

School of Fine Art, Painting

Final Review Guidelines (Master of Fine Arts)

All Master of Fine Arts students are required to conduct a Final Review as part of the Master's program to present their Final Thesis. All final reviews must be completed in the term which the student completes the program units for their Master's degree. If thesis conditions are not met within two semesters of unit completion, students will be asked to apply for reinstatement into the graduate program.

Important Contact Information

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Eligibility

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

Scheduling

Please review the [Midpoint and Final Review Handbook](#)

Deliverables

Portfolio

Your portfolio of finished work consisting of the culmination of your projects completed in the MFA program that demonstrates the highest quality required for graduated level work.

More details and guidance can be found in the Portfolio PDF Checklist

Online Students: Please review the [Online Technical Requirements](#) page for requirements relating to your submissions for upload

Thesis Book

Your written presentation will be different depending on your emphasis. In your professionally bound written presentation, you must include the following sections, in this order and with a separate heading for each: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Autobiography, Resume, Portfolio.

More details and guidance can be found in the Portfolio PDF Checklist

Oral Presentation

Introduce yourself, show your portfolio work, and go through your PowerPoint/PDF and your thesis proposal.

You may present using a slide application if you prefer but have your pdf ready as a backup in the case of incompatibility (no new software will be downloaded onto AAU machines for your presentation). Save your pdf to cloud storage or a USB drive in addition to uploading your pdf in the LMS.

Begin practicing your oral presentation well in advance to ensure your level of professionalism.

Due Date for Deliverables

Your thesis and portfolio must be uploaded to the LMS review portal at least two weeks before the date of your presentation, and the combined file size must not exceed 50 MB.

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
Final Review Presentation	20 minutes
Committee Question & Answer Session	10 minutes
Committee Discussion – closed door/offline	15 minutes
Committee Decision & Feedback	10 minutes

Online Review Structure

Final Review Panel/Student Introduction	5 minutes
Final Review Presentation	20 minutes
Committee Critique/ Question & Answer Session	20 minutes
Committee Discussion – closed door/offline	15 minutes
Committee Decision & Feedback	Results will be presented in the LMS within one hour after the close of the Review

Final Review Preparation Timeline

Semester Prior to Presentation:	Review department specific guidelines Meet with your Academic Director to discuss feasibility of thesis ideas for feedback
2 to 3 months prior	Check graduate website for Final Review sign-up schedule Solidify your Thesis Project Concept
6 Weeks Prior	Prepare your thesis book Work with an editor or contact ARC to make sure your thesis book is grammatically correct and typo-free.
1 month prior	Onsite students ONLY: Print your thesis book and have it professionally bound 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 prior	Practice your oral presentation out loud and with a timer Review the online-specific requirements and test all of your equipment
2 weeks prior	Both Online and On Campus Students: Upload your portfolio and your thesis to your review page On-campus students verify your equipment works prior to your actual presentation date
1 week prior	Onsite Students ONLY: Thesis books should be received no later than 1 week before the review date. Plan your attire, dress professionally Practice your presentation in front of a live audience
Tips for the day of	Get plenty of rest the night before Arrive early to prepare physically and vocally for the group performance If you will be using a cellphone, make sure the battery is charged
Following your review	View your Final Review results here

Portfolio, Thesis Book & Presentation Checklists

Portfolio Contents

When you layout your photographs in the book, make sure you have:

- Four pictures per page (maximum) or less
- Details including:
 - Titles
 - Size
 - Medium and substrate
- Clearly lit, professional photographs
- Two detailed close-ups photographs
 - If your works have a tactile or textural aspect make sure one of your close-ups uses an angled light source to enhance the textual quality and show detail.

IMPORTANT: All artwork being presented **MUST** be in this book

Thesis Book Checklist

Your Final Thesis Project thesis book must provide a synopsis of the research and creative processes involved in the completion of the work. This should be informed by the notes that you have kept in your Thesis Tracking system entries each semester. It must also include images of your work and details (see the checklist below for more information and layout).

- REVIEW: Review the general AAU Final Review guidelines, but be certain to follow the Fine Art Painting Final Review Handbook (this document) when writing your thesis book.
- GRAMMAR/SPELLING: Be sure the proposal is grammatically correct and free of spelling errors and typos.
 - The Academy Resource Center (ARC) offers support for both your written and oral presentation.
- IMAGES: Paintings must be professionally photographed. All photographs are to be well lit. Include close up details in photographs too.
 - When you layout your photographs in the book, make sure there are no more than four images per page and include the following detail information: Titles, size, medium and substrate.
- EVOLUTION: Your thesis book must significantly reflect the evolution of your project since your Midpoint Review. DO NOT simply recap what you wrote in your Thesis Project Proposal at your Midpoint Review.

