

Museum Studies Program - University of Kansas

A Handbook for Graduate Students

Museum Studies Program
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This handbook is for informational purposes and does not constitute a contract. Degree requirements currently enforced appear in the Museum Studies Section of the KU [Academic Catalog](#).

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This handbook and associated appendices can be found on the [MUSE Student Documents SharePoint site](#).

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Introduction

Since 1981 the graduate program in Museum Studies at the University of Kansas (KU) has offered nationally acclaimed training for professional careers in museums, historical agencies, and related institutions. The program (1) prepares graduates for professional careers in museums and related institutions; (2) promotes innovative multidisciplinary research and practice in museum studies; and (3) seeks opportunities for engagement by students and faculty to enhance museums in the state and the region.

The master's degree in Museum Studies is a 36-credit-hour program built around 3 fundamental components – *Foundational* courses and experiences, *Topical* inquiry and application in relevant disciplines, and *Professional* specialization and expertise. Students who earn the M.A. in Museum Studies will have acquired mastery of the professional and conceptual dimensions of museums in the broadest sense, while also developing the specialized skills necessary for success in the field.

The KU Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies is a 15-credit-hour program that provides students with a solid grounding in the discipline of museum studies. The certificate program is open to students in KU graduate programs. It enables students to integrate knowledge of museum studies into their academic disciplines.

The graduate curriculum in Museum Studies provides a comprehensive overview of the discipline, opportunities for mastering core components of museum practice, avenues for exploring the interdisciplinary nature of museums, solid grounding in current issues facing museums, and possibilities for research to develop new and innovative approaches in the field. The Museum Studies Program's core courses provide a foundation in the theories, history, techniques, and problems common to museums, historical agencies, and related institutions as well as the specialized operations of such institutions. Students also receive classroom and field training in methods and subject matter in a variety of professional specialties, including leadership and management, exhibits, collections, curation, and education and community connections. The Museum Studies Program also has well-established connections with academic disciplines such as African and African American Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, Geology, Art History, History, and Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, and students have many opportunities to take courses in those fields. Museum Studies graduates are well-equipped to undertake professional and leadership responsibilities in museums, historical agencies, and related institutions.

The Director of Museum Studies, in consultation with the Museum Studies Executive Committee, administers the program. University faculty and area museum professionals constitute the program's faculty, while the program counts affiliates from a number of academic

departments and museums on campus. Museum Studies students are active in the Program's Museum Students Organization, as well as in local, regional, and national professional organizations. For additional instructional, research, and field services, the University of Kansas provides a broad range of opportunities for study – these include:

- Anschutz Library
- Art & Architecture Library
- Biodiversity Institute/Natural History Museum
- Booth Family Hall of Athletics
- Dole Institute of Politics
- KU Libraries' Conservation Service
- Music & Dance Library
- Spahr Engineering Library
- Spencer Museum of Art
- Spencer Research Library
- Watson Library
- Wheat Law Library
- Wilcox Classical Collection

In addition, students have access to nearby universities, historical agencies, specialized libraries, and museums.

Mission

The KU Museum Studies Program:

- engages in critical examination of museum theory and practice;
- fosters innovative approaches that extend the potential of museums to serve society; and
- prepares students for leadership in the diverse, multidisciplinary museum field.

Vision

KU Museum Studies will strengthen its role as a leading student-centered and research-focused program by:

- attracting and retaining talented and intellectually curious students in a rigorous learning environment that fosters student success;
- building and sustaining productive relationships with faculty across the University;
- developing innovative learning opportunities for graduate students;
- initiating research and programs that explore all aspects of the museum field;
- working closely with the University's museums, archives, and libraries to support their missions and create opportunities for students; and
- engaging with institutions and individuals in the museum profession through partnerships, grants, and collaborations.

Values

The KU Museum Studies Program contends that museums serve society best when they create dynamic settings where:

- material evidence – embodied in specimens from the natural world, products of human experience, and creative expressions of all kinds – opens new pathways for understanding the past, the present, and the future;
- knowledge and understanding becomes accessible and inspiring for wide-ranging audiences;
- important topics facing society are openly presented, discussed, and challenged; and
- reflection on fundamental topics such as representation and access is ongoing.

The KU Museum Studies Program values and demonstrates leadership in the University and the museum profession by:

- producing graduates who have scholarly expertise as well as practical knowledge, skills, and experience;
- emphasizing the fundamentally multidisciplinary nature of museum studies;
- advancing professional best practices in all facets of museum work;
- advocating responsible stewardship of natural, artistic, historic, and cultural resources;
- challenging expectations about the role of museums in society;
- embracing engagement with all people and communities;
- encouraging collaboration among colleagues and stakeholders; and
- supporting research that strengthens theory and practice in museum studies.

Unit Structure

Administration

Director of Museum Studies. The Director is the administrative head of Museum Studies, the chairperson of the Museum Studies Executive Committee, and an ex-officio member of any other Museum Studies committees or subcommittees. The Director oversees Museum Studies programs, initiates and/or carries through curricular and other changes in the program, appoints and oversees Museum Studies staff and lecturers, supervises the Museum Studies budget, applies Museum Studies and University rules as appropriate, and performs other normal tasks as required by the College and other University administrative units.

Museum Studies Executive Committee. The Museum Studies Executive Committee (MSEC) advises the Director concerning program affairs including (but not necessarily limited to): development of program policies, oversight of the academic quality of the program, establishment of criteria and standards for the admission of students to the program, and budgetary and curricular concerns that affect the program as a whole. The academic design of the program is established by guidelines set by the MSEC.

Admissions Committee. An Admissions Committee will be established each year to review applications to the master's program. The Admissions Committee will be composed of the Director and at least three Museum Studies faculty and affiliates. The members will be appointed by the Director, in consultation with the Executive Committee.

Program Staff

Lauren Chaney

COGA Graduate Program Coordinator

Lauren advises students throughout their time at KU, including the admissions process, regular enrollment, petitions, GTA/GRA/GA appointments, the M.A. exam process, and graduation.

[Schedule a virtual advising appointment](#)

lkchaney@ku.edu

Sunnie Clapsaddle

Administrative Associate

Sunnie oversees all administrative needs for the Museum Studies Program.

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Faculty and Affiliate Faculty

Visit the Museum Studies website for a current list of our [faculty members](#).

University Offices

Your unit's Director of Graduate Studies and/or Graduate Program Coordinator is your first stop for any questions related to graduate study or requirements. If you would like to research an issue in advance of speaking with them or if you still have questions, the following offices can provide assistance:

[**College Office of Graduate Affairs \(COGA\)**](#)

COGA oversees graduate affairs and administers University policy for programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The COGA website contains comprehensive information on requirements and processes pertaining to graduate education at KU. Most common questions can be answered with the information provided there, including questions regarding [enrollment changes or forms](#), University policies regarding [exams](#) and committee requirements, and University [graduation requirements](#).

COGA reviews all [student petitions](#) related to University and College policy, issuing decisions on behalf of the College or referring as required to a faculty committee and/or Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. The more common student petitions relate to [enrollment](#), [graduate credit](#), [leaves of absence](#), and [time limit extensions](#).

[**Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs**](#)

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs is the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs at KU. The Executive Council of Graduate Studies sets policies and regulations governing graduate study and offers various programs for graduate students throughout the year. While COGA should be your first stop for any questions your department cannot answer, you may be referred to Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs for certain matters, especially for those related to [GTA/GRA/GA appointments and policies](#).

