

COLLEGE CATALOG & STUDENT HANDBOOK

**Summer-Fall 2025
Winter-Spring 2026**

Updated 6/5/25



a CalArts affiliate

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to VCFA. VCFA occupies a unique and evolving place in American higher education, devoted exclusively to graduate study in the fine arts. Our extended community of writers, musicians, designers, filmmakers, and artists is now enriched by our permanent residency location at CalArts—our official home and affiliate. This exciting development enhances our vibrant national center for graduate arts education, offering our students an unparalleled opportunity to deepen their creative practice in one of the most forward-thinking arts environments in the world.

For over 30 years, VCFA has combined intensive, one-on-one mentorship with self-directed artistic practice, allowing students to earn their terminal graduate degrees through highly individualized programs of study. Our model continues to offer practical experience and critical insight, empowering both emerging and established artists to meet their artistic goals.

Our students come from diverse backgrounds and from all corners of the globe, united by a shared purpose: to work closely with award-winning faculty and peers, deepen their critical understanding of their disciplines, and refine their craft. Now, through our affiliation with CalArts, we are not only expanding the boundaries of our residency experience but also reinforcing our commitment to fostering creative innovation in the arts.

As we navigate tenuous and divisive times globally, the role of art has never been more important. Art is uniquely positioned to bridge divides, build community, and foster shared understanding. At VCFA, we believe that the arts are essential to democracy and freedom of expression, and we remain committed to empowering our students to become catalysts for change through their creative work.

Within the pages of this catalog, you will find information about our graduate-level programs in Film, Graphic Design, Music Composition, Visual Art, Writing, and Writing for Children & Young Adults. This document serves as a comprehensive guide to our college-wide policies and the information here is intended to support that goal. Should you have further questions as you review this catalog, I invite you to contact the director of the program in which you are interested or currently enrolled.

I look forward to seeing you!

Warm regards,

Andrew Ramsammy
President, VCFA

ABOUT VCFA

The College attracts students and faculty from around the country and overseas. Its mission takes into account the importance of the College as a vital gathering place for faculty, visiting writers, and artists, including current students who are treated as fellow artists from their first contact with the institution. Writers and artists connected with VCFA are drawn to the College as a national center of their circle of interest, a place where their quest for excellence is shared by others.

Mission

VCFA is a global community of artists continuously redefining what it means to be an arts college. We measure our success by our ability to foster the excellence of emerging and established practitioners. We believe that the arts are central to the human experience and have the ability not only to reflect reality but also to create it.

Purpose

VCFA is a place where the creative expression of individuals is nurtured and a sense of community flourishes. For seventy years Vermont College® has been a site for progressive education. VCFA seeks to shape the global future of the arts with an emphasis on excellence that allows its members to reach for the highest artistic standards as individuals while recognizing that the arts are one of the foundations of a healthy and creative society. This is a place where national and international leaders in the arts gather, teach, and show and perform their work. The college prides itself on its openness and on creating an environment that is safe, welcoming, and built on mutual respect.

Statement on Community Values

As a global community of artists continuously redefining what it means to be an arts college, the VCFA community has come together to articulate this statement of values on diversity, equity, and inclusion. These values express our dedication to the tenets and ethics of social, economic, and environmental justice, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ inclusivity, and religious inclusivity. We reject all forms of othering and oppression, including colonialism, misogyny, ableism, ageism, classism, nationalism, paternalism, and white supremacy.

The arts are central to the human experience and have the ability to not only reflect reality but create it. We acknowledge that, too often, the histories of arts disciplines have been presented as canonical, monolithic narratives, constructed and controlled

by dominant voices that systematically exclude and marginalize other cultures and peoples. We seek to discover, celebrate, and learn from a plurality of traditions and movements as we renounce singular canons and the biases underlying them. In this way, we aspire to inform richer, more encompassing futures that accurately reflect the varied peoples these disciplines serve, as well as the varied peoples who practice them.

We believe that everyone should have access to the opportunities and tools for expression and communication afforded by the fine arts, and that society is best served when all voices are heard and valued.

- We believe in the fundamental value of every person and recognize that each person in our community belongs fully, as an equal. Diversity in all its forms creates a strong, healthy, and productive environment that reflects the world we live in and the reality we aspire to create.
- Each member of our community has both rights and responsibilities. Among these is the right to be treated with respect at all times and the responsibility to treat others with respect at all times, along with that of educating ourselves about what this means. It is not the responsibility of any individual from a marginalized group to educate others about their experience.
- We honor the agency of each person to be seen and heard, to defend their rights, to think critically and independently, and to uphold their responsibilities to the community and its individual members. The possibility of disagreement between individuals or groups is intrinsic to the exchange of ideas, and the exchange of ideas is fundamental to teaching and learning. We are committed to the principle that disagreement and respect can and must remain compatible. As an embodiment of these values, we are committed to open and ongoing dialogue.
- People learn in different ways, and we strive to support each learner on their unique journey. We believe in an educational model where all community members—faculty, staff, and students—actively contribute to both teaching and learning, even as we acknowledge the inherent power differential within every teaching and learning environment.
- We value a workplace where all staff members actively contribute to the mission of the college. While the roles of staff members may differ, we value them equally.

We welcome all who agree to abide by these values, as we look forward to listening, learning, and growing together in pursuit of an ever more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

Low-Residency Model

VCFA uses a student-centered learning process in which students, with the guidance and approval of faculty, design their plans of studies within a framework of learning objectives determined by their program.

RESIDENCIES: All VCFA programs require participation in intensive residencies to begin a 15 or 16 credit semester. Residency content differs for each program, based on the requirements of the field of art with which the program is concerned, but all programs offer faculty lectures, readings, exhibits or performances; critiques and workshops; and visiting artist presentations, as well as individual time with faculty and opportunities for students to share work in readings, performances, and exhibitions on campus.

SEMESTER: Post-residency, the semester revolves around intense interactions between students and their semester faculty advisors, during which time they exchange work, ideas, and critiques, and faculty offer guidance regarding the student's development in the context of the student's own goals.

Governance

VCFA is governed by a **Board of Trustees**. The Board of Trustees has final responsibility for the institution, and assures the institution's health by exercising its authority to: determine the mission of the College; hire, evaluate and retain the President of the College; approve the strategic plan; and set tuition and budget. The Trustees delegate operating authority to the President of the College to achieve the College mission and realize its strategic plan within the established budget.

Accreditation

VCFA is accredited by the New England Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Inquiries regarding the status of an institution's accreditation should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

New England Commission on Higher Education

3 Burlington Woods Road
Burlington, MA 01730-4514
Phone: 781-425-7785
<http://www.neche.org/>

VCFA is also a member of the **National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)**. Participating postsecondary institutions must annually apply for approval to offer interstate distance education in SARA member states without individually applying to each state for such approval, subject to certain limitations. SARA centralizes the authorization process for each SARA-participating institution in a single state that SARA calls the institution's "home state." Institutions approved by their states to participate in SARA must be appropriately accredited and meet academic and financial requirements designed to protect and benefit students. Inquiries regarding VCFA's NC-SARA status should be directed to:

Office of Regulatory Compliance

Vermont Agency of Education
National Life Drive, Davis 5th Fl.
Montpelier, VT 05620

MFA DEGREE PROGRAMS

MFA in Film

Overview

VCFA awards the Master of Fine Arts in Film degree through the MFA in Film program. The Master of Fine Arts in Film degree represents the advanced study of filmmaking. VCFA recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in the field.

Learning Goals

- Demonstrate a mastery of professional and artistic skills through the creation of a new, rigorously pursued and developed body of work appropriate to the student's focus in live action filmmaking, animation, and/or screenwriting.
 - Projects may be of varied style, genre, length and media, subject to self-identified project goals, and refined through faculty guidance at residency and during the semester.
 - Student projects will be assessed in the context of professional practice for filmmaking and screenwriting with regards to storytelling techniques and production values.
 - Supplemental film or other professionals, such as specialized technicians, or experts in specific non-film-related fields (e.g., an historian or a documentarian), and other qualified consultants or content experts may serve as student resources as needed.
- Make appropriate creative choices, grounded in professional practice, in the application of the language of film. Interaction between students and faculty will address student progress by assessing the production process, the integration of research and production, and the identification of additional theoretical and historical research, as they apply to the semester's work.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the student's work in the context of film history and criticism, and of relevant contemporary works by others. The faculty will develop recommended reading and viewing lists that will form the core of the students' general research and theoretical investigation, evidenced in the semester self-reflection papers, in the students' creative work, and in the thesis.
- Synthesize research into project-based production. Student work will be grounded in critical analysis. Written end-of-semester self-reflections will address the specifics of student engagement within the context of the semester's project(s).

MFA in Graphic Design

Overview

VCFA awards the Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design degree through the MFA in Graphic Design program. The Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design degree represents the advanced study of graphic design. VCFA recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in the field of Graphic Design.

Learning Goals

The learning goals of the MFA in Graphic Design program are as follows:

- To develop an ability to synthesize form, content and craft
- To deepen and expand critical ability
- To build fluency in design discourse and visual culture
- To claim agency in the larger context of design and society

The Master of Fine Arts Degree in Graphic Design is a terminal degree and affords graduating students the necessary credentials to teach at the higher education level. The goal of the MFA in Graphic Design program is not only credential, but also to help students develop advanced design skills, vision, and knowledge.

