



Master of Fine Arts, Fashion Merchandising Midpoint Review Handbook

Effective FALL 2017 (Updated August 10, 2017)

Midpoint Review Objectives

Evaluate development and progress through the previous course works

Demonstrate skills and knowledge on fashion business through their course works

Propose a thesis topic for review and departmental approval

This handbook contains the Fashion Merchandising Midpoint Review requirements, planning guides, and resources. Please read through all of this information carefully before preparing your materials for Midpoint Review. If you have any questions or need clarification on any aspect of your upcoming Midpoint 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 Midpoint Review Handbook. If you are uncertain if this is the latest version, please refer to the Fashion Merchandising 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 MIDPOINT REVIEW

A. Eligibility

Prior to scheduling your Midpoint Review, you must have done the following:

- Completed 24-36 Units
- Completed or be in progress of completing all core requirements (listed below)
- Completed 6 units of Liberal Arts
- Must attend the department's midpoint orientation (if not, meet with the Merchandising Graduate Director)

These core courses must be taken by all Fashion Merchandising students *

FSH 643: Digital Techniques for Fashion

FSH 630: Fashion Marketing Strategy

FSH 631: Merchandising Principles

FSH 632: Trend Analysis & Product Development –OR–

FSH 633: Management Concepts

FSH 634: Textiles & Other Raw Materials

FSH 635: Creating Competitive Strategy (Must be completed or concurrent to Midpoint Review)

Or FSH 649 Entrepreneurship in Fashion: Strategic Brand Management (Must be completed or concurrent to Midpoint Review)

FSH 637: Product Sourcing

FSH 675: Visual Merchandising: Image & Brand

* Core courses may be waived with academic director approval only

Note: International students who are tested into or choose to take EAP 605S or 605W: English for Art Purposes should do so immediately after taking EAP 604: MS: English for Art Purposes and before they plan to do their Midpoint Review.

Plan ahead and be prepared to present your proposal by the beginning of the semester.



2. SCHEDULING YOUR MIDPOINT REVIEW

A. Review Date

Midpoint Reviews are conducted in the spring, summer and fall semesters. Presentations typically start in the third or fourth week of the fall or spring Semester and in the second week of the summer semester. You can find the signup dates in the Graduate School Calendar:

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

NOTE: Please communicate with your Graduate Advisor about when would be the most appropriate time to schedule your Midpoint Review. It is important to know the final cut-off date for scheduling your review.

You should receive an email from the Midpoint Review Coordinator approximately one week prior to the start of the semester you will be presenting your Midpoint 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 Midpoint Review Orientation prior to completing the Midpoint 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 Midpoint Review online please review the online presentation specifications.

Onsite: You are required to attend the department Midpoint Review Information Session prior to the midpoint review.

Please contact the Midpoint Review Coordinator if you have any questions.

C. Attendance & Cancellations

Midpoint Review is a required component of your Master's level program and must be completed before commencing the directed study or final portfolio portion of your program. Cancellations or postponements must be organized through the Midpoint Review Coordinator at least 5 working days prior to the scheduled review date. Late cancellations or postponements will be considered "No Show" and fail the Midpoint Review.



3. DELIVERABLE DETAILS & DUE DATES

Your Midpoint Review will consist of the following three components: portfolio, thesis proposal, and oral presentation.

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

Portfolio: You will need to include images of class project examples. These need to be the very best samples of your work from the major courses taken preciously.

Upload/Deliver To: Upload to the Portfolio Icon in LMS

Due Date: One (1) week prior to review date

Format: PDF

Thesis Proposal: A copy of printed written thesis proposal to bring on the day of midpoint review presentation –only ONSITE, not ONLINE. Your Thesis proposal must have a clear concept. The concept should include what your project is about, why you have chosen the project, and how you plan on implementing your proposal. Describe your proposal in detail and ensure that it is not too narrow or overly broad in scope. Address what led you to the project, how you expect your project to evolve and what challenges you foresee. Your project must also allow room for growth through investigation, exploration and risk taking.

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

Upload/Deliver To: Upload to the Thesis Proposal Icon in LMS

Due Date: One (1) week prior to review date

Format: PDF

Oral Presentation: Oral presentation of your proposed thesis project.

