



**Warren Wilson**  
COLLEGE

## **MA in Critical Craft Studies Admissions Process** **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What prerequisites are required for admission into the MA in Critical Craft Studies?**

A BA or BFA degree is anticipated from applicants; however, the review process considers your entire application package. We are interested in students returning to school after other kinds of work and life experiences as much as recent graduates. A thoughtful, well-written statement of purpose for all applicants helps us understand how your experiences and education contribute to your interest in craft studies; consider briefly addressing how a low GPA may be balanced by your life and work experiences.

Courses will be conducted in English. Second or third languages are not required and instruction will not be offered as part of the program. Students with additional language skills are encouraged to use those skills in their coursework. This program calls for strong communication skills; students should be prepared to read, write, and actively discuss the materials in individual assignments and group situations.

### **What subject areas are you looking for in an applicant's BA or BFA degree?**

This strength of this program will come from students from a variety of backgrounds, including art, art history, and material-based craft programs as well as Anthropology, English, Material Culture, Visual Culture, and Gender Studies. We encourage applicants from all subject areas and a variety of experiences.

### **When should I apply and how long does it take to go through the admissions process?**

We have rolling admissions for the program and will accept applications up to March 1 of the enrollment year. To be considered for financial aid and scholarships, applications and FAFSA forms must be received no later than midnight on March 1 in the year of enrollment. Decisions after March 1 will be made on a rolling admission basis within 4-6 weeks of receipt of a completed application.

### **What should my Personal Essay include?**

This is your opportunity to describe how your academic and professional experiences connect to your decision to pursue an MA in Critical Craft Studies. Be as direct and succinct as possible, and share how this graduate degree will help you achieve your future goals in 1000 words at most. If you have worked as a curator, educator, intern, volunteer, workshop instructor, artist, writer, filmmaker, etc., for example, please describe how your own experiences impact your interest in this program. Use this essay to tell us the unique things you bring to the program, and how you think the program will help you in future endeavors. You may use this prompt or develop an essay on your own: *How would the MA in*

*Critical Craft Studies connect your interests, experiences, and studies with your future goals?*

**What are you looking for in the Object Response?**

For this essay, you will choose one of two objects (download from the application) for a maximum 500-word essay that you will upload to the application. This piece of writing helps us understand how you are thinking about craft and objects. The length was chosen to mirror exhibition reviews published online or in print today. The committee is interested in how you analyze the work; you can choose any approach from placing the work in a cultural context to materials and process, theoretical questions about the form, identity, and history, etc. This is an opportunity to look closely, think specifically, and share how you connect a question with analysis. References should be noted through footnotes or an attached bibliography of essays, books, or other materials (for example, podcasts) that contributed to your thinking and writing. Choose one and at most two ideas to explore in your writing. Creative writing responses that reflect research are welcome.

**What kind of additional materials may I submit?**

We strongly encourage you to share up to three additional materials to support your application. These should show your work and interests and can be from your current or past projects. Your samples can take a variety of forms, such as a written text, essay, published writing; texts for a museum or exhibition, press release; artist statement with images or weblink; syllabi; sample lectures; videos; podcasts; creative writing; or other forms that show how you create and communicate content. These materials help the admissions committee understand your thinking through projects that may or may not be directly connected to craft. You will submit these materials in PDF format in the application; web links may be shared in a list. You will be asked to provide a brief description including project name, date, and your role on the project.

**Who should I ask to write my recommendations? May I submit more than 2 letters?**

Letters of recommendation should be from a professional and/or academics who are familiar with you and your work. Only two letters may be submitted through our application process.

**I received my undergraduate degree from outside the United States, do I need an evaluation of my grades?**

Yes, students who earned their post-secondary degree(s) in a country other than the United States are required to have a “course-by-course” credential evaluation performed by an outside evaluation service. A number of organizations render this service. While most of these provide acceptable evaluations, World Education Services (WES) is recommended. WES assists students with initiating the evaluation process and can be reached at wes.org or at 800.937.3895. Please allow four-to-six weeks for an official credential assessment to be completed and forwarded to the Admissions Office at Warren Wilson College.

**As an international student, do I need to submit at TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores with my application?**

A satisfactory proficiency of the English language is required for admission to Warren Wilson College and is required for all students whose native language is not English.