MFA in Music Composition

Overview

VCFA awards the Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition degree through the MFA in Music Composition Program. The Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition degree represents the study of music from the composer's, not the critic's or the scholar's perspective. The focus for every student is on the art of composition, first and foremost. The program offers students the opportunity to work with faculty across a range of musical genres and, through that process, gain the technical tools and formal clarity to realize most fully their own compositional voices.

Learning Goals

The learning goals of the MFA in Music Composition program are as follows:

- High achievement in the creation of music
- Ability to productively describe and discuss music and the compositional process

- Knowledge of music, and writing about music, relevant to the student's compositional interests

MFA in Visual Art

Overview

The Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art Program at VCFA allows students to earn an MFA degree over a period of two years through a combination of on-campus residencies followed by semesters of self-designed studio practice. Students work from their home studios in the context of the communities in which they live, work, and make art. VCFA recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in visual art and other fine arts.

Credit Hours

Full-time enrollment at VCFA is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. In the Visual Art Program, each semester consists of a 12-credit Studio Project and a 3-credit Visual Culture Project. A minimum of four successfully-completed semesters or the equivalent thereof (if a study is not completed in the usual sequence) for a total of 60 credits is required for the award of the degree, in addition to the fulfillment of all graduation requirements. Each semester is approximately six months in duration. During this time, each student commits and is expected to devote a minimum of six hours per week to academic work and 20 hours per week to studio work.

Learning Goals

The learning goals of the MFA in Visual Art program are as follows:

- Mastery of artistic accomplishment, both aesthetic and technical, in self-selected media
- Clear understanding of various criteria for making critical judgments about art based on its relationship to visual culture, art history, and the social context
- Substantive knowledge of visual culture and an understanding of methodology for doing historical research

MFA in Writing

Overview

VCFA awards the Master of Fine Arts in Writing. The MFA in Writing degree represents the study of literature from the writer's, not the critic's or the scholar's, perspective. It is not a technical or narrow degree. The reading and analytical components of each semester project, and the variety of lectures offered during the residencies, provide opportunities for unusually well-integrated and humanities-based curricula, without sacrifice of direct manuscript work and criticism. VCFA recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in writing.

The Program offers three regular degree options in the following major genres: poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction.

Learning Goals

The learning goals of the MFA in Writing Program are as follows:

- Creative ability in the field, both technical and aesthetic
- Critical ability in the field
- Knowledge of the literature or “culture” of the field

MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults

Overview

VCFA awards the Master of Fine Arts in Writing degree through MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults (WCYA) program. The MFA in Writing degree represents the study of literature from the writer's, not the critic's or the scholar's, perspective. It is not a technical or narrow degree. The reading and analytical components of each semester project, and the variety of lectures offered during the residencies, provide opportunities for unusually well-integrated and humanities-based curricula, without sacrifice of direct manuscript work and criticism. Thus the graduate is especially well-prepared in children's literature as well as in writing. VCFA recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as a terminal degree in writing.

Learning Goals

The learning goals of the MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults Program are as follows:

- To lead students to their full creative potential as writers for children and young adults
- To sharpen and further students' analytical reading and critical writing skills
- To cultivate knowledge and appreciation in students for the literature in their field to foster an ongoing creative writing community within which students can continue lifelong writing

ADMISSIONS + ENROLLMENT

Admission

All admission decisions are made by the Admission Committee, which is composed of program faculty members and the Program Chair. All admission decisions are confidential.

An application fee is required before an application will be processed. Application fee waivers may be granted upon request.

While requirements for each program may vary, the following policies apply college-wide:

- Applicants must have completed a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and have a basic proficiency in the technical skills required for the pursuit of their creative goals.
- Applicant statements of purpose should evidence potential to engage with a range of intellectual traditions and to receive and productively respond to criticism.
- Applicants should demonstrate knowledge of contemporary and critical components of their discipline.
- Applicants should demonstrate professional standards in craft, a creative practice or recognized engagement with the medium, and a critical perspective.

Bachelor's transcripts and letters of recommendation from those who are familiar with the student's practice and ability to work independently are required.

Applications may be reviewed without official transcripts at the discretion of the program but acceptance in such cases will be conditional upon receipt of official transcripts. A new student may not enroll and begin a semester until official transcripts documenting completion of the required undergraduate degree are on file with VCFA.

A program will occasionally consider accepting a student who does not hold a bachelor's degree. Such candidates must demonstrate strong evidence of exceptional artistic work paired with writing and research abilities appropriate to graduate level study. This exception is not made often and the decision to waive an undergraduate degree is weighed carefully by the Admissions Committee at each individual request.

Admissions decisions are generally made within one month of the receipt of a completed application packet.

If a student is denied acceptance to a program for a specific semester, they may submit a new application to be reconsidered for another semester. In some cases, an applicant may be asked to wait one full year to re-apply, allowing time for further artistic growth and development.

Enrollment & Deferment

Students admitted into a particular semester may defer admission to a later semester. It is required that students submit their tuition deposit for the semester they originally applied for, since this is what holds their place in the following semester as a deferral. If, however, enrollment is delayed for one year beyond the initial acceptance, students are required to re-apply and be considered by the Admission Committee. Readmission is not guaranteed.

Transfer Credit

The Master of Fine Arts programs at VCFA will consider accepting a maximum of one semester of graduate-level transfer credit toward the MFA degree. In order for credits to be considered for transfer, the student must apply and be accepted into the program, and the credits must be from an accredited institution of higher education.

All potential transfer credits are subject to Faculty and/or Admissions Committee review. The earliest that a transfer credit decision will be made is at the point of acceptance into the program. See the individual program sections of the Student Handbook for program-specific criteria and procedures.

Acceleration

On rare occasions, the programs will consider accepting professional experience and accomplishment in lieu of a maximum of one semester of graduate-level credit. These decisions are at the discretion of program leadership and must be approved by program leadership.

Enrollment Status

Full-time enrollment at VCFA is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. VCFA does not offer part-time study in its graduate degree programs.

Leave of Absence

Enrolled students may request up to two consecutive semester-long leaves of absence from the program without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing in the program. See each program section for specific program guidelines.

Financial aid recipients are advised that the length of the LOA may affect the timing of repayment for federal student loans. Federal regulations state that any period of non-enrollment longer than 180 days—the loan(s) six-month grace period—will put a student’s loan(s) into repayment status. Additionally, the federal government will report the student to their lender as ‘withdrawn’ from the college.

IMPORTANT: Leave of Absence status as described above does NOT constitute an “Approved Leave of Absence” as defined by federal financial aid regulations.

Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA’s financial aid counselor: VCFA-FAO@financialaidservices.org or 877-612-2599.

Medical Leave of Absence

A Medical Leave of Absence is an approved leave of absence for a documented medical reason that occurs at some point during an enrolled student’s semester. A student may apply for a medical leave during a semester they are enrolled at VCFA. The leave will be based upon a documented medical condition. The student applies for the medical leave by written request to the Program Chair. There must be a reasonable expectation that the student will return from the leave. A medical leave is approved by the Program Chair and student services in consultation. The medical leave process involves the following:

1. The student provides a written request to the Program Chair for a medical leave of absence.
2. The student is able to stop their studies at the point of the request or point determined in consultation with the Program Chair. The Program Chair refers the student to Student Services to provide medical documentation and to receive financial aid consultation.
3. The student and Program Chair develop a plan for the work needed to complete the semester.
4. The student goes on leave for the remainder of the semester they applied for the medical leave.
5. During the next semester the student will resume the planned work to be completed with an assigned faculty advisor. The student must resume the semester work within 180 days from the start of the medical leave. During the

make-up period of completing the previous semester's work, the student remains on LOA status and is not officially enrolled at VCFA; they are not eligible for federal financial aid or VCFA financial aid. It is viewed as a resumption of the previous semester's incomplete work requirements.

6. As an unenrolled student during the make-up period or in the event the student is not able to resume their semester work within 180 days, there may be financial aid implications. As an approved medical leave, there is no return of financial aid, but it is counted against the 180-day grace period for student loan repayment. Any student going on medical leave must meet with student services prior to approval of the medical leave to review federal financial aid requirements.
7. There is no charge for a medical leave.
8. Upon completion of the semester requirements the Program Chair will inform the registrar of status.
9. The student can resume their enrolled status in the program at the beginning of the next semester following completion of the semester requirements.

IMPORTANT: A Medical Leave of Absence as described above automatically puts a student on Leave of Absence for the following semester. **Recipients of federal Title IV financial aid must be aware of the implications of a leave on their financial aid situation**, the 180-day grace period, and repayment schedule. Students contemplating a leave of absence should discuss their individual situations with VCFA's financial aid counselor: VCFA-FAO@financialaidservices.org or 877-612-2599.

Withdrawal

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time. The date of withdrawal is defined as the day on which the Program Chair or Registrar receives official notification of withdrawal by the student or such later date as the notification may indicate. See the Withdrawal & Refund Policy for more specific information.

Final Assessments ("Grades") after Withdrawal

If a student withdraws during the refund period, a final assessment of "W" (Withdrawn) will be recorded on the student's academic record. If a student withdraws during a semester but after the refund period has passed, a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) will be recorded on the student's academic record. If a student completes a semester and withdraws from the college following that semester, the final credit determination for the semester as supplied by the evaluating faculty will be posted to the student's academic record. In the case of an appeal of an academic decision, the refund schedule may be paused until a final determination is made.

