



## Master of Fine Arts, Traditional Animation Final Review Handbook

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This handbook contains the Traditional Animation Final Review requirements, planning guides, and resources. Please read through all of this information carefully before preparing your materials for Final Review. If you have any questions or need clarification on any aspect of your upcoming Final Review, you will find information about who to contact on page 17 of this handbook.

It is your responsibility to use the latest version of the Final Review Handbook. If you are uncertain if this is the latest version, please refer to the Traditional Animation page on the Graduate Showcase:

<http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/>

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 ONLINE ICON: The online icon will mark items that are specific to online students only.

On campus students can skip these items.

## 1. ELIGIBILITY FOR FINAL REVIEW

### A. Eligibility

All Final Reviews must be held at the end of the semester in which you complete your regular program units.

You must declare your graduation term before a tentative date can be set. The process has three steps:

1. **DECLARATION:** In the semester prior to your Final Review, you can either contact your advisor to declare your graduation term or go through your self-service page. Additional graduation declaration and commencement information is found online

here: <http://www.academyart.edu/content/aau/en/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduation-commencement.html>

2. **REGISTRATION:** Register for your final semester of coursework with your advisor or online through your [Online Student Registration Profile](#).

3. **REVIEW SIGN-UP:** Once you have declared your graduation term and registered for courses, at the start of the semester you are presenting, you will need to review the Final Review online orientation and complete the online sign-up form available here: <http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/>. Refer to the Graduate School Calendar for the available online sign-up dates here: <http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources>. See further details for scheduling a final review below.

**NOTE:** If Final Thesis Project conditions have not been met within two semesters, you will need to reapply to the Graduate School to graduate.

Plan ahead and prepare as much of your project as possible by the beginning of the semester. Strive to have only your final touches remaining to be completed *during* your last semester of coursework.

## 2. SCHEDULING YOUR FINAL REVIEW

### A. Review Date

Final Reviews are conducted in the spring, summer and fall semesters. Presentations typically start in the eleventh or twelfth week of the fall or spring semester and in the sixth week of the summer semester. You can find the sign-up dates in the Graduate School Calendar:

<http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources>

No Final Reviews are permitted during the intersession. A finalized date will be set during the semester the Final Review is to be conducted, based on director availability. This date can be changed only in case of personal emergency, and must be approved by both the Graduate School and the department director to be official.

**NOTE:** Please communicate with your Graduate Advisor about when would be the most appropriate term to schedule your Final Review. It is important to know the final cut-off date for scheduling your review. You should receive an email from the Final Review Coordinator approximately one week prior to the start of the semester you will be presenting your Final Review with details on how to sign-up. The email will direct you to the Graduate Midpoint and Final Review Showcase <http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/>.

## **B. Review Orientation**

You are required to watch the online Final Review Orientation prior to completing the Final Review sign-up form online. You have the option of presenting your Midpoint or Final Review online or on campus. If you will be doing your Final Review online please review the [online presentation specifications](#). You will be sent confirmation of your review date shortly after the close of the review sign-up period. Please [contact](#) the Final Review Coordinator if you have any questions on scheduling your review.

## **C. Attendance & Cancellations**

Final Review attendance is mandatory. All Final Reviews must be held at the end of the semester in which you complete your regular program units. If you do not attend the Final Review will be considered a “No Show” and will be noted as “Not Approved”.

Cancellations or postponements may be approved as a rare exception, all requests must be organized through the Final Review Coordinator at least 5 working days prior to the scheduled review date. Late cancellations or postponements will be considered “No Show” and will be noted as “Not Approved” for the Final Review.

Students are asked **not** to invite non-committee members, friends or family to their Final Review. Please do not provide food at the Final Review.

### 3. DELIVERABLE DETAILS & DUE DATES

Your Final Review will consist of the following four components: portfolio, thesis book, oral presentation, and Directed Study Journals. [Link to tutorial on uploading work to LMS.](#)

**IMPORTANT:** If your Thesis Book and Portfolio are not received in time, your Final Review will be cancelled, and you will need to present the following semester.

**Portfolio:** All artwork created for this proposal should be of portfolio quality. Your Final Thesis Project should be work you would be proud to show to a prospective employer. Items to present may include (but are not limited to):

- Storyboard (If required for the project.)
- Script (If the project includes dialogue, a script should be included.)
- Animatic or Animation Reel (If required for project.)
- Character Designs (These should present multiple views.)
- Scenic Designs
- Color Breakdown (If required for the project.)
- Reference Materials (photographs, photocopies, technical articles, fabric swatches, web images-whatever items/images illustrate the content, emotional tone, color, or style of your project.)