The following criteria represent different ways to prove English proficiency:

- Achieving the minimum required official score on the International Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL; minimum required score 79) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam (minimum required score 6.5). Your scores should be sent directly to the Admissions Office at Warren Wilson College.
- Completion of three consecutive years, and graduation from an accredited school where English is the language of instruction.
- Completion of an associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctorate, or professional degree at an accredited college or university where English is the language of instruction.
- Obtaining minimum scores on SAT Verbal section of 450 or better or ACT Reading of 18 or better.
- Obtaining an official score of 4 or higher on either the International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level Language A examination in English, or the College Board Advanced Placement Program (AP) examination in English Language
- Being selected by one of our approved exchange program partners to attend Warren Wilson College through an approved exchange relationship

Test scores are valid for two years after the test date but are still considered valid if the score exceeded the minimum requirement and the applicant has maintained continuous residency in the United States since the exam date.

#### **How many students are accepted?**

Currently, up to 15 qualified students are admitted annually.

#### **What degree will I earn in this program?**

All students receive a Master of Arts in Critical Craft Studies from Warren Wilson College. Warren Wilson College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools: Council on Colleges.

#### **Who are MA in Critical Craft Studies students?**

Students in the MA in Critical Craft Studies program include recent graduates and returning students with years of work and life experiences. Students are of all ages, backgrounds, and from around the world. We have students from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds with degrees in areas such as art history, art, anthropology, history, economics, historic preservations, gender studies, philosophy, critical theory, film, and media arts.

#### **Who are the faculty in the MA in Craft Studies program?**

The MA in Critical Craft Studies places students immediately within the field. The rotating faculty roster is unique and unmatched by any other program in the US or abroad. Drawn from a range of academic institutions and cultural organizations, students in the MA in Critical Craft Studies are taught by experts in and outside of craft who bring research methods and expertise from a variety of disciplines, such as art, art history, anthropology, material culture, visual studies, as well as curatorial, writing, or programmatic work.

Each term, every student is assigned a Core Faculty member as their academic advisor plus an outside mentor. Mentors offer special expertise in the student's area of research and meet with students for at least six hours each semester, introducing them to potential research subjects and opportunities. For the final semester, students will have a committee

composed of Faculty, Mentors, and students to support research and successful completion of their final project.

Visit our website for a list of Faculty and Mentors:

<https://www.warren-wilson.edu/academics/ma-in-craft/>

### **How is this low-residency program organized?**

Students in the MA in Critical Craft Studies program experience a shared curriculum focused on craft histories and theories, materials and research labs. Students begin the Program and their first residency in July. The semester, which includes the two-week residency, continues for 16 weeks. Semesters begin in July and January. All students participate in July and January residencies and semesters each year for two years, and a final 5th residency to present their Practicum Project as completion of their graduation requirements. During the program, Semesters 1 and 3 begin in July and conclude in November; Semesters 2 and 4 begin in January and conclude in May. Students should expect to have class meetings or other events scheduled on any day of the week, including nights and weekends, during both the residencies and the normal course of the semester.

Residency instruction includes a combination of lectures, discussions, readings, field trips, workshops, hands-on material labs, studio visits, as well as a mixture of individual and group work. Students will explore craft histories and theories from around the globe and a range of disciplines through readings and interaction with experts within and outside of craft studies. Coursework, concepts and research methods for each semester are introduced in the residencies and further explored through independent study, project assignments, online group discussions, and monthly meetings with individual mentors. Research and Material Labs are designed to engage the Swannanoa/Asheville area as case studies. To complete Labs, students apply methods and approaches learned in their own hometowns. While the program includes a Material Lab, the emphasis is not on the acquisition and development of skills. Instead, students work on understanding materials and processes to improve their understanding of how things are made and to cultivate direct ways of investigating craft that brings processes together with theory, history, and finished work. All research findings are shared and engaged collectively to expand the field through collective exchange and knowledge building.

Students propose a final Practicum Project during Residency 3 and use independent study time that semester to develop and then submit research plans for final approval at the end of the semester. Residency 4 for graduating students include meetings with a committee composed of faculty and students. Graduating students return during Residency 5 to present their final projects.