Upload/Deliver To: At the Midpoint Review

Due Date: At the scheduled day/time of your review if presenting on-campus; online students must submit a PowerPoint presentation one week prior to scheduled review.

Format: PDF (For Thesis Proposal Presentation)

Practice and Prepare: 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.

Notes: You may use notes, flashcards, or prompts in your presentation deck as cues to help you remember the information during your oral presentation. Do not read your entire presentation.



4. MIDPOINT REVIEW PROCESS

A. Review Expectations and Structure

Midpoint Reviews are 45 minutes in duration. Your presentation should be 10 minutes long. The Midpoint Review meeting will follow this structure:

- Midpoint Review Panel/Student Introduction
- Midpoint Review Presentation: 10 minutes
- Committee Question and Answer Sessions: 10 minutes
- Committee Discussion – closed door/offline: 10 minutes
- Committee Decision and Feedback: 10 minutes

Review Committee: The Midpoint 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, and can now proceed with Directed Study for the following semester.

Not Approved: You have NOT passed, and are NOT allowed to proceed with Directed Study until one of the following has been completed and the Midpoint Proposal is approved by the Midpoint Review Committee:

Resubmit: Following specific Midpoint 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 Midpoint Proposal is approved and you can proceed with Directed Study the following semester.

OR

Represent: Following specific Midpoint Review Committee requirements, you must complete additional studio work, rethink Final Project, and/or sign up for a new Midpoint Review next semester.

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

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 Fashion program learning outcomes. At the Midpoint Review the review committee is looking at your progress towards achieving the stated outcomes.

<http://www.academyart.edu/academics/fashion/graduate-degrees>



5. CHECKLISTS

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

Portfolio Contents: You will need to include images of class project examples. These need to be the very best samples of your work.

- Title of project
- Date(s) created
- Course name and instructor
- Project team and contributors (if applicable)

THESIS PROPOSAL PDF CHECKLIST

Thesis Proposal Contents: A copy of printed written thesis proposal to bring on the day of midpoint review presentation –only ONSITE, not ONLINE. In your thesis proposal book, you must include the following sections, in this order and with a separate heading for each:

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Student Introduction
- Resume
- Course Project Examples
- Midpoint Thesis Proposal Abstract
- Midpoint Thesis Proposal Details
- Timeline

Cover Page: The Cover of your thesis book must include the following:

- Thesis Project Title
- Project Subtitle (if needed)
- Your Name
- Student ID Number
- Academy of Art University, Graduate School of Fashion Merchandising
- Identify this is your “Midpoint Proposal”
- Date of Presentation
- Time of Presentation

Table of Contents: All Midpoint proposals must have a table of contents (TOC)

- Number each page of the proposal
- List each topic section and it’s corresponding page number in the TOC
- Select an appropriate font
- Font size should be no smaller than 10 pt. and easily readable



Student Introduction: you will briefly address the following in no more than one page in length:

- Introduce yourself
- Explain how you became interested in the program
- Discuss what led you to enroll at the Academy of Art University

Resume: You will need to include a formal resume in your proposal. This is a one-page professional document that lists your current contact information, work experiences, skills and education. Dates should be listed chronologically, most recent at the top of the list. Typed in 10 to 12 point font.

- Name / Address / Phone number / E-mail
- Website (optional)
- Educational background
- Recent or pertinent employment history
- Other relevant interest/vocational information

Course Project Examples: You will need to include images of class project examples. These need to be the very best samples of your work from 3-5 different classes.

- Title of project
- Date(s) created
- Course name and instructor
- Project team and contributors (if applicable)

Midpoint Thesis Proposal Abstract: The Project Abstract is an overview of your Proposed Thesis Project. It should clearly articulate what you intend to do. By reading this abstract, the committee should get a solid sense of what you will be doing without having to read the full proposal. The Project Abstract should be a well written paragraph of approximately 150 words and address the following points:

- Project concept
- Location of the business proposed
- Target Market
- Reason for choosing the concept
- How you plan to present the final project

Midpoint Thesis Proposal: The Thesis Project Proposal is the **focal point of the midpoint**. In this section of the document, you will relay the details of your proposed project to the Panel. There is no specified length for the Proposal. Avoid direct repetition of your sentences from your Abstract. You will want to address the following in an articulate and well thought-out manner:

- **CONCEPT:** What is your business concept and why have you selected it? The business concept must include originality – a new product line, a unique merchandising strategy, a new retail strategy, or a retail and merchandising service-oriented concept.