[Link to more detailed portfolio checklist](#)

<b>Upload/Deliver To:</b>	Upload to the Portfolio Icon in LMS
<b>Due Date:</b>	Two (2) weeks prior to review date
<b>Format:</b>	PDF; .MOV or .MP4 for Demo Reel

**Thesis Book:** The Final Thesis Book is a written document that includes an autobiography, resume, project and production schedule.

Professional Editing: The proposal must be professionally executed, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors and typos.

[Link to more detailed thesis book checklist](#)

<b>Upload/Deliver To:</b>	Upload to the Thesis Book Icon in LMS
<b>Due Date:</b>	Two (2) weeks prior to review date
<b>Format:</b>	PDF

**Oral Presentation:** Come prepared to give a professional oral presentation. It should consist of an overview of your work and be no more than 20 minutes in duration. Online students will present through an online meeting room. Five to ten high-resolution prints, mounted on ¼” black (same size boards) foam core board of your work. Leave space/border around your images. High quality resolution is required. Label on back of each board must include: your name, ID, contact information, name of project (plus text Master’s Final Thesis Project) and date of your presentation. Online students will present their prints through their books and PowerPoint presentation online.

[Link to more detailed oral presentation checklist](#)

<b>Upload/Deliver To:</b>	At the Final Review
<b>Due Date:</b>	At the scheduled day/time of your review; Two (2) weeks prior to review date if presenting online
<b>Format:</b>	Presentation boards; PowerPoint or PDF
<b>Practice and Prepare:</b>	Practice your oral presentation in advance of your review to ensure your comfort level during the presentation. Be prepared to answer questions when you are finished.
<b>Notes:</b>	You may use notes, flashcards, or prompts in your PowerPoint as cues to help you remember the information during your oral presentation. Do not read your entire presentation.

[Link to online presentation details for online students](#)

**Directed Study Journals:**

Your Directed Study Journal must be made available to the review team. Your department’s specific journal requirements are outlined in the Directed Study Guidelines:

[http://www.academyart.edu/content/dam/assets/pdf/gradstudents/directed\\_study\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.academyart.edu/content/dam/assets/pdf/gradstudents/directed_study_guidelines.pdf)

## 4. FINAL REVIEW PROCESS

### A. Review Expectations and Structure

Final Reviews are one hour in duration. Your presentation should be 20 minutes long.

The Final Review meeting will follow this structure:

Final Review Panel/Student Introduction	5 minutes
<b>Final Review Presentation</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>
Committee Question & Answer Session	10 minutes
Committee Discussion – closed door/offline	15 minutes
Committee Decision & Feedback	10 minutes

**Review Committee:** The Final Review Committee is comprised of faculty and/or industry professionals approved by the Graduate School and the Department Directors.

**Committee Question & Answer Session:** After your presentation, questions will be asked by the Committee for clarification on your project.

**Committee Discussion, Decision, & Feedback:** After the question and answer session, the committee will recess in private to discuss the merits of your proposal.

### B. Results

Upon reconvening, the committee will present you with one of the following outcomes:

**Approved:** You have passed the review portion of your degree requirements and may be granted your degree upon completing all degree requirements. [See awarding the Master’s Degree below.](#)

**Not Approved:** You have NOT passed, and will NOT be granted your degree until one of the following has been completed and the Final Review materials are approved by the Final Review Committee:

**Resubmit:** Following specific Final Review Committee requirements your project requires small changes that must be corrected and re-submitted within 3 weeks. If the re-submission meets the requirements, then the Final Review materials are approved and you may be granted your degree.

**OR**

**Represent:** Following specific Final Review Committee requirements you must complete additional studio work, and/or rethink your Final Project, to present at a new Final Review next semester. You must sign-up for a new review date at the start of the next semester.



Please follow directions outlined in the link below to view your results and written feedback after your Final Review.

[http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home\\_page/pdf/ReviewResults.pdf](http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home_page/pdf/ReviewResults.pdf)

### C. Evaluation Questions

The work you submit will be assessed using the Graduate School of Traditional Animation program learning outcomes. At the Final Review the review committee is evaluating your success in meeting the stated outcomes.

