

## Master of Fine Arts, Visual Development Final Review Handbook

---

This handbook contains the Visual Development 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 16 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 Visual Development page on the Graduate Showcase:

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

### Table of Contents

1. [Eligibility for Final Review](#)
2. [Scheduling Your Final Review](#)
3. [Deliverable Details and Due Dates](#)
4. [Final Review Process](#)
5. [Checklists](#)
6. [Preparation Timeline](#)
7. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
8. [Important Links](#)
9. [Online Presentation Details](#)
10. [Contact Information](#)

 **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:** Students are required to upload a marketing portfolio consisting of work from the thesis project and supplemental work from Directed Study courses as well as other classes to show a wider range of style, design, and subject matter. The portfolio should showcase your very best work only. All work must be original and wholly the student’s creation.

[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

**Thesis Book:** Using the “story-based” idea approved at the Midpoint Review students will create a Visual Development packet to be delivered in the form of an “Art of/Making of...” book. The Final Review thesis book needs to follow the development process of the story idea, characters, environments, etc... as presented at Midpoint Review to completion.

Suggestions of where to print would be : **Lulu.com, Blurb.com, and Costco.**

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>	Onsite – Deliver to committee during presentation Online – Deliver to below address:  Visual Development Department ATTN: Lindsay Langsdale 540 Powell Street San Francisco, CA 94108  All students must also complete and upload the PDF to the Thesis Book Icon in LMS
<b>Due Date:</b>	Day of the review
<b>Format:</b>	Printed hard copy

**Oral Presentation:** During your Final Review presentation you will pitch your idea and provide a story synopsis supported by fully developed, characters, environments, scenes, etc... Research and reference sources should be included in the presentation. The Final Review presentation requires a digital presentation with a sampling of characters, and environments; value thumbnails and color script for display purposes are required (neatly mounted presentation boards are optional).

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

<b>Upload/Deliver To:</b>	At the Final Review
<b>Due Date:</b>	Two (2) weeks prior to review date
<b>Format:</b>	PowerPoint or PDF; Presentation boards (at the time of your scheduled review)
<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 Visual Development program learning outcomes. At the Final Review the review committee is evaluating your success in meeting the stated outcomes.

[http://www.academyart.edu/academics/visual\\_development/graduate](http://www.academyart.edu/academics/visual_development/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

### FINAL PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

**Portfolio Contents:** Students are required to upload a marketing portfolio consisting of work from the thesis project and supplemental work from Directed Study courses as well as other classes to show a wider range of style, design, and subject matter. The portfolio should showcase your very best work only. All work must be original and wholly the student’s creation.

Crediting: Collaborative projects must clearly indicate which area the student is responsible and accountable for (e.g. coding, designing, research etc.)

### THESIS BOOK CHECKLIST

Using the “story-based” idea approved at the Midpoint Review students will create a Visual Development packet to be delivered in the form of an “Art of/Making of...” book. The Final Review thesis book needs to follow the development process of the story idea, characters, environments, etc... as presented at Midpoint Review to completion.

**Thesis Book Contents:** In your Adobe PDF written proposal, you must include the following sections, in this order and with a separate heading for each:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cover Page        | <input type="checkbox"/> Resume                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table of Contents | <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Project Summary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autobiography     | <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Project         |

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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title & Topic  | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialization: Family films, Live action or Games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Name  | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify this as your “Thesis Project”             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student ID Number  | <input type="checkbox"/> Date of Presentation                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academy of Art University, Graduate School of Visual Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Time of Presentation                               |

**Table of Contents:** All Thesis Books 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

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

- Introduce yourself
- Where are you from? What is your background?
- What personal/professional/educational experiences have influenced your pursuit of Visual Development? What are your career/artistic goals?
- You want to be sure to write your autobiography in a concise and engaging manner.

