

Master of Fine Arts, Landscape Architecture Final Review Handbook

This handbook contains the Landscape Architecture 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 18 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 Landscape Architecture 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 three components: thesis book, oral presentation, and Directed Study Journals. [Link to tutorial on uploading work to LMS.](#)

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

Thesis Book: All three (3) copies of your thesis book must be professionally bound in an 11" x 17" format, landscape orientation and must include two (2) CD copies of the thesis book. The following sections with a separate title page for each must be included: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Autobiography, Resume, Statement of Professional Goals, Abstract/Project Summary Statement, Site Analyses, Design Concept, Proposed Project Solution, Bibliography.

Professional Editing: The thesis book must be professionally edited, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors and typos. The completed thesis proposal book must be of professional quality.

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

Upload/Deliver To:	Upload to the Thesis Book Icon in LMS
Due Date:	Two (2) weeks prior to review date. Spring , Fall semesters. One (1) week prior to review date. Summer semester.
Format:	PDF

Oral Presentation: The Academy of Art University’s Online Final Review provides a means for both online and offsite Academy students to present their thesis projects via the Academy’s online meeting environment. All students have the option of presenting their Final Review online or on-campus. Whatever venue the student chooses to present their Final Review, the following requirements must be met:

CONTENT: Recap your written document as your presentation, but do NOT read your paper or PowerPoint presentation *verbatim*. The Review Committee has already reviewed and read your thesis book.-Present boards or digital images that specifically relate to your Final Thesis. The images and drawings shown should clearly represent the design solution as well as the process that resulted in the solution.

COMMUNICATE: Effective communication is critical. You must convey your design solution as well as the reasoning behind and justification for that solution to the Review Committee as if you were presenting to a professional client.

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

Upload/Deliver To:	At the Final Review
Due Date:	At the scheduled day/time of your review
Format:	A PowerPoint or PDF presentation, or equivalent, accompanying your oral proposal presentation is required.
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 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. The standard formatting requirements for Directed Study Journals are outlined in the Direct Study Guidelines:

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 approximately one hour in duration. Your presentation should be 30 minutes long.

The Final Review meeting will follow this structure:

Final Review Panel/Student Introduction	5 minutes
Final Review Presentation	25 minutes
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

C. Evaluation Questions

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

http://www.academyart.edu/academics/landscape_architecture/graduate

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

THESIS BOOK CHECKLIST

Your Final Thesis Book must provide a clear and sequential synopsis of the research and the design process involved in the development of the solution for your project site.

For the Thesis Book:

- **CONTENT:** Review the Thesis Book Checklist below.
- **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 thesis book and oral presentation.
- **VISUALS:** All visual information, whether it be maps, site plans, diagrams, charts, photographs and any other visual media, must clearly support and illustrate both the design process as well as the solution itself. In addition, scales and north arrows must be included wherever necessary.
- **PROCESS:** Your written presentation 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.

Thesis Book Contents:	In your thesis book, you must include the following sections with a separate heading for each:										
	<table> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Cover page</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Summary</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Table of Contents</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Site Analysis</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Autobiography</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Design Concept</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Resume</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Proposed Project Solution</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Cover page	<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Summary	<input type="checkbox"/> Table of Contents	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Autobiography	<input type="checkbox"/> Design Concept	<input type="checkbox"/> Resume	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed Project Solution		<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography
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<input type="checkbox"/> Resume	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed Project Solution										
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography										

Cover Page:	The cover of your thesis book must include the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Project Title <input type="checkbox"/> Your Name <input type="checkbox"/> Student ID Number <input type="checkbox"/> Academy of Art University, School of Landscape Architecture Identify this as your "Final Review" <input type="checkbox"/> Date of Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Time of Presentation

Table of Contents:	All Final Reviews must have a table of contents (TOC)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Number each page of the proposal <input type="checkbox"/> List topic sections and corresponding page number

Autobiography:	Include an introduction of you as a landscape architect to the review committee. This autobiography will not be the same as used for your Midpoint review. It should include the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Very brief highlights from the autobiography previously written for your Thesis Proposal book.

- Explanation of why you want an MFA in Landscape Architecture.
- Description of what you have achieved in the MFA program and how you will apply these achievements to your future professional career.
- Provide an overview of what you want to accomplish in your life as a professional landscape architect

Resume: You will need to include a formal resume in your proposal that is updated to include significant activities and achievements you have accomplished since your Mid Point review. 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.

Thesis Summary: The Thesis Summary is a short but detailed summary of your Thesis Project. By reading this summary, the committee should have a solid sense of what you have created without having to read the full book. 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. The summary should be approximately 150 - 250 words. Key illustrations should be included to support the main points.

Site Analysis: The Site Analysis evaluates both large scale issues as well as specific details about the existing site. This is an opportunity for you to convey your deep understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the project site to the Review Committee. More importantly, the site analysis should provide a clear rationale for and connection with the decisions you made in your solution.

As you have done in your previous studios, your site analysis will explore and describe all of the environmental, ecological, social, cultural, economic aspects of the site. Understanding and communicating the site context at various scales is also key here. Using internet tools can be very useful in gathering base information but do not rely only on this resource. Expand your research to include books and recent design publications.

Your site analysis needs to include information about the current users and activities taking place on the site if applicable. Age, gender, socioeconomic status, and other relevant information must be clearly communicated.

Indication of scale and the north arrow on all pertinent maps and plans is essential.

Make sure to cite all resources and label all maps and diagrams.

