it-yourself copying. This office also offers other services, such as transparencies to buy and copy onto. Photocopiers there are available between 8:30 and 4:00, Tuesday through Friday. On Mondays the office opens at 10:00. 492-2175.
- The Student's Union Print Centre, room 0-26 in the basement of SUB, is another place for regular copying. This is also a full-service copy centre for your posters, transparencies, etc. September through April, hours of operation are 9:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday. 492-9113.

See General Handbook and your specific program handbook for more information on photocopying needs and resources.

RESEARCH AND TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

The Department considers year-one and year-two grad students at the Master's level, and PhD students year 1 to 4 for research and teaching assistantships. You may have heard about and accepted your assignment already.

- Funding for all assistantships depends on budgets handed down to the department from other levels of university administration. This is why there may seem to be a delay in hearing about your new assistantship assignment. Individual professors also often get research grants that may fund Research Assistantships.
- The Department assigns assistantships to scholarship students only after non-scholarship students have been accommodated. However, the Department does recognize that teaching

is a very valuable part of grad students' experience at the U of A, and works to provide teaching opportunities to grad students.

- How payments are made: all TA/RA and scholarship semi-monthly payments are made through direct-deposit. If you are a new student please upload your banking information to the [Staff Services Portal](#) (*the portal is located at the bottom of the linked page*). If you are a returning student, please make sure your banking info in Bear Tracks is up to date, so that you will receive your first payment on the 25th of September. If your first TA/RA position begins in January, then you will go through this process then. Check your first pay statement. If you notice any irregularities, please consult the Graduate Advisors with any concerns.
- If you are a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), you must meet with your supervisor early in the semester. Once you've discussed and agreed upon timelines and expectations, sign a GTA / GRA Time Use Guideline and submit it to the Graduate Advisors.
- If you are a TA Principal Instructor, be sure to meet with your course coordinator prior to the term, to discuss the course content, intentions and grading. The coordinator must approve your Course Outline, which must be handed out on the first day of classes.
- All GTAs are encouraged to attend Teaching Learning sessions, offered twice in the year (August/September and January, see Graduate Teaching Learning). If you are a new GTA and Principal Instructor (P.I.) for the course, you are normally required to attend at least ONE session of the offerings, prior to or at the very beginning of teaching the course.

TUITION BALANCE PAYMENT AND GTA/GRA

- Any tuition balance remaining after the payment deadline in each term will be deducted from your GRA/GTA pay cheques in 6 equal installments, starting in October (or February for Winter term). In case there is still a balance owing after these deductions - you are responsible for paying this balance. Please ensure that you check Bear Tracks regularly to make sure your tuition is being paid according to your understanding so that you can clear up any issues early. See [Tuition Payroll Deduction \(Graduate Students\)](#) for full details.
- You cannot opt out of these deductions. You can however pay your tuition in full by the deadline with a loan or scholarship or by other means, if you wish to keep your full GRA/GTA paycheques.
 - » Please note that this applies to GRA/GTA assignments ONLY and not scholarships. So if your funding package consists of a mixture of scholarships and GRA/GTA, tuition will be deducted from GRA/GTA pay only.
- For thesis-based students who are required to be registered full time for the entire year, including Spring and Summer, you can see a sample of how your tuition and fees are spread out over the year on the [GPS Payroll Deductions Site](#).
- ***Make sure you plan financially for paying tuition and fees over spring and summer!***

EXTERNAL FUNDING

We encourage ALL students to vigorously pursue "external funding" – that is, funding beyond what the department directly has to offer you as a grad student:

- The department has only limited funds to offer. Departmental funding comes from different sources and is definitely subject to change from year to year. External funding can help you to stabilize your income and have a bit more security into the future.