Dismissal

Occasionally, a student may be dismissed from the program. The conditions for dismissal are if the student has consistently failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals and working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, refuses to participate fully in the residency, or violates the student code of conduct.

If the work of a student is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level, their continuation in the program can be denied. No student may receive a determination of “NC” (No Credit) for two consecutive semesters and remain in the program.

The date of dismissal is defined as the date on which the student receives written notice of dismissal from the College. A student may reapply to the program after a minimum of one year from the date of dismissal.

Extended Study Semester

The Extended Study Semester is an additional 12-credit semester beyond the four semesters required for the MFA degree at VCFA. The Extended Study Semester gives students the opportunity to meet their goals for the degree, whether that be exploring areas that were not included in the first four semesters or completing an advanced aspect of that original study.

Tuition for the Extended Study Semester is set at a lower rate than for the first four semesters. Federal financial aid can be used for the Extended Study Semester.

Except in rare cases initiated by the program, an Extended Study Semester is only open to students who have already earned a minimum of 60 credits toward their degree.

Deadlines for registering for an Extended Study Semester vary by program; an interested student should consult with their Program Chair as soon as an Extended Study Semester is under consideration. To be approved, the student must submit a proposal to the Program Chair outlining the rationale and goals for the Extended Study Semester, along with a recommendation from the student’s most recent faculty advisor. Final approvals for Extended Study are made by the Chief Academic Officer.

A student may enroll in a maximum of two Extended Study Semesters.

A student who has been approved for an Extended Study Semester and has satisfied program thesis requirements may participate in the graduation ceremony along with

their original cohort but will neither receive a diploma nor have the degree reflected as earned on the transcript until completion of the Extended Study Semester.

Postgraduate Semester

The MFA Programs at VCFA offer postgraduate semesters for VCFA graduates or others who have completed the MFA or a PhD at another accredited college or university. A postgraduate semester is an opportunity to work closely with a particular faculty member, or to focus on a specific project or a particular element of the craft. Because a postgraduate student is not enrolled in the degree program and, therefore, not required to meet the usual degree guidelines, a greater degree of flexibility allows one to design the semester to work entirely around specific interests and goals.

A student who is a graduate of a VCFA MFA program (and thus has already completed five residencies) may choose to do the semester only and not attend the residency.

Others who are not VCFA graduates are required to attend the residency.

The semester work takes place on a schedule designed between the student and advisor and through methods they deem best suited to their exchange. This may be through email, phone conferences, hard copy packets, audio files, or a combination of methods. Both student and advisor must complete mid-term and end-of-semester evaluations. A student receives 12 credits upon successful completion of the postgraduate semester.

TUITION + FEES

Tuition and fees for each program are determined on an annual basis as approved by the Board of Trustees, and are published on the college website. Tuition and fees are subject to change without notice. Tuition bills are issued 8-10 weeks prior to the beginning of each new semester. Payments may be made by check, online e-check, or by credit card payment.

Tuition must be paid in full by the billing due date prior to the beginning of the semester. Students may elect to pay tuition in four equal monthly installments, beginning at the time of billing. Students electing tuition payment plans will be charged an administrative processing fee. Students whose account balance is past due will not be allowed to begin a semester and may be dismissed from the College. Accounts more than 90 days past due may be placed with a collection agency.

Enrollment Deposit Fee

New students are required to pay an enrollment deposit fee (see tuition and fee schedule) prior to their initial residency or registration. The deposit is applied to the matriculated student's first semester of tuition and fees. The enrollment deposit is non-refundable.

Room & Board Fee

Room & Board is a comprehensive fee that covers a student's housing and meals during a residency period. For students staying off-campus, there is a meal plan only option available.

Financial Aid

VCFA's financial aid staff makes every effort to see that students admitted to the College are able to enroll and continue their enrollment with support through financial aid services. Financial assistance in the form of loans, scholarships and fellowships, is available to eligible students attending VCFA academic degree programs. VCFA scholarships are awarded by the financial aid office at time of admission and cover the full time of a student's enrollment at VCFA. More information regarding VCFA scholarships, federal loans, and outside funding opportunities can be found on the tuition & financial aid sections of the VCFA website. Application for financial aid in no way affects admission decisions.

Financial aid is a means of payment, and the absence of or delay in receipt of financial aid funds does not affect the financial responsibility of the student for

charges due to the college. Payment plans are available for students who may need more time to pay their tuition over the course of a semester; contact the Bursar to set up a payment plan.

Credit Balances

Credit balances created by federal or state financial aid funds will be automatically refunded. Credit balances created by funds other than federal or state financial aid funds will not be automatically refunded to you. Please contact the Bursar's office to receive these other credit balances.

Withdrawal & Refunds

Students may withdraw from VCFA at any point during the semester. (Visual Art students may withdraw from individual study projects.) The amount of a refund, if applicable, is determined by the start date of the semester, the effective date of the withdrawal, and the balance of the student's account, after financial aid adjustments, as of the withdrawal date. Financial aid adjustments are based on federal guidelines. (See Return of Financial Aid below.)

The withdrawal must be in writing and should be sent directly to the program office or the registrar's office. The date of withdrawal is the earlier of:

The date the student notifies the college; OR
The ending date of the previous semester if the student fails to register for a new term or officially notify the College of their desire for a Leave of Absence.

Each semester begins on the first day of residency. If a student withdraws before the residency begins, all tuition and fees will be removed from the student's account (with the exception of the non-refundable deposit and room and board fees for the residency, if applicable*). After that, refunds are prorated over the first few weeks of the semester.

The full refund schedules for the **Summer-Fall 2025 & Winter-Spring 2026** semesters are as follows:

Summer-Fall 2025 Refund Schedule	Tuition Refund	Withdrawal Deadline*
Before Semester Start Date	100%	6/23/2025
Day 1-4 of Semester	90%	6/27/2025
Day 5-10 of Semester	75%	7/3/2025
End of Residency + 1 Week	50%	7/9/2025
End of Residency + 2 Weeks	25%	7/16/2025
2 Weeks after Residency and Beyond	0%	7/17/25 and beyond
Residency room & board cancellation deadline (3 weeks prior to residency start date)	100%	6/3/2025
Other residency fees are non-refundable	0%	
*If a refund date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the next business day		

Winter-Spring 2026 Refund Schedule	Tuition Refund	Withdrawal Deadline*
Before Semester Start Date	100%	1/1/2026
Day 1-4 of Semester	90%	1/5/2026
Day 5-10 of Semester	75%	1/11/2026
End of Residency + 1 Week	50%	1/17/2026
End of Residency + 2 Weeks	25%	1/24/2026
2 Weeks after Residency and Beyond	0%	1/25/2026
Residency room & board cancellation deadline (3 weeks prior to residency start date)	100%	12/12/2025
Other residency fees are non-refundable	0%	
*If a refund date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the next business day		

In direct correlation with the tuition refund policy, VCFA institutional scholarships/grants will be calculated according to the same percentage(s) as the tuition being charged/refunded to students who for any reason take an official leave of absence or withdraw after the start of the academic semester.

*It is understood that a student who fails to notify the college of withdrawal from the program is obligated for all tuition and fees assessed for the complete semester.

Return of Financial Aid


Students who are using student loans to pay their tuition and are considering withdrawing from the program should talk to VCFA's financial aid coordinator about the financial aid ramifications as VCFA's refund schedule does not take financial aid return requirements into consideration.

Federal regulations require VCFA to perform a calculation for the return of federal financial aid when a financial aid recipient withdraws, goes on leave of absence, is expelled, or otherwise ceases to be a student during a semester for which aid was received. The return amount due to the federal financial aid program(s) is calculated on a per diem basis with a formula established by Federal regulations. In other words, the financial aid office will calculate the percentage of aid you have earned by dividing the number of days you were enrolled before withdrawal by the number of days in the semester. The remaining portion of your aid will be returned. Returns are required to be calculated on any student who withdraws before 60% of the semester is completed. An example of the federal refund formula is available upon request in the Financial Aid office.

The returns will be applied to the financial aid programs in the following order: Federal Unsubsidized Stafford loans, Federal Subsidized Stafford loans, PLUS loans, and other Title IV programs. Funds returned to the federal loan program will reduce the student's loan balance with their lender. The student will be responsible for reimbursing VCFA for any funds returned by the university on behalf of the student. The student will be notified of this amount by mail, and balances must be paid to the Business Office.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Calendar/Residency Schedule

		ACADEMIC CALENDAR / RESIDENCY SCHEDULE <i>Summer-Fall 2025 - Winter-Spring 2026</i>				
<i>This schedule is for planning purposes only. Please check with the Operations Team for more specific residency information (arrival and departure times, etc.) before making travel arrangements.</i>						
LOW-RESIDENCY MFA PROGRAMS:			On-Campus Dates			
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Low-Residency MFA Programs</i>	<i>Semester Start Date</i>	<i>Residency Start Date</i>	<i>New Student Orientation</i>	<i>Graduation/Residency End Date</i>	<i>Semester End Date</i>
Summer-Fall 2025	All Programs	6/24/25	6/24/25	6/24/25	7/2/25	12/31/25
Winter-Spring 2026	All Programs	1/2/26	1/2/26	1/2/26	1/10/26	6/22/26

Summer Residency 2025

CalArts, Valencia, CA

Residency Start Date	June 24, 2025
Residency End Date	July 2, 2025

Winter Residency 2026

CalArts, Valencia, CA

Residency Start Date	January 2, 2026
Residency End Date	January 10, 2026

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Length of Program

The maintenance of rigorous College and program standards for academic progress assures that each student's learning constitutes a graduate-level education accomplished in a timely manner and within the administrative and educational capabilities of the institution. Detailed narrative evaluations of student learning are completed both at mid-semester and at the end of each semester, and these and other program-specific reviews and requirements determine whether students are awarded credit, continue to the next semester, are placed on probation or leave-of-absence, or are dismissed.

