

Thesis Exhibition

Format, Defense, Final Submission, Guidelines, and Best Practices

Format

The UWM Graduate School determines the standard format for completed MA theses. If this format is not followed, graduation may be delayed. It is therefore important for students to familiarize themselves with these requirements as soon as possible.

Due to the Graduate School requirements for final thesis submission, students pursuing the Curatorial Track MA in Art History will compile their thesis paper into two separate formats: the exhibition catalog for publication and distribution during their exhibition run and the final thesis for submission, which will take the form of a typical paper. For the full list of requirements, including instructions for spacing, font, margins, page numbering, tables and figures, appendices, etc., consult the Graduate School's website: <https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/thesis-dissertation-formatting/>

Students are **required** to attend the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Workshop.

Page length of the thesis will vary depending on several factors: the topic itself (e.g., some topics require more extensive literature reviews), citations, etc. Generally, the main text of a UWM Art History MA thesis exhibition catalog will comprise 25-30 pages in length.

The Graduate School does not dictate the citation format for MA theses. An advisor may have preferences where the use of footnotes or endnotes are concerned. Whatever the format it must be employed consistently throughout. Students should use the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style or the particular style guide preferred by the thesis advisor.

Catalog Format:

Cover (with UWM logo)

Title Page

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Thesis Exhibition Text (broken up into chapters, sections, or essays)

Exhibition Checklist (this can be illustrated or not, though you should consider including images of figures you reference in your text)

Bibliography / Works Cited page

Note that there are two approval stages for the thesis exhibition catalog text. The additional requirements are to ensure sufficient work has been demonstrated to move forward with the exhibition.

Approval of text:

A solid draft of your thesis exhibition catalog text and all other written materials should be submitted to your Advisor and 2nd reader by December 1st or May 1st the semester before your exhibition dates. This draft must be approved by both readers before the end of the semester for your exhibition to continue. This draft is subject to the same evaluation categories listed below.

1. **Approval as submitted:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend approval. The exhibition continues as scheduled.
2. **Approval with minor changes:** Both the advisor and/or second reader recommend minor changes. If changes are agreeable to the student and advisors, changes are made and the exhibition progresses. If not, a compromise must be reached, changes must be made, or the exhibition does not progress.
3. **Major changes:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend major changes. In this instance, a student may be advised either to not to print a catalog, transition the project into a traditional thesis paper, or not progress with the exhibition as planned. In consultation with both advisors, and if need be the Director of Graduate Studies, the student shall either make the changes and incorporate them into the catalog in the time before the opening, make alternate arrangements to create a brochure or other didactic material in a shorter format than a catalog, or alter the project under the guidance of the advisors.
4. **Rejection:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend rejection. A 3rd reader is selected in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. A decision by a majority of the three readers is binding. This may result in not having a catalog for the opening reception and/or cancellation of the exhibition.

Approval of catalog for printing:

Your thesis exhibition text and catalog layout must be approved by both your Advisor and 2nd reader before it is sent for printing. There are four general outcomes of this evaluation listed below. Note that your catalog text will have already been approved by your advisor and 2nd reader by the end of the semester prior to your exhibition dates.

Note that this should not be the first draft of your catalog submitted to your advisor for review, if it is, it is unlikely it will be approved without major changes. If rejected, your exhibition will not be allowed to continue.

1. **Approval as submitted:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend approval.
2. **Approval with minor changes:** The advisor and/or second reader recommend minor changes. If changes are agreeable to the student and advisors, changes are made and

resubmitted to both readers for approval before printing. If not, a compromise must be reached, changes must be made, or the catalog is not printed.

3. **Major changes:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend major changes. In this instance, a student will be advised not to print a catalog. In consultation with both advisors, and if need be the Director of Graduate Studies, the student shall either make the changes and incorporate them into the catalog in the time before the opening, or make alternate arrangements to create a brochure or other didactic material in a shorter format than a catalog. If the advisors recommend the latter and the changes are agreeable to the student, the student shall incorporate those changes into the final submission to the Graduate School.

4. **Rejection:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend rejection. A 3rd reader is selected in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. A decision by a majority of the three readers is binding. This may result in not having a catalog for the opening reception and/or cancellation of the exhibition.

Defense

The student must pass an oral defense of the thesis exhibition. The student will be examined by both the advisor and 2nd reader. The student must receive approval from the advisor in order to schedule the defense. For the thesis exhibition, the defense is typically scheduled during the course of the exhibition's display and takes place in the gallery. The defense must be scheduled in consultation with the advisor, the 2nd reader, and Mathis Art Gallery staff, and must take place by the deadline provided by the Graduate School. **It is essential that students know the defense and submission deadlines to graduate on time.** Please check the Graduate School website for more information.

During the defense, students are generally required to give a brief discussion of the scholarly significance of the thesis. This is followed by questions from the advisor and 2nd reader. The defense length is a minimum of 1 hour. Students must bring a copy of the thesis to the defense.

Immediately following the defense, the advisor and 2nd reader will decide whether to approve the paper as submitted, approve with minor changes, request major changes, or reject. Remember, this applies to the final submission of the thesis exhibition to the Graduate School, not the printed catalog. Additional changes may be required to meet these final submission guidelines.

1. **Approval as submitted:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend approval. Any necessary changes are made by the student before final submission to the Graduate School.

2. **Approval with minor changes:** Both the advisor and/or the second reader recommend minor changes. The student must make the recommended changes, secure both advisors' approval, and make final submission to the Graduate School within the deadlines set by the Graduate School.

3. **Major changes:** The advisor and/or second reader recommend major changes. The student must make the recommended changes, secure both the advisor and 2nd reader's approval, and make the final submission to the Graduate School. Under the guidance of the advisors and if need be the Director of Graduate Studies, the student may be required to postpone his/her graduation date.

4. **Rejection:** Both the advisor and second reader recommend rejection. A third reader is selected in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. A decision by a majority of the three readers is binding. Under the guidance of the advisors and if need be the Director of Graduate Studies, the student must postpone his/her graduation date.

Final Submission Format

In order to make final submission to the Graduate School, the contents of a successfully defended thesis exhibition must be ordered as follows:

Preliminary Pages:

- Title page – required
- Abstract page - required
- Copyright page - optional
- Dedication – optional
- Table of Contents – required for all except creative works
- List of Figures – required if figures appear in thesis
- List of Tables – required if tables appear in the thesis
- List of Abbreviations – optional
- Acknowledgements – required if permission to reproduce copyright material is necessary
- Frontispiece (illustration) or Epigraph (quotation) – optional

Main Body:

- Main text
- References
- Appendices – optional

Best Practices

The completion of a successful MA degree requires careful planning and attention to detail. Students should begin planning a degree path shortly after arrival in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. While that path may change, it is essential to understand all degree requirements as soon as possible.



College of Letters & Sciences

Department of Art History

During their second semester, it is recommended that students select a primary thesis advisor. Students work with the primary advisor to set specific objectives and deadlines for the completion of the thesis. Regular communication with the primary advisor is essential for the successful completion of a thesis.

Students should provide at least two weeks for primary and secondary faculty advisors or editors to provide feedback on a draft.

Students are strongly encouraged to share drafts with fellow Art History graduate students or to consult with the UWM Writing Center.

Funding:

If you have not already received a Hayes Award for research, you are **required** to apply for the Hayes Award in order to assist with expenses related to the exhibition, among them the cost of loans, installation, display, catalog printing, creation of didactic materials, and any final research needs. Students who fail to submit applications for the Hayes Award will not be eligible for financial assistance from the Department and will forfeit their minimum \$600 exhibition award.