NOTE: Ideas that fall outside this range of choices should be approved by the department director prior to development.

- TYPE OF BUSINESS: What type of business will you develop - wholesale, retail, service oriented, etc.? Where are you proposing to start your business? What country, city and neighborhood?
- OBJECTIVES: Why your business concept is important in the industry? Is there a void in the market or are you possibly identifying a new and untapped market?
- MARKET OVERVIEW: Market research, industry overview and market size, current industry trends.
- LOCATION: Location research and overview. What location characteristics allow your business to be successful?
- TARGET CUSTOMER: Who is your target market? What are their demographics, psychographics, sociographics and behaviors? How many people fit the criteria for the target market that you are establishing? And explain why they are your ideal target market based on the research.
- KEY COMPETITORS: Who will be your key competitors? And why?
- PRODUCT/SERVICE DESCRIPTION: What products (or service if the business concept is service-based) do you plan to sell? Why?
- COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES: Have you formulated what your competitive advantage(s) will be?
- OPPORTUNITIES: Summarize your proposal and explain what opportunities are you attempting to capture based on your preliminary research? How the proposed business will fill a void in the market or are you possibly identifying a new and untapped market?

Timeline: The timeline must include the following:

- List by semester the courses that you have taken to date, including the course number, title, and instructor.
- List your anticipated courses by title and semester.
- Identify your anticipated graduation date (semester/year).
- Be sure your total units add up to 63 units.

ORAL PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

General Oral Presentation Guidelines: The Midpoint Review is a formal presentation before a Review Committee, where the Graduate School evaluates your eligibility for Master’s candidacy based on the following:

- Challenge and quality of proposed Final Thesis Project
- Level of critical thinking and problem solving
- Development of a body of work

MIDPOINT REVIEW PRESENTATION PDF GUIDELINES

Presentation Deck Development Guidelines: Create your own presentation starting with an introduction/title slide and end with a final slide, which indicates the end of the presentation to the



panel. *Presentation deck is a summary of your thesis proposal and must be different from the proposal PDF you uploaded in the LMS.*

It is best to keep your presentations written text in bullet-point format or very short sentences so the panel does not have to read a lot of written information while listening to your oral presentation simultaneously.

Though there is a degree of freedom in how you develop your presentation deck, there are some important development guidelines you must follow:

- Font: Use the standard fonts that are easily readable: such as Arial, Times New Roman or Garamond (some fonts do not load correctly).
- Size: Use a font size that is large enough to read - recommended sizes are 18 pt. for text and 24 pt. or larger for titles.
- Color: Use a font color that is easy to read
- Images: Make sure your images are high resolution to be clearly seen
- Content: Use bullet points instead of written paragraphs. References, copyright information, and technical notes may be included at the end of the presentation. (MLA Format)

DO NOT: Embed anything in your PDF presentation (Audio, Video, or Flash Content - transitions, etc.) If you want to present this type of material to the Midpoint Panel, you must submit these materials separately to the Online Graduate Department in advance of your Review.



6. PREPARATION TIMELINE

3 to 4 months before your review	<p>Read Fashion Merchandising specific Midpoint Review Handbook</p> <p>Watch the Midpoint Review Orientation</p> <p>Attend the Fashion Merchandising Midpoint Review Workshops</p>
2 to 3 months before your review	<p>Check graduate website for Midpoint Review sign-up schedule</p> <p>Solidify your Thesis Project Concept</p>
6 weeks before your review	<p>Prepare your thesis proposal</p> <p>Meet with the Fashion Merchandising Graduate Director</p> <p>Work with an editor or ARC – Thesis proposal to make sure your thesis proposal is grammatically correct, cited properly and typo-free</p>
1 month before your review	<p>Create your PDF slide show</p> <p>Organize and create notes for your presentation</p> <p>Work with a friend, colleague or ARC on your oral presentation</p>
3 weeks before your review	<p>Print your written Thesis Proposal (Onsite only)</p> <p>Practice your oral presentation out loud and with a timer</p> <p>Review the online-specific requirements and test all of your equipment</p>
1 week before your review	<p>On-campus students verify our equipment works prior to your actual presentation date</p> <p>Upload your PDF and Portfolio to your Student Homepage</p> <p>Meet online with your Online Graduate Department Learning Coordinator to review your presentation room setup and use</p> <p>Send your PDF presentation to Online Online Graduate School via email</p> <p>Plan your attire to dress professionally</p> <p>Practice your presentation in front of a live audience with a timer</p>