Design Concept: Clearly articulate and describe the conceptual basis for your project solution. Describe the evolution of your thinking from the three initial concepts you presented in your Midpoint Review. Illustrations and project details should illustrate your thinking process. The relationship between the final concept, design intent, and project solution should be clearly evident.

Proposed Project Solution: This section represents the heart of the Thesis Project; the culmination of the input and refinements accomplished in all classes taken during after the Midpoint review.

Illustrations should clearly show all relevant aspects of the design process and of the project itself. The graphics should be able to tell the story of the solution with minimum notation. Attention should be paid to the sequencing of visual information in order to achieve maximum impact.

As mentioned previously, the relationship between the final concept, design intent, and project solution should be clearly evident

Bibliography: List the references that you used to create your Final Thesis Project.

ORAL PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

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

PowerPoint/PDF: A PowerPoint, PDF, or approved equivalent presentation accompanying your oral proposal is required.

Timing: Do not read your book or PowerPoint/PDF *verbatim*. Timing should generally be as follows:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduction/Autobiography - Introduce yourself to the panel. Give a brief autobiography. Include professional goals: What is your passion? What do you really want to do with your MFA in Landscape Architecture?	5 Minutes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Review Presentation	25 Minutes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Committee Question & Answer Session	10 Minutes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Committee Discussion – closed door/offline	25 Minutes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Committee Decision & Feedback	10 minutes

Duration: Final Reviews are approximately 1 hour in duration. Your oral presentation should be presented in approximately thirty (30) minutes or less.

Content: This is a formal presentation to the Review Committee of a student's Final Thesis Project as proposed by the student at Midpoint Review. Recap your thesis book as your presentation. Do not include details from your thesis book.



- You must present the fully developed content as proposed at your Midpoint.
- All your 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.

Original Work: All work must be original.

Crediting: Collaborative projects must clearly indicate which area the student is responsible and accountable for.

Professional Appearance: Dress for your review in a manner appropriate for presentation to potential investors - professionally.

Rehearsal: 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.

PDF/ PowerPoint Presentation: If presenting online, a PowerPoint or PDF presentation, accompanying your oral proposal, is required. After you have scheduled your review, the Online Graduate Department will contact you to walk you through the review process. Online students must upload their presentation to the Final Review presentation room 2 weeks in advance of their presentation (one week in Summer).



FINAL REVIEW PDF CHECKLIST

**PowerPoint/
PDF Checklist:** Your PowerPoint/PDF should include the following slides:

- Introduction Page
- Proposed Project Solution Slides
- Closing Slide

**Introduction
Slide:** The introduction/title slide must include the following items:

- Your name
 - Your student ID
 - Department Name
 - Project Title
 - Date & Time of the presentation
- Auto biographical images if appropriate

**Thesis Summary
Slides:** The Thesis Summary slides must provide the contextual graphic information for the thesis project, the process and the solution.

**Proposed Project
Solution Slide(s):** The Proposed Project Solution slides must include the following items:

- All relevant Site Analysis slides
- All relevant Design Concept slides
- All relevant visual material required to illustrate the design process and solution for the project site

Closing Slide: This slide should clearly indicate that you are finished with your presentation. You may choose to include the following:

- Your Name
- Your Project Title
- Thank you

6. PREPARATION TIMELINE

<p>3 to 4 months before your review</p>	<p>Read Landscape Architecture specific Final Review Handbook</p> <p>Watch the Final Review Orientation</p> <p>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</p>
<p>2 to 3 months before your review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check graduate website for Final Review sign-up schedule <p>Department specific items?</p>
<p>6 weeks before your review</p>	<p>Prepare your thesis book</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with an editor or contact ARC to make sure your thesis book is grammatically correct and typo-free.
<p>1 month before your review</p>	<p>Print your thesis book and have it professionally bound</p> <p>Create your PowerPoint/PDF slide show</p> <p>Organize and create notes for your oral presentation</p> <p>Work with a friend, colleague or ARC on your oral presentation</p>
<p>3 weeks before your review</p>	<p>Send to your department two (2) identical bound copies of your Final Review Thesis Book; these must be received two (2) weeks prior to your review date</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> <p>Email your PowerPoint or PDF presentation to Online Graduate School</p>
<p>2 weeks before your review</p>	<p>On-campus students verify your equipment works prior to your actual presentation date</p> <p>Upload your PDF of your portfolio and thesis book to your home page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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
<p>1 week before your review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet online with your Online Coordinator to review your presentation room setup and use <p>Plan your attire, dress professionally</p> <p>Practice your presentation in front of a live audience</p>

Tips for the day of your review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 here

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 FinalReview@academyart.edu 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 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. DO not repeat information presented in your Thesis Proposal book.
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?	No.
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	http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academic-resources/graduate-student-academic-resources
Academy Resource Center (ARC)	http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/academy-resource-center Your resource for proofreading, ESL assistance, Final 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	www.landscapearchitecturedaily.com
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 Final Review Orientation, and links to the Final Review Guidelines and Handbooks.
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 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

Phone: (415) 618-3614



10. CONTACT INFORMATION

Final Review Coordinator: finalreview@academyart.edu

(415) 618-6297

Contact for Online Students: onlinegradreview@academyart.edu

(415) 618-3614

Department Contact(s): Heather Clendenin
Director of School of Landscape Architecture
Tel: (415) 618-3600
Email: HClendenin@academyart.edu

Send Materials To: Academy of Art University

School of Landscape Architecture

Final Review

79 New Montgomery

San Francisco, CA 94105

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