CalArts School of Film/Video MFA Thesis Packet 2019-2020

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- Return completed packet to the Film/Video office -

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CalArts School of Film/Video
MFA Thesis Guidelines

Preparing for the thesis takes some time. Please read these guidelines for specific information on preparation and requirements.

Students are expected to work with their committee members and Film/Video faculty and staff to design their thesis project's method, schedule and viable production and post production pathways. Additionally, the student is expected to convey to the committee any significant changes to the project's content, form, method or production schedule, and work with faculty and staff to update production strategies accordingly.

Thesis Committee

Students should meet with their mentor and other faculty early in the MFA-2 year to discuss ideas for thesis and develop a faculty committee. Each Film/Video program has different recommended timelines for thesis preparation and committee members.

Experimental Animation
3rd semester

Minimum 3 members
- mentor
- 2 additional regular FT faculty

Film Directing
3rd or early in 4th semester

Minimum 3 members
- mentor
- 1 additional FDP faculty
- 1 additional FDP or other Institute faculty

Program in Film and Video
3rd semester

Minimum 3 members
- mentor
- 1 additional PFV faculty
- 1 additional PFV or other Institute faculty

Preliminary Review

The Preliminary Review ("Prelim") is designed for the student to propose their MFA thesis project for evaluation and feedback from their faculty review committee. It's important that the Preliminary Review defines the standards by which the student and their committee will evaluate the completed thesis.

The Prelim is also the context in which the student will outline their project's technical pathway and use of Film/Video facilities. Both the academic and technical aspects of the proposed project will be discussed and evaluated for their artistic merit, scope and feasibility. The review is followed by the filing of a Preliminary Review Report, which is reviewed by the mentor and the Dean, and posted to the student's academic record.

Scheduling Your Preliminary Review

Once you and your mentor have agreed on your thesis proposal and on which faculty will make up your committee, please book your review date and time with the Film/Video office. If you do not book your review, a date and time will be assigned to you.

Once your review is booked, it cannot be rescheduled except in case of emergency.

Preparation for the Prelim

One month before the Prelim: Meet with faculty/staff & complete Technical Paperwork

In the month prior to the Prelim, students should arrange to meet individually with faculty and staff who manage the facilities they will use for the thesis, to help gain a clear understanding of the technical processes necessary to complete their thesis project.

Please bring these 3 documents to each meeting:
- Written description or summary of the proposed thesis project
- Facilities Supervisor Authorization
- Post-Production Questionnaire

Two weeks before the Prelim: Turn in Technical Paperwork
Please turn in the Facilities Supervisor Authorization and Post-Production Questionnaire to the Film/Video office.

One week before the Prelim: Provide review materials
Please provide your faculty committee with the items below, by email, link or faculty mailbox.

Experimental Animation	● Storyboard ● Written and visual materials that illustrate the proposed thesis
Film Directing	● project outline, synopsis or script ● line-item budget ● production timeline from prelim to completion ● optional: visual and sound references, sketches, or other materials
Program in Film and Video	● project outline, description, synopsis or script as appropriate ● line-item budget ● production timeline from prelim to completion ● any other relevant materials (optional)

Changes to Your Thesis

If there is a substantial change in the nature of your thesis or its size, you must discuss the changes with your mentor and present a new written proposal to your committee. A second Prelim may be necessary. Any substantial changes in the technology used or in the length of the project must be accompanied by a new "Facilities Supervisor's Authorization" form.

Graduation Review
The MFA Graduation Review occurs before the end of the student's last semester. Students present the thesis to the committee for evaluation and feedback. The committee determines if the project meets the expectations for completion.

For all programs, if the thesis is not complete at the scheduled graduation review, the student is not approved for graduation. A second review will not be possible until the thesis is complete and not before the beginning of the next semester.

For a thesis project to be considered complete, it must have a finished output with sound mix. In the case of a thesis finished on film, complete is defined as a final edit and mixed soundtrack. A silent thesis must be presented either as a film print or a finished output. An installation, performance or interactive project is defined as complete once it has been exhibited in a gallery or other public setting.

Students are required to leave a copy of their thesis project for the CalArts Library.

Review Reports

Either a staff note-taker or the mentor will create reports to document both the preliminary and graduation reviews as a record of the committee discussions and decisions. This will go to the Dean for review and be available via Hub Helper at the end of the semester.

(Rev. 10/1/2019)

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REVIEW INFO	
Student Name	
Program	○ Experimental Animation ○ Film Directing Program ○ Program in Film and Video
Year Level	
Review Date	
Thesis Project Title	
Have you completed the Post Production Questionnaire?	○ Yes ○ No
Have you completed the Project Assessment Checklist?	○ Yes ○ No
Mentor Approval Signature	

This form must be completed and brought to your mentor 2 weeks before your preliminary review date.

