Master of Arts
MA Final Portfolio Review Guidelines
School of Music Production
and
Sound Design for Visual Media

Please read through all of this information carefully before preparing your materials for your Final Review. If you have any questions or need clarification on any aspect of your upcoming Final Review, please refer to the "Contact" page of this handbook.

FINAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

FINAL REVIEW PREPARATION AND PLANNING

RESOURCES

Section 1:   GENERAL FINAL REVIEW INFORMATION/GUIDELINES

FINAL REVIEW INTRODUCTION

For your MA Final Review you will post examples of the work that you have accomplished during your time in the MA program. You will also post a written document that describes your history, your goals, and the creation of the projects which you are submitting. The Final Review Committee will review your progress in the program, and will evaluate the quality and evolvement of your work. The Final Review Committee decides on the granting of the MA Degree.

FINAL REVIEW COMPONENTS

Project Media

Three to four examples of your work should be posted to the LMS. These should be the best examples of your work at the Academy. They may be separated as distinct files, or all of the pieces may be edited together into a "reel". The media examples must be submitted to the LMS **no later then the Final Review Due Date.**

Written Project Summary

The Final Review Project Summary should provide a synopsis of the each of the examples submitted to the Final Review. Flawless spelling and grammar are required of all written submissions. The Final Review Written Project Summary in PDF format must be submitted to the LMS **no later then the Final Review Due Date.**

Due Date

Your written Final Review Project Media, and Written Project Summary must be posted to the LMS **in advance of the due date**.   Contact the MUS Administrator to find out the due date for the semester in which you are submitting your review.

AWARDING THE MASTER'S DEGREE

The diploma will be issued upon completion and passing of **ALL** of the following:

• Submission of the Final Review Project Media and acceptance by the Committee.

• Submission of the Final Review Written Project Summary and acceptance by the Committee.

• All curriculum requirements fulfilled: all units and minimum grade requirements completed.

- No outstanding financial obligations.

- Online Graduate Survey at http://apply.academyart.edu/careersvsgradtrack/

SECTION 2: MA MUSIC PRODUCTION AND SOUND DESIGN FINAL REVIEW GUIDELINES

PRIOR TO YOUR FINAL REVIEW

- In the semester prior to your Final Review, you must contact your Academic Advisor to Petition to Graduate.

- Thoroughly review the Final Review Handbook and clarify any questions you may have in regards to the requirements. Questions can be addressed to your Department Director, who can answer specific questions about the Final Review process.

FINAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

The Final Review is intended to satisfy the Director and the Review Committee that you have achieved a reasonable level of accomplishment in the subject matter of your degree. All MA MUS Students presenting for their Final Review must prepare and the following (please read specifications to follow):

- **Project Media**

- **Written Project Summary**

PROJECT MEDIA

- For your Final Review, you post 3 to 4 example Projects of your work.

- The work may be submitted as separate files, or may be edited together into a single "reel".

- Each Project should be an example of your sound or music work for **visual media**. That is, stand-alone sound or music is not sufficient. There must be an accompaniment of a visual media image.

- The projects must exemplify your highest level of technical proficiency.

WRITTEN PROJECT SUMMARY

- Review the general AAU Final Review guidelines, but be certain to follow the MA

Music Production and Sound Design Final Review Handbook (this document) when writing your written proposal.

• 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.

• Your written presentation must include the following sections.

- **Cover Page**
- **Autobiography**
- **Resume**
- **Project Summary**
- **Influences**
- **Statement of Future Plans**

SUMMARY

Soon after the due date, the Final Review Committee will convene to discuss your Final Review. Upon convening, the committee will decide upon one of the following outcomes:

Approved. Student has been approved and will be granted the MA degree.

Not Approved. Student has **NOT** been approved and will **NOT** be granted the MA degree until one of the following has been completed and the review is approved by the Final Review Committee:

RESUBMIT: Following specific Final Review Committee requirements, the student's project requires changes that must be corrected and re-submitted within 3 weeks. If the re- submission meets the requirements, then the Final Review will be approved and the student will be granted the MA degree.

RE-PRESENT: Following specific Final Review Committee requirements, the student must complete additional studio work, rethink the Project Media, and/or sign up for a new Final Review the next semester.

SECTION 3: FINAL REVIEW PREPARATION TIMELINE

3-4 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR FINAL REVIEW

• Read General Final Review Guidelines (Section I of this Handbook)

• Read Music Production and Sound Design Department Final Review Handbook (this entire document)

6 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR FINAL REVIEW

• Prepare your Written Project Summary following the Final Review Checklist.