**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. In addition, your resume provides the reader with your contact information and a list of past experience, including:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Education experience   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Experience  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone number                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Skills (software, artistic, and otherwise)                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail and website             | <input type="checkbox"/> Honors (academic and professional)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional contact information | <input type="checkbox"/> Dates should be listed chronologically, most recent at the top of the list |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Objective                      |   |

**Thesis Project Summary:** The Thesis Project summary is the focal point of the written proposal. In this section of the document, you will relay the details of your project to the panel. You will want to address the following in an articulate and well thought-out manner (approximately 2 pages in length):

- Define your Thesis Project in detail
- Describe what led you to the project – your personal connection
- Elaborate on the idea/story
- Describe any challenges you faced with the project
- Describe background on your idea/story (attach reference/research materials, bibliography, filmography, etc.)
- Explain how the project evolved

**Thesis Project:** The Final Review Thesis Book needs to follow the development process of the story idea, characters, environments, etc...as presented at Midpoint Review to completion. The Final Review Thesis Book should represent work completed in Directed Study and include:

- Character development from silhouettes to thumbnails/ initial sketches to turnarounds, character lineup, and expression sheets, several action/attitude poses, situational poses to final color (number will vary depending on the number of characters in the story – 4 minimum).
- Two pages of character thumbnails (2.5" tall) in 15 – 20 different poses for one character
- Props and vehicle designs as they relate to your story idea.
- Environmental set design including floor plans/ground plans, architectural exploration, and natural environmental exploration (plants, trees, etc.) as they apply to your story.
- Thumbnail layouts to final Layouts in value showing Key
- Beats/locations/environments in the story (3-5 completed layouts).
- Final color "Cinematic Moments" with characters representing Key Story beats (minimum 15-20 completed full color illustrations) derived from the finalized color Script (20-40 thumbnails in Value and Color Roughs).
- Framing should represent film, TV, and/or game aspect ratio. Strong storytelling use of camera should be represented.

Your Thesis Book must be uploaded as a PDF to the "thesis book" area of your student Review profile.



## FINAL REVIEW ORAL PRESENTATION

**Oral Presentation:** During your Final Review presentation you will pitch your idea and provide a story synopsis supported by fully developed, characters, environments, scenes, etc... Research and reference sources should be included in the presentation. The Final Review presentation requires both a digital presentation and four neatly mounted presentation boards with a sampling of characters, and environments; value thumbnails and color script for display purposes are required. Recap your written document as your presentation, but do NOT read your paper verbatim

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

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.

Please dress appropriately.

**Online Presentation Requirements:** Online students are required to submit a PowerPoint or PDF to be loaded online. This is different from the PDF of your book. After you have scheduled your review the Cyber Campus Department will contact you prior to your review to show you how the online Review process works and how to use your slideshow during your oral presentation. Online students must also upload the PowerPoint file to their presentation room **two (2) weeks in advance of your presentation (one week in summer)**. Students will find a **PowerPoint Template** and **Online Technical Requirements** necessary to participate in an Online Review under "Technical Resources" in the [Graduate Review Showcase](#).

## 6. PREPARATION TIMELINE

3 to 4 months before your review	Read Visual Development 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. Do this several times until you feel comfortable presenting it  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Review the online-specific requirements and test all of your equipment</li> <li> Email your PowerPoint or PDF presentation to Online Graduate School</li> </ul>
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  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Send your PowerPoint presentation to Online Graduate School via email</li> <li> Meet online with your Online Graduate Department Learning Coordinator to review your presentation room setup and use</li> </ul>
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	<p>Get plenty of rest the night before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If you will be using a cellphone, make sure the battery is charged</li> </ul> <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>
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 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.
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/visual_development/">http://www.academyart.edu/academics/visual_development/</a>  <a href="http://online.academyart.edu/schools/visual-development">http://online.academyart.edu/schools/visual-development</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.
Visual Development Review Showcase Page	<a href="http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/schools/visual-development.html">http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/schools/visual-development.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: Lindsay Langsdale  
Visual Development Assistant  
Tel: (415) 618-3924  
Email: [LLangsdale@academyart.edu](mailto:LLangsdale@academyart.edu)

Send Materials To: Academy of Art University  
  
School of Visual Development  
Final Review  
  
79 New Montgomery  
San Francisco, CA 94105

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