<http://www.academyart.edu/academics/animation--visual-effects/graduate-degrees>

### D. Awarding the Master's Degree

Your degree will be awarded and diploma issued after you have completed ALL of the following:

- All curriculum requirements are fulfilled: all units and minimum grade requirements completed.
- Presentation and approval of your Final Review before Committee
- Submission of all Final Project materials.
- No outstanding financial obligations.
- Completed the Online Graduate Survey at <http://apply.academyart.edu/careersvsgradtrack/>.

**NOTE:** If Final Project conditions have not been met within two semesters, you will need to reapply to the Graduate School to graduate.



## 5. CHECKLISTS

### FINAL PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

<b>Portfolio Contents:</b>	<p>All artwork created for this proposal should be of portfolio quality. Your Final Thesis Project should be work you would be proud to show to a prospective employer. Items to present may include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Storyboard (If required for the project.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Script (If the project includes dialogue, a script should be included.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Animatic or Animation Reel (If required for project.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Character Designs (These should present multiple views.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Scenic Designs</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Color Breakdown (If required for the project.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Reference Materials (photographs, photocopies, technical articles, fabric swatches, web images-whatever items/images illustrate the content, emotional tone, color, or style of your project.)</li></ul>
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## THESIS BOOK CHECKLIST

<b>Thesis Book Contents:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Cover Page
	<input type="checkbox"/> Autobiography
	<input type="checkbox"/> Resume/Experience
	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Thesis Project Synopsis
	<input type="checkbox"/> Production Schedule/Breakdown
<b>Cover Page:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Name
	<input type="checkbox"/> ID Number
	<input type="checkbox"/> Major/Discipline
	<input type="checkbox"/> Date and Time of Final Review
	<input type="checkbox"/> Title/Topic of Final Thesis Project
	<input type="checkbox"/> One sentence describing project (e.g. 'A two-minute 2D animated short film' etc.)
<b>Autobiography:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Narrative (Keep this brief. 1 page at most.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Where are you from? What is your background? What personal/ professional/ educational experiences have influenced your pursuit of the field of traditional animation?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What have you studied at The Academy?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What are your career/artistic goals?
<b>Resume/ Experience:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Resume (1 page)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal contact information
	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective (optional)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Experience
	<input type="checkbox"/> Skills (software, artistic, and otherwise)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Honors (optional--academic and professional)
<b>Final Thesis Project Synopsis:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstract (1 page)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Summarize your project
	<input type="checkbox"/> Briefly describe your concept and relate your narrative
	<input type="checkbox"/> Briefly describe how you produced your project
	<input type="checkbox"/> What skills are you looking to showcase with this project? ( <i>character animation, effects animation, storyboarding, character design/concept art, background painting/layout design</i> )
	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Proposal at Midpoint (1 page)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Define the project in practical terms.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe your personal interest in this topic.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Present background on this topic if appropriate ( <i>attach reference/research materials, bibliography</i> )
	<input type="checkbox"/> What form did your Final Thesis Project take? What does your project consist of? List these items, be specific.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have plans to submit your finished piece to competitions, websites, etc.?
<b>Production Schedule/</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> List all goals and areas of concentration for each semester with your plans and accomplishments.



**Breakdown:**

- List general tasks for your project (*assembling final presentation materials, transferring animation to video, etc.*)
  - Timeline/Schedule
  - Plug the items listed in your Production Breakdown into a calendar that matches the length of your project (*in most cases 3 full semesters*). How did the work break down? Be honest.
  - Areas of Concern - List any technical, artistic, conceptual, or production elements of your project that were of concern. What strategies did you use resolve these issues?
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## ORAL PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

**Oral Presentation:** Come prepared to give a professional oral presentation. It should consist of an overview of your work and be no more than 20 minutes in duration. Online students will present through an online meeting room.

Five to ten high-resolution prints, mounted on ¼" black (same size boards) foam core board of your work. Leave space/border around your images. High quality resolution is required. Label on back of each board must include: your name, ID, contact information, name of project (plus text Master's Final Thesis Project) and date of your presentation.

- At least one or two boards should showcase samples of traditional work: paintings, sketches, photography, or sculpture that give us reference of your background.
- One or two boards should demonstrate the process of your thesis such as any of the following: storyboard segment/s, character studies, sketches, character design, or photographs.
- Two boards must showcase at least an example of a scene or model or clip of the Final Thesis Project itself.

