

MFA Thesis Paperwork 2025-2026

The purpose of this paperwork is to get you thinking about your project and help you plan. Your answers to these questions may change as your thesis develops, so it's okay if you don't have the answer to every question yet; hopefully this form will help you better understand what kinds of details you should be thinking about and who you can go to with questions.

This form is a fillable pdf. Please fill out as much as possible in the document and then print it out to take around for signatures.

Section 1: Student Information

Full Name: _____

ID Number: _____

Phone: _____

CalArts Email: _____

Program: _____

Year Level: _____

Mentor Approval Signature: _____

*Your mentor must sign this **after** you have completed the rest of this paperwork.*

Submitted to the Film/Video Office: _____

To be signed by Miranda Stewart.

Section 2: Project Information

What type of project are you working on?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Animation
- ☐ Documentary
- ☐ Installation
- ☐ Music Video
- ☐ Narrative
- ☐ Solo Production
- ☐ Stop Motion
- ☐ Other (Please describe): _____

Project Title

What are your estimated filming dates?

What is your estimated budget?

Where do you plan to film (both on and off campus)?

Will there be any non-CalArts participants working on your project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Will you be paying anyone on your production?

This includes paying for gas money or any other additional deal points.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Will you be using any animals (including your pets)?

For example, you might plan on filming your dog play with a friend in the park.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will you be using any weapons and/or prop weapons or any kind of depiction of weapons, real or AI-generated? Either actual or composited during post?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will you be shooting inside a motor vehicle in your production?

Please mark "yes" if you plan to shoot a motor vehicle that may or may not be moving. If you're simply using a car to drive to location, you can check "No."

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will you be using smoke or fog?

For example, you may wish to use a haze machine for your production.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will you be using fire or pyrotechnics?

Examples include shooting a fireplace, lighting a candle as a prop, smoking, or cooking.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will you be working in or near water?

For example, check "yes" if there is a running bathtub on set.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will you be working with minors?

Mark "yes" if you plan to collaborate with any person under 17 years of age. This includes (but is not limited to) interviewing, recording, or hiring a person under 17 years of age as an actor, however big or small the role may be.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will your project involve any type of stunts?

For example, you may be filming a staged trip or fall.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Will your project contain any nudity or simulated sex?

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Will you be traveling internationally with the equipment?

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Section 3: Post-Production Information

The purpose of the questions below is to get you thinking about the post production process. Your answers to these questions may change as your thesis develops.

Backups

Please check with faculty and staff if you are unsure about safe backup protocol. Before beginning to work on your thesis, please be sure to budget for a production drive and AT LEAST one backup hard drive. Please refer to the “Production Drives, Backup Storage and Best Practices” article on 2 Pop Support for more information.

Post Production Facilities

School of Film/Video access protocol to Digital Editing & Post Edit Suites requires you to pass the required first semester editing class or prove basic proficiency in Digital Editing & Post. If you would like to use the suites but have yet to do so and would like an orientation, 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 laptop/workstation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, is your home system a Mac or PC?

- ☐ Mac
- ☐ PC

Digital Production and Editing

There is a wide range of professional cameras, resolutions, and video formats available for your projects, both within CalArts resources and externally. Your choice of camera and its settings—such as recording format, resolution, color profile, and frame rate—will have a significant impact on your post-production workflow. If you are unsure about any aspect of your workflow, you are strongly encouraged to consult Faculty or Technical Staff *before* you begin shooting to ensure compatibility and avoid costly errors.

Proper use of Head and Tail Leader is essential for smooth editing and archival workflows. Please refer to the “Using Standard Leader” guide on 2 Pop Support. If you are unfamiliar with this process, speak with Faculty/Staff for hands-on guidance before delivery.

Camera Information

What camera(s) are you using for this project?

Please list make/model, for example: RED Raven, Sony A7S II, Sony FX6, BMPCC 6K Pro

Image Capture Settings

What resolution will you record?

For example: 4K UHD 3840x2160, DCI 4K 4096x2160, 2K, HD 1920x1080

What is your intended finishing resolution and aspect ratio?

For example: 16:9, 1.85:1, 2.39:1

What frame rate will you use?