Each student's academic progress will be reviewed at the conclusion of every semester. Since the curriculum for each VCFA student is individually designed, study plans and narrative evaluations provide syllabus-type information which is routinely shared among program faculty to facilitate and support student learning. VCFA does not provide letter grades or calculate grade point averages. VCFA's grading system is as follows:

Grade Code	Description
CR	Full Credit Awarded
NC	No Credit Awarded
IE	Incomplete/Extension
TR	Transfer Credit
W	Withdrawn

An assessment of CR is considered the equivalent of a B or better in a conventional grading system. The underlying assumption is that students at the graduate level should perform well, not just adequately. There an assessment of CR indicates substantial effort, productivity and artistic progress.

In accordance with Title IV financial aid regulations, students enrolled in the MFA programs are considered to be making satisfactory progress if their progress allows for completion of the program at the following rate: Credits attempted must be satisfactorily completed within 150% of total credits required for completion of the program. For example, if the total credits required for program completion is 60, the maximum attempted credits allowed would be 90 (150% of 60). If the total credits required for program completion is 64 credits, the maximum attempted credits allowed would be 96.

In accordance with Title IV financial aid regulations, satisfactory academic progress is assessed on the following basis:

Each student receives a mid-semester review of their progress. If a student is deemed to be making insufficient progress, they may receive a warning.

At the end of each semester, final credit assessments are recorded in the student's academic record. A final assessment of "CR" (Credit) indicates that the student has satisfactorily completed the semester study/semester project and full credit was awarded.

If a student does not satisfactorily complete the semester, a final assessment of "NC" (No Credit) is recorded in the student's academic record. They are allowed to repeat the semester and are placed on probation for the repeated semester of enrollment. Probation does not affect a student's eligibility for financial aid under Title IV. The Registrar submits Satisfactory Academic Progress reports to Financial Aid Services prior to the disbursement of financial aid for the subsequent semester.

Students on probation who fail to meet SAP requirements at the next calculation (i.e. the end of the next semester of enrollment) will receive formal written notification of dismissal from the program office. This notification will be shared with the Academic Dean and the Registrar. In such dismissals, students may re-apply to return to the program after one year.

Probation is not allowed for two consecutive terms, or for more than two terms total, during the student's enrollment at VCFA. There is only one period of probation allowed for any given semester.

If the student successfully completes the repeated semester, credit is awarded and probation is lifted. It is possible a student could subsequently fail a future semester, but if this 2nd repeated semester is failed the student would be dismissed, and this dismissal is final. The student would not be allowed to apply for re-enrollment later because they would have used up the 150% maximum attempted credits.

An assessment of "IE" (Incomplete/Extension) is temporary and must be replaced by a final assessment of "CR" or "NC" by the end of the approved extension period. The Incomplete grade extension period may last through the end of the following semester during which the student is on Leave of Absence.

Credits attempted include all credits a student is enrolled in each semester. Documented calculation of SAP occurs at the end of each semester. Satisfactory academic progress is then verified with Financial Aid Services at the beginning of each new semester, prior to the disbursement of federal financial aid.

If a student is dismissed and then appeals the dismissal, they will not be enrolled during the appeal period (and thus will not be receiving financial aid).

See the individual programs' student handbooks for more specific information about academic progress through the programs.

Credit Hours per Semester

The MFA degrees awarded by VCFA are consistent with comparable degrees offered by other graduate programs in their standards, content, and length of study. The maintenance of rigorous College and program standards for academic progress assures that each student's learning constitutes a graduate-level education accomplished in a timely manner and within the administrative and educational capabilities of the institution. Intensive one-on-one work with faculty advisors is the student's primary venue for learning and artistic growth, richly augmented by the five on-campus residencies with their extensive offerings. The work students do during the semester and between residencies is commensurate with the quantity and quality of work done in conventional MFA programs.

In keeping with the standards recognized by the higher education community, VCFA utilizes the following general guidelines for estimating credit hours per semester: Each low-residency semester at VCFA is 6 months in length, for which 15 to 16 credits are awarded for successful completion. Each semester begins with a mandatory residency with a minimum of 100 hours of instructional time. The remainder of each semester requires an average of 25-30 hours per week of independent study under the supervision of a faculty member. Each program requires students to participate in a final graduation residency, which is the culmination of the educational experience at VCFA.

Academic Records

Transcripts

Transcripts are issued by VCFA's Registrar's Office. Transcripts are available through myVCFA, the college's secure student portal: sso.vcfa.edu. Unofficial transcripts (a simple listing of semesters and credit awarded, mainly intended for student use) may be viewed and printed free of charge. There is a \$10 fee for each official transcript issued, and payment must be submitted with the transcript request.

Once all end-of-semester paperwork (final evaluations from both the student and their faculty advisor, and final grades) is submitted by the Program office to the Registrar's office, final grades and credits awarded are posted to each student's academic record. The earliest date students should expect their academic records to be updated and transcripts to become available is two weeks after the semester end date.

For more information on transcripts, grades, and academic records at VCFA, please contact the Registrar's Office at registrar@vcfa.edu.

Student Right to Privacy (FERPA)

VCFA complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended. The purpose of the act is to afford certain rights to students concerning their education records. The primary rights afforded are the right to inspect and review the education records, the right to seek to have the records amended and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from the records. The Act does not apply to students admitted to VCFA who have not officially enrolled. VCFA affords all of the rights under the law to its students.

Educational Officials

FERPA specifies that VCFA staff and faculty and certain other government or accrediting officials with a legitimate educational interest do have the right to review student records without consent. This includes any person employed by the college in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or other administrative position; individuals serving on the Board of Trustees; a student serving on an official committee (such as a grievance or disciplinary committee) or in a supervised Work Study position; individuals, organizations and other entities employed by or under contract to VCFA (such as an auditor, attorney, contractor, consultant, collection agent, or volunteer); accrediting or financial aid agencies and state and federal officials conducting lawful activities; and other outside parties providing services and functions or otherwise acting on behalf of the institution. VCFA staff and faculty with legitimate access to education records must be aware of their FERPA obligations with respect to privacy and disclosure of student information.

Legitimate Educational Interest

Education officials have a legitimate educational interest when, in the exercise or completion of their administrative, supervisory, academic, research or other administrative responsibilities on behalf of the institution, incur the need to know specific information from education records.

Annual Notification

Students will be notified of their rights as stipulated by FERPA annually, by publication in the College Catalog/Student Handbook or any other method deemed appropriate by the Registrar.

Directory Information

Student records are confidential, with access limited to those directly involved in the administrative or academic process. In accordance with FERPA, the college will not release student educational information without the express written consent of the student. There are, however, some exceptions. As specified under the provisions of FERPA, certain information is considered to be public information, or “directory information,” provided that students are given the opportunity to prohibit the disclosure of such information.

At VCFA, the following information is considered “Directory Information”:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone #
- Email Address
- Photographs/Digital Images/Audio/Video
- Date of Birth
- Program of Study
- Class Schedule
- Dates of Attendance
- Grade Level
- Enrollment Status
- Degrees Received

Students have the right to withhold the release of “Directory Information.” To do so, a student must make a written request to the Registrar to withhold this information. It should be noted that if a student asks for “Directory Information” to be withheld, it will be withheld from a variety of sources, including: friends, relatives, prospective employers, honor societies and the news media. Students should be aware that directory “blocks” are permanent and will not be removed without written request. Examples of other exceptions:

- Emergency situation
- Lawfully issued subpoena
- Educational “need to know” by appropriate faculty or staff at the college

Students have the right to review any of their educational records. Students should submit to the Registrar and Program Chair written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect.

Students have the right to seek amendment of educational records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the Registrar and Program Chair, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the Registrar and Program Chair decide not to amend the record as requested by the student, the student will be notified of the decision and advise the student of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing. Students who disagree with the resolution of a challenge are allowed to document their objection, and this statement must be retained and released with the education record to which the student objected.

Students have the right to file complaints with the Department of Education concerning alleged failure by VCFA to comply with the law. Written complaints should be directed to the following office:

Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605
(202) 260-3887, Fax (202) 260-9001

Academic Integrity/Honesty

The purpose of VCFA's Academic Honesty Policy is to maintain the highest standard of academic integrity and professionalism. Academic dishonesty, or cheating, is defined as any act that would have the effect of giving unfair advantage, or unfairly advancing one's academic standing in the learning community. Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable to the learning community of VCFA. Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism, which is defined as the unacknowledged use of another's work, with the clear intent of passing the work on as one's own. [See individual program policies on plagiarism.]
- Submitting critical, scholarly, or creative work, or any work products that have been prepared in whole or in part by others without appropriate acknowledgement or citation.
- Falsifying data, information, or citations in work submitted.
- Altering any VCFA form, record, or document; forging the signature of any VCFA student, faculty, or staff member.
- Acting to prevent others from completing their work; willfully disrupting, damaging, or destroying the work of others.
- Tampering in any way with College computer systems; copying or destroying computer files, programs, software, or manuals without proper authority.

