

Mary Baldwin University, in partnership with the American Shakespeare Center, offers the degree of Master of Letters (MLitt), leading to the terminal degree of Master of Fine Arts (MFA). The program is non-residential and open to qualified men and women. Offers of admission are extended to the strongest candidates. Firmly grounded in the liberal arts tradition, the program offers a combination of stagecraft and scholarship, with interdisciplinary emphasis on acting, directing, dramaturgy, and teaching. Study proceeds from a common group of required courses, ensuring mastery of Shakespeare and his plays and the world and theatre in which he worked. Many classes follow the traditional semester format; others have a modular format lasting several weeks, or are held on weekends and during the summer months. Each student works closely with the faculty and with a faculty advisor on the Mary Baldwin campus, and courses combine traditional academic scholarship with practical experience. All students have access to the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse, the only modern reconstruction in the world of Shakespeare's Blackfriars. Resident faculty instruction is augmented with internationally recognized visiting scholars and artists.

## Shakespeare & Performance Admission

All students who matriculate into the Mary Baldwin University Shakespeare and Performance (S&P) program agree to abide by the rules, regulations, and standards set by the university. Students who seek the MLitt and MFA are eligible for financial aid services. The Declarations section of this catalog states Mary Baldwin's policies on non-discrimination, student privacy rights, and other important provisions.

### Note for prospective teachers:

Post Baccalaureate Teacher Licensure (PBTLE) is offered through the academic outreach program of MBU Online. It is not part of the S&P program. Students also can earn initial Virginia Licensure in K-12 Theatre or Secondary English through the MBU Master of Arts in Teaching program.

## Admission Requirements

- Admission will be limited to the most qualified applicants
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
- An academic major in the arts and sciences or other appropriate discipline (or interdisciplinary major)
- Minimum 3.0 GPA in the last sixty hours of college work
- Fluent written and spoken English. Nonnative English speakers must submit a TOEFL score of 600 or above.
- An interview (campus or phone) and/or audition with the S&P Admissions Committee.
- See Transfer Credit section below.

## Admission Process

- Applicants to the S&P program must submit the following to the Office of Graduate Admissions at Mary Baldwin University:

- Application for admission
- Official transcripts of all post-secondary work
- Two letters of reference from professional educators, employers, or those who have observed professional work
- A goal statement of approximately 500 words

Admissions decisions are made by the S&P Admissions Committee. The program director will inform applicants, in writing, of their admission status. In rare cases, applicants will be advised at the time of their admission regarding any additional undergraduate course requirements that must be fulfilled as conditions of enrollment. Any person may be denied admission to the S&P program for the following reasons:

- Attempting to obtain admission by fraudulent means or through misrepresentation of material facts
- Falsification of records or documents
- Conviction of any felony
- Conviction of any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, sexual offense, drug distribution, or physical injury

## Full Admission

Full admission to the MLitt program as degree-seeking candidates will be offered to the most qualified applicants who meet all admissions requirements.

## Conditional Admission

In rare cases a student may be admitted on a conditional basis, requiring, for example, specific work to be completed early in the student's career in the program, or the maintenance of a specific GPA during the first semester or academic year. In accepting the student, the program director will inform the student of the conditions under which the student is accepted and the time allowed for the fulfillment of those conditions.

## Transition from Conditional to Full Acceptance

The program director will monitor any conditional student, reporting to the VPA Educational Policy Committee on the student's academic progress at the end of each semester. Within two weeks of that review, the program director will inform the student in writing of the committee's recommendations regarding the student's continuation in the program, admission to full degree-seeking status, or requesting the student to withdraw from the program.

## Five Year BA/MLitt Option

Undergraduate Theatre or Performing Arts majors at MBU may elect to apply to the S&P program through a 3-2 option that allows selected students to receive the Bachelor of Arts degree in T h e a t r e or Performing Arts and the Master of Letters degree in Shakespeare and Performance in five academic years. *For more details, see Undergraduate Offerings, Performing Arts/Theatre*

## Orientation

New students are required to participate in an orientation just prior to the start of the fall term. Successful applicants receive notice of the orientation dates in the summer of the year they will matriculate in the fall term.

