

BEYOND THE BACCALAUREATE: GRADUATE SCHOOL



Photograph by Richard Johnson interiorimages.ca

GRADUATE SCHOOL

... identify ... assess ... apply ... finance

A GUIDE FOR OCAD STUDENTS & ALUMNI

Introduction

Applying to graduate school is no small undertaking. For all disciplines it entails the application itself, the personal statement - often the most difficult and time consuming step - as well as the letters of recommendation. For the fine art or design student, the process is further complicated by the addition of many other necessary items and considerations. The portfolio alone may require the inclusion of a cover page, an artist's statement, curriculum vitae or résumé, a written description of documentation or slide list and, of course, the art work itself, or representation thereof.

Daunting as the endeavour may be, with a little (ok! a lot) of foresight and planning, it can be broken up into a series of manageable tasks and goals and accomplished with, if not ease, at least with confidence and assurance that success is attainable. This is an attempt to detail those manageable tasks and goals. Whenever possible, source references have been included.

As well as attending the annual information sessions hosted by Campus Life & Career Services (**generally in late September**), students are encouraged to access the wealth of expertise available to them on a daily basis from faculty. Many instructors have gone down this less-traveled road and can provide much insight. The fine art and design disciplines are, to a great extent, self-contained cultures with intricate webs of global-spanning connections. The student is well advised to take advantage of that. You will find our faculty more than happy to share their knowledge and experience.

Identifying Graduate Schools

Finding a graduate school where you have any chance of being accepted is all about *fit*. Your discipline is fine art or design. Getting into a graduate program in psychology because you have entertained the idea of being an art therapist is highly unlikely unless you are willing to pay the dues - namely taking a bunch of introductory, undergraduate psychology courses - prior to being admitted to the graduate program. Likewise, unless you have combined an exceptional academic performance with a spectacular portfolio, your Bachelor of Design is unlikely to gain you immediate entrance to a graduate program in architecture. If you are a drawing and painting major and the body of your work is in the abstract mode, do not apply to a school which you know emphasizes a classical approach. In other words, do the research. Some schools may have a particular political (Marxist or deconstructionist or feminist) preference. With the advent of Internet, this task has been made considerably easier. Often, the school's site will have a list of current and past graduates you can speak with directly. And do not forget to consult OCAD faculty; they may have personal and intimate knowledge about a particular school.

Fit may also include many personal considerations such as your mobility, studio facilities, rural versus urban, transportation costs, student population. The following grid was developed by a former Dean at OCAD, and allows students to quantify such personal needs, before beginning their search.

A Working Chart for Graduate School Selection (developed by former Dean John Kissick when he was conducting his personal graduate school search)

1. Place the preliminary list of schools in the first box.
2. In each of the other boxes, fill in pertinent information, then rank in order from best to worst—giving 10 points for best, 1 point for worst. In areas where a yes or no response is necessary, give 10 points to an affirmative, and whatever number left after granting all affirmative responses (for example, if there are 3 affirmatives, then everyone else would receive 7 points)

3. If there is one specific issue that most concerns you (i.e. Teaching experience, finances, etc.), you may choose to weight your responses more heavily than normal – perhaps giving double the number of points in that section.

4. You can add or subtract headings as you need.

5. Count up the scores—and you should have at least a general idea of where your interests lie.

School	Costs (Tuition, living etc.)	Space (Studios)	Faculty (Reputation) Fac. School	Thesis (Y/N)	Location (Urban / Rural)	Teaching (T.A.s)	Intang. (Family)
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							

URL SITES

www.ocad.ca (OCAD Home ... select CURRENT STUDENTS from orange banner at top. Advising & Campus Life from left-hand menu, and Employment & Career Info) *Graduate Programs by Major*

www.ocad.ca/library

The Dorothy H. Hoover Library offers access to sites for:

- Portfolios
- Proposals or Grant Writing
- Artist’s Statements
- Studying Elsewhere
- Scholarships and Research Grants
- Arts & Artist Grants

Go to <http://www.ocad.ca/library> and select the Help tab from the upper tool bar. If you can not find what you need, be sure to ask for assistance at the Library’s Reference Desk.

http://www.aucc.ca/can_uni/our_universities/index_e.html (AUCC’s site ... Canadian)

<http://www.allartschools.com> (Complete directory of U.S. art schools)

<http://www.ArtSchools.com> (Compare 3,500+ art & design schools and programs)

<http://www.gradschools.com> (Locating schools ... international)

<http://www.aicad.org> (Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design ... listing of majors, degree programs, and minors available at AICAD colleges on the undergraduate and graduate levels)

<http://www.usnews.com> (Ranking U.S. schools)

<http://www.core77.com> All-purpose Design web site; active, global discussion board where students exchange information about schools.

