

Admissions and Applicant Information

Entrance Requirements

The MFA Steering Committee makes admissions decisions based on its belief, as determined upon review of all application materials and interviews, that a matriculating student has the capacity for graduate level work and is likely to thrive in the low residency environment. The Committee prefers that a student matriculating into the MFA program at Maine Media College holds a B.F.A., B.A., or B.S. degree (or the equivalent in the case of international students), has had extensive practical and/or academic experience in his or her area of endeavor, and is conversant with the history of his or her chosen media. In extraordinary circumstances the MFA Committee may admit an applicant who does not hold an undergraduate degree. In these instances, the applicant must provide persuasive and ample documented evidence of an education equivalent in breadth and depth (Please see “**Special Considerations for Applicants Without an Undergraduate Degree**” below).

Application Procedures

Materials

- Completed application form and \$75 application fee (make checks payable to “Maine Media College”)
- Official transcripts from all post-secondary schools attended
- Resume
- An essay, approximately 500 words in length, describing: the applicant’s background and formative influences, either aesthetic or experiential, in his or her discipline, his or her interest in pursuing an MFA degree, and the applicant’s goals beyond graduate school
- Three letters of recommendation from academic and/or professional colleagues
- A portfolio, reel, or other documentation of work (**please see “Admissions Advice” below for more detailed information on application materials**)
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International Students

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Proficiency in spoken and written English is critical to students’ success in the MFA program at Maine Media College. Applicants whose first language is not English are required to submit TOEFL scores. International students who have previously earned an undergraduate or graduate degree from a college or university at which instruction is provided in English are exempted from this requirement. TOEFL test scores must be reported directly to Maine Media College through Educational Testing Service (ETS). The ETS institutional code for Maine Media College is B686. For more information about ETS and TOEFL scores please contact the registrar at registrar@mainemedia.edu.

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There are no minimum-score requirements for admission. Test results are considered in light of other factors used to determine preparedness for graduate study.

Deadlines & Notification

Applications are accepted for consideration at any time, however the deadline for application submissions for fall retreat admissions is September 30 and for

spring retreat admissions the deadline is April 15. Admissions materials are reviewed by the core MFA faculty and acceptance decisions are made prior to retreats.

Applicants are notified of admissions decisions within three weeks of receipt of completed applications.

Submission Guidelines

Transcripts and letters of recommendation should be sent to “MFA Admissions,” Maine Media College, 70 Camden Street, Rockport, Maine 04856. All other materials should be submitted via one of the following options

- Website gallery (in the case of a password protected gallery, please provide the password).
- Vimeo page (please provide password if necessary).
- USB flashdrive mailed to the above address.

Images for digital portfolios should be JPG files and not exceed 1200 pixels in any dimension.

Interview

A member of the MFA Committee may, in the interest of making informed decisions, contact an applicant upon receipt of the application materials to schedule a telephone interview.

The Retreat

Students accepted to the program who choose to attend the retreat will present work for critique and participate fully in all retreat activities. Students should be prepared to discuss their work, describe artistic goals and provide historical and cultural context for their work during critiques at the retreat.

Auditing

A prospective applicant may audit a retreat as an opportunity to experience this aspect of the program without making a commitment to apply.

Admissions Advice

The low-residency program at MMC is for artists interested in engaging in a rigorous educational experience leading to the MFA degree in the media arts fields of photography, filmmaking and multimedia. The College seeks those who are motivated to produce high-quality creative work under the guidance of experienced mentors and eager to participate in a community of artists striving for artistic growth through individualized practice and study. The MFA at Maine Media College offers an intimate, vibrant and intense community sensitive to the creative needs and goals of each student.

The MFA Committee holds that the program flourishes by attracting and enrolling a student body with a broad array of interests, diversity of experiences and wide-ranging educational backgrounds. This approach to admissions makes for a rich environment in which to make, think, and talk about art. Therefore, the Committee makes no specific requirements with regard to undergraduate majors nor does it specify a minimum number of undergraduate credits in art or art-related disciplines.

MFA Committee members review completed applications (all application materials) as they are received and render opinions regarding admissions to the MFA Steering Committee. MFA admissions materials are reviewed with regard to evidence of a prospective student's unique visual statement, cohesiveness of voice, and competency in their chosen medium, as well as their level of understanding of their work and their potential to succeed in a low-residency program. Not only are an applicant's qualifications and preparedness to pursue the low-residency MFA degree considered, the faculty also takes into account the population of current students and strives to admit students who add diversity and breadth of experience to the body.

The MFA Committee bases its judgments on materials applicants are required to submit: portfolio, reel, or other documentation of work; essay; transcripts; resume; three letters of recommendation; and interviews with applicants. What follows is a discussion of these elements of the application packet and the ways in which Committee members consider them. Generally speaking, they are presented in the order of priority that reflects their significance in admissions decisions.

1. Documentation of Work:

The MFA is a Fine Arts degree. The Committee would prefer to see recent work that makes a coherent statement representative of your creative focus and unique "voice." Therefore, it is not a good idea to submit work done commercially over which you did not have exclusive creative control, nor is it recommended that you send work with the sole intention of demonstrating your versatility or technical virtuosity. Submit work that most clearly identifies your personal creative interests. The work should be technically strong enough to support the content of the work. This is to say that the Committee values technique primarily in relation to artistic statement.