For example: 23.98 fps, 24 fps, 25 fps, 29.97 fps, 59.94 fps

Color Pipeline Note

If you are shooting in a log format (such as S-Log 3, C-Log, or ARRI Log-C) or capturing in RAW (such as REDCODE RAW or ARRI RAW), color grading and proper gamma conversion in post-production are essential for achieving your final look and delivery format compatibility. Be aware that RED and ARRI RAW footage require dedicated color management workflows, such as ACES or DaVinci color management, to handle unique color science and metadata correctly. Make sure you have a clear plan for managing LUTs and color transforms to ensure consistent results and consult your post team or faculty in advance if unsure.

Video Editing Platform (NLE)

What software will you use to edit picture?

- ☐ Avid Media Composer
- ☐ Adobe Premiere Pro
- ☐ DaVinci Resolve
- ☐ Final Cut Pro X
- ☐ 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? How are you planning to get these made?

Film Production: Will you be shooting film for any parts of your project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Film Production: Select One

- ☐ Super 8mm
- ☐ 16mm
- ☐ Super 16mm
- ☐ 35mm

Do you plan to use Film/Video film scanning services?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Sound Recording

Will there be Sync Sound?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Single-system sound (recorded directly to camera)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Double-System

- ☐ MixPre Field Recorder
- ☐ Other:

Describe model of field recorder:

What microphone(s) do you plan to use?

Do you plan to use a time-code slate (smart slate)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Audio Mix

Are you planning to have a mix done?

Required for MFA thesis films.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Who will do your mix?

☐ Film/video faculty or staff

☐ Another CalArts student

☐ Myself

☐ A non-CalArts mixer at an outside facility

What software 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, and Delivery

Are you planning to use a different software than your NLE to Color Grade?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, what software do you plan to use?

Audio Laybacks

Once your sound mix and final picture are 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 FVSound Helpdesk (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 FVSound Helpdesk (E104) during operating hours or upload your file to the Submissions/Laybacks folder on FVCentral.

Once the layback process is completed, FVSound will provide you with a folder containing all the necessary files for: ProRes for file-based exhibition (5.1), H.264 for internet streaming (Internet Only), an Archival Master ProRes file (5.1, LtRt, and Internet), and a DaVinci Resolve project archive from which to create your own custom output files.

There is no fee for laybacks, but your files will not be delivered to you until you pay for your mix session (\$18/hr). For Final Output and Audio Layback please contact FVSound (fvsound@calarts.edu).

Do you know how to export a ProRes 422 (HQ) Screening Master file as specified in the School of Film/Video House Codec (included at the end of this section)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Internet version

An Internet version will be provided to you with your layback. If you need further 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 Paul Kyle (pkyle@calarts.edu).

Section 4: Facilities Supervisor's Authorization

You will need to arrange meetings (in person or virtual) with each supervisor of a facility area you will use to complete your thesis. Please email them to book a meeting and be sure to include your written thesis proposal and any other relevant materials as links or attachments. Each supervisor will need to sign below for their area, which will confirm that you and they have agreed that what you plan on doing can be achieved as discussed. You only need to meet with supervisors of facility areas you will use.

If your thesis project significantly changes, you will need to have another Preliminary Review and follow these same steps with the new project idea.

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	Justin Hogan			
Production Sound	Alejandra Molina Rios, Alicia Maye, or Andrew Kim			
Post-Production Required for FDP and PFV, optional for EA	Paul Kyle			
Sound Editing & Mixing	Aidan Reynolds, Alejandra Molina Rios, Alicia Maye, or Andrew Kim			

Optional Authorizations

If you are planning to use any of these facilities, you must obtain the relevant signatures.

FACILITY	SUPERVISOR	SIGNATURE	DATE	NOTES
Black & White (A404)	Chaska Jurado or Kevin Hernandez			
Sound Stage (BB3)	Chaska Jurado or Kevin Hernandez			
2D & 3D Stop Motion (BB4)	Stephen Chiodo			
Videographics (E44/E45)	John Hawk or Paul Kyle			
Installation Space (C113)	Chaska Jurado or Kevin Hernandez			
Video Studio (C115)	Chaska Jurado or Kevin Hernandez			
Permanent Set (C117)	Chaska Jurado or Kevin Hernandez			
Digital Optical Printer (E19)	Charlotte Pryce or John Hawk			
Darkroom (E20)	Charlotte Pryce			
Flatbeds (E26)	Charlotte Pryce or John Hawk			
Optical Printer (E24)	Charlotte Pryce			
Film Scanning (E39)	Paul Kyle			
Motion Capture (E58)	Jonah Primiano			
Oxberry (F102)	Charlotte Pryce			
VR (F105)	Yaloo Lim			
Other: _____				