[**Office of the Registrar \(OUR\)**](#)

Contact OUR for questions related to enrollment (if the question cannot be resolved via the enrollment changes link provided above under COGA), tuition, campus fees, the Academic Calendar, and fee petitions.

[**Financial Aid and Scholarships**](#)

Contact Financial Aid and Scholarships for questions related to the disbursement of scholarships, fellowship award, loans, and FAFSA.

[International Support Services \(ISS\)](#)

Contact ISS for questions related to international students, including enrollment requirements, international student insurance, obtaining a social security card, I-20 questions, and any issue related to student visas. While other offices on campus such as the Applied English Center, Human Resources, or the Registrar may also handle related matters, because the students' legal status in the country may be affected, it is recommended that students contact ISS first.

[Center for Teaching Excellence \(CTE\)](#)

CTE is a University office dedicated to assisting instructors and GTAs in developing effective instructional techniques and to introducing instructors and GTAs to the pedagogical technology available at the University. CTE specialists work with instructors and GTAs individually and also offer a diverse array of workshops and discussions.

General Department Policies & Procedures

Admission

M.A. Admission Requirements

We admit students to the M.A. program for the fall semester. Applications are due in **early February** each year (consult [MUSE admissions webpage](#) for exact date).

To be considered for admission to the program, a student must hold a bachelor's degree. Acceptance in the program is determined by the Museum Studies Admissions Committee.

A complete application for admission must include:

1. A completed application, along with a non-refundable application fee, submitted online through [Graduate Admissions](#).
2. A copy of your official transcript, issued by the Registrar's Office of the institution from which you have (or will have) earned your bachelor's degree (and master's degree, if applicable). You can obtain an official transcript from your Registrar's Office (typically marked "Issued to Student"), copy it, and upload it to your application. **IMPORTANT:** Records accessed through a student portal are NOT official transcripts, and we are unable to accept them.
3. One essay not to exceed five double-spaced pages.
Please respond to this prompt: How has a museum experience shaped your outlook on the function and relevance of museums? Explain how you have seen museums engage with their various audiences, stakeholders, or communities.

Feel free to draw from personal experiences of visits to museums or volunteer/paid positions you have held or current events or other instances of museum engagement you have learned about in your studies. Be analytical. Use your essay to help the Admissions Committee better understand your worldview and how you think critically and comparatively about museums and your career objectives in them. We realize you may not have museum work experience, so we want to know how you envision approaching museum studies and your unique perspective as an emergent scholar. We also want to see how well you write. Feel free to cite and support your essay with representational examples from museums, related socio-cultural or political events, your educational and disciplinary expertise, and/or interventions that you see are necessary in the field.

We will evaluate your work based on the clarity of your vision, the relative support for your perspective and claims, and your passion for the field as an incoming scholar. We encourage you to think critically about your areas of interest and how your experience, broadly conceived, offers a fresh perspective to an incoming graduate cohort in Museum Studies at KU. Cogency and clarity are at least as important as content.

Topics you might consider, but certainly are not limited to: ethical responsibility to the community; programming surrounding collections and holdings; acquisition practices and repatriation of collections; ecology and the environment; ethics/legal aspects of collecting, exhibiting, or storing materials; how museums create knowledge; the role of objects in deepening people's capacity for self-awareness.

4. A personal statement, not to exceed three double-spaced pages, explaining:
 - those aspects of museums and museum studies that particularly interest you
 - your professional goals, including the area of museum work that most attracts you
 - your relevant experience and background
 - how you believe KU's Museum Studies Program matches your interests, and
 - anything else you think is important for us to know. If you believe your academic record doesn't reflect your potential to perform well in our program, please provide an explanation.
5. Two letters of recommendation. Please use KU's online letter of recommendation system. We strongly recommend that at least one of your letters of recommendation come from a professor, instructor, or other individual who can speak directly to your academic ability.
6. A resume or curriculum vitae listing your education, employment history, volunteer experience, internships, scholarships/fellowships, and academic awards.
7. If an applicant is not a native speaker of English, they must verify their English proficiency. Please see Graduate Admissions' [English Proficiency Requirements page](#) for more information.

Graduate Certificate Admission Requirements

We accept graduate certificate applications from current KU graduate students for fall and spring entry. We do not offer a standalone graduate certificate for non-KU students. Acceptance in the certificate program is determined by the Museum Studies Director in consultation with Program faculty and affiliates.

Current graduate students wishing to enroll in the Graduate Certificate Program will apply through Graduate Admissions. A student must be in good standing in their master's or doctoral program to participate in the certificate program. The application process entails completing the [online application](#), which requires the following materials:

- A letter stating your interest in Museum Studies and its relationship to your graduate course of study
- A current copy of your KU advising report
- A brief letter from your faculty advisor or Director of Graduate Studies confirming their support of your pursuit of the certificate

Program Cost and Financial Aid

Use Financial Aid's [cost calculator](#) to determine your cost per semester, year, or for the entire degree. The Museum Studies M.A. program requires 36 hours of graduate credit, and most students complete the program in four semesters. Be sure to filter the calculator by "Graduate students" and resident or non-resident based on your Kansas residency status. The Museum Studies M.A. is an in-person program at the KU Lawrence campus.

Museum Studies works closely with other departments and KU's on-campus museums to connect students with funding in the form of Graduate Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Research Assistantships, and internships. Many of our students find career-related jobs and paid internships on campus or in nearby communities. Available funding opportunities are communicated to incoming and continuing students via the MUSESTUDENTS email listserv.

All domestic students are encouraged to complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) each year. At the graduate level, the government provides student loans only, but KU uses FAFSA information to determine student eligibility for institutional scholarships, grants, and federal work-study positions.

Academic Integrity & Misconduct

The Museum Studies Program considers academic integrity essential to our work and we expect students to adhere to its principles in conducting research. This means that students acknowledge the sources they use in their academic work and cite them fully and correctly; this includes the use of generative AI/ChatBots in brainstorming, outlining, editing prose, and other tasks related to a course assignment. Not acknowledging a source constitutes plagiarism. Students should consult with faculty well before due dates if they are not sure how to handle a source.

Academic integrity also means that work on examinations and assignments must be carried out by authorized means. Students are subject to sanctions by the University for Academic Misconduct if they violate these principles. Definitions are provided in the [University Senate Rules and Regulations](#).

Annual Review

After the first year of study in the program, the Director, in consultation with the Graduate Program Coordinator, will evaluate each student's progress, ensuring satisfactory grades have been achieved and the courses fulfill program requirements. Students will receive a letter from the Director to summarize the results of the review, and either the director or student may request a meeting to discuss the review further.

Good Academic Standing

Students who fall below a cumulative grade point average of B (3.0) are placed on probation by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students who do not raise their grade point average by the following semester may be dismissed from the program.

The Museum Studies Program will not permit a student who has six or more credit hours of incomplete grades to enroll in further coursework until the courses have been completed.

The Museum Studies M.A. program is designed to be completed in two academic years, or 4 semesters, with students beginning the program in the Fall Semester. Typically, a student completes and defends their capstone project during semester 4. A student who has completed all coursework requirements and spends one or more semesters beyond semester 4 solely working on their capstone project may be placed on academic probation for lack of satisfactory progress. Failure to make progress during the probationary period may lead to dismissal.

For additional information on good standing as well as probation and dismissal procedures for those students that do not meet the requirements for good standing, see the [University Policies and Degree Requirements](#) section of this document.

