

MIDPOINT REVIEW GUIDELINES – ANIMATION AND VISUAL EFFECTS

(2D ANIMATION, 3D ANIMATION, GAMES, MODELING & VISUAL EFFECTS)

The thesis project provides the final assessment of the student's educational program. It is meant to be resolved, cohesive, and represent a major direction or development in the student's work. Like the provisional and final review presentations, the project should incorporate the totality of the student's academic experience to date and exhibit substantial development throughout the program. The thesis should demonstrate that the student has acquired a thorough knowledge and mastery in the discipline and is prepared to be involved in the field at an advanced level, exhibiting critical thinking and ability over and above the product and expertise expected at the undergraduate level.

PORTFOLIO PRESENTED

- Mandatory for students to present demo reel on DVD before the review committee.

Display Material

This is your Preproduction Artwork that you created and will hang up or display in some way before the start of your presentation. It should be large enough to be clearly visible from a distance of 6 feet. Professionally presented means, no folds or wrinkles, no torn edges, nicely mounted onto clean (and possibly thicker paper) paper. One-sided material so it can all be seen at once.

The visual component of the Midpoint Review will vary depending on the subject matter and production techniques of each proposal. Students should present work that:

1. Proves their technical and artistic ability to complete the proposed project
2. Illustrates the visual style, narrative, and concept of their proposal.

All artwork created for this proposal should be of **portfolio quality**. Items to present include (but are not limited to):

- **Class work/Professional work** (previous work that demonstrates the technical and artistic skill needed to complete your project)
- **Script** (If the project includes dialogue, a script should be included.)
- **Storyboard** (If required for the project.)
- **Concept Sketches** (initial brainstorming pages that illustrate the evolution of the proposal.)
- **Environmental/Scenic Design** (Designs of the environment and/or objects in your piece. Artwork that shows what a completed scene might look like.)
- **Color Breakdown** (If required for project.)
- **Reference Materials** (photographs, photocopies, technical articles, fabric swatches—whatever. Items/images that illustrate the content, emotional tone, color, or style of your project.)
- **Character Designs** (Finished designs for the main characters of the project. Rough sketches as well as color renderings. These should present multiple views.)
- **Character Turn-Arounds** (Required for both animation and modeling thesis projects)

- **Shot Breakdowns** (Required in order to provide project asset budget, timeline, feasibility and overall production organization.)
- **Animatic or Animation Reel** (Suggested as a complimentary aide for assisting in the story development)
- **VFX Tests** (Any VFX tests that you may have done)

PRESENTATION

WRITTEN

**** ATTENTION!** As of Summer 2007, we have changed the **FORMAT** required for your written proposals. Animation students (3D, 2D, VFX, Modeling, Games, etc) will need to submit **TWO** copies of their written proposal on CD. The CD submission will **REPLACE** the standard printed book submission. You should develop your written proposal as if you were going to print and bind it (8 ½ x 11), but save it as a PDF file and burn it onto two CDs (one for your Department, one for the Graduate School). Your Director may print out the document if necessary. Additionally, please limit the file size of your document, as they will be distributed to your Committee through email.

The Final Project Proposal is a brief, written document that includes an autobiography, resume, project proposal, and production schedule. All written materials should be double-spaced and checked for spelling and grammar. Two copies of the proposal need to be submitted (see above guidelines) - each copy must have the visual presentations organized in a professional manner. (Have someone other than yourself proof read your materials. Written presentations that are sloppily put together will be returned for resubmission.)