<p>Tips for the day of your review</p>	<p>Get plenty of rest the night before</p> <p>If you will be using a cellphone, make sure the battery is charged</p> <p>Have a glass of water available during your presentation</p> <p>Arrive at your Final Review on time and ready to go</p> <p>Greet your committee members prior to beginning your presentation</p> <p>Listen to the committee's advice and take notes</p> <p>Maintain professionalism during the entire review</p>
<p>Following your review</p>	<p>Review your Midpoint Review results here</p>



7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When can I schedule my Midpoint Review?	Once you have completed your eligibility requirements, you can sign up online when the sign up is available. Check the Graduate School calendar for dates and the Graduate School's Midpoint Review Page for the sign up link.
How many pages should the thesis book be?	There is no specified length for the completed written proposal. There are some sections that have limitation of length, but the main part of your proposal does not have a limit. The written proposal 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.
Am I supposed to have a fully developed thesis or portfolio prepared for the Midpoint?	No. That will be developed through your group directed studies after you pass your Midpoint Review.
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.
Can I use my thesis proposal document as a presentation?	No. PowerPoint Presentation is the summary of the proposal, not a duplicate of the proposal submitted.
When and where do I submit?	The proposal must be uploaded to the Midpoint Review Section on the Dashboard one (1) week prior to the review date. (note: 1week prior to the review date for summer Midpoint Review applicants)



8. IMPORTANT LINKS

Graduate Student Homepage	http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources
Library Resources	http://library.academyart.edu/ Research tools and database to prepare for your Midpoint Review
Formatting Resources	http://elmo.academyart.edu/reference-help/mla_citation_guide.html/ http://arc.academyart.edu/writing/mla_examples.html MLA Citation guidelines
Academy Resource Center (ARC)	http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academy-resource-center Your resource for proofreading, ESL assistance, Midpoint Review, Writing Lab.
Accessing Your Review Results	http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home_page/pdf/ReviewResults.pdf
Online Chat Schedules & Recordings	Chat Schedule: http://online.academyart.edu/innovative-learning/chats.html Graduate Chats: http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/graduate-chats.html Twitter: @aauchats
Department Specific Websites	https://www.academyart.edu/academics/fashion http://online.academyart.edu/schools/fashion
Graduate School Calendar	http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources
Graduate Review Showcase	http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/ Here you will find a link to the Midpoint Review Orientation, and links to the Midpoint Review Guidelines and Handbooks.
Fashion Merchandising Review Showcase Page	http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/schools/fashion-merchandising.html
Online Connection Through Mobile Devices	 http://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect/feature-details/adobe-connectmobile.html Application required for using the Adobe Connect Meetings from your mobile device.
Online Presentation Do's & Don'ts	 http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/ Look under Additional Presentation Tools
Online Technical Requirements	 http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/ 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: http://arcps.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm
Uploading Review Content	http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/content/dam/Grad%20Showcase/home_page/pdf/Uploading_Review_Content_WI15.pdf
Photographing & Submitting Artwork	http://media.academyart.edu/howto/index.html http://howto.academyart.edu/submitting-artwork



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 one week prior to the presentation date.

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

Phone: (415) 618-3614



10. CONTACT INFORMATION

Midpoint Review Coordinator:

midpointreview@academyart.edu
(415) 618-6390

Contact for Online Students:

Onlinegradreview@academyart.edu
(415) 618-3614

Department Contact(s)

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Send Materials To:

Academy of Art University

School of Fashion Merchandising
Midpoint Review

79 New Montgomery
San Francisco, CA 94105

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