



Department of Art History and  
Communication Studies  
McGill University  
Arts Building, W-265  
853 Sherbrooke Street West  
Montreal, QC, Canada H3A 0G5

Département d'histoire de l'art et  
d'études en communication  
Université McGill  
Pavillon des arts, W-265  
853, rue Sherbrooke ouest  
Montréal, QC, Canada H3A 0G5

Tel. : (514) 398-2850  
Fax: (514) 398-8557  
E-mail: ahcs@mcgill.ca

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to learn of your interest in our graduate programs. This letter hopefully will answer many, if not all, of your initial questions. If not, please feel free to contact me directly with more detailed topics. Please also be sure to explore the various links on our website to learn about faculty, admissions, students, among other topics.

Note first that we have two separate programs although students can take courses in either program: one in Art History and another in Communication Studies. Admitted students can also take courses at other Quebec universities through the university-transfer program (<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/iut/home-page>).

To self-assess whether or not your academic research interests and previous academic training fit within our department's areas of expertise, please take a moment to review carefully our faculty profiles <http://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/people-contacts/faculty> and also the types of MA and PhD topics studied by previous students <http://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/graduate/grads>.

Because we are a small department, admission to our graduate programs is very competitive – we receive over 150 applications per year in both programs (Art History and Communication Studies), and typically offer acceptance to between 10 and 15 of these to the MA and PhD programs combined. **Our priorities in admission** are 1) academic excellence (as demonstrated by your academic track record and your **two letters of reference**, preferably academic references), 2) scholarly ability (as demonstrated by **two academic writing samples**), and 3) "fit" with the orientation of our program (as demonstrated by your application's **statement of research interests**). You do not need to provide a CV. **Your cumulative grade point average** (CGPA) is another indication of eligibility (<http://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/graduate/admissions>). However, if yours is below the required minimum, you can still apply although we recommend that your reference letters and your research proposal provide sufficient indication to reviewers of your file that you are well prepared for graduate study in our department. You may also provide GRE scores if you have them, but they are not required.

**Writing samples** should demonstrate your scholarly research and writing abilities. These could be previous course papers, published work, a chapter from an undergraduate or graduate thesis, or high-quality journalism. There is no stipulation as to length (though we are unlikely to read excessively long submissions in their entirety).

**Your statement of research interests ('the research statement')** is a short document that should set out your research interests. For MA students, this is usually between 500-700 words (single-spaced); For PhD students, it is 1000-1400 words, single-spaced.

For PhD students, your statement should include some discussion of the following: 1) the research question or problem you are interested in; 2) the objects of research you hope to treat or investigate; 3) the theoretical discussions in relation to which this problem or question is situated; 4) the social or historical context in relation to which this the problem is meaningful or significant; and 5) the methodological approach you intend to take. You are free to include citations but this is not required.

In the most successful cases, these statements tend in the direction of a project proposal; however, this is not a strict requirement, and applications that thoughtfully explore a problem without formally proposing a project can also be successful. Our primary concern in evaluating statements is that they demonstrate a capacity and imagination for advanced scholarly research. For additional guidance on developing a research proposal required to apply for admission, please consider this resource: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/research-tracking/proposals>.

Your statement should also provide some indication of how and why our department is an appropriate place for this work to be accomplished. In your research proposal, we thus recommend that you indicate which faculty member(s) you might wish to work with, preferably in priority sequence; this will help the admissions committee in its communication with potential supervisors. Final decisions about this are not made until the Admissions Committee has reviewed applications. That said, supervisor interest is an important factor in our admissions process. Typically, potential supervisors take note of applicants with whom they have communicated and notify the admissions committee of any in whom they have a preliminary interest; likewise, the admissions committee notifies potential supervisors of strong files that might be suited for their supervision, and asks for an appraisal. All of this information is then considered by the admissions committee, which makes final decisions on recommendations for admission.

I would encourage you to make contact with professors you might want to study with who have expertise in your topics of interest. Use this link to learn more about us: <http://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/people-contacts/faculty>. Feel free to contact any of us directly. Here is a resource about how to connect with a potential supervisor: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/research-supervision/connecting-supervisor>.

As you might already know, McGill is a primarily English language university so all instruction in our programs is in English. Since English is the primary language of instruction and communication at McGill, you must demonstrate an adequate level of proficiency in English, regardless of your citizenship status or country of origin. Here are the requirements for English language proficiency: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/international/apply/proficiency>. There is also a French language requirement for our PhD students. Students must either demonstrate previous training and proficiency in the French language, or they need to complete a translation exam (a short text with aid of dictionary) in Year 3 of the program. Language courses to assist with preparation to meet this requirement are available at McGill.

**In terms of funding**, if your application is recommended for admission you will be notified in writing of the financial offer from the department. We typically provide guaranteed funding to students during the first 4 years of our PhD programs and to MA students for two years. We also require in-program students to apply to all major sources of external funding for which they are eligible, and we assist them in this process. Additional information on graduate funding is available at <https://www.profellow.com/> and also at the following websites: <http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/>, <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/funding>, and <http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/funding>.

This funding is available in two forms: competitive and non-competitive. Non-competitive funding includes opportunities for research assistantships and stipends usually from your supervising professor and first year recruitment fellowships. Competitive funding includes opportunities to apply for a variety of grants, awards, or fellowships for which you may be eligible. Competitive funding also includes TA-ships.

Finally, I would encourage you to consult with graduate students already in the program. Links for that are provided here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/graduate/gsa>. You can find our students' profiles here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/people-contacts/phd-students> and past MA and PhD work here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/graduate/grads>.

Here is the application portal: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply>.

Thank you again for your interest in our programs, and please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any further questions.

Very best,

Director of Graduate Programs for the Department of Art History and Communication Studies

Email: [gpd-ahcs.arts@mcgill.ca](mailto:gpd-ahcs.arts@mcgill.ca)