In your thesis book, you must include the following sections with separate headings:

- Cover Page
- The cover of your thesis book must include the following:
 - Project title
 - Your Name
 - Student ID Number
 - Academy of Art University, Graduate School of Fine Art Painting
 - Final Thesis Project
 - Date of Presentation
 - Time of Presentation
- Table of Contents
 - All Final Reviews must have a table of contents (TOC)
 - Number each page of the book
 - List each topic section and its corresponding page number in the TOC
 - Select an appropriate font. Font size should be no smaller than 10 pt. and easily readable
- Autobiography
 - For your autobiography, write in a concise and engaging manner. Briefly address the following in no more than one page in length:
 - Introduce yourself
 - Explain how you developed an interest in Fine Art Painting
 - Discuss what led you to enroll at the Academy of Art University
 - You may also include other information that seems appropriate or relevant
- 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.
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
 - E-mail

- Website (optional)
- Additional contact information
- Educational background
- Recent or pertinent employment history
 - Dates should be listed chronologically, most recent at the top of the list.
- Other relevant interest/vocational information
- Timeline
- The timeline must include the following:
 - List by semester all of the courses that you have taken to date that apply to your degree completion, including the course number, title, and instructor of each course
 - Identify your anticipated graduation date(semester/year)
 - Be sure your total units add up to 63
- Thesis Summary
 - The Thesis Summary is a short but detailed summary of your Final Thesis Project. The summary should include what the project was about, why the project was created, and what methods you used to fulfill the intent of the project. It should be approximately 150 words.
 - Area of emphasis
 - Genre
 - Subject matter
 - Reason for choosing the subject matter
 - Reason for creating the project
- Thesis Project
 - The Thesis Project Final Report is the focal point of the thesis book. In this section of the document you will relay the details of your completed project to the Panel. You will want to address the following in an articulate and well thought-out manner:
 - Define your Thesis Project in detail (what, why, how)
 - Describe your personal interest and involvement with the project
 - Describe background information on your topic and how you came to choose this project
 - Describe any challenges you encountered with the project and how they were overcome
 - Describe how the project evolved from the Midpoint Review
 - Describe what you feel you have learned from the project & your methods of working
- Thesis Paintings/ Photographs
 - When you layout your photographs in the book, make sure you have:
 - Four pictures per page (maximum) or less
 - Details including:
 - Titles
 - Size
 - Medium and substrate
 - Clearly lit, professional photographs
 - Two detailed close-ups photographs
 - If your works have a tactile or textural aspect make sure one of your close-ups uses an angled light source to enhance the textual quality and show detail.
 - **IMPORTANT:** All artwork being presented **MUST** be in this book.
- Influences
 - The Influences section needs to identify and show samples of your artistic influences in making the project. You should identify at least two artists as influences.

- Be specific in describing how and why these artists have influenced/inspired you and/or your work.
- You will want to identify:
 - Who your artistic influences are (historical and contemporary)
 - What part of their work inspired you (include example pictures)
 - How their art has influenced your work
- Promotional Materials
 - Include the following done in GLA 674: Professional Practices for Fine Artists
 - Promotional materials
 - Artist statement
 - Business card
 - Website information
 - Additional promotion materials you have created
- The Statement of Future Plans
 - The Statement of Future Plans should identify the following:
 - Identify the next steps you will be taking after you complete your Final Thesis Project. Will you be continuing with the project?
 - Identify your professional goals, including what steps you have taken toward meeting these goals.

Oral Presentation Checklist

The oral presentation is a summation of the research process and conceptual solution of the Final Thesis Project. Original work must be shown but must be accompanied by slides or other visual materials.

- POWER POINT/PDF: A PowerPoint or PDF presentation accompanying your oral proposal is required.
- Q&A: Plan to answer questions and defend your work at the end of your presentation.
- PRACTICE: Practice your oral presentation in advance of your review to insure your comfort level during the presentation. Such practice is essential to your preparedness for your Review.

This is a formal presentation to the committee of a student's body of work - the Final Thesis Project as proposed by the student at Midpoint Review. Recap your thesis book as your presentation. Do not include heavy details from your thesis book.

- You must present the fully developed content as proposed at your Midpoint Review.
- All work presented for the Final Review should be created after successfully passing the Midpoint Review.
- The project presentation must exemplify your highest level of technical proficiency

IMPORTANT: DO NOT READ your presentation off the slideshow and do not read directly from your notes. Use bullet points and fill in the information. How you present your work will affect the overall decision. The committee is looking for how well you speak about your work; address your ideas and overall approach.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many pages should the thesis book be?

A: 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

Q: If I'm an online student, do I need to send in physical samples of my class work?

A: No. Online students are required to submit a .pdf of the Final Thesis book but are not required to submit a printed and bound copy.

Q: Can we include work we've done outside of the Academy?

A: Work not executed at the Academy of Art University should not constitute more than 10% of your portfolio presentation.

Q: Can I use fancy text, borders and custom backgrounds for my PDF presentation?

A: We would recommend against it. Simple, easy to read and easy to see content is best.