

Overview of Costume Application Process

The UC-I graduate level study requires that you apply in two different ways. First, you must apply online as a graduate student with the university. Second, you must apply to the specific program faculty with whom you wish to study. We approach graduate level work with the mentoring model; you will work directly with the faculty to hone your expertise in one specific area. The actual application occurs as a ***three step process***.

The Costume Application Steps:

You may do these steps in any order. For most efficient processing, apply to the university online first. An online application also indicates to us you are a serious candidate, and not just shopping around.

We understand that applicants may not want to pay many application fees while they still consider potential programs. If you choose to wait for this step, please be more pro-active with your application: email me directly that you've sent materials so I can watch for it. The Drama office will not have an online application to automatically match your materials to, so I will keep an eye out for anything you mail.

1) University Application. This process is now entirely online using the UCI application page on the website. The online system will direct your application to the main Drama office as well as process your application fee.

This university application will require transcripts, letters of recommendation and a self statement. Please mail hard copy information directly to the Drama Department. The mailing address is Department of Drama, University of California, Irvine, CA 92697-2775.

Your application will not be considered complete until all the letters are in. Please make your letter writers aware of the final paperwork deadline, March 10th. This is university policy to guarantee fair assessment of every candidate.

2) Drama Design Application. You will note the university online application does not provide an upload portion for a portfolio or resume. Please send a cover letter, a full resume of your work and portfolio directly to me using the Drama Department address. In your cover letter alert me to whether you've applied online to the university yet or not, and tell me about your goals in pursuing a graduate education. You may send CDs or an online portfolio-- please include the URL in your cover letter. ***Admission portfolios will not be returned.***

3) Personal Interview. During that interview we like to see original portfolio materials and evidence of your design process such as concept statement, rough sketches, research and final sketches. Many students interview with us during the U/RTA process. Other students organize a junket, visiting several campuses they are interested in. If you will

be visiting the area and would like to apply for a campus tour or interview, ***please contact me directly via email.*** The UC system uses the quarter system- we may not be on break at the same time you are, so an appointment is required.

Not every potential candidate may take the necessary time away from work or school for a campus visit. If that is the case, we can arrange a telephone or Skype interview. Please contact me directly for campus visit or interview information. We have a small fund for potential candidates to visit our campus. To qualify for this fund, you must have completed all application materials. Sadly, we've learned that our location a few miles from Disneyland has been abused in the past, so we are now very strict about using funds only for serious candidates. Some years the fund depletes quickly if many out-of-state candidates travel at once.

How we process applications:

Each university uses a unique system- but in general, there is a difference between being ***Accepted*** into a program and receiving an ***Offer*** of financial support as a TA or through other graduate funding. Some programs ***accept*** a large pool of applicants; they determine later who will receive ***offers*** for graduate stipends. That acceptance system assumes a certain number of students will then decline the offer and go to other programs (similar to over-booking a flight.)

UC-Irvine does not use that system. It is our policy that we ***accept*** only those students we can ***offer*** a graduate stipend. That means you will not receive a general letter of acceptance from us a few weeks or a month after you apply. Your application remains open until we contact you.

The costume program typically accepts 2 students each Fall Quarter. In January we begin contacting students with further questions about the applications, a request for more materials, etc. If you don't hear from me in January, it does not always mean you're not a viable candidate. It may merely indicate we are swamped with applications and are still sorting through them. Please ***do not hesitate to email me*** with questions at any time during this process; I'm aware this process is baffling. We will have more than one laugh about it together as we go through the steps.

After we process your application and conduct interviews at the U/RTAs in New York and Chicago, we arrange personal interviews or campus visits during February and early March. The last step is the final decision -- which can occur anytime between mid-February and late-March; I contact you by phone or email with an offer of a position and a stipend.

Direct Applications and U/RTA Applicants

We participate in the U/RTA interviews in New York and Chicago during late January (for more information, <http://urta.com/index.php>.) If a student chooses to use the U/RTA application process, there are separate rules designed to keep the process as fair as possible to all parties. U/RTA policies dictate dates to send out offers.