Individual programs may have more program-specific details regarding plagiarism and academic honesty.

Artificial Intelligence in Academic Programs

Overview

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly available to teaching and learning in the arts. We expect and require that all faculty and students who choose to engage with AI will apply the same attention, honesty, and integrity as they do with all other academic endeavors. It is crucial to ensure that any use of AI is consistent with ethical and responsible practices and in compliance with VCFA's [Academic Honesty Policy](#).

Guidelines

Any student wishing to engage with or incorporate AI in their work for credit in an academic program at VCFA must take the following steps:

- Discuss their intentions to engage with AI and obtain agreement from their faculty advisor.
- Appropriately cite any use of AI. Form for citation may vary, depending on the nature of the engagement with AI.
- Fact-check and correct material for accuracy.
- Avoid tools, technologies, or outcomes that may perpetuate bias and discrimination or reinforce stereotypes based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or any other identity.
- Understand that any student submitting work generated in part or in full by AI and representing this work as their own original production will be in violation of VCFA's Academic Honesty Policy and will be subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in the Student Handbook, up to and including denial of academic credit, probation, suspension, or dismissal.

Factual Errors, Bias, and Discrimination

Students and faculty engaging with AI are advised that AI frequently presents materials and data that are partly if not entirely incorrect or fabricated, often convincingly and authoritatively. In addition, AI can produce work that perpetuates bias and discrimination or reinforces harmful identity-based stereotypes. Students using AI are advised to check and correct material for factual accuracy, and must understand that they are responsible for the accuracy and sensitivity of all work they submit.

Copyright

While AI work isn't copyright attributed to any one person, students should be advised that works used to generate it might be. To avoid copyright problems, students should consider and research how AI generators may have obtained their information. Students and faculty interested in more information about copyrights and protecting their work may refer to creativecommons.org and other online resources.

Different Kinds of Work

Broadly speaking, student work in the academic programs at VCFA falls into two categories: 1) original creative work, and 2) critical and/or scholarly work that often takes the form of writing, regardless of artistic discipline. The potential challenges and impacts of AI on these two types of work may be different, and both should be taken into account by students and their advisors.

College-wide Guidelines and Program Guidelines

While these guidelines apply across all programs at VCFA, we recognize that AI impacts various arts disciplines in different ways, and that academic programs within VCFA may identify a need for additional guidelines for their students and faculty.

Periodic Review of these Guidelines

Given AI's rapid advancement, VCFA is committed to reviewing and updating these guidelines on an ongoing basis. The Office of Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Academic Council, and others as appropriate, will revisit this document at least once every semester and revise as needed.

Artistic Freedom and Responsibility

VCFA protects the right of faculty members, students and staff to freedom of inquiry, thought, expression, publication and peaceable assembly. Faculty may not be penalized by VCFA for expressions of opinion or associations in their private or civic capacity. They should, however, remember that the public may judge VCFA by their utterances and should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, and show respect for the opinion of others, making every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

VCFA nurtures the artistic, intellectual, and official development of all members of our community. We foster inclusive artistic and cultural diversity and defend the principle of freedom of thought, practice, and expression. At the same time, we recognize the responsibilities of individuals within our community to consistently promote understanding and mutual respect.

VCFA advocates for these fundamental freedoms and responsibilities in all of our academic and artistic activities as an essential part of our educational mission. As a national center for education in the arts, our program offerings sometimes present content that challenges or disturbs. It is our expectation that faculty, students, and all members of the VCFA community will present material thoughtfully and responsibly and that they will engage with presented material in a manner that fosters openness, reflection, and dialogue.

It is the responsibility of each individual within our community to judge for themselves the merit of any artistic and academic material presented. Students and faculty members are encouraged to exercise their personal right and responsibility to absent an event if material causes them distress, and to openly and respectfully engage with ideas they oppose, rather than seeking to suppress such material. Taking these actions brings no penalty or judgment from a program or its community.

Academic and Programmatic Appeals

VCFA assures that students have access to a process for the reconsideration of academic evaluations, advancement decisions and other academic actions of the programs. Students dissatisfied with such academic aspects of their program are encouraged to seek resolution. The first step toward resolution is discussion with the faculty advisor, the Program Chair and/or the Faculty Chair. If no mutually agreed upon solution can be reached, students may submit written petitions to the Chief Academic Officer, whose decision is final.

For exceptions to program policies, students may present petitions to the Program Chair and Faculty Chair, in consultation with the Faculty Advisor, if appropriate.

Closing of the College or Programs

In the event of a school or program closure, and consistent with NECHE Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Teach-Out Agreements, and in alignment with Standard 4.9, VCFA has developed this Teach-Out Plan to ensure that current students will be able to continue their study with minimal disruption.

This plan affirms that in the event of a program closure, VCFA is committed to providing the students with an educational program that is reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to what was promised to the student upon enrollment.

Since our existing programs operate on the same overall structure and academic calendar, students can expect structure and scheduling to be sufficiently similar, should we need to provide an alternate program.

In the event of program closure, VCFA will provide the necessary resources and support to ensure that impacted students receive an individualized and student-centered experience. We would address this by either (a) retaining sufficient staff and faculty to advise impacted students through degree completion; or (b) secure any temporary faculty support to advise impacted students through degree completion.

In the event of school closure, VCFA is committed to providing all enrolled students with:

- Notification: We will work to provide as much advance notice as possible to our students and faculty about an anticipated closure date;
- Equitable treatment: In addition to providing information about comparable programs, we will work to secure Teach-Out Agreements with the institutions best suited to provide sufficient resources and services to educate and advise our students through degree completion.
- Transparency: We will provide clear information to impacted students about:
 - Any applicable refund or discharge policies offered by federal and/or state programs;
 - Record retention plans, including how to obtain student records and transcripts;
 - Tuition, fees, and any other relevant expenses that they may incur as part of any Teach-Out agreement; and
 - Transferable credits that the teach-out institution will accept in advance of their enrollment.

Residency Requirements

Students begin each semester with an on-campus residency where they join faculty, peers, and visiting guests for vibrant days of lectures, critiques, workshops, and discussion. The residency allows for reflection, input, and dialogue surrounding creative process and practice. Shared experiences during residency can be profound, generating and sustaining cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary conversations and fostering relationships lasting far beyond graduation. All graduating students must attend a final graduation residency.

Guest Attendance: Although specified events are open to the public, other activities and facilities are for students and faculty only, and students may not be accompanied to the residency by spouses, friends or family. Our experience has been that the residency period is an extremely demanding time to which students must give full attention. Guests are allowed for special occasions only such as public performances and 11 graduation ceremonies. Students must receive permission from the program office for guests to stay overnight in a dorm; if approved, there is a fee

Although specified events are open to the public, other activities and facilities are for students and faculty only, and students may not be accompanied to the residency by spouses, friends or family. Guests are allowed with permission of the program office for designated special occasions such as graduation ceremonies.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Definition

VCFA conducts its academic and residential programs in accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and similar Vermont and California law.

Disabilities may include physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more of an individual's major life activities, and which may require modifications to VCFA's facilities, programs, or services. These laws require, among other things, that:

- No student may be excluded from any program or any course solely on the basis of disability;
- Modifications in degree or course requirements that do not constitute a fundamental alteration of those degree or course requirements may be necessary to meet the needs of some students with disabilities;
- Auxiliary aids, such as tape recorders, note takers or amplification devices, must be permitted in the classroom when they are required to ensure the full participation of students with disabilities;
- Special teaching equipment or devices used in the classroom (and in some cases teaching techniques that rely upon the sight, hearing, or mobility of students) may require adaptation in individual cases;
- Alternate assessment and evaluation methods for measuring student achievement may be necessary for students with impaired sensory, manual, writing or speaking skills (except where those are skills being measured), so long as such alternate methods do not constitute a fundamental alteration of academic requirements;
- VCFA facilities must be accessible as required by law;
- Group meetings, classes, seminars, and/or lectures may have to be relocated to permit access for students with mobility impairments; and
- Counseling of students with disabilities toward more restrictive careers than students without disabilities is discriminatory; unless such counsel is based on strict licensing or certification requirements in a profession.

The law does not require VCFA to make accommodations that are unreasonable, unduly burdensome or that fundamentally alter the nature of VCFA's programs or services, changes to facilities are only required by law under certain circumstances, and VCFA is not responsible for services of a personal nature.

Procedure

Upon acceptance to a VCFA program, every student is sent a Disabilities Services Survey form (“DSS form”) asking if the student seeks accommodations for any disability that has been officially diagnosed by a licensed professional. Even if a student does not seek accommodations or if a student chooses not to inform the College about a disability, the DSS form must still be signed, to indicate that the student has read and submitted to the Disability Services staff. DSS forms should be completed and submitted as quickly as possible in order to facilitate the consideration of accommodation requests and the timely provision of reasonable accommodations.