- Future employers, and admissions and scholarship committees will look at your success at attracting outside funding as a strong indication of your abilities and achievements.
- As per your letter of acceptance into the program, departmental policy will favour students that actively pursue external funding. We realize that success is not guaranteed.
- External funding may come in the form of scholarships, bursaries, awards, grants, or contracts. Here are some places to start your search.
- You can find a current list of funding options here: [GPS Awards and Funding](#)
- The major source of graduate funding available for Canadian citizens and permanent residents is the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council](#). If you are eligible you will be expected to submit an application in the first term of your first year. MA / MFA students are only eligible to apply in their first year, PhD students can apply from year one to year three.
- The Canada Council:
 - » Opportunities and eligibility can be found at: <https://canadacouncil.ca/>
- The Alberta Foundation for the Arts:
 - » Opportunities and eligibility can be found at: <https://www.affta.ab.ca/>
- Also, check into the provincially-funded arts granting body in your home province (if not Alberta). For example:
 - » Ontario Arts Council
 - » Saskatchewan Arts Board
 - » British Columbia Arts Council

GPS also offers research and travel grants to grad students varying in value – up to \$2000. When applying for an [GPS travel grant](#), keep in mind that you are allowed to receive only one such grant during the course of your program. You are eligible to access funds to further your research by supporting travel to:

- a) attend conferences where the student is giving a paper
- b) visit libraries, archives or other institutions to pursue research
- c) perform or present creative work.

See the Director of Graduate Programs for more information.

EMERGENCY FUNDING

There are resources available to help students in financial distress.

[Emergency Loans](#) are available. Emergency loans are helpful for students experiencing delays in funding or student loans. Emergency loans are interest-free and repayable in six months.

[Graduate Student's Association Emergency Bursary](#): The GSA offers an emergency bursary for students who run into an unexpected emergency.

[Indigenous Students' Support Fund](#): First Peoples' House and Student Financial Support (Office of the Registrar) partner to provide funding for students who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit peoples of Canada (FNMI) and need emergency financial support.

[International Supplementary Bursary](#): students can apply for emergency funding through International Student Services.

Finally, the Department of Drama also has an emergency bursary fund. This fund is intended to be accessed after students have exhausted other sources of emergency funding. If you are in a situation where you are unable to access any of the other funds, or cannot pay back an emergency loan, please make an appointment with to access the fund.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVAL FACILITIES

- Hours of operation among the University's numerous libraries vary depending on the time of year and the specific library. The information about hours of operation is on the U of A Libraries homepage.
- The Drama Subject Guide is an incredible resource put together by our Drama Librarian with shortcuts to an abundance of ways to find exactly what you need. <https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/drama>
- Find links and instruction on using the vast collection of Audio and Video resources for instruction and research at: <https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/audiovideo>

PREPARING YOUR THESIS

For students in the MA and PhD programs, please familiarize yourself with GPS's guidelines for preparing your thesis here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/academic-requirements/thesis-requirement-and-preparation>

Students in MFA programs do not follow the same guidelines for thesis preparation and do not have to submit their written thesis document to GPS. Please consult your program coordinator/supervisor about preparing for your thesis.

Other information that you should obtain for your reference as soon as you can: the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies' website material entitled Preparing your Thesis. GPS no longer provides paper copies, but you can download the information at: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/resources/graduate-students/thesis-preparation-requirements-deadlines/index.html>

It is customary for all students to provide a bound copy of their thesis to the department to be made available through the Guberman library. See the general department handbook for information on the Guberman (also known as the Gube). Many students find it useful to look at past theses for inspiration!

COMMITTEES ON WHICH DRAMA GRAD STUDENTS HAVE REPRESENTATION

In September each year, most likely at the Graduate Orientation, Drama grad students elect representatives to the following committees:

- **The Graduate Students' Association: two seats available.** See <https://gsa-ualberta.ca/> for further details and meeting dates.
- **Drama Council: one seat available (and an alternate).** Drama Council is the general committee comprised of representatives from all areas of the department. It is the governing body of the Drama department. It addresses policy, course, and program changes, as well as pan-departmental issues.
- **Graduate Committee: two seats available (and an alternate).** The Graduate Committee is comprised of the faculty members who teach in the graduate programs, plus two student representatives. It addresses questions specifically related to grad studies.

INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- If you are an international student, you will have additional concerns affecting your graduate studies. To inform yourself about policies that may affect your graduate program, including visas, study permits, work opportunities, and financial aid, start at these pages: <https://www.ualberta.ca/international/index.html> and <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/awards-and-funding/international-student-funding.html>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada is also a crucial link for international students: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada.html> This page also links to any of the federal government forms that you may need to submit before and during your studies.