Cover Sheet

- Name
- ID Number
- Specialization
- Date and Time of Midpoint Review
- Title/Topic of Final Project
- Clear labeling – “Midpoint Review”

Autobiography

- Personal Narrative (Keep this brief. 1 page at most.)
 - Where are you from? What is your background? What personal/professional/educational experiences have influenced your pursuit of animation/modeling/special effects?
 - What are you studying at The Academy?
 - **What are your career/artistic goals?**
- Resume (1 page)
 - Personal contact information
 - Objective (optional)
 - Education
 - Professional Experience
 - Skills (software, artistic, and otherwise)
- Honors (optional--academic and professional)
- Storyboard
 - Include short descriptive alongside each image of basic action
 - Descriptive could include type of camera move (if any)
 - Descriptive could include dialogue (if any)

- Beat Boards
 - Beat boards are images that describe each major “beat” in your film
 - Should include EMOTION of characters in that scene
 - Need to convey that something is happening in the story
 - Moments of conflict or resolution
 - Can help define the type of relationship characters have w/ each other.
- Shot Breakdown
 - Using ShotPlanner software or something similar, break down each thing that has to happen in order to complete one particular shot.

PROPOSAL

- Abstract (1 page)
 - Summarize your project.
 - Briefly describe your concept and relate your narrative.
 - Briefly describe how you will produce your project.
 - What skills are you looking to showcase with this project? (Modeling, animation, compositing, etc.)
- Project Proposal (1 page)
 - Define the project in practical terms.
 - Describe your personal interest in this topic.
 - Present background on this topic if appropriate (attach reference/research materials, bibliography, filmography, etc.).
 - What form will your final project take? What deliverables will you actually present at your final review? List these items. Be specific.
 - Do you have plans to submit your finished piece to competitions, websites, etc.?

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

- Production Breakdown
 - List all deliverables for your final review.
 - List under each deliverable the assets and/or tasks needed to complete it. (Be specific and thorough – include such items as 3D models, textures, lighting, costumes, sound effects, actors, music, camera animation, etc. If your project is narrative, list each scene in your project that will require its own setup; shoot; etc., then list all items or tasks required for each scene. Base your projections on storyboards and sketches.)
 - List general tasks for your project (assembling final presentation materials, transferring animation to video, etc.)
 - If students decided to have assistance or some of the work (modeling, rigging, etc.) be done by other people, then the review committee needs to be notified and students need to consider when assembling the timelines.
- Realistic Timeline/Schedule
 - Plug the items listed in your Production Breakdown into a calendar that matches the length of your project (in most cases 3 full semesters).
 - **Edit the subject matter of your project to fit within your timeline.**
 - Should be in the form of a filled out Calendar. This should be figured out to the day! Each shot has a set amount of time needed to be completed. Be sure to not schedule on major holidays and don’t forget to schedule in breaks!
 - Make sure that time breakdown is Gantt style chart with overlapping data.

It would be a good idea to include a list of each for the project:

 - List of all things Characters that need to be created.
 - List of all Props and Items in Environment that need to be created.
 - List of all things that will need to be done with Effects.
 - List of all items that will create or cast light.

AREAS OF SPECIAL CONCERN

Either difficult in nature, or difficult with you're particular skill level or skill set.
(This can help us find you a direct study)

- Areas of Concern
 - List any technical, artistic, conceptual, or production elements of your project that might be of concern. What strategies could be used to solve these issues should they become a problem?

DEMO REEL

This is an edited compilation of your best work to date. Demo Reels shouldn't exceed 3 minutes!!
Ideally, quality over quantity...leave them wanting more, not nodding off!

An Ideal Animation Demo reel will include:

- Action showing off the principals of animation.
- Action showing knowledge and understanding of Weight.
- Acting both Pantomime Acting and Acting to Dialogue.
- Walk Cycle with Personality.
- Several different Characters with different body types.
- Present the final demo reel on DVD.

NOTE: This is a suggestion for students who have the interest and capability to create a website for yourself to demonstrate your work to potential employers.

ALSO, PLEASE NOTE

Here are a few other important things to note prior to your presentation.

- Arrive on time, and be prepared to begin your presentation immediately at the start time of your scheduled presentation time.
- Make sure to introduce yourself at the start of your presentation.
- Dress appropriately for your presentation. It is a professional environment. Dress as though you are going to a job interview.
- When you are being critiqued, take notes. These notes will help you create a better final project, and may assist you if you need to resubmit your midpoint.