Program Engagement/Professionalism Acknowledgment

As a student in the Museum Studies M.A. or Graduate Certificate program, you are expected to:

1. check your KU email account regularly and respond to emails from faculty, the Director, and program staff in a timely manner (within 1-2 business days). Program announcements, upcoming events, job/internship opportunities, etc. will be communicated via the MUSESTUDENTS email listserv.

2. access and bookmark the [MUSE Student Documents SharePoint site](#). All program documents, including the Graduate Student Handbook, can be found on the SharePoint site.
3. attend all professional development activities and workshops organized by the Museum Studies Program. A list of workshops/seminars will be provided as information becomes available.
4. communicate directly with program staff and/or Director if you are behind in your classes, feel overwhelmed, have difficulty with an instructor, have mental or physical health issues that may lead to the need for a leave of absence, or other issues that may affect your wellbeing and program progress. We are here for you!
5. select a MUSE faculty or affiliate faculty member to serve as your M.A. advisor by the end of your first semester. Meet with them *at least* once per semester for course advising, capstone project advising, and general mentorship.

Advising & Mentorship

Advising for entering students is provided by the Director of the Museum Studies Program and the Graduate Program Coordinator. By the end of the first year, and preferably sooner, students should choose an M.A. advisor drawn from the [faculty and affiliates listing on the program website](#) whose expertise aligns with the student's area of emphasis/interest. The M.A. advisor will be directly involved with the development of the student's capstone project and, in all but a few cases, will also serve as chair of the student's M.A. committee. Students are encouraged to think carefully about which faculty members are a good fit with their research projects as well as their intellectual and professional goals and to seek advice from faculty, peers, and staff when choosing advisors. When a student has decided on an advisor, they must notify the Museum Studies Director and Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure that their academic record is current. The student should work with their M.A. advisor prior to the start of each semester to create a regular meeting schedule.

Throughout a student's graduate career, it sometimes becomes appropriate to change their M.A. advisor. Students are free to change advisors at any time during the master's program as long as all parties involved are kept informed and the student secures the support of the new advisor before initiating the change. The student must inform their current advisor, Director of the Museum Studies Program, and the Graduate Program Coordinator of their intent to change advisors. In the event of a disagreement on the part of the current advisor, the issue should be brought to the Director of the Museum Studies Program or the Executive Committee if the

current advisor is the Director of the Museum Studies Program. Students considering an advisor change must understand that their new M.A. advisor may expect changes in their program of study. If the student changes advisors or if changes in the program of study occur, the student must notify the Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure that there will be no confusion about meeting degree requirements. The student must secure a new advisor within three months of initiating the change. A student who is unable to identify a new advisor within the three-month period may be placed on academic probation. Failure to secure a new advisor by the end of the subsequent semester may result in dismissal.

Students convene their own committees of three or four faculty members and/or museum professionals. At least one of the members must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at the University of Kansas. If the M.A. Advisor is not a tenured or tenure-track KU faculty member, a tenured or tenure-track faculty member on the committee will need to serve as Co-Chair with the M.A. Advisor. One committee member may, with department and university approval, be appointed from other universities or institutions to serve on specific graduate student committees.

Students should initiate discussions with potential committee members no later than the third semester of study; the committee should be determined by the end of the third semester. [Note: Any faculty member has the right to refuse to serve on any M.A. committee]. The committee is confirmed and communicated to Museum Studies via the [Committee Approval and Mentorship Agreement Form](#), which must be submitted to the Director and Graduate Program Coordinator no later than December 15 of the third semester. The form lists all members of the committee, confirms student and committee roles and responsibilities, and lays out a plan for meetings and deadlines as the student approaches submission and defense of the capstone in the final semester of the program.

Grievance Procedures

Pursuant to Article XII of the University Senate Code and Articles V and VI of the University Senate Rules and Regulations of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, the Museum Studies Program has established procedures to hear grievances arising within program among faculty, staff, and students. These procedures are formally located in the policy library at: <http://policy.ku.edu/CLAS/grievance-procedure-museum-studies>. Appeal of a grievance heard at a subordinate unit level is to the Judicial Board, not to the College. This procedure shall not be used to hear disputes assigned to other hearing bodies under USRR Article VI, Section 4.

Petitions

If a graduate student has a compelling reason to seek exemption from a program requirement or University policy, they may submit a petition to the Museum Studies Executive Committee.

The student should consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure the petition is necessary and that all appropriate documentation is collected to submit the petition. The Graduate Program Coordinator then forwards the information to the Director, who then refers the petition to the Executive Committee, which will convene to consider the petition.

In cases where the petition relates to a program requirement rather than a University policy, the Executive Committee will issue a final decision.

In cases where the policy or requirement being petitioned is a University policy, the Executive Committee will decide whether to support the student's petition or not. If the committee agrees to support the petition, they submit it to the College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA) along with supporting materials as required. The petition form specifies the supporting materials needed for each type of petition. COGA's [petitions webpage](#) provides additional information related to submitting petitions. Additional information regarding common University petitions, such as leaves of absence, enrollment requirements, and time limit extensions may be found in the [University Policies & Degree Requirements](#) section of this document.

Degree Requirements & Procedures

M.A. Program Description

The course of study leading to the Master of Arts in Museum Studies comprises 36 credit hours at the graduate level. Each entering student enrolls in the Museum Studies Core, and then, with guidance of M.A. advisor(s) and program staff, crafts an individualized, multidisciplinary program of study in which they master both general and specific topics appropriate to their interests and relevant to current museum standards. In addition to courses in topics such as collections management, museum education, exhibit design, and museum management ("Museum Professional Area Courses"), students can take advantage of the resources of a major research university to gain skills in fields as diverse as scenography, learning theory, audience evaluation, nonprofit leadership, psychology, and public administration, among others. Students are also encouraged to take courses in academic disciplines such as history, area studies, anthropology, art history, natural sciences, and visual arts ("Museum Topical Courses"). Museum Studies students have access to the staff and resources of several acclaimed museums located on the KU campus, as well as to museums in the region. Many of the courses are taught by museum professionals who work in institutions locally.

The program has six elements:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. The Museum Studies Core | 9 credits |
| 2. Museum Professional Area Courses | 9 credits |
| 3. Museum Topical Courses | 6 credits |
| 4. Supplemental Program of Study | 9 credits |
| 5. Museum Internship | 3 credits |
| 6. Capstone Project (Research) | |

Museum Studies Core Courses

The Museum Studies Core ensures that all Museum Studies students gain a comprehensive understanding of the theories, history, techniques, and problems common to museums, historical agencies, and related institutions. MUSE 803, taken in a student's third semester of study, provides training for students to conduct research or other creative activities that advance the discipline of museum studies in preparation to write and defend their capstone project in the fourth semester.

MUSE 801 The Modern Museum: Institutions, Knowledge & Audiences (3 cr. – Fall) This course provides students with an overview of the historical development of museums as institutions, bodies of knowledge, and communicators with a public audience. Students will

become familiar with museological theory and methods through reading and discussion of canonical and contemporary texts. Course readings and discussions will examine the purpose and functions of museums in diverse historical, geographical, cultural, and disciplinary contexts, allowing students to identify shared and distinct practices across varied museums. Site visits will familiarize students with museum practices in realms including administration, curation, education, exhibits, and research.