Review of Information

If a student submits a DSS form that indicates that a student seeks academic or other assistance or accommodations, the Disability Services staff will consult with the student about their options, which may include, for example:

- That the student could seek formal accommodations for a disability, by submitting appropriate professional assessment and documentation of a disability from an objective, qualified, licensed professional to the Accessibility Services Coordinator. The licensed professional should provide a comprehensive report, including diagnoses, a description of how the physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities, and recommendations for academic or other accommodations. The report and documentation may be provided by the student at any time in the semester. The Disability Services staff may request additional information, depending on the circumstances. All documentation must be reasonably current, depending on the nature of the condition(s) at issue. VCFA does not conduct or pay for such assessments or for the preparation of related documentation;
- That professional assessment and documentation is not indicated or required, but that the student should seek out appropriate academic assistance from faculty and program staff; or
- That some other approach is appropriate.

Accommodation Profile

Upon receiving appropriate documentation of a disability as described above, the Disability Services staff will, if a student so requests, work with relevant program staff and faculty as necessary to determine essential program requirements, make a decision about what reasonable accommodations can be provided without fundamentally altering the nature of the class and/or program at issue, develop an educational profile outlining accommodations and providing suggestions for students and faculty in the living/learning environment. The student must release this document to any individual by way of a signed release form provided by the Disability

Services staff. It may not be distributed by any other means or discussed publicly for reasons of student confidentiality.

Voluntary Nature of this System

Students are not compelled to report disabilities, or to follow up on referrals to the Disability Services staff, or to seek and pay for professional assessments, or to release the educational profile for accommodations to the program. Unless the student voluntarily completes these actions, VCFA cannot make accommodations for the student.

Confidentiality

The material provided by the student or by professionals who have been involved in the student's diagnosis, treatment, or accommodations requests will be treated as confidential information. Access will be granted only to the Disability Services staff and those involved in the student's education as necessary to facilitate an understanding of essential program requirements and the facilitation of accommodations, or if a health or safety issue is presented.

Appeal Process

Any student dissatisfied with the accommodations or adjustments offered or made to accommodate a disability will have the right to appeal. The appeal process will be as follows: A written statement of the dispute will be sent by the student to the Chief Academic Officer. This statement should include all relevant information and should request the desired remedial action. Based on this statement, the CAO will return the matter to the Disability Services staff for further consideration (with or without a suggestion that further information or documentation may be necessary), activate changes to the individual accommodations, or decide that the profile as developed is appropriate. The CAO level of appeal will be final.

Service Animal and Assistance Animal Policy

VCFA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the federal Fair Housing Act, Vermont Public Accommodations Act, and California Civil Code 54.2 to the extent that these laws are applicable to its programs and facilities. The following service and assistance animals policy was adopted to facilitate VCFA's compliance with applicable law. Animals that are neither service nor assistance animals as defined in this policy and applicable law are generally not permitted on campus.

Service Animals

The American with Disabilities Act defines a “service animal” as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.” A service animal is not a pet, but can perform some of the functions and tasks that an individual with a disability cannot perform themselves. Animals are considered “service animals” under the ADA if they meet this definition, regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government. The functions or tasks performed by the animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Assistance animals, as defined below, are not considered service animals. The following policy guidelines apply to service animals at VCFA:

1. A service animal may be excluded from any VCFA facility if that animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, if its behavior (for example, barking), is disruptive to other participants within the facility, or if it is not housebroken.
2. If a service animal is excluded from a facility, the individual with a disability will be given the option of continued participation, with assistance, within the facility.
3. The service animal must be clean, housebroken, in good health, and be current on its rabies vaccination.
4. All service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
5. All individuals who use service animals on campus must abide by current city ordinances/laws pertaining to licensing and vaccination requirements for service animals. It is the responsibility of the owner and/or user of the animal to know about these ordinances and/or laws.
6. All owners and/or users of service animals are responsible for cleaning up after and properly disposing of their animal’s feces while on campus.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. VCFA employees may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Employees cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Students who plan to utilize a service animal on campus should contact the Disability Services staff at disability.services@vcfa.edu to let the College know that the animal will be on campus regularly, and to discuss any applicable logistical issues. Faculty members and staff members who plan to utilize a service animal on campus should contact disability.services@vcfa.edu for the same reasons.

Assistance Animals

“Assistance Animals” (which are sometimes also referred to variously as emotional support animals, companion animals, or therapy animals) are a category of animals that may work, provide assistance, or perform physical tasks, for an individual with a disability and/or provide necessary emotional support to an individual with a mental or psychiatric disability that alleviates one or more identified symptoms of an individual’s disability, but which are not considered Service Animals under applicable law and VCFA’s Service Animals Policy. Some Assistance Animals are professionally trained, but in other cases Assistance Animals provide the necessary support to individuals with disabilities without any formal training or certification. Dogs are commonly used as assistance animals, but other animals may serve a person with a disability as an Assistance Animal.

The question in determining if an Assistance Animal will be allowed in housing owned, operated or controlled by VCFA is whether or not the Assistance Animal is necessary because of the individual’s disability to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy that housing, and its presence in that housing is reasonable. However, even if the individual with a disability establishes necessity for an Assistance Animal and it is allowed in VCFA housing, an Assistance Animal is not permitted in other areas of the College (e.g. dining facilities, libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, studios, performance spaces, etc.).

Procedures for Requesting Assistance Animals in VCFA Housing

The procedure for requesting Assistance Animals follows the general procedures set forth in VCFA’s Americans with Disabilities Act Policy, available at: <http://vcfa.edu/admissions/student-accessibility-services> supplemented by the additional considerations and requirements outlined below.

Criteria for Determining Whether Presence of an Assistance Animal is Reasonable

VCFA housing is unique in several aspects including the mandatory assignment of roommates for many individuals and the requirement that individuals must share a room or suite in certain residence halls. To ensure that the presence of assistance animals is not an undue administrative burden or fundamental alteration of VCFA housing, the College reserves the right to assign an individual with an assistance animal to a single room without a roommate.

However, for all requests for assistance animals, the Disability Services staff will consult with responsible College officials as necessary in making a case-by-case determination of whether the presence of an assistance animal is reasonable. A request for an assistance animal may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden on the College; (2) fundamentally alters VCFA’s housing policies; and/or (3) poses a direct

threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including VCFA property.

The College may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable, or in the making of housing assignments for individuals with Assistance Animals:

- The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
- The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. serious allergies);
- The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
- The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
- The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
- The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others; or
- The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.

Access to Non-Residential VCFA Facilities by Assistance Animals

An Assistance Animal must be contained within an individual's privately-assigned individual living accommodations (e.g., room, suite, apartment) except to the extent the individual is taking the animal out for natural relief. When an Assistance Animal is outside the private individual living accommodations, it must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness (subject to the leash/harness exceptions stated above). Assistance Animals are not allowed in any VCFA facilities other than VCFA residential facilities to which the individual is assigned.

Assistance Animals must be properly housed and restrained or otherwise under the dominion and control of the owner at all times. No owner shall permit the animal to go loose or run at large. If an animal is found running at large, the animal is subject to capture and confinement and immediate removal from VCFA housing.

Individual's Responsibilities for Assistance Animal

If the College grants an individual's request to live with an Assistance Animal, the individual is solely responsible for the custody and care of the Assistance Animal and must meet the following requirements: The owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the individual's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations.

The College has the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations, which may include a vaccination certificate. The College reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed. The owner is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner and, when provided, must use animal relief areas designated by VCFA. An individual with a disability may be charged for any damage caused by their Assistance Animal beyond reasonable wear and tear to the same extent that it charges other individuals for damages beyond reasonable wear and tear. The owner's living accommodations may also be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests if necessary as part of the College's standard or routine inspections. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a College-approved pest control service. The owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in residential facilities.

The College shall have the right to bill the individual's account for unmet obligations under this provision. The owner must fully cooperate with VCFA personnel with regard to meeting the terms of this Policy and developing procedures for care of the animal (e.g., cleaning the animal, feeding/watering the animal, designating an outdoor relief area, disposing of feces, etc.).

Assistance Animals may not be left overnight in VCFA Housing to be cared for by any individual other than the owner. If the owner is to be absent from their residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the owner. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the Assistance Animal is contained, as appropriate, when the owner is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities. The owner agrees to abide by all equally applicable residential policies that are unrelated to the individual's disability such as assuring that the animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for individuals who reside there.

The animal is allowed in VCFA housing only as long as it is necessary because of the owner's disability. The owner must notify the Accessibility Services Coordinator if the Assistance Animal is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. To replace an Assistance Animal, the new animal must be necessary because of the owner's disability and the owner must follow the procedures in this Policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act Policy when requesting a different animal.

VCFA personnel will not provide care or food for any Assistance Animal including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.

Removal of Assistance Animal

VCFA may require the individual to remove the animal from College housing if:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others;
- The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a College program;
- The owner does not comply with the owner's responsibilities set forth above; or
- The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the VCFA community.

VCFA will base such determinations upon the consideration of the behavior of the particular animal at issue, and not on speculation or fear about the harm or damages an animal may cause. Any removal of the animal will be done in consultation with the Accessibility Services Coordinator and may be appealed as outlined in the Appeal Procedures section of the VCFA Americans with Disabilities Act Policy.

Should the Assistance Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

Non-Retaliation Provision

VCFA will not retaliate against any person because that individual has requested or received reasonable accommodation in VCFA housing, including a request for an Assistance Animal.

