



MFA in Photography Program—Frequently Asked Questions

The MFA in Photography program at The Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University, was created to emphasize craft and concept driven photography. Our program is built upon photographic history, and the fluid integration of contemporary media with traditional, and alternative, photographic practice. This is predicated upon the philosophy that photography is not a single entity, but is unique among the visual arts in its ability to successfully merge new technology and cultural influences with artistic production.

In the last few years, we have had the rare opportunity to create a brand new MFA program where concentrated studio practice, and a passionate respect for the handmade image, has been the guiding force. Our program development has been motivated by the premise that the medium of photography is in a state of flux, and that its subsequent identity will be built, in part, upon its past. Contemporary photographic artists, like those in our MFA in Photography program, are creating in a time where the terms antiquarian, and craft, will be synonymous with innovation... and it is the young artists who will cognitively define the future of photography.

General Information and Structure

How do I apply and what do I need to include in my application?

Applicants must submit the following:

- A completed graduate application form and application fee of \$50.
- A representative portfolio of 15-20 works in tif format (include data sheet with title, size, date, and medium) on Mac compatible CD, DVD, or flash drive. All images should be 150 pixels per inch with 900 pixels at its longest dimension.
- A resume reflecting the student's education, art and work experience, exhibitions, awards, publications, etc.
- A simple one page statement of purpose reflecting the students' artistic goals in the MFA program in photography.
- A personal essay stating conceptual framework and artistic/autobiographic influences. (1-2 pages)
- Official college transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate work.
- Two letters of recommendation with contact information of recommenders.

Forms and more information can be found at www.aiboston.edu/mfa/photo.

Application materials should be sent to:

AIB MFA Program in Photography
Office of Graduate Admissions, Lesley University
29 Everett Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-2790
March 1: Postmark deadline for application

How do you evaluate a candidate for the MFA program in Photography? What is the process?

The primary component of a candidate's application will be a representative portfolio of 15-20 works (include data sheet with title, size, date, and medium) on Mac compatible CD or DVD, that demonstrates a clear photographic vision. All images should be tiff format at 150 pixels per inch at 900 pixels on the longest dimension. It is expected that a candidate for the MFA in Photography will have strong technical skills, coherent syntax, and the ability to discuss their work on a conceptual, contemporary, and historical level.

Applicants will be asked to submit a personal and concise essay, discussing their art and relevant autobiographical influences that have contributed to its creation. This essay, incorporating a short statement of purpose describing their intentions during the degree program, and transcripts, are also instrumental in defining the applicant to the admissions committee.

Finalists may be invited to Boston and should bring actual work to the interview.

How many students will be in the MFA in Photography program?

12-14 students will be accepted into the program each year.

Is having a BFA essential to be considered for the program?

Not at all. Successful graduate candidates come from a great variety of backgrounds and may have developed a working sophistication with photography without a BFA degree. We welcome applicants from a variety of artistic backgrounds and experiences.

Do I need to take the GRE?

No, GRE scores are not a component of the application process.

Is the program nationally accredited?

Yes. The MFA in Photography program is accredited by both New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

What is the general structure of the program?

A full two year, fall admission only, four semester resident program with a blend of graduate studio seminars, featuring collaborative teaching with core MFA Faculty and Visiting Artists, in addition to critical studies/art history electives and studio electives every semester. Beginning the second semester, students take professional studies electives that can incorporate an internship, teaching fellowship, and independent study. The final semester, in conjunction with Graduate Studio Seminar IV, will include a written thesis and exhibition.

Is there graduate studio space?

In addition to many resources of the department, including a full inventory of photography equipment, graduate candidates get exclusive use of the graduate studio located in the photography complex.

Can I visit?

Please contact the Photography Department for information on arranging a visit to the University for an appointment with the Director of the AIB MFA Program, Christopher James, at 800.773.0494 ext. 6684. or visit www.christopherjames-studio.com. The Art Institute of Boston is located at 700 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02215.

What if I am an international student?

The program works no differently for International students than it does for U.S. residents with the exception of Visa and TOEFL requirements. Please read the information relevant to international students in the paper application, or refer to the Information for International Students online www.lesley.edu/admissions/intl. Please note that according to U.S. regulations, international students enrolled in this program are not permitted to work off campus while in the United States, but may participate in on-campus work-study programs through Lesley Work.

What does the program cost?

Tuition and Fees for the MFA in Photography program can be found at www.aiboston.edu/mfa/tuition. Federal financial aid is available. Please refer to the Financial Aid website at www.lesley.edu/financial for more information about loans and scholarships.

Are there teaching fellowships available?

Every semester, one to three MFA in Photography candidates will be selected for Teaching Fellowships. These will be credited as Professional Studies degree requirements and compensated at an adjunct rate consistent with experience.

Is housing provided?

There are no graduate dormitories. Graduate candidates are responsible for their own housing.