MUSE 802 The Museum Profession: Ethics, Standards & Cultural Awareness (3 cr. – Spring)

This course builds upon the foundational theoretical and disciplinary knowledge developed in MUSE 801 to interrogate the ethics and standards that govern museums as institutions, affect their operations and functions, and underlie relationships with various audiences. Students will continue their engagement with museological theory and methods to deepen their understanding of the politics and epistemologies that shape museum practice and produce ideas of authenticity and authority. Students will consider the role of museums in creating perceptions of scientific and historical truth, identity, and belonging. These considerations develop the critical faculties that will allow students to recognize opportunities to reframe museum practice along more ethical, equitable, and inclusive lines.

MUSE 803 The Contemporary Museum in Practice: Debates and Research Methodologies (3 cr. – Fall)

This course synthesizes and builds upon the institutional, ethical, and professional knowledge developed in MUSE 801 and MUSE 802 to engage with contemporary challenges, debates, and issues confronting museums, their staff, and their audiences. Engagement with current issues will allow students to situate their own professional and disciplinary interests in the context of the wider field of museum studies as they begin to formulate their capstone project topics and methodologies. Students will hone research skills, identify sources, construct bibliographies, and begin literature review for their capstone project, culminating in a complete capstone proposal to be submitted to the instructor and the student's committee.

Museum Professional Area Courses

Students will develop expertise in the principal specialties of museum work by completing at least three of the following courses. Courses incorporate training in best practices, policy development, and legal and regulatory concerns, as well as future trends. Students may take more than three professional area courses as part of their supplemental program of study.

- MUSE 699: Anthropology in Museums
- MUSE 701: Managing Museums
- MUSE 703: Introduction to Museum Exhibits
- MUSE 704: Introduction to Collections Management and Utilization
- MUSE 705: Museum Education and Public Engagement

- MUSE 706: Preventive Conservation in Museums
- MUSE 707: Archival Theory and Practice
- MUSE 708: Digital Methods
- MUSE 710: Natural History Curation and Collections Management
- MUSE 780: Special Topics (depending on the topic of the course)

Museum Topical Courses

Museum topical courses address the conceptual and theoretical foundations of museums in depth. These courses place museological subjects in broader historical and intellectual frameworks and are often taken in disciplines represented in their museums/institutions of specialization. Students may take courses offered in one or several disciplines. Courses will be selected with the input of the Graduate Program Coordinator, Museum Studies Director, and student's committee chair/M.A. advisor, as necessary. Approval will be based on the general relevance of the course and assurance that the student's work will be applicable to museum studies.

Supplemental Program of Study

Students design a unique program of study in consultation with their committee chair/M.A. advisor, the Graduate Program Coordinator, and the Museum Studies Director. Courses are selected based on the student's research and professional goals and should inform the capstone project. Courses may be taken within or outside the Museum Studies Program.

Museum Internship

While enrolled in the Museum Studies M.A. program, students are required to gain at least 250 hours of museum experience through an approved, professionally supervised, credit-earning internship.

The internship forms a critical component of the student's program and gives the student valuable training in the field as well as a chance to work closely with professional museum staff on meaningful projects to prepare for a career as a museum professional. The 250-hour requirement serves to strengthen students' resumes and ensures students have hands-on museum experience prior to applying for jobs post-graduation.

The internship must be mutually beneficial to both the student and the participating institution and be focused on activities relevant to the student's interests. The primary goal is to offer high-quality educational and practical experience in which the student acquires in-depth understanding of museum operations and activities while making a substantial professional

contribution to the institution. Students are responsible for securing their own internship and should discuss possible options with their M.A. advisor, program staff, and the Museum Studies Director. Students may apply for internships at local, regional, national, or international museums. Internships may be paid or unpaid, although the program strongly recommends students be paid for their labor.

Beyond the internship, students can gain additional museum experience in a variety of ways: through a paid or unpaid position at a local or regional museum, by taking part in volunteer projects with the Museum Students Organization, by participating in professional organizations, or other similar activities. Students must submit documentation (such as a letter from their supervisor) that they have completed the required number of hours. Work done as part of a class assignment, or done prior to enrolling in the Museum Studies Program, cannot be credited toward the museum experience requirement except in extraordinary circumstances.

Internship Requirements

All forms and documents associated with the internship can be found on the [Museum Studies SharePoint site](#).

1. Students must complete an internship with a minimum of 250 contact hours in an approved institution.
2. A student must enroll in 3 credit hours of MUSE 799 at some point during their tenure in the M.A. or graduate certificate program (if pursuing the certificate internship option).
3. Internships usually take place during the summer, but they may also take place during the school year.
4. Documentation
 - a) Internship Approval Form: *Prior to the internship*, the student must submit a description of the duties and activities that the internship will entail, including the name of the museum professional who will serve as the on-site supervisor. The Museum Studies Director must approve and sign the form before the internship begins. Documentation that the student has been accepted by the host institution must be provided.
 - b) Journal and Portfolio: The student must keep a journal that describes, and reflects on, the internship experience. There is no predefined format for the journal; it may be handwritten or kept electronically – the critical element is that it is kept regularly during the internship. The portfolio will contain materials associated with the internship experience, such as products for which the student was responsible, photographs of activities, institutional policies and procedures, and examples of materials produced by the institution as a result of the intern's work.
 - c) Updated Resume or CV: Must include the skills the student developed and project they completed during the internship in a way that is legible to future employers/museum professionals. The student submits the updated resume or CV to

- their site supervisor along with the Supervisor's Intern Evaluation form as they will need it to complete their evaluation of the student's work.
- d) Evaluations: At the end of the internship, the student's on-site supervisor will submit to the Museum Studies Director a confidential evaluation of the student's performance (Supervisor's Intern Evaluation form). The student also completes and submits a confidential evaluation of the internship experience (Student Internship Evaluation form).
 - e) Report. The student is required to write a 5- to 10-page (double-spaced) paper describing, evaluating, and critically analyzing their internship experience. The student will use the paper to discuss how the internship supported their professional development as well as how they feel that they contributed to the institution's goals.

Internships (MUSE 799) receive a grade of "S" (Satisfactory) or "U" (Unsatisfactory). The Museum Studies Director will assign a final grade based on the student's paper, journal, and portfolio, along with the on-site supervisor's evaluation. A grade of I (incomplete) will be assigned if the student enrolls in MUSE 799 before they complete their 250 internship hours or if required documents are not received before the semester grade submission deadline. The Director will post a final grade once the student submits all required internship documents.

Capstone Project and Defense

Each student will be responsible for a capstone project—developed through research or other creative activity—that contributes to the field of museum studies and demonstrates the student's ability to engage conceptually and professionally with the discipline. The capstone may be an extension of work undertaken during an internship or in a course.

Format

The capstone project can take a number of forms. Many students elect to write a traditional research paper that ranges from 10,000 to 15,000 words (inclusive of notes and bibliography). Others stage exhibitions, develop educational curricula or pedagogical tools, design a website, produce a social media application, or direct a film.

Students producing a capstone that differs from the traditional research paper format are expected to produce work of similar complexity, significance, and effort. Students choosing this option should produce a shorter written companion (4,000-6,000 words, with bibliography) that reflects on the theory and scholarship underlying the project, situates the project in the relevant literature, and analyzes the project's significance for the contemporary field of Museum Studies.