Appeals, Complaints & Grievances

Complaints and Grievances (Non-Academic)

For reconsideration of administrative decisions, and all non-academic grievances and complaints, students should submit formal documentation in writing to the Program Chair within two weeks of the initial incident, decision or notice. The Program Chair, after consultation with the CAO as appropriate, will make a determination on the petition, consulting with the Faculty Advisory Committee if needed. Students may appeal decisions in writing to the CAO, whose decision is final.

If there are numerous complaints regarding a specific issue or incident, the Program Chair brings the complaint to the attention of the CAO, who then consults with the President, if necessary, and develops a plan to address the issue. This plan is shared with the students and/or the college community via email from the President or CAO or through a town hall-style meeting.

For further information about the complaints and grievances process through the State of Vermont, please see the state's Complaint Resolution Statement: <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/postsecondary-program-complaint-resolution>.

For complaints or grievances specifically related to discrimination or harassment, please see the college's Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

Discrimination & Harassment

VCFA is committed to providing faculty, staff, students, Artist-mentors, and invited visitors with an environment where they may pursue their careers or studies free from discrimination. The Director of Student Affairs is ultimately responsible for administering the college's ADA policies. The CalArts Title IX Office is responsible for administering Title IX policies and the Harassment & Discrimination Policy. The Chief Operations Officer (COO) in coordination with the CalArts Human Resources office is responsible for Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Discrimination policy and accessibility (ADA) policies as they relate to employees. The officers exist, in part, to ensure that all members of the College community understand their responsibility to create and maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

The College pledges itself to the broad application of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, in particular Titles VI and VII, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Americans and Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and comparable state and local laws.

For purposes of this policy, discrimination and sexual harassment are defined as follows:

Discriminatory harassment is conduct of any nature, which denies equal privileges or treatment to a particular individual because of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, and status as a Vietnam veteran, or sexual orientation, and/or any other classification protected by law. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, verbal or physical attacks, written threats or slurs, unwelcome banter, teasing, or jokes that are derogatory, or depict individuals in a stereotypical and demeaning manner, or any other conduct based on the protected classification which has the purposes or effect of interfering unreasonably with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an offensive, hostile, or intimidating working or learning environment.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and has been defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, promotion, grades or academic status; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for making an employment or academic decision affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for work or learning.

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either gender toward a person of the same or opposite gender when that behavior falls within the operative definition of sexual harassment. Harassment without an overt sexual component can also violate the law and College policies under the circumstances outlined in the discriminatory harassment definition where it is shown that the harassment is directed at an individual because of the individual's gender.

Sexual harassment is prohibited and will not be tolerated at VCFA. Sexual harassment violates the dignity of individuals and impedes the realization of the College's educational mission. The College is committed to preventing and eliminating sexual harassment of faculty, staff and students through education and by encouraging faculty, staff and students to report any concerns or complaints about sexual harassment. Prompt corrective measures will be taken to stop sexual harassment whenever and wherever it occurs.

Procedure

The CalArts Title IX Coordinator and Director, Community Rights and Responsibilities has primary responsibility for resolving complaints. Students can always bring any concerns to their Program Chair; any other member of the College community who has a complaint can report the incident to the COO or their immediate supervisor. If someone does not feel comfortable reporting through those lines, they can email the Title IX Coordinator at title9@vcfa.edu. The College prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint and/or participates in an investigation.

The College will make every effort to promptly investigate and resolve complaints with due regard for fairness and the rights of both the complainant and alleged offender. The College will make every effort to protect the privacy of the parties. If there is evidence of harassment, the College will make the prompt and effective corrective action appropriate to the situation. Knowingly making false allegations of harassment or providing evidence with the knowledge that it is false are also violations of College policy and will subject that person to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions for violations of this policy, which may range from a reprimand to dismissal from the College, will be imposed in accordance with applicable College policies.

Title IX and Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

VCFA complies with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, which states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with Title IX requirements, VCFA prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all educational programs, activities or employment practices. This includes but is not limited to: admissions, academic programs, recruiting, financial aid, recreation, housing, and employment. Prohibited sex discrimination includes sex-based discrimination, sexual violence, and sexual misconduct as described in this policy. Title IX protects all people regardless of their gender from sex discrimination.

For more information on Title IX and VCFA compliance and standards, see below regarding the College's Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the U.S. Department of Education's implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, the College's Title IX Coordinator has primary responsibility for coordinating the College's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in all the operations of the College, as well as retaliation for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX.

VCFA's Title IX Coordinator is listed below. They are responsible for coordinating the College's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator's responsibilities are outlined in greater depth below, but the core responsibilities include overseeing the school's response to Title IX reports and complaints and identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems revealed by such reports and complaints. To accomplish this, subject to the exemption for confidential employees discussed below, the Title IX Coordinator must be informed of all reports and complaints raising Title IX issues, even if the report or complaint was initially filed with another individual or office or if the investigation will be conducted by another individual or office. The Title IX Coordinator is available to respond to inquiries regarding violations of this policy, including sex--based discrimination or sexual misconduct, and to meet with students, employees or third parties regarding Title IX--related issues, such as issues related to the College's

compliance with Title IX, response to Title IX reports or complaints, related grievance procedures, relevant patterns of conduct, or related education and prevention programs. The contact information for VCFA's Title IX Coordinator is below:

Dionne Simmons

Title IX Coordinator

dsimmons@calarts.edu

title9@vcfa.edu

The complete Title IX Sexual Discrimination & Harassment policy is available here:

<https://vcfa.edu/policy/discrimination-and-harassment-policy/>

International Students

VCFA is certified by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to admit international students and to issue I-20 Certificates of Eligibility for Nonresident (F-1) Student Status.

The I-20 Certificate of Eligibility is not a student Visa. Rather, it is the document which is necessary to obtain a student Visa, and is needed to enter the U.S. for the on-campus residency periods. (Canadian citizens do not need a student Visa to attend VCFA, but still must have an I-20 to enter the U.S. for residencies.) The I-20 is valid only for the duration of the on-campus residency period, and international students must return to their home country after each residency period. All international students must complete the I-20 process every semester, prior to entering the U.S. for each on-campus residency period. In addition, students are required to pay the \$350 SEVIS I-20 fee to the Department of Homeland Security in advance of each on-campus residency. VCFA does not issue I-20 certificates to dependents (spouses or children) of students.

F-1 Student Visas are generally issued for a period of at least two years, so students should only have to go through this process once prior to their first on-campus residency.

The registrar serves as the Primary Designated School Official and can be contacted for further information about SEVIS (Registrar@vcfa.edu). Admissions staff members are also familiar with the SEVIS process and are available to assist prospective international students.

Canadian Students

The Canada Revenue Agency recognizes VCFA as a university outside of Canada for the purposes of the Canadian Income Tax Act. This means that Canadian citizens who attend VCFA may be able to claim a tax credit for tuition expenses. Please go to the

Canada Revenue Agency website to “INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS – EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE OF CANADA” (www.cra-arc.gc.ca) for more information and details.

Library

The VCFA Library supports the intellectual and creative pursuits of the VCFA community and furthers the mission of the college to foster the excellence of emerging and established practitioners. The VCFA Library focuses collection development towards supporting the programs of the college and offers access to 25,000 books and print materials, 160,000 eBooks, and 12,000 digital journal titles. The Library staff develop the library's collection with a goal of creating a diverse and inclusive set of resources, with a particular eye toward acquiring published works by the VCFA community. In addition, library staff provide research assistance, orientations and individual library instruction, and remote support through videoconferencing consultations.

The library's [website](#) is the portal for accessing the searchable online catalog, research databases, library policies and guides, and for communicating with library staff. Most items not owned by VCFA Library can be requested via Interlibrary Loan.

All registered students have library accounts following the firstname.lastname convention. Active students on leave of absence have continued access to the library's digital resources, and graduating students may elect to continue with the library's services as alumnx by contacting library staff. Information about logging into the library catalog can be found at the library's website along with guides and tutorials for using many of the library's resources.

Students may check out books from the VCFA Library collection for six months at a time. Items borrowed through interlibrary loan are subject to the policies and due dates set by the lending library. The VCFA Library ships materials (both our own items and materials obtained through interlibrary loan) to all students with US shipping addresses. Students with international shipping addresses should contact the library directly to request materials.

Email the library staff to request:

- Interlibrary loan materials
- Copies of research documents
- Circulating VCFA Library materials
- Renewals of circulating materials currently on loan to you
- Research assistance, answers to reference questions, and help using library resources
- Prepaid USPS labels to return VCFA Library and interlibrary loan materials

- Renewal of an expired library account

Graduating students must return all library materials prior to graduation. Students with outstanding interlibrary loans checked out to their accounts will be unable to receive their diplomas until their accounts have been cleared.

VCFA Library

36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 828-8512 (phone)
(802) 828-8514 (fax)
vcfalibrary@vcfa.edu
<https://vcfa.edu/library>

Thesis Retention & Access Policy

All critical and creative thesis projects and process papers (or documentation thereof) submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree are retained by the institution for the student's academic record, and for the benefit of future students, researchers, and for the scholarly and creative community. Authors and artists retain copyright. All physical thesis papers are held by the VCFA Library. Digital copies of all thesis papers are accessible through each program's Commons. Authors and artists may opt out of including their thesis in the digital archive by contacting their Program Chair or the VCFA Library. Final thesis requirements and documentation vary by program; see each program's section for details.