Applications in Photography:

An applicant in photography should submit 20 – 25 images that represent a coherent body of creative or documentary work made within the past three years. This work is to clearly

show the applicant's personal artistic orientation, fundamental areas of concern (especially in the case of documentary forms) as well as the working processes significant to the applicant's practice.

In instances where the applicant is developing a project incomplete at the time of application, the applicant may submit this work to supplement the primary portfolio if they believe it represents a significant change in either statement or process. The applicant should include a brief statement (in addition to the required essay) explaining how the work departs from that submitted as the portfolio.

Additional professional or contract work is reviewed, but is of secondary importance.

Applications in Film:

Applicants working in film production should submit a video **or videos** representing personal creative work made within the past three years. Running time for all materials together shall not exceed 30 minutes.

Those most interested in screenwriting should submit a portfolio of written work that includes the following: 1) **a concept** for a feature script or a documentary that you might find it interesting to develop (no more than one typed page); and 2) **a short screenplay** of no more than 15 pages **or** two **scenes** in screenplay format. If the latter option is chosen, one scene should provoke the reader's curiosity and engagement via visual storytelling and an absolute minimum of dialogue (no more than four pages); the other scene should be driven by dialogue and character development (no more than seven pages). Each scene should compel the reader to want to follow the character into a more developed story.

Additional professional or contract work is reviewed, but is of secondary importance. Professional work should be labeled as such. All material presented must indicate the creative role of the applicant. Serving "below the line" on a project is not acceptable for application material. Writers may submit scripts as well as other writing samples. A multimedia applicant may submit a URL for web-based work.

Applications in Multimedia:

An applicant in multimedia should submit material representing personal creative work made within the past three years. If an applicant engages more than one medium, either in combination (installation, performance, books) or as discrete components of ongoing artistic practice, they should submit photographic or time-based documentation of these works as well as a brief written description of the project. Such time-based documentation should not exceed 30 minutes in duration. Still photographic documentation for all projects represented should not exceed 25 images. Those submitting documentation of books may separately include excerpts of writing in .doc or .pdf form. Such samples shall not exceed ten pages, total. A multimedia applicant may also submit a URL for web-based work.

Additional professional or contract work is reviewed, but is of secondary importance. Professional work should be labeled as such.

2. Essay:

Your essay should be approximately 500 words in length, describing your background and formative influences. Include information that you deem especially relevant to your artistic evolution and the development of content in your work. This means that you ought to consider contexts, artistic or otherwise, in which your work might be discussed, particularly if you have experiential or educational background in these areas. For example, if your work is involved with areas of thought outside of the arts (psychology, sociology, anthropology, science, etc.) this is information the Committee would appreciate. As best you can, please connect this information to the work you submit with your application.

We would also like to know your reasons for pursuing an MFA degree as well as your current and longer-term goals. These might be practical or artistic, or both.

3. Letters of recommendation:

The Committee accepts letters from academic and/or professional colleagues. Compelling letters from arts practitioners and teachers who are well known to Maine Media College can be persuasive, especially if you have worked or would consider working with these individuals as mentors. If this is not the case, the next item, your resume, may be more informative. Letters writers should attest to your talents, commitment and cognitive abilities, or other personal qualities that would have bearing upon your involvement in the MFA program.

4. Resume:

This should be an artist's resume including your educational background and degrees earned (whether or not these degrees are in the fine arts) as well as your professional activities (only if they are art-related). Information regarding professional activities is typically categorized along the following lines: Exhibitions, Screenings, Publications; Awards and Grants; Bibliography (reviews or other critical discussion of your work. If you have worked commercially in the arts, this information is relevant. If this work has been done in collaboration with others, please indicate your creative role in each item listed. If you have been employed as an educator or administrator in an arts-related capacity, this information is also relevant.

5. Transcripts:

Transcripts serve as documentation of degrees earned and areas of study pursued. They are also helpful to program administrators in understanding the educational backgrounds of applicants and eventual students. GPAs or grades earned for specific courses are of less significance to the Committee in making admissions decisions.

Special Considerations for Applicants Without an Undergraduate Degree:

An undergraduate degree is a generally accepted indicator that the holder has acquired knowledge and has developed skills in the arts and sciences, including the capacity for critical thought and the ability to synthesize ideas and practice in ways adaptable to environments and circumstances outside of the undergraduate program, whether these

involve professional work or higher levels of education. Applicants without an undergraduate degree must demonstrate by other objective measures, to the satisfaction of the MFA Committee, that they have acquired commensurate knowledge and skills.

a. For those with some college experience, the Committee will further evaluate transcripts and coursework (including syllabi, when available and desired) in an effort to better assess specific knowledge and competencies applicants have acquired in the course of their studies as well as the extent to which these intersect with the goals of the MFA.

b. The Committee requires that, in its majority judgment, the creative work submitted by applicants will be superior in both clarity of artistic statement and technical proficiency. The Committee may seek support for its judgment in this area through close examination of applicants' resumes (awards, grants, work/life experience, etc.).

c. The Committee may require, especially when there is insufficient other information on which to base an assessment about the applicant's ability to analyze, evaluate and make judgments about works of art, that the applicant submit an additional 500-word essay so demonstrating.