Structure

Each project will differ and should be designed in coordination with the capstone committee. Most will have the following sections:

Preliminary

- Cover page with full title, year of degree, name, prior degrees, and committee members
- Signature page for (co-)chairs to sign
- Abstract (100-200 words)
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents
- List of figures (if needed)
- List of tables (if needed)

Introduction

- The research question/topic situated within the broader field of museum studies
- Literature review
- Discussion of theory, methods, and definitions
- Thesis/argument/project plan

Body

- May be broken into subsections
- Present evidence, data, and/or relevant case studies
- Analyze findings in relation to museological scholarship and professional standards to support the argument

Conclusion

- Highlight the project's contributions and significance to museum studies and the relevant discipline(s) discussed

Bibliography

- Formatted in Chicago or MLA, depending on citation style used

Formatting

Students may consult KU Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Templates, available through KU Libraries, for guidance on general structure but confirm formatting preferences with their chair(s).

They should use a 12-point standard font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial), double-spaced, paginated, one-inch margins, with a standard and consistent citation style (Chicago footnotes or MLA parenthetical citations) and bibliography.

The Committee

Students convene their own committees of three or four faculty members and/or museum professionals. At least one of the members must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at the University of Kansas. If the M.A. Advisor is not a tenured or tenure-track KU faculty member, a tenured or tenure-track faculty member on the committee will need to serve as Co-Chair with the M.A. Advisor. One committee member may, with department and university approval, be appointed from other universities or institutions to serve on specific graduate student committees.

Students should initiate discussions with potential committee members no later than the third semester of study; the committee should be determined by the end of the third semester. [Note: Any faculty member has the right to refuse to serve on any M.A. committee]. The committee is confirmed and communicated to Museum Studies via the [Committee Approval and Mentorship Agreement Form](#), which must be submitted to the Director and Graduate Program Coordinator no later than December 15 of the third semester. The form lists all members of the committee, confirms student and committee roles and responsibilities, and lays out a plan for meetings and deadlines as the student approaches submission and defense of the capstone in the final semester of the program.

Role of the Chair

The capstone is designed and executed in close collaboration with the student's M.A. advisor/committee chair (or co-chairs, if applicable) and the other members of the committee. The chair will advise the student on the significance and feasibility of the project, useful readings and professional colleagues to consult, data collection and analysis procedures, drafting the capstone, and preparing for the oral defense.

In the mentorship agreement document, the Chair and the student will agree upon a timeline for meetings and submission of drafts and revisions. While student/advisor preferences may differ, a good rule of thumb is regular correspondence between student and primary advisor throughout the second year of the program, with in-person or virtual meetings to discuss the project held monthly during the third (Fall) semester and biweekly during the fourth (Spring) semester. Student and chair should discuss the roles of secondary committee members, and their input throughout the research and writing process should be discussed with those committee members.

The Defense

Each student will successfully defend their capstone project, which serves as the final master's examination. This master's examination, taken during the student's final semester of coursework, focuses on the student's capstone, while also testing the candidate's mastery of

museum principles and practices, and relevant subject disciplines indicated by the student's record. The exam is oral, and the student will defend their capstone to their M.A. Committee. The oral defense is public; faculty and graduate students are invited and encouraged to attend as nonvoting participants.

Defenses are scheduled for two hours and may be in person or virtual. The defense begins with a 15–30-minute presentation by the student detailing the conceptualization of their project, its methodology, key findings, and significance for the wider field of museum studies. Following the presentation, the student fields questions from the committee and, should the chair/committee allow, the audience. At the end of the question-and-answer session, the student will be asked to leave the room so that the committee can discuss their performance and determine whether the project as a whole (written product and defense) merits a “pass.” The student will then be invited back and informed of the outcome.

The complete capstone project (including all scholarly apparatus, bibliography, etc.) must be submitted to the committee two weeks in advance of the defense. The written capstone project will be evaluated (Outstanding (earns honors), Pass, or Fail) by each member of the committee in accordance with the [M.A. Capstone Rubric](#) before the oral defense. A favorable majority is required for passing the exam. Most capstone projects will require at least minor revisions. If revisions are required by the committee, they must be *manageable* to implement before the semester grade deadline. Within *48 hours* of the defense, the committee chair must submit a checklist of specific revisions to be made to the written product. Revisions should not include integration of significant new readings or drafting of new sections (these should have already been raised during the drafting and advising process before the defense), unless student has not included material that was previously requested. If the committee believes that revisions are significant enough that they cannot be implemented by the semester grade deadline, the committee should deem the capstone project a “fail” and the student will undertake revisions and defend in a subsequent semester.

Scheduling the Master's Defense

Students should be proactive about selecting their exam committee members. A student must have their committee solidified by the end of their third semester of enrollment in the program. See the [Advising & Mentoring](#) section of this handbook for committee composition guidelines.

Early in the final semester of enrollment, students should meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator to discuss scheduling the exam. Faculty schedules tend to fill up with exams near the end of each semester, so scheduling (at least tentatively) a date and time with committee members early in the semester will provide the student with more flexibility. The Graduate Program Coordinator will poll the student's committee members for their availability to assist the student in selecting a final date and time.

Written notice of intent to take the master's examination must be filed with the Museum Studies office *at least three weeks in advance* of the examination, providing the names of the chair and committee members, the date and time of the exam, and the location of the exam. The exam should be taken during the last semester of coursework.

Sample Schedule/Tasks

Each project is unique and will require different benchmarks. Student and chair are advised to break the project into manageable tasks, set deadlines for submission and feedback, and work together to determine the necessary checkpoints to complete the project and successfully defend it at the end of the fourth semester while allowing time for necessary revisions after defense. What follows is a **sample** timeline for the successful defense of a capstone in the research paper format; students and advisors are encouraged to alter as they see fit according to personal preferences and project format in the committee approval and mentorship agreement form.

Year One: Second (Spring) Semester

- Select a M.A. advisor and meet with them at least twice to discuss plans for remainder of the time in the program
- Brainstorm capstone topic ideas
- Identify courses to support research with M.A. advisor

Year Two: Third (Fall) Semester

Students will complete MUSE 803 The Contemporary Museum in Practice: Debates and Research Methodologies, where they will make progress toward their capstones with the course instructor and their chair.

As part of that coursework, students will:

- Meet with advisor to narrow ideas for project topic, sources, and approach
 - Share final project rubric [attached] to shape discussions of the project's conceptualization and execution
- Discuss options for second and third (and fourth, if necessary) committee members
- Meet with other potential committee members and secure their commitment
- Begin research
 - Begin to compile bibliography in consultation with committee
 - Collect sources/read in relevant scholarship
 - Begin to define/hone research question(s)
 - Discuss format of the capstone, citation style, etc.
 - Make any necessary connections with professionals/institutions
 - Complete any necessary permissions/certifications (e.g., Institutional Review Board permissions if conducting research with human subjects)

- Submit a series of scaffolded assignments, which include:
 - Research proposal (1–3 pages)
 - Bibliography
 - Literature review (1,000 words)
 - Brief outline (1–2 pages, bulleted, with sections, subsections, and plans for writing)
 - Introduction (3–5 pages)
 - Detailed outline
 - Workplan for fourth semester
 - Final presentation
 - Final portfolio with revised copies of bibliography, literature review, introduction, detailed outline, and workplan

Students will submit these assignments to both the instructor and their chair.

Year Two: Fourth (Spring) Semester

January:

- With chair approval, share revised prospectus with full committee for feedback

January–February:

- Follow workplan
- Meet regularly with chair and with committee members as needed (biweekly recommended)
- Share drafts of writing in advance of meetings

March:

- Apply for graduation via Enroll & Pay by March 1 to ensure your name appears in all graduation ceremony programs
- Initiate the oral defense scheduling process in consultation with Lauren Chaney and committee. Lauren will need the following information at this time:
 - The names of your committee members
 - A two-week window during which you'd like to schedule your defense. Please consult with your M.A. advisor/committee chair to determine an appropriate and realistic defense window.
 - Defense format - virtual, hybrid (some members in person and others virtual), or in person? Please provide a preferred location if you'd like to hold your defense in person.
 - Written confirmation from your committee chair (an email is fine) that they approve of your proposed defense window.