Student Code of Conduct

VCFA nurtures the artistic, intellectual, and official development of all members of our community. We foster inclusive artistic and cultural diversity and defend the principle of freedom of thought, practice, and expression.

VCFA will take appropriate action regarding students who violate the College's campus and conduct regulations or disrupt the learning and campus environment. Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to: verbal warning, temporary or permanent dismissal from campus or from the program. Individuals who have authority to address such situations include Program Chairs, the Chief Academic Officer, and CalArts Title IX Coordinator (for issues relating to Title IX law and policy). The officer responsible for decisions regarding disciplinary actions at VCFA is the Chief Academic Officer, or their designate.

As an enrolled student at VCFA, the additional following areas are included in our Student Code of Conduct:

Respect for Governance

Respect for Governance is the expectation that members of the VCFA community will act in compliance with the laws, regulations and policies that are in effect and govern behavior at the College and the conduct of College business. Whether physically on campus or elsewhere, students are expected to comply with all City, State and Federal laws, as applicable.

Respect for Others and for the Educational Environment

Respect for others is the central principle that governs interactions at VCFA. A primary expectation that flows from this principle is civility and tolerance. Respect for others is expected in all relationships including those with members of the greater VCFA community. Respect should be present in verbal and written communications and should be shown at program and public events, meetings, on the telephone and in electronic exchanges. People have the right to disagree; however, there is also a responsibility to be civil and to maintain respect even while disagreeing. A positive working environment where everyone can receive respect and do their best work requires a respect and tolerance for difference and diversity.

All students, faculty, staff and visitors are expected to behave in a way that respects the educational environment. Behavior that disrupts the educational environment will not be tolerated.

Respect for Property and Respect for Information

Property includes physical assets, intellectual property, the College name and other resources. As a nonprofit organization it is essential to maintain the highest standards of stewardship for the property and resources entrusted to us. Respect for property, therefore, includes respect for campus facilities and educational resources, all intellectual property of VCFA and the property of individual students, faculty, staff, and others at the College.

Confidentiality

VCFA expects that students understand and honor that artistic and academic work shared with individuals and/or groups during residency and throughout the semester is not to be shared outside the designated community, including official media formats, without the express permission of the individual student or faculty member.

Statement of Ethical Conduct

VCFA expects all students, faculty, staff and visitors to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.

Appropriate Conduct

Students will not engage in behavior that is threatening, dangerous or harmful to self or others, that disrupts the learning and campus environment or that damages college property. Students are expected to cooperate with and be respectful of all VCFA personnel as they carry out their duties. Students may not possess firearms, other weapons or fireworks while on campus. Students may not tamper with smoke detectors, sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, wiring, or electrical equipment. State laws also prohibits such tampering.

Disciplinary Procedures

Emergency/Immediate Situations: In an emergency or immediate and time-sensitive situation, VCFA and CalArts may suspend its normal disciplinary procedures and temporarily dismiss and remove from the physical campus and/or remote classroom access a student whose conduct is determined to be sufficiently disruptive or dangerous. Such conduct includes but is not limited to behavior that is threatening to self or others, behavior that disrupts the campus and learning environment, public impairment from alcohol or other substances, and other offenses included in this Handbook.

Non-Emergencies: In non-emergency cases, where there is indication that student behavior violates campus policy, the following sequence of actions will occur:

- **Fact Finding:** The offending behavior will be reported to the Program Chair or the appropriate designate. The Program Chair, and any other appropriate individuals involved in the incident, will investigate the allegations and determine the facts of the case, which will be reported, in writing, to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO).
- **Interview With Student(s)/Others:** The Program Chair and COO will meet with the student(s) and any other individuals involved, in person or by phone, together and/or separately, as appropriate, to review the facts of the case, to allow the student(s) to respond to the allegations and to present their version of the alleged events. They may meet, separately, with any witnesses to the incident. The Program Chair and COO will consult with the CAO or CalArts Student Affairs staff, as needed.
- **Disciplinary Action:** Following the meeting with the student(s), the Program Chair and COO will determine if disciplinary action is warranted. If so, such action may include dismissal from the program or making continued enrollment conditional upon cessation of the offending behavior. The decision will be made in consultation with the CAO and CalArts Student Affairs office

and communicated in writing to the student, who will be required to sign a statement agreeing to comply with the conditions for continued enrollment.

- **Noncompliance by the Student:** If the student violates the conditions for continued enrollment, as determined by fact-finding and the COO, the student will be dismissed.

In all such incidents the VCFA staff member(s) addressing the situation will document the incident and action(s) taken.

Appeal: Decisions made and actions taken pursuant to these disciplinary procedures may be appealed to the COO and CAO of VCFA who shall make a joint final determination.

Student ID Cards

Enrolled VCFA students will receive a student ID card at their first residency. These cards include student ID# and serve a variety of purposes including verifying student status at libraries which extend their lending privileges to VCFA students, and for student discounts elsewhere. There is a \$5 fee for replacement ID cards.

VCFA Email Policy

Email is the primary means of communication within the VCFA community. The Information Technology Department (IT) assigns each student, faculty member, and staff member an official VCFA email address. All College and program communications will be sent to students, faculty, and staff via their VCFA email accounts, with the expectation that these communications will be received and read in a timely fashion. Students, faculty and staff are expected to use their VCFA email accounts in all communication. VCFA email addresses provide necessary access to shared files, such as Google Docs and Google Sheets, as well as calendar invitations.

VCFA email addresses are set up using the name supplied to IT by the relevant staff (firstname.lastname@vcfa.edu). New students, faculty, and staff will be notified when their vcfa.edu email account has been created. It is then the responsibility of the individual to activate their new vcfa.edu email account.

When using VCFA email, students, faculty, and staff must observe high standards of professionalism, discretion, and ethics. Disclosure of information about students or employees in violation of laws or College policies protecting confidentiality is prohibited. Given the nature of electronic communication, email users are reminded that confidentiality and privacy cannot be guaranteed. It is a violation of the VCFA code of conduct for any user of an official email address to impersonate a college officer, student, faculty member, staff member, or alumnx.

While VCFA does not explicitly ban the forwarding of a user's College email account to other email accounts controlled by the same user, this practice is strongly discouraged for reasons concerning security and privacy. VCFA can support only vcfa.edu mailboxes. The College assumes no responsibility for forwarded email, and users must recognize that forwarding their College email to a separate external email account may cause harm to the College's systems. Additionally, using a separate account may seriously limit the College's ability to protect an individual in the event of conflict or disagreement.

VCFA Portals

VCFA utilizes several portals for various purposes within the college community. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the portals and use them for the appropriate purposes. Please note that each portal has a different login setup (username and password) and it is important to keep track of this information for each portal.

myVCFA

This secure student portal is connected to the college's Student Information System. Through this portal students can pay their bills, access their academic records (official and unofficial transcripts), and maintain their contact information. The portal is located here: sso.vcfa.edu

For assistance logging into the system, please contact the IT Department (support@vcfa.edu).

Veterans Benefits

VCFA is approved by the Vermont State Approving Agency to accept veterans benefits, including Chapter 31 (Voc Rehab) and Chapter 33 (Post-9/11 GI Bill®) benefits. VCFA also participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program.

VCFA's registrar serves as the Veterans Affairs School Certified Official and certifies enrollment for veterans so that their educational benefits can be used at VCFA. VCFA is also approved for the Tuition Assistance (TA) Program through the Department of Defense.

A veteran's eligibility for educational benefits is established by the VA. Information may be found at www.gibill.va.gov or by calling 1-888-442-4551. The amount of the benefit is dependent on eligibility and entitlements. Veterans who plan to use their educational benefits to attend VCFA should provide a "Certificate of Eligibility" (aka

Statement of Benefits) to the VCFA Registrar as soon as possible upon acceptance into the program, in order to begin the process.

In accordance with Title 38 USC 3679(e), any covered individual is permitted to attend or participate in the course of education during the period beginning on the date on which the individual provides to the educational institution a certificate of eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 31 or 33 (a certificate of eligibility can also include a “Statement of Benefits” obtained from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) website – eBenefits, or VA 28-1905 form for chapter 31 authorization purposes) and ending on the earlier of the following dates:

- The date on which payment from VA is made to the institution,
- 90 days after the date the institution certified tuition and fees following the receipt of the certificate of eligibility.

VCFA will not impose any penalty, including the assessment of late fees, the denial of access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or the requirement that a covered individual borrow additional funds, on any covered individual because of the individual’s inability to meet their financial obligations to the institution due to the delayed disbursement funding from VA under chapter 31 or 33.

All questions about Veterans benefits should be directed to the VCFA Registrar:

Office of the Registrar

VCFA
36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 828-8724
Registrar@vcfa.edu

GRADUATION

Graduation requires both academic and financial clearance. The Program Chair and Registrar will certify that all academic degree requirements have been fulfilled. The Bursar’s Office will audit financial accounts, and the Library will verify that there are no outstanding obligations to the library (outstanding interlibrary loans, etc.)

Diplomas & Transcripts

If a graduating student has not fulfilled all academic obligations, the degree will not be awarded and they will not receive their diploma until all academic requirements have been completed.

If a graduating student has not fulfilled all financial obligations, they will not receive their diploma until all requirements have been met.

VCFA reserves the right to change any provision, requirement, statement of policy or procedure, service or facility detailed in this handbook. This handbook does not constitute a contractual agreement between the student and VCFA.