Bring a copy of your written thesis proposal, your completed Post Production Questionnaire, and your completed Project Assessment Checklist with you when you discuss your thesis project with the faculty or staff in the facilities that you will be using to complete your project. They need to sign below for their area, which will signify that you and they have agreed that what you plan on doing can be achieved as discussed.

If your thesis project changes, you need to follow the policy outlined for the Preliminary Review.

Completing this form does not guarantee availability or access to facilities and equipment.

MANDATORY AUTHORIZATIONS				
FACILITY	**SUPERVISOR**	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**	**NOTES**
Cage Equipment Lighting, Grip, Sound, Film, Video	Nathan Meier			
Production/Safety * See the Production/Safety Project Assessment Checklist	Justin Hogan			
Post-Production For FDP and PFV only * Not applicable to EA	Paul Kyle			
Sound Production	Craig Smith *or* Paul Soucek *or* Aidan Reynolds			
Sound Editing & Mixing	Craig Smith *or* Paul Soucek *or* Aidan Reynolds			

Facilities Supervisor's Authorization
for MFA Thesis Projects

OPTIONAL AUTHORIZATIONS

Check "Yes" or "No" on each facility.
If checking "Yes," you will need the signature of the corresponding supervisor.

FACILITY	SUPERVISOR	SIGNATURE	DATE	NOTES
Black & White (A404) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Gordon Kurowski *or* Edgar Jorge Baralt *or* Kye Potter			
Sound Stage (BB3) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Kye Potter *or* Edgar Jorge Baralt			
2D & 3D Stop Motion (BB4) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Pia Borg *or* Stephen Chiodo			
Videographics (C105C) ☐ Yes ☐ No	John Hawk *or* Gordon Kurowski			
Installation space (C113) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Gordon Kurowski *or* Edgar Jorge Baralt *or* Kye Potter			
Video Studio (C115) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Gordon Kurowski *or* Edgar Jorge Baralt			
Permanent Set (C117) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Gordon Kurowski *or* Edgar Jorge Baralt			
Digital Optical Printer (E19) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Charlotte Pryce *or* John Hawk *or* Nora Sweeney			
Darkroom (E20) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Charlotte Pryce			
Flatbeds (E26) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Charlotte Pryce *or* John Hawk *or* Nora Sweeney			
Optical Printer (E24) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Charlotte Pryce			
Film Scanning (E39) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Paul Kyle			
Oxberry (F102) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Charlotte Pryce			
F103 ☐ Yes ☐ No	Hillary Kapan			
Motion Capture / VR (F105) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Michael Scroggins			
Other: ☐ Yes ☐ No				

Updated 10/3/18

Post-Production Questionnaire
CalArts School of Film/Video
2019-2020

While completing this questionnaire is required, the purpose of this questionnaire is to get you thinking about the post-production process. Your answers to these questions may change as your thesis develops.

Name	
Program	☐ Experimental Anim. ☐ Film Directing ☐ Prog. in Film and Video
Phone #	
Email	@alum.calarts.edu
Project Type	☐ Animation ☐ Documentary ☐ Experimental ☐ Fiction ☐ Installation ☐ Mixed/Other (please describe):_____
Project Level	☐ MFA Thesis Project ☐ BFA Final Project ☐ None of the above (please describe) _____

Estimated running time for final output: _____ minutes

Backups

Please check with faculty and staff if you are unsure of safe backup protocol. Before beginning to work on your thesis, please be sure to budget for a production and AT LEAST one backup hard drive. Before buying, we encourage you to consult with faculty or staff regarding specifications.

Post Production Facilities

School of Film/Video access protocol to Digital Editing & Post Edit Suites requires you pass the required first semester editing class or prove basic proficiency to Digital Editing & Post Faculty/Staff. If you meet the requirements and have yet to use to the Digital Editing and Post Edit Suites, contact Paul Kyle (pkyle@calarts.edu).

Will you be using the Digital Editing and Post Facilities in the sublevel?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Will any part of your project be done using a home workstation?	☐ Yes	☐ No
If yes, please describe the following:		
Brand (e.g. 27" iMac, 2017)		
Graphics Card (e.g. ATI Radeon HD 4850)		
RAM (e.g. 8 GB)		
OS (e.g Mac OS 10.12)		
Video editing software & version (e.g. Final Cut Pro X 10.2)		

Digital Production & Editing

There are many cameras, resolutions, and file formats available to students within and outside of the School's resources and support. The student is responsible for understanding how the choice of cameras and capture settings impacts post production workflows. We encourage you to consult with Faculty and Staff BEFORE you shoot if you do not have sufficient experience or knowledge with the required workflow to complete your projects independently.