Late March:

- A **full** draft with all sections, bibliography, scholarly apparatus included to chair/committee for comment

Mid-April:

- Chair/committee (as needed) return draft with requested edits/revisions

Late April:

- Revised/intermediate draft to committee (if required)

At least two weeks prior to scheduled defense date

- Final draft due to committee. This deadline is non-negotiable. If a student is unable to circulate their final draft to the committee two weeks prior to the defense, the student must reschedule. This should not be the first time the committee sees the capstone document(s). At least one round of pre-defense revisions are essential in ensuring a successful defense. Submitted draft must be complete, with all scholarly apparatus and proper formatting present.

Late April/early May:

- Complete oral defense
- Conduct requested revisions in advance of the graduation deadline

Graduation deadline (typically mid-May). Please check [KU's Academic Calendar](#) for the specific date.

- Complete required revisions and submit final draft of capstone to the Graduate Program Coordinator. MUSE will keep your capstone on record in your student file.

Graduation Procedures

Students planning to graduate should meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator *early in the semester* during which they plan to graduate to make sure they have satisfied all [requirements for graduation](#).

Early in the semester in which they expect to complete degree requirements, graduate students should complete an [Application for Graduation](#) online through Enroll and Pay. The deadlines for each semester can be found on the [academic calendar](#).

Graduate Certificate Program Description

The course of study leading to the Certificate in Museum Studies comprises 12 credit hours at the graduate level. The Certificate Program enables students to integrate knowledge of museum studies into their own academic disciplines or professional training. Completion of the certificate in museum studies represents an additional credential for graduate students from a variety of academic fields who are preparing for careers in research and teaching or professional practice. Enrollment in the program is open to students admitted to a regular KU graduate program.

The Museum Studies core curriculum will be the basis for the graduate certificate, which emphasizes the essential interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of museum work by drawing on a range of departments in the University. The program allows students to gain knowledge in preparation for doctoral study, as well as for employment in museums and related fields such as historic preservation, cultural resource preservation, archives, and government agencies.

The awarding of certificates will be handled in accordance with guidelines of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Completion of the program will appear on the graduate transcript.

1. Required Courses (6 credits)

MUSE 801 (offered each Fall) and MUSE 802 (offered each Spring); must be taken in order

2. Museum Professional Area Course (3 credits)

Choose one course from the following list:

- MUSE 699: Anthropology in Museums
- MUSE 701: Managing Museums
- MUSE 703: Introduction to Museum Exhibits
- MUSE 704: Introduction to Collections Management and Utilization
- MUSE 705: Museum Education and Public Engagement
- MUSE 706: Preventive Conservation in Museums
- MUSE 707: Archival Theory and Practice
- MUSE 708: Digital Methods
- MUSE 710: Natural History Curation and Collections Management
- MUSE 780: Special Topics (depending on the topic of the course)

3. Museum Internship (MUSE 799) OR Capstone Project (MUSE 798) (3 credits)

Students earning the Certificate in Museum Studies must complete one of the following:

- an approved 3-credit-hour internship (MUSE 799) of at least 250 hours. See the guidelines for internships described for the [Master's Degree in Museum Studies](#).

- Research, writing, and defense of a capstone project (3 hours of enrollment in MUSE 798) plus 50 hours of museum experience. See the Certificate Capstone Guidance for Students and Advisors on the [MUSE SharePoint site](#).

University Policies and Degree Requirements

This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included.

Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

General Policies

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

Admission

Degree or non-degree seeking applicants must have a bachelor's degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Admission to Graduate Study](#)

English Proficiency Requirements

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are three ways to prove English proficiency:

- Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.
- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing

service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to graduateadm@ku.edu for verification.

- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU [Applied English Center](#) (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.
- US Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs' [Spoken English Competency page](#).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study](#)
- [Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, Kansas Board of Regents Policy](#)

Enrollment

For graduate students, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the department level. While units within the College may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full time (e.g. students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full time enrollment is as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). *See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment.

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s).

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

Students not enrolled by 11:59pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must pay a fee to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the department of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the "Withdraw from the University" option.

Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current [Academic Calendar](#).**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on [Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript](#).

Your graduate program coordinator is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. In order to avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

Related Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

Graduate Credit (Including Transfer Credit)

The University's Graduate Credit [policy](#) defines KU's conditions for the following:

- Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course "counting" towards a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;
- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for master's students;
- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate seeking student toward another graduate degree.

Transfer Credit

The transfer credit option allows master's students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours that can be counted toward a KU master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the PhD. In circumstances where students enter the PhD program with an MA from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the PhD. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced hour degree master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced credit hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify. A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript

Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below.

In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS. Students must also provide documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the PhD, reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Related Policies:

- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#) (on Reduced Hour Master's Degree)

Credit/No Credit

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC [online request](#) form. Elections and changes to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found on the current KU [Academic Calendar](#). Please keep in mind, short courses may have [alternate dates](#).

The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)

Probation & Dismissal

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making [satisfactory progress](#) toward completing their degree. The department initiates the probation process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative [GPA dropping below a B average \(3.0 on a 4.0 scale\)](#). In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

Additionally, the College has set a 2.5 minimum GPA for students to be eligible for a semester of academic probation. In cases where a student's GPA drops below the minimum of 2.5, the student is considered ineligible for academic probation and will be dismissed by the College. Students are strongly advised to review the [College-specific policy on probation and dismissal](#) for more information about the 2.5 threshold for dismissal.

Students may also be placed on probation by their departments for other reasons that constituting a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis, dissertation, or capstone project
- Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams),

- Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)
- An unsatisfactory result in their department's annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the [Good Academic Standing policy](#) for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress.

Individual programs may also have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their department graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

Grading

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs' [Grading policy](#) governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in [Article II](#) of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.

Students should carefully review the [College-specific grading information](#), in particular the section on the SP/LP/NP grading scale for thesis & dissertation hours and the impacts of receiving a LP (limited progress) or NP (no progress). Students should also consult their adviser and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them.

Students should also consult their faculty advisor and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information about department-specific grading policies.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on course work counted toward any of the master's degrees at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Course work counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Related Policies:

- [University Senate Rules & Regulations](#)
- [Grading](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)

Time limits

Typically, the University expects the master's degree to be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six to seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the link above and in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that the College's Mentoring Agreement is required for doctoral students who are within 2 years of exhausting their maximum time to degree. See the [College Graduate Regulations](#) or talk to your graduate program coordinator for more information. **Related Policies and Forms:**

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams](#) (on exam expiration and recertification)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time To Degree Information](#)
- [Graduate Degree Completion Agreement](#) (PDF)

Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework

while remaining in good standing with the University and the department and while “stopping the clock” on their time to degree. When a student is on a Leave of Absence, it is understood that they have temporarily suspended their graduate work and therefore will not make use of University resources, including faculty time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director of Graduate Studies and review their department’s internal petition procedures. Units or the Director of Graduate Study may request documentation to support the student’s need for a leave of absence.

For a Leave of Absence to gain approval, the student must be withdrawn from all active and/or future enrollment. Withdrawal for the purposes of Leave of Absence is still subject to all Registrar deadlines, required forms, and applicable tuition and fees.