Online students will present their prints through their books and PowerPoint presentation online.

**Work Capture:** The Director asks for Hi Resolution files for Video (NTSC) to be submitted for processing through the Video Lab. You must use your Lab Account to drop off properly formatted files to the department file server and fill out the proper forms. All materials and questions can be directed to the Video Lab Manager, 3D Dept. 180 New Montgomery, for approval. Check with the Video Lab for format questions and forms. The Video Lab must sign off on these requirements before your diploma will be issued.

**Video:** Bring your rendered files on Disk to your Final Review. You will need them to submit your final files through the Video Lab.

Once your Final Thesis Project is approved, bring your files to the Video Lab for processing. The Video Lab is located on the 3rd floor of 180 New Montgomery. Ask for the Lab Manager. You will need to complete a "Frames to Beta Output Request" form, which we will provide at your review. You will also need lab access, obtained through the registration process at the beginning of the semester. Make certain that your account is active well in advance of your output needs. You may need several attempts to output, so, plan to use the lab for your final process; it behooves you to plan your time well. Ask your academic advisor for details regarding lab access. You will not graduate until the Video Lab notifies the Graduate School via email that you have completed this requirement.

All materials submitted must be clearly labeled with your name, student ID number, date of Final Review and Major. If your materials are incomplete, the granting of your degree will be delayed.

## 6. PREPARATION TIMELINE

3 to 4 months before your review	Read Traditional Animation specific Final Review Handbook  Watch the Final Review Orientation  Review your Midpoint Thesis Book and review committee comments. Identify whether you have made changes to the project that may require approval from the Department Director prior to your Final Review
2 to 3 months before your review	Check <a href="#">graduate website</a> for Final Review sign-up schedule
6 weeks before your review	Prepare your thesis book  Work with an editor or contact <a href="#">ARC</a> to make sure your thesis book is grammatically correct and typo-free.
1 month before your review	Create your PowerPoint/PDF slide show  Organize and create notes for your oral presentation  Work with a friend, colleague or ARC on your oral presentation
3 weeks before your review	Practice your oral presentation out loud and with a timer  ● Review the online-specific requirements and test all of your equipment
2 weeks before your review	On-campus students verify your equipment works prior to your actual presentation date  Upload your PDF of your portfolio and thesis book to your home page  ● Send your PowerPoint presentation to Online Graduate School via email  ● Meet online with your Online Graduate Department Learning Coordinator to review your presentation room setup and use
1 week before your review	Plan your attire, dress professionally  Practice your presentation in front of a live audience
Tips for the day of your review	Get plenty of rest the night before  ● If you will be using a cellphone, make sure the battery is charged  Have a glass of water available during your presentation  Arrive at your Final Review on time and ready to go  Greet your committee members prior to beginning your presentation  Listen to the committee's advice and take notes  Maintain professionalism during the entire review
Following your review	View your Final Review results <a href="#">here</a>



## 7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When can I schedule my Final Review?	Once you have completed your eligibility requirements and have petitioned to graduate, contact the Final Review Coordinator via email at <a href="mailto:FinalReview@academyart.edu">FinalReview@academyart.edu</a> to be added to the presentation list. <i>You must be in contact with the Coordinator no later than the first few days of the semester you wish to present.</i>
How many pages should the thesis book be?	There is no specified length for the completed Thesis Project Summary. The thesis book should be thorough in describing all aspects of your project, but you also want to think about how you can be concise and avoid redundancy of information in the content.
If I'm an online student, do I need to send in physical samples of my class work?	No.
Can we include work we've done outside of the Academy?	Work not executed at the Academy of Art University should not constitute more than 10% of your portfolio presentation.
Can I use fancy text, borders and custom backgrounds for my PowerPoint presentation?	We would recommend against it. Simple, easy to read and easy to see content is best.