Application

Applications are generally due sometime between December and January for fall admission. This varies greatly from school to school and from program to program. Some schools, particularly in U.S.A. may have rolling deadlines. Many schools' applications are available now on line. It will be necessary to include all post-secondary transcripts, so be sure to order these well in advance. Since you are probably still finishing up your final undergraduate year, this may entail sending two sets of transcripts from your current school, the second being a final, showing your final semester grades and having your degree status posted. Official transcripts are required and generally mean that they are sent directly from institution to institution. Some schools, to expedite the process, will allow you to deliver them in person as long as they are received in a sealed envelope. Deadlines are often strictly enforced.

If you're applying to an international school, it may be required that you have your transcripts translated and notarized. Most translation services also will be able to notarize the documents for you. One such place is Textronics (<http://www.textronics.com>) where the service is provided for around sixty or seventy dollars. There is also a site for the Certified Translators in Ontario (<http://www.atio.on.ca> or <http://www.atio.on.ca/nonflash.html>) where you may make enquires regarding such service.

Any call to a school in regards to the application process (you should have names and appropriate titles of persons to whom you will be sending material) should be recorded, including name, date contacted, and information received. It is often necessary to double-check the information with a different authority at the school.

URL SITES

http://graduatestudies.concordia.ca/pdf/application_form.pdf (**Sample Application**)

Letters of Recommendation/Reference

Persons from whom you will be requesting these documents should have been identified by at least your junior (third) year, and approached at the beginning of your final year. In general, a minimum of three such letters are required. These carry a great deal of weight in the selection process. Care should be taken that they are of the highest quality (consider letters from instructors in your upper-level courses first) and attest to your specific suitability - *fit* - to the program. Students should do all the preparatory work possible before approaching referees. Your instructors will be bombarded with such requests at this time each year, and anything you can do to lighten the task for them will serve you well. Some schools may require **academic assessment forms** as well as the letters. Again, do whatever you can to complete these forms yourself before approaching referees.

URL SITES

<http://www.ocad.ca/library> and select the Help tab from the upper tool bar. If you can not find what you need, be sure to ask for assistance at the Library's Reference Desk.

<http://gradschool.about.com/od/askingforletters> (Sample reference letters)

http://graduatestudies.concordia.ca/pdf/assessment_opt-out.pdf (Sample Assessment Form)

Portfolio

For the fine art or design student, the portfolio is crucial to a successful application. Minimally, it should include: a cover page, an *artist's statement*, a *curriculum vitae or résumé*, a *written description of documentation or slide list* and, **samples** (actual work or digital representation) of your art/design work

http://www.ocad.ca/students/career_services/career_resources/resumes_coverletter_portfolio_webpresence.htm (See "Web Presence and Portfolio")

<http://www.artistportfolio.net/> (Includes **free** virtual gallery space)

Slide or DVD-R or CD-R Preparation

Though slides are still accepted by schools, most have progressed to DVD or CD submissions. There are some strict submission parameters: that the submission be Mac compatible, for instance. Or that film or digital video submissions be only 30 minutes long. If the production is documenting an installation work, a separate sheet detailing the applicant's creative role, medium, length, dates of pieces. The work should be cured and submitted on 16mm, VHS or MiniDV (PAL - Phase Alternating Line, or NTSC - **NTSC** is the analog television system in use in the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Mexico, and some other countries), DVD (Zone 1); DVD-R and CD-R.

Concordia notes that for painting: A maximum of twenty slides of current work with a separate slide list, detailing medium, size, and date. DVD-R and CD-R may be substituted for slides and must be Mac compatible.

If slide submissions are made, schools generally ask that they be properly installed in a Kodak-style carousel.

A recent check with a few prominent camera shops revealed that they no longer do much in the line of converting a digital image to a slide; though there are specialty shops still doing so, and places like Black's still have customers asking for negatives and prints made into slides.