Students on a Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the KU [Academic Calendar](#) for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If a student’s plans change and they wish to return and enroll before the leave was set to end, they may contact their department to request an early reactivation.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Leaves of Absence](#)
- [GPA Leave of Absence Request Form \(linked at bottom of webpage\)](#)

Required University Milestones

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

- Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for Master's degree*
- Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Exam
- Doctoral Final Exam/Dissertation Defense

*A final culminating effort is not required for departments with an approved coursework-only master’s degree option in the Academic Catalog (note that programs with a capstone are considered coursework only).

Before a student is allowed to complete any of these three exams, pre-approval from the College is required in advance of the exam date. This pre-approval request will be submitted on the student’s behalf by their department after the exam date has been scheduled. The College

reviews the student record and verifies all University requirements have been fulfilled. The full list of these requirements may be found via the link in the heading above. Students should work with their departments well in advance of their planned exam date, to schedule their exams in a timely fashion and to ensure that all University policies relating to oral exams are being followed.

There are additional policies requirements for oral exams. The following are University policies pertaining to oral exams:

Oral Exam Committee Composition

All voting committee members must be appointed members of KU's Graduate Faculty. Additionally, a majority of committee members serving on a graduate student oral examination committee must be tenured/tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department or program of study.

Many additional restrictions apply, especially for doctoral exam committees. Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the University policies pertaining to exams, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies when forming an exam committee. Your graduate program coordinator can assist with confirming the qualifying status of any faculty member at KU or outside of KU.

Oral Exam Attendance

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin and if a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the policies below, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies in the formation of an oral exam committee.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Oral Exam Attendance](#)
- [Graduate Faculty Appointments](#)

Graduate Certificate Requirements

The University offers a variety of [Approved Graduate Certificate Programs](#) to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate program requirements.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria](#)
- [Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

Graduation Requirements (Master's & Ph.D.)

In addition to all program requirements, students [planning to graduate](#) must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs Funding Opportunities

Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs offers funding opportunities in several different categories. Students interested in applying should direct inquiries to the department's Director of Graduate Studies or to GPA. Some of the available funding opportunities include:

[Summer Research Scholarships](#): intended primarily for post-comp doctoral students.

[Graduate Student Travel Fund](#): intended for graduate students presenting a paper at a national or regional meeting of a learned or professional society. A student may receive an award (max \$750) only once per academic year, with priority given to students who have not received the fund previously. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Policies Regarding Freedom of Expression on Campus

Kansas State Law (HB2333) requires postsecondary educational institutions in Kansas to publish in their handbooks and orientation programs the institution's policies, regulations, or expectations of students regarding free expression on campus.

Per KU General Counsel, this includes the following two policies:

- [KU Public Assembly Policy](#)
- [Kansas Board of Regents Statement on Free Expression](#)

Note that the two policies listed above apply to ALL members of the campus community; they are not specific to graduate students.

Appendices

Master's Program Checklist

You can find a fillable version of this form on [SharePoint](#)

Required Coursework:

Core Curriculum (9 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
MUSE 801 The Modern Museum: Institutions, Knowledge & Audiences			
MUSE 802 The Museum Profession: Ethics, Standards & Cultrl Awareness			
MUSE 803: The Contemp Museum in Practice: Debates and Rsch Mthds			
Museum Professional Area Courses (9 Hours)			
Museum Topical Courses (6 Hours)			
Supplemental Plan of Study/Electives (9 Hours)			
Internship (3 Hours)			
MUSE 799: Museum Internship			

Internship & Museum Experience:

Position/Location			
Forms Submitted (Date)			
Approval Form		Student Evaluation	
Supervisor Evaluation		Internship Paper	
Journal/Portfolio		Updated Resume/CV	

Master's Defense:

Chair			
Committee Member			
Committee Member			
Oral Exam Date		Time/Location	

You must submit your capstone project to the Director of Museum Studies and the Graduate Program Coordinator as soon as you complete the post-defense revisions requested by your committee members.

Museum Studies M.A. Two-Year Plan

Recommended semester 1 classes

Semester 1	Credit Hours
MUSE 801: The Modern Museum	3
MUSE Professional Area Course	3
Museum Topical or Elective Course	3

- ☐ Attend MUSE orientation and refer to Graduate Studies' [Welcome Guide & Info Hub](#) to familiarize yourself with KU's graduate student resources.
- ☐ Reach out to resources on campus (Wingspan, Student Access, etc.) if you need additional academic support. Use these resources before you get too far behind in your coursework.
- ☐ Check your KU email account regularly and respond to emails in a timely manner.
- ☐ Engage with the Museum Students Organization.
- ☐ Begin to track your museum experience hours. You need 500 total hours (including the 250-hour internship) of museum experience to complete the M.A.
- ☐ Late in your first semester, research potential MUSE M.A. advisors.

Recommended semester 2 classes

Semester 2	Credit Hours
MUSE 802: The Museum Profession	3
MUSE Professional Area Course	3
Museum Topical or Elective Course	3

- ☐ Select your M.A. advisor and meet with them at least twice per semester to discuss your plans for the remainder of your time in the program.
- ☐ Start to think about your capstone project topic and identify courses to support your research with your M.A. advisor.
- ☐ Search for potential internship opportunities. Many students choose to complete their internship during the summer between their first and second year. Students are responsible for securing their own internship.
- ☐ Continue to track your museum experience hours.

Recommended semester 3 classes

Semester 3	Credit Hours
MUSE 803: The Contemporary Museum in Practice	3
MUSE Professional Area Course	3
Museum Topical or Elective Course	3

- ☐ Begin to work on your capstone project.
- ☐ With the assistance of your M.A. advisor, identify two other faculty members to serve on your capstone defense committee. Work with Lauren Chaney if you have any questions about Graduate Studies' [committee policy](#).
- ☐ By December 15, complete the Committee Approval and Mentorship Agreement Form in consultation with your M.A. advisor and submit it to the Director and Graduate Program Coordinator.
- ☐ Continue to track your museum experience hours.

Recommended semester 4 classes

Semester 4	Credit Hours
Remaining Course Requirement	3
Remaining Course Requirement	3
MUSE 799: Internship	3

- ☐ You are not required to enroll in MUSE 799 during the term in which you complete your internship. Many students choose to save their enrollment in MUSE 799 for their final semester as it's not an actual class. This will give you more time to focus on your capstone project.

If you have funding that covers your tuition in a given term (GRA or GTA), we encourage you to enroll in 12 hours that term to avoid having to pay for MUSE 799 with out-of-pocket funds or loans.

- ☐ Meet with your M.A. advisor early in the semester to develop a meeting schedule and timeline to support the successful completion of your capstone project. Refer to MUSE's Capstone Guidance document for more information.

- Work with Lauren Chaney in February or March to begin the scheduling process for your capstone defense. Lauren will work with your committee to find a date and time that works for everyone.
- Apply for graduation via Enroll & Pay by March 1 to ensure your name appears in all graduation ceremony program booklets

Graduate Certificate Checklist

You can find a fillable version of this form on [SharePoint](#)

Required Coursework:

Core Curriculum (6 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
MUSE 801: The Modern Museum			
MUSE 802: The Museum Profession			
Museum Professional Area Course (3 Hours)			
Internship / Capstone (3 Hours)			
MUSE 799: Museum Internship OR MUSE 798: Capstone			

Internship & Museum Experience*:

Position/Location			
Forms Submitted (Date)			
Approval Form		Student Evaluation	
Supervisor Evaluation		Internship Paper	
Journal/Portfolio		CV	

*We also offer a capstone project option if you can't fit 250 internship hours into your schedule. You will enroll in MUSE 798 in lieu of the internship course. This option requires 50 hours of museum experience. See the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) for more information.