### **What can I expect to study in this program?**

Students in the MA in Critical Craft Studies experience a shared curriculum focused on craft history, theory, and research methods. Material and Research Labs are designed to test methods collectively to prepare students to conduct research on their own projects during each semester. Warren Wilson Colleges' Work Crews and studios will connect making through craft media, including time considering the processes and materials of weaving, blacksmithing, ceramics, and dye garden. The focus in the Lab is to consider how to better develop research questions and study through observation and



introductory hands-on experiences with craft media and processes. On-site residencies use the College and the surrounding areas as a laboratory to connect readings with experiences, studio visits, archives, and research methods and faculty specializations. Off-site semester work involves independent readings in craft histories and theory, and assignments designed to connect on-site research experiences with applied research in the students' own place of residence. Course materials connect students to craft in the broadest sense of the subject: studio, contemporary, folk, artisanal, and decorative arts.

Although coursework is conducted in English, readings, assignments, discussions and online engagements will examine craft across the globe, and the study of craft in the United States will reflect the diversity, breadth, and depth of its population. Students are encouraged and supported as they develop inquiry and analytical skills, and to increase confidence in sharing their findings through writing, public speaking and podcasts, online and exhibition formats, social media, and emerging experimental platforms. For those seeking to pursue further graduate study, an MA thesis as a final project is an option; others may select curatorial, critical writing, curricular development or programmatic projects as the culmination of guided and individual study.

Students will learn about the field from the leading thinkers, writers, researchers, curators, craftspeople, designers, and artists who focus on craft as well as from one another. The learning environment is inclusive and investigative, giving students the opportunity to learn, test, and refine their skills through connections within the field, preparing them for work environments while they study.

### **How does the program build community among program participants?**

The program follows a cohort model; students are admitted once a year, and work together during their course of study through projects, online discussions, and shared research. The program uses various digital platforms and tools to offer both private and public platforms for gathering and sharing information. Students will share rooms and housing during residencies, with times built in for social gatherings and private times built into the schedule. Group projects extending residency work into the semester will also facilitate connections.

### **How many courses do I take to complete the program?**

Each student is required to participate in 5 on-site residencies and 4 independent study/off-site courses that will total up to 60 credits. Each student will have experiences connected to writing, speaking and curating; a final practicum project is required of each student and may include a thesis-length essay, exhibition, course development or another form that demonstrates the application of course offerings and critical inquiry in the field.

Residencies and Semesters are divided as follows:

History and Theory 14 credits (4 semesters: 4,4,3,3)

Materials Lab 14 credits (4 semesters: 4,4,3,3)

Research Lab 14 credits (4 semesters: 4,4,3,3)

Practicum Project 18 credits (2 semesters: 3,3,5,5) +2 (for final presentation in Residency 5)

Each semester includes a range of approaches, teaching styles, and content. Semesters are structured to move students through Research Methods; Craft in Public; Communication about Craft; and Applied Research.

**Is every class offered each semester?**

No, each term is a module in which the on-site curriculum extends into the off-site independent study. Topics will shift with the availability and expertise of faculty.

**May I transfer courses from another University or program?**

This program does not accept transfer credit at this time.

**Will I be required to choose an area of concentration?**

No, this program is not structured in this way. All students will enroll in the same courses and have shared assignments with the exception of the final practicum project. This final project will be independently researched by each student and will fit the student's interests in applying research methods and theory into practice, such as a thesis-length essay, exhibition, course curriculum, podcast series, film, archive, or program development such as a symposium. All students will present their Practicum Project in their 5th Residency.

**How long do I have to complete the program?**

You have 2 years plus a final summer residency to complete the program. We strongly recommend completing the program in sequential order. Students who elect or need for personal reasons to take a term off will need to apply for a leave of absence, and may have to wait until the next term in the sequence is offered to resume the program; completion times will be adjusted in these situations.

**Financial Details****Is financial aid available?**

There are a limited number of merit-based scholarships available for students in the MA in Critical Craft Studies program. There is not a separate application for these scholarships. Every applicant will be considered for these based upon the strength and quality of the application.

If you wish to apply for need-based aid including an unsubsidized federal loan, our office requires you to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). The FAFSA uses both your and your spouse's information (if applicable) to calculate your eligibility for federal student financial aid such as loans. The Department of Education requires students to use prior, prior year federal income tax information. We recommend that you use the Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) in the FAFSA to upload your tax information directly from the IRS. Warren Wilson College's school code is 002979.