ETHICS AND ACADEMIC CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT

GPS expects all graduate students to fulfill an Ethics Training Requirement by taking in their first term in INT D 710 Ethics and Academic Citizenship (Master and doctoral students) and INT D 720 Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship (Doctoral students).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENT

GPS regulations expect all graduate students to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for professional development. Master's students must present this plan within 12 months of your program's commencement; Doctoral students within 18 months. Your IDP is to be approved by your program coordinator. GPS also expects all students to fulfill 8 hours of Professional Development. See the GPS website for guidance, including tools for completing your IDP and an online tracker for your PD hours (CampusBRIDGE): <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/professional-development-requirement/index.html>

Submit your completed PD Form to the Grad Advisor early in your program. You are not permitted to graduate without PD completion

Please note that the following activities do **not** normally qualify for PD:

- Attending a conference or society meeting
- Sessions also used towards ethics (ie DR 601)
- Presenting a research talk or poster
- Giving a performance/concert
- Attending information sessions
- Attending sessions for discipline or research

LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUAL DRAMA GRAD PROGRAMS

You will have many opportunities to interact with grad students in other programs. If you would like more information about the individual grad programs, including their histories, objectives, and requirements, go to the Drama department website, which will contain the most up-to-date information. <https://www.ualberta.ca/drama/graduate/index.html>

- The Master of Arts in Drama (Thesis and Course based)
- The Master of Fine Arts in Design
- The Master of Fine Arts in Directing
- The Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Practice
- The Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Voice Pedagogy
- The PhD in Performance Studies

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Please familiarize yourself with the student code of behaviour.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/governance/resources/policies-standards-and-codes-of-conduct/code-of-student-behaviour.html>

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

There are resources available on campus for mental health and wellness. You can find information about resources for graduate students here:

- General: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/current-students/need-help-now.html>
- Additional Graduate Student Resources: <https://gsa-ualberta.ca/programs-services/>

Quality of Graduate Supervision Recognition/Awards

The University recognizes excellence in Graduate Supervision and Mentorship, and there are a number of opportunities to do this, both for your academic advisor/supervisor/coordinator and for the Department's Graduate Advisor on Staff.

Graduate Students can be involved in these nominations, either individually or in a group. If you wish to initiate (GSA, AASUA) or suggest (contact the Chair or Director of Graduate Programs) where applicable). Please note that dates may vary from year to year.

STUDENT INITIATED

Graduate Student Association (GSA) GSA Non-Academic Staff Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize a member of the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) of the University of Alberta for their exceptional performance and/or service to graduate students.

Deadline: mid January | Nomination: by Graduate Student

See online: <https://www.preview.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/funding/recognition-awards/nonacademicstaff.html>

AASUA

The purpose of this award is to recognize a member of the Association of Academic Staff, University of Alberta (AASUA), whose work with and for graduate students has been of exceptionally high quality.

Deadline: mid January | Nomination: by current Graduate Student

See online: <https://www.preview.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/funding/recognition-awards/academicstaff.html>

DEPARTMENT INITIATED

Faculty of Arts Graduate Teaching Award

The award is to recognize those Graduate Student teachers that exhibit a consistently superior command of the subject matter being taught and provide students with a comprehensive, coherent understanding of the subject matter.

Deadline: Mid December | Nomination: by Department (Chair)

See online: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/fees-funding/scholarships-awards/graduate-student-teaching-awards.html>

Killam Award

The Killam Award for Excellence in Mentoring has been created to recognize outstanding performance in the area of mentoring summer research students, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, visiting research scholars and undergraduate students.

Deadline: mid March | Nomination: by Department (Chair)

See online: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/awards-and-funding/scholarships/killam.html>

Related Documents and Appendices

Department Resources and Policy Documents

For current documents as they are updated, please refer to:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/drama/resources/index.html>

Content on these pages is subject to change, so please refer back regularly for the most current version.

Department of Drama Graduate Seminars

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/drama/graduate/graduate-courses.html>

Published each Spring for the following academic year.