Using Head and Tail Leader is an important part of the Post Production process. See the "Using Standard Leader" document on the FVTech Support site here: https://goo.gl/RvDZUt. If unfamiliar, please talk with Faculty/Staff about the proper use of Head and Tail Leader.

Camera

What Camera(s) will/did you shoot this project with?	
Please describe the following...	
Resolution (e.g. 1080p)	
Frame rate (e.g. 23.98fps)	
Codec (e.g.H.264, ProRes, REDRAW)	

Video Editing Platform (NLE)

What software will you use to edit picture?

☐ Adobe Premiere Pro   ☐ Avid Media Composer
☐ Final Cut Pro X   ☐ DaVinci Resolve
☐ Other: _____

	Will there be VFX (visual effects) made outside of your NLE?	☐	Yes	☐	No
	If yes, what software are you planning to make your effects with?				
	Will there be subtitles created outside of your NLE?	☐	Yes	☐	No
	If yes, what software are you planning to make any titles or subtitles with?				
	Will you be doing color correction/grading outside of your NLE?	☐	Yes	☐	No
	If yes, what software are you planning to use for color correction/grading?				

Film Production & Editing

Select one:	☐ Super 16mm ☐ 16mm ☐ 35mm ☐ Super 8mm
Do you plan to do a negative cut of your film?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, are you using a FLEX file?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Will this FLEX file be used to create a cutlist while at CalArts?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Select one:	☐ Using a cut list from Media Composer (FilmScribe) ☐ A flatbed with workprint 　○ 16mm flatbed 　○ 35mm flatbed

Please note!

If you plan on shooting film and finishing on film, please consult with Nora Sweeney (nsweeney@calarts.edu) or Gordon Kurowski (gkurowsk@calarts.edu) before scheduling your telecine or film scan.

Will you be shooting film and finishing digitally?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Do you plan to use the Film/Video Cintel Film Scanner?	☐ Yes ☐ No

Sound Recording

Is there Sync Sound?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Single-system sound (recorded directly to camera)?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Was Automatic Gain Control (AGC) on or off?	☐ On ☐ Off
Double-system:	☐ Field Recorder (Model:_____) ☐ Other: _____
What microphone(s) did/will you use?	
Did you use a time-code slate (smart slate)?	☐ Yes ☐ No

Specifications of Your Source Audio Files

Sample rate:	☐ 48.048 kHz ☐ 48 kHz ☐ 44.1 kHz
Bit depth:	☐ 16 bit ☐ 24 bit

Please note!

If your audio sample rate is not compatible with your digital post-production frame rate, please consult with FVSound (fvsound@calarts.edu).

Audio Mix

Are you planning to have a mix done?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Will this mix be done at CalArts?	☐ Yes	☐ No
What system will you use to prepare your sound for mixing?	☐ Pro Tools ☐ Other: _____	
Do you know how to make an AAF/OMF and a QuickTime Movie file for a Pro Tools session from your project's editing software?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Final Color Grading , Layback, & Delivery

Color Grading

Are you planning to use a different software then your NLE to Color Grade?		☐ Yes	☐ No
	If yes, what software do you plan to use?		
	Do you know how to use this software?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Audio Laybacks

Once your sound mix and final picture is finished you're ready for a layback. The layback is the final step in the post-production process wherein the final sound mix is married with final picture.

You need to deliver your final color corrected video output without audio to the Sound Transfer Room (E104). Your video should be a full quality final export with titles, standard head leader, color correction, and must be silent. Either drop off your file in person to the Sound Transfer Room (E104) during operating hours or upload your file to the Submissions folder on FVCentral.

Once the layback process is completed, FVSound will provide you with a folder containing all the necessary files for: file-based exhibition (5.1), internet streaming (Internet Only), DVD/Blu-ray (5.1), and a FCPX library from which to create your own custom output files.

There is no fee for laybacks. For Final Output and Audio Layback please contact FVSound (fvsound@calarts.edu)

ProRes (HQ) File Master

Do you know how to export from your mastering software to a ProRes 422 (HQ) file as specified in the School of Film/Video House Codec (included as the last page of this document)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Internet Delivery *(e.g. Youtube, Vimeo)*

Are you planning to publish your final project on the Internet?	☐	Yes	☐	No
If yes, do you know how to compress your project for best results/ uploading?	☐	Yes	☐	No

An Internet version will be provided to you with your layback. If you need assistance with creating a master file or publishing to the Internet, please consult with faculty and staff.

DCP

DCP is a highly mastered format that ensures consistent playback across venues. Please do not attempt a DCP for delivery without consultation.