## Advising

Upon entering the program, each student is assigned an advisor who is a member of the S&P faculty. The advisor is a general resource person for the program. In practice, however, students usually gravitate towards the faculty member most qualified to advise them on their professional interests and, as they select their final degree project, towards the person likely to advise their thesis. All students should feel free to consult the program director, or any faculty member, at any time.

## Transfer Credit

A student may present no more than six semester hours of graduate credit for transfer on approval by the program director, who grants that approval on a case by case basis. Courses may be presented only if graded "B" or better. Transfer credit is awarded only if ALL the following conditions are met:

- The S&P director determines on the basis of catalog and course materials submitted by the student that the course content is equivalent to an MBU course.
- The credit was earned in an accredited graduate program.
- The credit was earned no earlier than three calendar years prior to the student's admission to the program.

**Note:** Because MBU's S&P program is, by its nature, different from many other English and theatre graduate programs, program transcripts are accompanied by a "key" noting course similarities to more standard English and theatre courses. In advance of enrollment, students are responsible for determining whether courses taken in the program can be transferred to another graduate program or will satisfy credential requirements the student intends to meet. After the course drop deadlines, a determination that courses are not transferable is not grounds for refund of tuition or fees.

## Accelerated MFA

Candidates with appropriate professional theatre work may be invited to audition for the program's Accelerated MFA, a two-year MFA including a professional, paid internship with the American Shakespeare Center (when available).

Interested candidates must follow conventional application policies and also interview/audition with the artistic staff of the American Shakespeare Center. The Accelerated MFA is open to actors, directors, and dramaturgs. Accelerated MFA students do not earn the Master of Letters degree.

## Invitational Post-Baccalaureate Portfolio Option

Students with a master's degree, extensive graduate work, or extraordinary professional experience may be invited to present a Post-Baccalaureate Portfolio. The program director, in consultation with faculty, will review the portfolio, and may grant 15–18 semester hours of credit, allowing the applicant to proceed towards completion of the Master of Fine Arts degree requirements within an abbreviated timeframe (without first completing the Master of Letters degree). The Post-Baccalaureate Portfolio should provide a detailed account of relevant coursework or professional experience and how it relates to analogous courses in the S&P graduate catalog. (Certain courses are exempt from consideration for prior credit.)

Granted credit hours and course credit for work at Mary Baldwin University must total 54 credit hours for completion of the MFA. In other words, students granted 15–18 hours of prior credit must complete a minimum of 36 hours in the S&P program. A Post-Baccalaureate student must complete all non-exempt MLitt required courses and complete the requirements for the MFA degree, including the MFA thesis. If a Post-Baccalaureate Portfolio applicant is deemed eligible for fewer than 15 granted credits, he or she will be advised to proceed with the standard MLitt/MFA academic program, with a possibility for award of transfer credits.

## Special Students

Individuals who possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution are eligible to enroll in courses as special students. Special students must meet the entry standards for the graduate program and should apply to the MBU Office of Admissions. No financial aid services are provided to special students. Students currently enrolled as undergraduates or graduates or post-graduate teacher certification students at Mary Baldwin University may be permitted to take up to two MLitt courses as special students. They must receive permission from the program director to do so. A GPA of 3.0 is normally required.

## Shakespeare & Performance Academic Policies

Academic policies applicable to MLitt and MFA students are published in this catalog. Other statements of program policies are maintained in the program director's office and/or published in the S&P *Student Handbook*. Policies may be amended at any time by the graduate faculty, who determine the date at which amended policies become effective.

## Policy on Participation

The plays taught and performed in the program may contain controversial themes and sexual content. Students are expected to engage with all the material and are encouraged to discuss with faculty any concerns they may have. Accepting a role in a program-sponsored performance event constitutes a *de facto* agreement to perform, direct, and/or dramaturg the play in its entirety.