• Prepare your example Project Media

1 WEEK PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE

• Plan to submit your work early! Late submissions will not be considered.

SECTION 4: FINAL REVIEW WRITTEN PROJECT SUMMARY CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST: In your PDF submission you must include the following sections with a separate heading for each:

• **Cover Page**

• **Autobiography**

• **Resume**

• **Project Summary**

• **Influences**

• **Statement of Future Plans**

 Below is a Section by Section checklist of all of the necessary information to include in your proposal.

COVER PAGE

 The Cover of your Written Proposal must include the following:

- Project title
- Project subtitle (if needed)
- Your Name
- Student ID Number
- School and Department name (Academy of Art University, School of Music Production and Sound Design for Visual Media)
- Due Date of Final Review
- Area of Concentration (Music Score for Film, Sound Design for Animation, Game etc.)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

 For your autobiography, you will *briefly* address the following in *no more than one page in length:*

- Explain who you are
- Explain how you became involved in the arts, and in Music or Sound in particular
- Discuss what led you to enroll at the Academy of Art University
- You may also include other information that seems appropriate or relevant to your work as a composer/sound designer, such as (though much of this may be included in your resume):

- Relevant Work experiences
- Relevant Educational experiences
- Relevant Personal experiences You want to be sure to write your autobiography in a concise and succinct manner that is as engaging as possible, and provides proper background and context for the rest of the written presentation.

RESUME

You will need to include a formal resume in your proposal. This is a 1-2 page professional document that lists your work experiences, skills and education. In addition, your resume provides the reader with your contact information and a list of past experience, including:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email and Website
- Recent examples of your work as a music composer or sound designer, etc.
- Educational background (beyond High School but limited to the last 10 years)
- Recent or pertinent employment history
- Other recent information relevant to your career as an music composer and/or sound designer, including teaching experience, professional memberships, volunteer experiences, student collaboration, relevant skills, etc.
- Dates should be listed chronologically, most recent at the top of the list

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Project Summary is the focal point of the written presentation. In this section of the document, you will relay the details of your completed projects to the Committee. You will want to address the following in an articulate and well thought-out manner **for each of your submitted projects**:

- Describe background information on your topic and how you came about choosing this project
- Describe any challenges you encountered with the project and how these challenges were overcome
- Describe what you feel you have learned from the project & your methods of working
- Include your job title on this project (Composer, Sound Designer, Music Editor, etc.)

There is no specified length for each Project Summary. Though it is always a good idea to be concise in your wording, this section should be as long as it needs to be to clearly and thoroughly articulate your ideas.

INFLUENCES

The Influences section in your proposal needs to identify and describe your artistic influences in making the project. You should identify at least three artists as influences. You will want to identify:

- Who your artistic influences are
- What part of their work inspired you
- How their work has influenced your work
- Include examples of work created by your influences

Though this section does not need to be long, you will want to be specific in describing how and why these artists have influenced/inspired you and/or your work. Your influences do not all need to be music composers or sound designers. Your work is often inspired by other mediums. Examples of artists work must be included.

STATEMENT OF FUTURE PLANS

The Statement of Future Plans should identify the following:

- Identify your professional goals, including what steps you have taken toward meeting these goals.

SECTION 5: FINAL REVIEW PROJECT MEDIA CHECKLIST

Ensure that you follow these steps for each of your projects.

- Work must be in the following format:

  Quicktime Movie File (.MOV) with final mix soundtrack (48kHz 16bit audio).

  Export your Quicktime .MOV file as 720P – this will result in the H.264 compression codec that maintains quality but results in a small file size.

- Each Project must be fully edited and mixed.

- For video games, it is **not sufficient** for the committee to have to play the game; instead you must capture game play and submit a video (.mov) file.

- Each Project should be no longer than 4 minutes. If the project is longer than that time, cut and edit your submission to include the best part of your work.

- There is no minimum running time. For example a 30 second commercial is fine.

- You do not need to be responsible for all of the audio on each project, but you should have at least one identifiable title with respect to each work, such as:

  o   Composer

  o   Sound Designer

  o   Music Editor

  o   Etc.

SECTION 6: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How many projects do I need to submit?

A. You should submit 3 or 4 projects. If all are very short, such as 30 second commercials, then you might want to submit 5. You must submit a minimum of 3 projects; the maximum is 5.

Q. How many pages should the Written Project Summary be?

A. There is no specified length for the completed Written Project Summary. There are some sections that have limitation of length, but the main part of your proposal does not have a limit. The written Report 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.

APPENDIX 1:

CONTACT Information

Final Review Coordinator
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1.800.544.2787 ext. 6297

Departmental Contact for specific questions about Final Reviews:
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