

MIDPOINT REVIEW GUIDELINES – COMPUTER ARTS NEW MEDIA

The Midpoint Presentation assesses the student's educational program to date.

The Graduate Student must demonstrate both mastery in the selected discipline and have the readiness to be involved in the field at an advanced level, exhibiting critical thinking, feasibility of successful completion of the Final Project based on the student's abilities over and above the product and expertise expected at the undergraduate level.

Given the student has successfully completed the fundamental skills and courses required to reach midway into the program, The Midpoint Presentation represents the student's highest level of abilities that reflect the Program Outcomes: Concept Development, Aesthetics, Usability, Technical Skills and Professional Practices.

The final project topic and plan for execution requires innovation to express how audiences utilize information through interactivity. The topic must be rigorously researched to demonstrate that the student has acquired a thorough knowledge of the subject.

Also, based on portfolio, the student must self assess his or her skill set, revisit initial goals in the program and estimate the level of competency required to meet those goals. This overview will influence the graduate student's project plan to successfully complete the Final Project.

A dedicated timeline for project development should involve challenge yet it must be achievable in accordance with time constraints, just over a year's time for full time students, for example.

CANDIDATE PROJECT CATEGORIES

Final Project Proposals fall under the following categories and can be combined:

Documentary

- Accounts for a significant event, person, place, a cultural aspect/phenomenon or event in history

Storytelling

- Realistic or Fantasy related exploration that provides cues or choices to eventually meet a meaningful solution or raise social awareness

Educational

- Cultural, linguistic, political, physical, geographical, scientific, astronomical, medical, archaeological, spiritual, religious, etc. These include any projects based on new interactive media to teach a subject.

Real World Applications

- A complete tool designed as a new form of entertainment, community, sharing, learning, building, construction, etc.

Experimental

- Must be accessed and experienced through a usable interface

Installation

- Can be related to any of the topics above however, student is responsible for all equipment, labor and expenses including projectors, software and hardware.*

*Installation: Once approved at midpoint, a student must follow the graduate school and gallery coordinator's processes to reserve a gallery space to showcase thesis projects of this nature. However, all equipment is to be provided by and will be the responsibility of the student.

EXPECTED PROJECT SCALE

Must be achievable and demonstrated in Detailed Timeline.

Please Note: Thesis Proposal Development will be addressed in the required course CANM 643 Interactive Design and Concepts. The Graduate Student will have an entire semester to plan their proposal from concept development to final oral and written presentations.

THE MIDPOINT PRESENTATION

The Midpoint Presentation requires an ORAL PRESENTATION before the Midpoint Review Committee, a VISUAL PRESENTATION that is projected and designed to assist the committee through your presentation, a WRITTEN PROPOSAL and a PROOF OF CONCEPT. See The Graduate School for additional details for Midpoint Presentation.

The Midpoint Presentation should be planned as if it were a PITCH to a client. Professional Practices must be considered here. All aspects of the presentation will be measured, totaled and determined whether or not the project is adequately convincing. If so, the student will be considered a PASS to move forward into Directed Study. Every presentation will be provided feedback and recommendations by the Midpoint Review Committee are on a case by case basis.

Convincing Final Project Proposals require organization, much preparation of materials, research and practice.

Oral 20 minute presentation should include the following:

PROJECTED VISUAL PRESENTATION

- Supports Project Proposal—it will also include your PORTFOLIO.
- KEYNOTE or POWERPOINT software are acceptable but ideally, CANM students should utilize the medium that showcases interactive abilities such as FLASH
- Transitions between the Visual Presentation and Portfolio, as well as launching websites or interactive projects should be as smooth as possible, planned and rehearsed
- Must be LEGIBLE and CLEAR to the Midpoint Committee
- Use BULLET POINTS; long scrolling text is better left for print publications
- Text must be consistent and legible

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

- Provide short background/bio
- Supply Resume
- State career and educational goals at AAU

PORTFOLIO PRESENTED

The portfolio must be presented in both the Written Proposal as well as in the Oral Presentation.