## 8. IMPORTANT LINKS

Graduate student homepage	<a href="http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources">http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources</a>
Academy Resource Center (ARC)	<a href="http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academy-resource-center">http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academy-resource-center</a> Your resource for proofreading, ESL assistance, Final Review, Writing Lab.
Accessing Your Review Results	<a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home_page/pdf/ReviewResults.pdf">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home_page/pdf/ReviewResults.pdf</a>
Online Chat Schedules & Recordings	Chat Schedule: <a href="http://online.academyart.edu/innovative-learning/chats.html">http://online.academyart.edu/innovative-learning/chats.html</a>  Graduate Chats: <a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/graduate-chats.html">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/graduate-chats.html</a>  Twitter: @aachats
Department Specific Websites	<a href="http://www.academyart.edu/academics/animation---visual-effects">http://www.academyart.edu/academics/animation---visual-effects</a>  <a href="http://online.academyart.edu/schools/animation-visual-effects">http://online.academyart.edu/schools/animation-visual-effects</a>
Graduate School Calendar	<a href="http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources">http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources</a>
Graduate Review Showcase	<a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/</a> Here you will find a link to the Final Review Orientation, and links to the Final Review Guidelines and Handbooks.
Traditional Animation Review Showcase Page	<a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/schools/animation-2d.html">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/schools/animation-2d.html</a>
Online Connection Through Mobile Devices	<a href="http://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect/feature-details/adobe-connectmobile.html">http://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect/feature-details/adobe-connectmobile.html</a>  Application required for using the Adobe Connect Meetings from your mobile device.
Online Presentation Do's & Don'ts	<a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/</a>  Look under Additional Presentation Tools
Online Technical Requirements	<a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/</a> Look under Resources → Technical Resources → Online technical requirements 



Technology Trouble Shooting	To participate in the web conference, you need to make sure that your computer has the latest versions of the Flash and Shockwave plugins and can run the web-casting software. To check this, please click on this link: <a href="http://arcps.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm">http://arcps.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm</a>
Uploading Review Content	<a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home_page/pdf/Uploading_Review_Content_WI15.pdf">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home_page/pdf/Uploading_Review_Content_WI15.pdf</a>
Photographing & Submitting Artwork	<a href="http://media.academyart.edu/howto/index.html">http://media.academyart.edu/howto/index.html</a> <a href="http://howto.academyart.edu/submitting-artwork">http://howto.academyart.edu/submitting-artwork</a>

## 9. ONLINE PRESENTATION DETAILS

### A. Scheduling a Meeting with an Online Graduate Review Coordinator

Academy of Art University's Online Graduate Review process provides a means for Academy students to present their project proposals via the Academy's online meeting environment. An Online Graduate Review Coordinator will contact you after your review has been scheduled to test your computer, internet connection, web-camera, and telephone. The Online Graduate Review Coordinator will also show you how the online review process works and how to upload and use your slideshow during your oral presentation. Students presenting online are required to have their equipment and any required presentation materials ready to upload and test at least two weeks prior to the presentation date (1 week for the Summer Semester).

### B. Online Presentation Guidelines

You are required to provide a PowerPoint or PDF presentation with visual and written information that will go along with your oral presentation. Be sure to follow your department guidelines, as some departments have different requirements. You can also find a checklist below with details on what to include in your presentation.

**Font:** Use an easily readable font (some fonts do not load correctly in Adobe Connect for PPT files). Use a font size and color that is clear to read.

**Images:** Images need to be in JPEG format and optimized for web viewing. Review your department requirements for labeling and titling your images.

**Credit:** When including art made by other artists, credit the artist.

**Content:** It is best to keep the text in bullet point format or very short clear sentences instead of written paragraphs. References, copyright information, and technical notes may be included at the end of the presentation.

Please refer to the links below for technical requirements:

[Online Technical Requirements](#)  
[Adobe Connect Diagnostic Test](#)

#### Online Graduate Review Contact Information

Email: [onlinegradreview@academyart.edu](mailto:onlinegradreview@academyart.edu)

Phone: (415) 618-3614



## 10. CONTACT INFORMATION

Final Review Coordinator: [finalreview@academyart.edu](mailto:finalreview@academyart.edu)  
(415) 618-6297

Contact for Online Students: [onlinegradreview@academyart.edu](mailto:onlinegradreview@academyart.edu)  
(415) 618-3614

Department Contact: Jessica Chan  
School of Traditional Animation – Administrative Assistant  
Tel: (415) 618-3684  
Email: [JChan@academyart.edu](mailto:JChan@academyart.edu)

Send Materials To: Academy of Art University

School of Traditional Animation  
Final Review

79 New Montgomery  
San Francisco, CA 94105

**NOTE:** Please obtain a tracking number or return receipt of delivery for your shipments.