It is not necessary to apply through the U/RTA system. You may apply to our program directly. If you do, it is helpful to indicate you are not using the U/RTA system, as a direct

application will not be subject to the same timetable. Please be aware the vast majority of our interviews do occur at U/RTA so we generally wait until mid-February to begin extending offers, regardless of your application method. We can and do accept qualified applicants early. We will contact you for that process.

Offers and Acceptance

I will contact you directly with a verbal offer and email confirmation to attend our program. If you accept that offer, the Drama Department sends a formal offer letter outlining the exact stipend awards and other information. University policy considers that slot unfilled until you return the signed offer. The offer will expire in a 10 day period- please read the letter carefully for deadlines.

Some students receive offers very early from universities; if you have an outstanding offer but are still interested in our program, please contact me directly with this information. In some cases I may be able to accelerate the process, but sometimes I am bound by outside regulations such as U/RTA policy.

Some students want to shop around for their financial support; trying to compare stipends can be frustrating as every university is unique. All programs know some candidates try to negotiate higher offers, and many are skittish about admitting students who will go only with the highest bidder. Graduate level study is an investment in your own skills and professional goals requiring a solid relationship with the faculty, staff and students.

However, IF you have very clear financial needs, please include this in your cover letter, By email or in an interview. We were graduate students, too, and we know the financial aspects of this decision.

Late Offers/ Acceptance

If you received a letter of non-acceptance from us, it may be that our two slots were filled early in the season this year. Because of our system of awarding stipends, a rejection does not necessarily mean you are an unacceptable candidate- it may mean we cannot offer you graduate support. Some students wish to attend our program anyway, and may agree to arrange their own scholarships or financial support. If you think you may fall into this category, please contact me to discuss this.

Occasionally an additionally funded slot will open later in the year. We are subject to unpredictable budget *bonuses* at times. It may be worth it to check back with us if you are interested in our program. I wish I had a better explanation than this, but the Governor of California does not share that information with me...or much of anyone for that matter!

Graduate Funding

And---speaking of the legendary California budget, it is worth noting our positions at UC-Irvine are well funded; if you are accepted you will not arrive on campus to find you lost your funding. Like many programs, we have navigated severe budget cuts but our graduate students are a very high priority. We will sell shoe-shaped cupcakes on the 405 if we must, and we will never cut your stipend once awarded without extensive discussion.

Portfolio Contents

Students often ask what we like to see in a portfolio. Every one has a different body of work, and we look forward to learning about you. Believe me, we see many formula or gimmicky portfolios and we're *thrilled* with a straightforward presentation that reflects who you are.

Your portfolio is partly an archive of past work, and partly an illustration of how your mind works. Everyone will have different strengths, and everyone will have areas they'd like to improve. We assume that is why you are interested in further training. However you arrange your portfolio, these are elements we look for (*not* listed in order of importance)

- Figure drawing, life drawing or painting. Drawing is an extension of Seeing. Your drawings can be from art class, your sketch book, doodles in class.
- Costume sketches- where are you in the process? A costume sketch is a form of communication to a director, a shop and your cast. Include both class projects and realized projects
- Understanding of script analysis or story structure. Many students include formal concept statements as part of a show's documentation. You may include a paper you've written on a related topic. We want to know Why you made the decisions you did.
- Evidence of your creative process- inspiration and factual research, doodles on placemats while meeting with a director, autumn leaves that provided a color scheme, inspiration collages, swatch collages—what excites you?
- Photos of realized works. Large photos please! We cannot see your work in microscopic photos. Ideally, place photos and sketches of a show near each other so we can compare your idea to its outcome.
- Photos of built or constructed items. Garments, crafts, accessories, Upcycling, DIY projects.
- Specific skills you possess. Do you love Photoshop? Surface design? Fabric modification? Jewelry making? Felting? Designing a side line of men's shirts?
- Resume of experience. List both educational and outside design/ tech experience that is relevant to your application. (For instance, we are not so much interested in the years you worked at Game Stop unless it is relevant to your goal to design game characters.) The successful applicant will have some work experience outside of their undergraduate institution such as internships, outside design or construction, summer stock, etc.