

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/>

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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 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](#)

Upload/Deliver To:	Upload to the Portfolio Icon in LMS
Due Date:	Two (2) weeks prior to review date
Format:	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](#)

Upload/Deliver To:	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
Due Date:	Day of the review
Format:	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](#)

Upload/Deliver To:	At the Final Review
Due Date:	Two (2) weeks prior to review date
Format:	PowerPoint or PDF; Presentation boards (at the time of your scheduled review)
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. 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

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
Final Review Presentation	20 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 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

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.)

THEESIS 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.



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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Name<input type="checkbox"/> Address<input type="checkbox"/> Phone number<input type="checkbox"/> E-mail and website<input type="checkbox"/> Additional contact information<input type="checkbox"/> Objective<input type="checkbox"/> Education experience<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Experience<input type="checkbox"/> Skills (software, artistic, and otherwise)<input type="checkbox"/> Honors (academic and professional)<input type="checkbox"/> Dates should be listed chronologically, most recent at the top of the list
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): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Define your Thesis Project in detail<input type="checkbox"/> Describe what led you to the project – your personal connection<input type="checkbox"/> Elaborate on the idea/story<input type="checkbox"/> Describe any challenges you faced with the project<input type="checkbox"/> Describe background on your idea/story (attach reference/research materials, bibliography, filmography, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 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).<input type="checkbox"/> Two pages of character thumbnails (2.5" tall) in 15 – 20 different poses for one character<input type="checkbox"/> Props and vehicle designs as they relate to your story idea.<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental set design including floor plans/ground plans, architectural exploration, and natural environmental exploration (plants, trees, etc.) as they apply to your story.<input type="checkbox"/> Thumbnail layouts to final Layouts in value showing Key<input type="checkbox"/> Beats/locations/environments in the story (3-5 completed layouts).<input type="checkbox"/> Final color “Cinematic Moments” with characters representing Key Story beats (minimum 15-20 completed full color illustrations) derived from the finalized Story Script (20-40 thumbnails in Value and Color Roughs).<input type="checkbox"/> Framing should represent film, TV, and/or game aspect ratio. Strong storytelling use of camera should be represented. <p>Your Thesis Book must be uploaded as a PDF to the “thesis book” area of your student Review profile.</p>



FINAL REVIEW ORAL PRESENTATION

Oral Presentation:	<p>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</p> <p>Dress for your review in a manner appropriate for presentation to potential investors - professionally.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Please dress appropriately.</p>
Online Presentation Requirements:	<p>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.</p>



6. PREPARATION TIMELINE

3 to 4 months before your review	<p>Read Visual Development 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>
2 to 3 months before your review	<p>Check graduate website for Final Review sign-up schedule</p>
6 weeks before your review	<p>Prepare your thesis book</p> <p>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>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>
3 weeks before your review	<p>Practice your oral presentation out loud and with a timer. Do this several times until you feel comfortable presenting it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review the online-specific requirements and test all of your equipment● Email your PowerPoint or PDF presentation to Online Graduate School
2 weeks before your review	<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
1 week before your review	<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	<p>Get plenty of rest the night before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● If you will be using a cellphone, make sure the battery is chargedHave a glass of water available during your presentationArrive at your Final Review on time and ready to goGreet your committee members prior to beginning your presentationListen to the committee's advice and take notesMaintain professionalism during the entire review
Following your review	<p>View your Final Review results here</p>

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.
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	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	http://www.academyart.edu/academics/visual_development/ http://online.academyart.edu/schools/visual-development
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.
Visual Development Review Showcase Page	http://gradshowcase.academyart.edu/schools/visual-development.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 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: Lindsay Langsdale
Visual Development Assistant
Tel: (415) 618-3924
Email: 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.