Always in transition, portfolio submission is quite likely institutionally unique and, as always, you'll need to do your homework and find out what is expected. Some general things to keep in mind:

- submit recent work
- consult other artists and professionals to help select your strongest work
- documentation must be complete and accurate
- consider hiring a professional if you don't know what you're doing; have that person make various formats so that you'll be able to use for different purposes
- make it crystal clear who owns the work and the representation of that work

ARTISTS' & DESIGNERS' RESOURCES

http://www.ocad.ca/students/career_services.htm (OCAD Career Services)

www.ocad.ca/library The Dorothy H. Hoover Library offers access to sites for:

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- Studying Elsewhere
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Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC)

<http://www.culturalhrc.ca/careersinculture/default-e.asp>

Cultural Management; Film and Broadcasting; Heritage; Live Performing Arts; Music and Sound Recording; New Media; Visual Arts and Crafts; Writing and Publishing

Akimbo <http://www.akimbo.biz/index.php>

Promotes contemporary visual art, video, new media and film via the internet, and provides up-to-date information about selected exhibitions, publications

CARFAC www.carfaontario.ca

401 Richmond Street West
Suite 440
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8
416-340-8850

Visual Arts Ontario www.vao.org

1153A Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M6J 1J4
416-591-8883

Ontario Crafts Council www.craft.on.ca

Designer's Walk
170 Bedford Road
Toronto, ON M5R 2K9
416-925-4222

Artist's Statement

This is a written introduction to your work. It may be written simply, in first-person; but it often appears in third-person, in an abstract and conceptual style, and may include a short biography. The statement appears at the beginning of your portfolio connecting the artist, the work, and the viewer or reader. There are numerous examples of statements available and easily accessible on the web. You could, for instance, go to a school's site, graduate programs, fine arts, and there will likely be links to examples. Or you can simply type in *artist's statement* in any search engine and go directly to lists of samples. (Note that these statements differ in format and content, depending on their purpose. A statement written when submitting to galleries, museums and competitions may vary considerably.)

... My artistic beginnings are rooted in memories of summers spent on the family farm.

... His grandfather's chain-sawed statues, peppering the fields of the ancestral farm had been a seminal influence on TG's work.

Letters of Intent

http://www.ocad.ca/students/career_services/career_resources.htm (see under Career Planning/Preparation)

<http://www.dianefarrisingallery.com/index.html> (This gallery has a list of their showing artists which include brief biographies and their statements. Most galleries do.)

Curriculum Vitae/Resume

If you have had a number of exhibitions, teaching experience, and are an influential member of the art and/or design community you will probably call your summary of experience a *curriculum vitae*. If you are a senior student applying for graduate school, you will probably call it a *résumé*. Either way, it is important to remember that this is not a job application. This document for this purpose will list your accomplishments, achievements, career benchmarks in direct relation to *awards*, and *collections*. Do not forget to mention any and all academic – writing, tutoring,

URL SITES (See under *Artist's Statement*)

Documentation

This is simply an itemization of your included work. You should submit anywhere from 15 to 20 pieces or representational slides (see "*Slide Preparation*" above). This will depend on the school and it is **imperative** that you check with the school. This would be a good time to remind you again to do the research first. That is, *check out the school's home page before* you contact a Graduate Coordinator or Department Chair or any other person involved in the application process. Persons involved in running academic programs - at any level, but particularly at the graduate level - *expect you to have done your homework*.

Your samples should be arranged in some sort of order, thematically, graphically, chronologically, or by media or subject matter. They also should be of the highest calibre and quality. If you are not a professional camera person, then spring for the expense and have your slides done professionally; it will be well worth the cost.

URL SITES (See under *Portfolio*)

Financing Graduate School

TA ... GA ... RA Financing

As well as the monetary funding sources, students need to be aware that one of the most common methods of funding graduate studies is through employment at the school where they will pursue the graduate degree. These come in varied forms and need to be considered during the **Identifying-Graduate-Schools** stage. They may take the form of a teaching assistantship (TA), a graduate assistantship (GA), or a research assistantship (RA), and students may be compensated in dollar value or they may negotiate for something along the lines of more private or bigger studio space. The following sites include information on grants, scholarships and various planning resources.