- Project samples, approximately 8- 10 pieces, from studio classes taken, that demonstrate skills
- Can display work done outside of class – limit 2-3 pieces
- Video, banner, animation, website redesign, digital imaging
- Interactive Projects, such as websites, flash assignments, **MUST BE LAUNCHABLE**; screen shots are **UNACCEPTABLE**. The Committee must experience the student interactive projects to estimate the level of student competence.
- Collaborative projects **MUST CLEARLY** indicate which area/s the student is responsible and accountable, such as coding, designing look and feel, research, etc...

PROJECT PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The proposal will be measured according to the CANM Graduate Program Outcomes:

Concept

Produce a unique project beyond on at least one dimension:

- Address a real user need currently unavailable
- Implement novel ways for user interaction with content
- Address a relatively unexplored content area that would engage users interactively

Well researched

- Understands domain/topic area of project
- Thorough competitive analysis
- Accuracy of content to target audience
- Relevancy of content to target audience

Proof of concept or end product with high user-system interactivity

- Technical feasibility
- Usability feasibility
- Student possesses the skills to execute proposed project
- Clearly stated level of technical execution (e.g., real product vs. interactive prototype)

Technical Ability

- Skill level and feasibility to carry out plan

Aesthetics

- Effective Visual Communication

Usability

- Description of Intended Audience
- Usability Evaluation Plan

Professional Presentation Skills

- Clearly, articulated concept
- Organization
- Portfolio
- Dress Professionally
- Do not READ the ENTIRE Presentation as this is considered unacceptable, and the audience will lose interest.
- All GRAMMAR and SPELLING for Visual Presentation, Portfolio Samples and Written Proposal must be flawless. Hire an editor as the Writing LAB provides language services but not editing services. See the department administration for a list of editors.

THE WRITTEN PROPOSAL must include the following:

- (1) A Cover with name of Project, Tagline, Student Name (formal and any nickname in parenthesis), ID, Semester and Date of Presentation.
- (2) Spiral binding or any permanent binding.
- (3) A Table of Contents
- (4) Page Numbers
- (5) An Autobiography
- (6) A Resume: Include contact information such as phone and email address.
- (7) Portfolio: Provide a page or title that introduces the Portfolio. Placement of Portfolio should follow the Resume. Resume and Portfolio could be placed either at the beginning of the Proposal or to conclude the Proposal (in the latter case, placement should appear before the Bibliography).

Portfolio should include at least 10 screenshot examples of work relevant to the thesis project proposal. Work created outside of the AAU is limited to 2-3 pieces.

- (8) The Project Title and Abstract: Provide a description of the project. Encapsulate the final project in one page or less. Address the project purpose and overall intent, the target audience, the user need, etc...
- (9) A Statement of Interest: In addition to the student's reasons to pursue the topic of choice, there should be indication of both past experience and current skills as well as future goals in the industry. It's advised that the student foregoes self evaluation in terms of current skills and assess achievable skills that challenge, yet meet the rigor of the final thesis proposal and The Department Outcomes successfully. Given this step, the Statement of Interest will cover both subject matter and approach to meet personal goals.
- (10) A detailed proposal of the final project, well thought out & specific; projected stages of development from initial concept, need, research findings, competitive analysis, target audience, personas, contextual material, parameters, any materials that demonstrate how the student envisions the project to behave; how the user responds. The latter could be shown in form of flow diagrams, user scenarios, storyboards, sitemaps, etc...
- (11) Optional: measurable or theoretical data such as surveys, tables, charts, Venn diagrams, focus group summary, etc... as support to final project proposal.
- (12) Any sketches, and or photos that explain the project visually and with conviction are encouraged.
- (13) Provide technical specifications for optimal target audience access
- (14) Proposed medium/media
- (15) Prospective usability research methods and planned iterative cycles of usability testing
- (16) Mood boards, general look and feel components such as color, type, layout
- (17) Inspirational resources that relate to and showcase possible project design directions.
- (18) Directed Study Outline
- (19) Detailed Timeline: Depict how the overall project development will ensue for the project development from start to finish. Present course selections and processes such as, Directed Study, Usability Testing, IRB considerations, in sequence within the timeline.
- (20) Include Bibliography associated with cited research
- (21) Credit text and images used in the proposal
- (22) Students are responsible for clear communication, proper use of grammar and correct spelling.