

MASTER OF ARTS IN MUSEUM STUDIES

College of Liberal & Creative Arts

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Museum Studies Program

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Mission

The mission of the Museum Studies Program is to develop future museum professionals through highly structured coursework in a setting where museums' educational efforts, collections, and interactions with the community are of central concern. Students are engaged in a 21st-century landscape, where responsiveness to the significant changes taking place in the museum profession are integrated into curriculum, activities, and professional development.

Program Scope

The M.A. in Museum Studies is unique to SF State, and the only one of its kind in a public university in the state of California, either in the California State University or the University of California systems. The M.A. degree is designed to provide professional training in major areas of museum work—Museum Management & Fundraising, Curatorship, Registration/Collections Management, Exhibition Design, Cultural Property Law and Protection, and Museum Education & Public Programming.

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The program builds upon students' previous academic studies in museum-related disciplines by emphasizing practical experience, professionalism, and important developments in the field of Museum Studies. Museum Studies students include mid-career museum professionals, people from other professional career fields, and recent B.A. graduates.

Facilities

The program supports a museum with permanent cultural collections. **The Global Museum**, located in the Fine Arts building, is volunteer-operated and admission is free. Museum Studies students staff the museum and produce all exhibitions and related educational and public programming. Other facilities include a specialized lab, teaching space, and collections storage.

Career Outlook

Alumni of the Museum Studies Program have found employment at all career levels in museums of all sizes and types throughout the U.S. The Museum Studies Program partners with the Paul K. Longmore Institute on Disability, the School of Art, Special Collections at the Leonard Library, the Sutro Library, the Harry D. Thiers Herbarium and other units on and off campus on projects and courses that prepare students for employment in all types of museums, cultural arts centers, arts commissions, historical sites and houses, national, regional and local parks, science centers, environmental education centers, libraries with exhibition programs, exhibit design firms, planetaria, aquaria, zoos, and botanical gardens.

Admission to the M.A. Program

Students are admitted to the program for fall terms only. To be admitted to classified status, a student must meet all general University requirements. No more than 6 units of work taken in post-baccalaureate status are transferable to M.A. degree credit in the museum studies program.

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must:

- Have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university in one of the following or related fields: anthropology, archaeology, art history, classics, design, education, history, science, or public/art administration, or other fields relevant to Museum Studies, such as communications, environmental studies, fine arts, humanities, or other relevant academic areas.
- Have at least a minimum grade point average of 3.20 in the last 60 semester units of upper-division courses completed.
- Be able to demonstrate understanding of the work and profession of museum studies, gained through paid or volunteer experience (minimum of three months) in a museum or related setting. Experience can be completed prior to or concurrent with application to the program.
- Submit to the Museum Studies program two letters of recommendation from faculty or supervisors knowledgeable of the applicant's academic or professional ability. At least one of these letters should be from a museum supervisor.
- Submit to the Museum Studies program a current resumé and written statement of purpose, outlining background, intentions, and goals as specified in the program's admissions procedures. Each applicant is encouraged to specify as closely as possible the focus or emphasis they wish to pursue.
- Send one set of transcripts of all prior academic work directly to the Museum Studies program. Another set is required by the University Graduate Admissions Office.
- A Comparison Essay, as specified in the program's admissions procedures, and preferably, also a sample of academic writing (for example, a course paper or writing assignment).
- Submit a paper TOEFL score of at least 550 or a computer-based score of 80 to the graduate admissions office, if an international applicant is from a non-English speaking country.

Applications for admission are due February 15.

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the core features of museum professionalism (ethical codes, professional societies, interpersonal skills, teamwork, career development resources).

- b. Outline the broad history of museums, their core organizational features, and basic museum theory.
- c. Acquire knowledge of key areas in museum research and practice, specifically in: collections care and registration; museum management and fundraising; and exhibition design.
- d. Depending upon their emphasis, students will acquire knowledge of at least one of following key areas in museum research and practice: curatorship; cultural property law and protection; museum education.
- e. Depending upon their emphasis, students will acquire or have the option of acquiring knowledge in museum research and practice in the areas of audience development, digital asset management, global operations, or conservation.
- f. Develop individual scholarship, creative activity, and museum professionalism through activities such as a written thesis, an exhibit component, an area of the written examination, or professional activities.

Written English Proficiency Requirement

The University has a requirement for written English proficiency that is to be assessed at two different points in a student’s program.

Level One (must be met prior to admission)

Comparison Essay in application for admission assessed as basic- to professional-level writing.

Level Two (toward the end of the program)

Grade of B+ or above on final research papers for M S 700 and M S 860.

Advancement to Candidacy

Besides meeting all general requirements for advancement to candidacy, applicants must, in addition, have completed with a grade of B or better in both M S 700 and M S 880.

Museum Studies M.A. – Minimum 33 units

The Museum Studies M.A. is designed to provide professional training in major areas of museum work: Museum Management & Fundraising, Curatorship, Registration/Collections Management, Exhibition Design, Cultural Property Law and Protection, and Museum Education & Public Programming.

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Core Requirements (9 units)

Code	Title	Units
M S 700	History and Organization of Museums (required the first semester)	3
M S 860	Fundraising in Museums	3
M S 880	Museum Internship	3

Area Requirements (9 units)

Code	Title	Units
Select 3 units from each group:		9

Collections Care and Conservation

M S 740	Museum Conservation and Restoration	
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M S 794	Museum Collections Management and Registration
Museum Management	
M S 800	Museum Management, Law, and Ethics
M S 830	Museum Governance
P A 745	Perspectives on Nonprofit Management
Exhibition Design	
ART 619	Exhibition Design
M S 720	Museum Curatorship and Collecting
M S 730	Museum Exhibition Development

Focus Areas (12 units)

Select four electives relevant to the following areas. No more than 6 units of non-museum studies courses may count towards electives in the focus area. Courses must be chosen in consultation with a Museum Studies faculty advisor.

- Curatorship
- Exhibition Design
- Cultural Property Law and Protection
- Museum Management and Fundraising
- Museum Education and Public Programming
- Registration/Collections Management

Culminating Experience Requirement (3 units)

Select one:

Code	Title	Units
M S 894	Creative Work Project	3
M S 898	Master’s Thesis	3
M S 896EXM & M S 896	Written Comprehensive Examination and Preparation for Written Comprehensive Examination	3

If the thesis or creative work project is not completed during the semester the student is enrolled in M S 894 or M S 898, the student is required to enroll in M S 897, a continuation course, in the third semester following their initial enrollment in M S 898 or M S 894. If the thesis or creative work project is not completed at the end of the third semester, students are required to enroll in the College of Professional & Global Education’s course, LCA 499 “Culminating Experience Continuous Enrollment,” and must maintain continuous enrollment in LCA 499 each fall and spring semester thereafter until graduation or until the department’s five-year deadline for completing the degree. If the written examination is not passed during the semester the student is enrolled in M S 896/M S 896EXM, the student is required to enroll in M S 896EXM the subsequent semester to take the examination a second time. Students who do not pass the examination a second time must enroll in M S 896EXM and M S 897, a continuation course, in the third semester following their initial enrollment in M S 896, as well as in another course in M S. If the student does not pass the examination a third time, students are required to enroll in M S 896EXM and must maintain continuous enrollment in M S 896EXM each fall and spring semester thereafter until graduation or until the department’s five-year deadline for completing the degree.