Certainly not a good fit for all students, looking at **international schools** in countries where higher education is completely government funded is an option for some. It often is difficult to ferret out exactly what free tuition means, but with a little perseverance it can be done. The **Academy of Fine Arts – Helsinki**, for instance, where there are four degree programs – Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking, and Fine Art Media Studies – is tuition free even for international students. You will not find that information reading through the program descriptions. However, if you keep mining the site, you will find a government page dealing with cost of living and the practicalities of living in Finland. Under "Financial Matters" it states that since university higher education is funded by the State thorough the Ministry of Education, students enrolled in regular degree studies pay no tuition fees. Some other schools students may wish to look at: University of Art & Design, Helsinki; Lund University, Sweden; National Academy of Art & Design, Oslo and Bergov; and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark. Though these options do exist, the climate seems to be changing rapidly. The Royal Danish Academy, for instance, will provide free tuition access to only EU/EEA students; from 2006 all other students have to pay

fees. And in August 2008, the higher education minister, Lars Leijonborg, in Sweden announced that country would begin to charge non-Europeans in January of 2010 *at the latest*.

Ken Steele, in April 25th, 2011's, "Academica's Top Ten," notes: **Free tuition attracting more Canadian students to Germany:** An increasing number of Canadian students are studying in Germany, where tuition is free for both citizens and foreigners. Currently, there are 534 Canadians enrolled at German universities, up 52% since 2002. Free tuition is not the only factor drawing Canadian students to Germany. Over the past few years, German institutions have been phasing out the old *diplom* and *magister* degrees -- difficult to translate for Canadian employers -- in exchange for North American-style bachelor's and master's degrees. Another barrier prospective students have overcome is the lack of German language skills, which is less of a problem now as the number of bachelor programs taught in English has surpassed 100. [Maclean's OnCampus](#) / [Add/Read Comments](#) (downloaded April 25, 2011).

And our own graduate programs here at OCAD University also notes a number of financing options. **Not all of these options would be applicable** to OCAD U's undergraduates seeking admission (check admission requirements of individual schools and programs) to graduate school, but it the information is worth exploring:

http://www.ocad.ca/programs/graduate_studies/scholarships_funding.htm

URL SITES

Association of Universities & Colleges of Canada (AUCC)

http://www.aucc.ca/scholarships/index_e.html

Grants in Graduate Studies

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/fininfo/gigs.html>

Scholarships Canada

<http://scholarshipscanada.com/>

University of Waterloo

<http://www.grad.uwaterloo.ca/scholarships/index.asp>

Government of Canada – International Scholarships Program

http://www.scholarships.gc.ca/main_e.html

DestinEducation

http://www.destineducation.ca/intro_e.htm

Canadian Bureau for International Education

http://www.cbie.ca/scholarship/index_e.cfm

Toronto Arts Council

<http://www.torontoartscouncil.org>

Ontario Arts Council

<http://www.arts.on.ca>

Ontario Ministry of Culture

<http://www.culture.gov.on.ca/english/index.html>

Ontario Trillium Foundation

<http://www.trilliumfoundation.org>

Canada Council for the Arts

<http://www.canadacouncil.ca>

Department of Canadian Heritage

<http://www.pch.gc.ca>

Campusaccess.com (This site is an **excellent site** for planning and financing)

<http://www.campusaccess.com>

OHIP (If you're leaving the country for more than six months ...)

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ohip/longer.html>

Government-Funded Student Loans

Students who pursue graduate studies in Canada will most likely be able to access federal and provincial government-funded loans through their home province's loan program. If you choose to study outside of Canada, you can usually only access federal assistance. You would apply through your regular home province. Make sure that you apply well in advance of your school year, as it usually takes 6-8 weeks minimum to process an application. If you already negotiated government-funded student loans to fund your education, you will also have to ensure that you have your graduate school complete the appropriate Continuation of Interest Free Status/Confirmation of Enrollment (Schedule 2) Forms in order to renew your previous loans for your current study period. This ensures that the government continues to pay the interest on these loans and no monthly payment is required from you. Please be aware that your new school may not have these forms on hand; you may have to contact your student loan lender(s) to obtain these forms

URL SITES

Ontario Student Assistance Program (Ontario government student aid programs - OSAP)

<http://osap.gov.on.ca>

You will find OGS (graduate school funding on this site as well)

Canada Student Loan Program (CanLearn ... provides links to all provinces, as well as excellent student financial planning tools)