If planning to make a DCP, please consult with Gordon Kurowski (gkurowsk@calarts.edu) or Paul Kyle (pkyle@calarts.edu)

Are you planning to make a DCP of your final project?	☐	Yes	☐	No

Film: Final Delivery

Select one...

☐ 16mm Film Print ☐ 35mm Film Print ☐ Other: _____

Please note!

See the next page for the School of Film/Video House Codec and File Naming Conventions.

CalArts School of Film/Video "House Codec"

CalArts School of Film/Video has a "House Codec" to use for ingest or output when applicable:
Pro-Res 422(HQ), 1920x1080, 23.976 fps or 24 fps, 5.1 or 2 channel, 24 bit, 48k

EA and CA Students may also finish as:
Pro-Res 422(HQ), 1920x1080, 24fps, 5.1 or 2 channel, 24 bit, 48k

Our currently chosen container for digital video files is **.MOV**
Our currently chosen file type for digital audio is **.WAV**

For transferring audio files to CalArts School of Film/Video Sound our adopted file interchange format is **AAF** or, if unavailable, **OMF**

All Avid produced **.MXF** files should be converted on output to **.MOV** QTs

CalArts School of Film/Video Naming Convention

Standard Naming Convention (LastFM_MyMovieTitle_YYYYMMDD)

- Start with your capitalized last name, the capital first letter of your first name, then the capital first letter of your middle name. For example, if your name is *Steven Paul Jobs:* **JobsSP**

- Next, to add a project name or title, use an underscore, followed by an abbreviated project name without spaces. Capitalize each word of the project name or title. For example, if your project name is *My Movie:* **JobsSP_MyMovie**

- Then, to add a date, use an underscore, followed by the year, month, and day without spaces. For example, if the date is *April 1, 1976:* **JobsSP_MyMovie_19760401**

- Supplemental information can be added after the date, such as version, audio, frame rate, or codec information. For example, if your file is version 2, with LtRt audio, at 24fps, and Pro Res HQ codec: **JobsSP_MyMovie_19760401_v02_LtRt_24p_PRHQ**

CaLARTS

Fill out form **completely**. After discussing your project with your Mentor, have them **sign the form**. Then bring it, along with the documents stated below, to **Justin Hogan - Head of Production Services**. Email: justinhogan@calarts.edu / tel: 661.255.1050 ext 2633 / Office E-204C

Student's Name: _____

Student's Phone: _____ Student's Email: _____

Project Title: _____ Student's Program: _____

Year Level: _____ Is this a Thesis Shoot? Yes __ No __

Total Shooting Days: _____ Budget: _____

Camera package wanting to use: SR2 __ FS700 __ Red Raven __ Sony AS7MII __ Other: _____

Check out date: _____ Return date: _____

Mentor Name: _____

Mentor's Signature: _____

Head of Production Services Approval: _____

Does your project have any special effects, including special effects make-up?   Yes   No

If yes, please briefly explain **(you may attach another sheet for all answers**):_____
_____
_____

Will you be filming off-campus?   Yes   No

If so, please list addresses:_____
_____
_____

Will you be renting any camera/grip/lighting equipment from off-campus?   Yes   No

If so, please list vendors, reps name and contact info:_____
_____
_____

Will you be using non-CalArts students as actors or crew?   Yes   No

If so, please list names / contact info:_____
_____
_____

Will you be filming minors? (anyone under the age of 18)   Yes   No

If so, please list name/contact info her and follow the guidelines for hiring minors:_____
_____
_____

Will there be stunts? (slaps, kicks, punches, falls, etc.)   Yes   No

If so, please explain:_____
_____
_____

Will you be using prop guns or prop weapons? (including clubs, knives, etc.)   Yes   No

If so please explain:_____
_____
_____

Will you be using motor vehicles in your film or video? (including your own)   Yes   No

If so, please list:_____
_____
_____

Will you be using animals in your project? (including your own pet)   Yes   No

If so, please explain:_____
_____
_____

Have you received any CalArts funding for this project?   Yes   No

If so, please explain:_____
_____
_____

Is this project being shot during class time?   Yes   No

Will a generator be used for production?   Yes   No

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING ATTACHMENTS:

- Insurance Coverage Request Form(s) for equipment rental and/or location site
- A copy of your script, budget and shooting schedule.
- A list of actors and crew members

NOTE: Please give yourself enough time once submitting this form. Do not wait two to three days before your shoot. Two weeks is recommended. If any of the information submitted on this form changes prior to production, you are required to notify Justin Hogan, Head of Production Services.

_____   _____
Student Signature   Date

Project Assessment Checklist / 7-22-2018