Museum Studies Committee Approval and Mentorship Agreement Form

You can find a fillable version of this form on [SharePoint](#)

Purpose

This agreement is a tool intended to support positive mentoring relationships, the objective evaluation of progress, and completion of the Museum Studies M.A. degree in a timely manner. With this agreement, the faculty advisor agrees to mentor the student through the creation of the M.A. capstone project. The form lists all members of the committee, confirms student and committee roles and responsibilities, and lays out a plan for meetings and deadlines as the student approaches submission and defense of the capstone in the final semester of the program.

The Agreement must:

- Be part of an extended and ongoing conversation between the student and their advisor(s) and should be discussed and agreed upon by all parties to that conversation.
- Clearly outline expectations for the student, advisor, and committee members.
- Establish a **realistic** timeline for progress that takes into account past performance, the work that remains, the amount of time the student can reasonably dedicate to capstone work, and circumstances that have impacted timely progress thus far.
- **Be submitted by December 15 of the student's third semester of enrollment in the Museum Studies M.A. program.**

I. Mentorship Agreement Participants:

Student Name:

Faculty Advisor/M.A. Committee Chair Name:

II. Committee members: List the other two (or three, if applicable) members of the M.A. capstone defense committee. Please review the committee parameters listed in the capstone project and defense section of the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) for guidance.

Committee member 1:

Committee member 2:

Committee member 3 (optional):

III. Communication & Engagement: Describe, in detail, expectations for communications, meetings, and engagement for the student, advisor, and committee members. The advisor and student should discuss and agree on the following:

- a. How often will you meet in person or virtually? How often should student check in via email?
- b. What is the preferred method of communication outside of meetings? What is the expected response time for communications? (May be different for advisor and student, but both should be included in the agreement)
- c. What is the expected turnaround time for advisor feedback or edits after receiving a draft?
- d. How and when will the student's committee or other mentors provide feedback or evaluate the student's work? (some prefer to wait until the defense, which is acceptable, but cannot result in requests for significant revisions or additions)
- e. How should the student prepare for meetings with the advisor and/or committee?
- f. What else should the student know about expectations (sometimes implicit) of a student at the M.A. capstone stage?

IV. **Advisor Monitoring and Support (to be completed by the faculty advisor/committee chair):**
Please explain how you will support the student and monitor their progress, both at the milestone checkpoints outlined below in Section V and throughout their final semester. What interventions will you implement if the student falls behind on a milestone (e.g. increase frequency of meetings, delay defense)?

- V. **Completion Timeline:** Provide a detailed list of all tasks required for the student to make satisfactory and timely progress toward M.A. capstone completion. List tasks corresponding to the various stages of research, outlines, drafts, revisions, defense, and the final submission of the capstone. Tasks to be completed and a sample timeline can be found in the capstone project and defense section of the [Graduate Student Handbook](#). See the Registrar's [approved academic calendars page](#) for each semester's graduation deadline.

This timeline should be **realistic** and take into account extenuating circumstances and barriers that may prevent progress.

Please note:

- Students are encouraged to defend at least two weeks before the graduation deadline to ensure they have enough time to complete post-defense revisions.
- Students must circulate a full draft to their committee at least two weeks before their defense date.

Tasks to be completed by the student with due date

Tasks to be completed by the student and advisor/chair	Due Date

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By signing below, all parties acknowledge that they understand and agree to adhere to the expectations outlined in this agreement.

Student Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Faculty Advisor Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

MUSE Director/Director of Graduate Studies Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Capstone Rubric

All committee members will receive a link to the rubric as a Qualtrics form at least *two weeks* before the oral examination. Each committee member will complete the rubric no later than *24 hours* before the oral examination so that responses can be aggregated and provided to the committee chair(s).

For each of the below-listed categories, the committee member will rate the student's performance on the written capstone project outstanding (4), very good (3), acceptable (2), unacceptable (1), or not addressed (0). Each category will also have a textbox wherein committee members can provide comments, if so desired.

There will also be a textbox for the committee member to indicate any requested revisions necessary to complete before the end of the semester. These will be collected by the committee chair, discussed during the examination with other committee members and the student, and will be finalized by the committee chair and communicated to the student in writing no later than *48 hours* after the exam.

The Qualtrics form will produce an aggregate score of all categories. The average of all committee members' aggregate scores determines the final rating:

Passing averages:

Outstanding, earns honors = 35-40

Very Good, pass = 26-34

Acceptable, pass = 20-25

Failing averages:

Unacceptable = 0-19

The committee chair will then complete the capstone outcome form (attached) and send to the Museum Studies Director and Program Coordinator.

RUBRIC CATEGORIES:

Research Question/Project Outcome

Identifies a focused research question or project outcome emerging from a topic of import to the field of museum studies that engages with museums as institutions, bodies of knowledge, and/or public spaces.

Argument/Project Plan

Presents an identifiable argument or project plan that addresses the research question/project outcome and organizes the capstone project.

Theory/Methodology

Capstone design is grounded in relevant theory from museum studies and other discipline(s) under consideration. Methodology emerges from theoretical precepts and allows the researcher to gather evidence to address the research question or achieve the project outcome.

Research/Data Gathering (Primary)

Identifies relevant sources/data that reflect varied perspectives on the research question/project outcome and that can be analyzed to support the argument/project plan.

Research/Scholarship (Secondary)

Identifies, synthesizes, and critically engages with scholarly literature and data from museum studies and the discipline(s) under consideration relating to the research question/project outcome.

Analysis

Analyzes primary and secondary sources to organize evidence and synthesize findings in support of the argument/project outcome.

Interdisciplinarity

Demonstrates knowledge of and complementarity to relevant discipline(s) beyond museum studies while connecting to museum studies theory and praxis.

Writing/Rhetoric

Presentation is organized, clear, fluent, and logical.

Professional Standards

Capstone demonstrates engagement, comprehension, and application of museums' professional standards in areas such as best practices, legal principles, ethics, and cultural awareness.

Significance/Contribution to field

Implications of the argument/project outcome, methods, and research for museum studies and other disciplines are clearly stated and convincing.

Capstone Outcome Form

MA Capstone Outcome Form Museum Studies Program

Student Name: _____

Committee Chair(s): _____

Defense Date: _____

Capstone Project Outcome (written product based on rubric scores and defense):

_____ Pass with honors

_____ Pass

_____ Fail

Revisions Required?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If revisions are required by the committee, they must be *manageable* to implement before the semester graduation deadline (consult Lauren Chaney lkchaney@ku.edu for the exact date). Within *48 hours* of the defense, the committee chair must submit a checklist of specific revisions to be made to the written product. Revisions should not include integration of significant new readings or drafting of new sections (these should have already been raised during the drafting and advising process before the defense), unless student has not included material that was previously requested. If the committee believes that revisions are significant enough that they cannot be implemented by the semester grade deadline, the committee should deem the final product a “fail” and the student will undertake revisions and defend in a subsequent semester.

If revisions are not required, only the committee chair’s signature is required below.

If the result is a “pass with honors” or “pass” with revisions, both the chair and the student must sign after the checklist of requested revisions is received and append the checklist to this form.

Committee Chair(s) Signature(s)	Date
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Student Signature (if required)	Date
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