<http://www.canlearn.ca>

National Student Loan Service Centre (primary lender for Canada-Ontario and many other federal and government student loans)

<http://canlearn.ca/cgi-bin/gateway/canlearn/id/nslsc.asp>

Other Types of Loans

Many financial institutions (banks) in Canada also offer competitive loans for students either in the form of a student line of credit or a student loan. Each bank offers their own version, so although they may seem quite similar, the terms can vary from institution to institution, so make sure you understand all the terms before you negotiate a bank loan. In addition, banks often require a credit-worthy co-signer, someone who will guarantee the loan in the event that you are unable to repay your loan. You can shop around -- even if you are turned down at one bank, you may be accepted by another. You might also look into the CanHelp loan program offered by the International Education Finance Corporation, which offers Canadian citizens the opportunity to borrow, in US dollars, up to the full cost of their education for more than 3,000 approved schools in the States and abroad.

URL SITES

J. Armand Bombardier Internationalist Fellowships

<http://www.cbie.ca/old/bombardier/bombardier.html>

Canada Student Loan Program (CanLearn) (provides information on other financing options)

<http://www.canlearn.ca>

John and Lois Lamont Graduate Scholarship http://www.cfsh.ca/What-We-Do/Scholarships_and_Awards/John-and-Lois-Lamont-Graduate-Scholarship.aspx

Bank of Montreal: http://www4.bmo.com/personal/0,4344,35649_36829,00.html

CIBC: <http://www.cibc.com/ca/loans/edu-line-of-credit.html>

Foundation Baxter & Alma Ricard <http://www.foundationricard.com>

Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation Fellowships <http://www.trudeaufoundation.ca/trudeaufoundation>

Royal Bank: http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/RBC:Qm-fCY71A8cAAM-88s4/products/personalloans/student_line_of_credit.html

Scotiabank: http://www.scotiabank.com/cda/content/0,1608,CID7362_LIDen,00.html

TD Canada Trust: <http://www.tdcanadatrust.com/student/stline.jsp>

See below for OCAD's *Sir Edmund Walker Award*, *Mudge Massey Travelling Award* and the *Alfred T. Vivash Bursary for International Graduate Studies in Design*.

Contact the Financial Aid & Awards office for more information and the relevant applications.

Sir Edmund Walker Award

Purpose: To encourage further study at the post-graduate level from any discipline within the Ontario College of Art & Design.

Allocation: 4th year, graduating students (June 2010)
Note: Alumni returning to complete degree requirements are not eligible.

Amount: To be confirmed. Previous awards have varied from \$3000 to \$16,000. Renewable upon application for a maximum of three years.

Study Period: Studies to commence by January 2011
Note: This award may not be deferred; studies must commence by the date noted.

First Awarded: 1980

Donor: The late Dorothy Webb in memory of her father, Sir Edmund Walker

Mudge Massey Travelling Award

Purpose: To encourage further study, **outside North America**, at a post-graduate level from any discipline within the Ontario College of Art & Design.
*Note: This award is intended to encourage overseas travel but under special circumstances travel in **all** countries, including Canada, would be considered.*

Allocation: 4th year, graduating students (June 2010).
Note: Alumni returning to complete degree requirements are not eligible.

Amount: \$15,000

Study Period: Studies to commence by January 2011
Note: This award may be deferred for up to one year maximum with the permission of OCAD and the donor.

First Awarded: 1995

Donor: Sir Neil Shaw in honour of his wife, Lady Elizabeth Shaw

Alfred T. Vivash Bursary for International Graduate Studies in Design

- Purpose:** To support a graduate from OCAD's Faculty of Design in the pursuit of graduate studies in design **outside of Canada**.
- Allocation:** 4th year, graduating students (June 2010) from the Faculty of Design.
Note: Alumni returning to complete degree requirements are not eligible.
- Amount:** To be confirmed. This bursary generally provides **up to** \$11,000 CDN in assistance for an OCAD Faculty of Design graduate to pursue a year of post-graduate studies **outside** Canada.
- Study Period:** Studies must commence **no later than** January 2011.
- First Awarded:** 2006
- Donor:** The Alfred T. Vivash Bursary has been established in memory of one of our province's most successful commercial artists, by his son, John, and daughter-in-law, Barbara.