

GRADUATE FILM PRODUCTION THESIS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Revised May 2007

As a candidate for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Film Production from Boston University you must complete a Thesis Film project. This document describes thesis projects and how the Thesis Committee and your First Reader will review and assess your progress.

Thesis Projects

To encourage collaboration and to allow you to pursue specific interests and talents discovered during your first two semesters, the film production faculty has delineated four distinct ways in which you may satisfy your thesis project requirement. You may choose to do your thesis project work as a: *1) Director, 2) Producer, 3) Director of Photography, or 4) Editor.*

Directors create an original thesis film of no longer than 28 minutes duration. If for logistical or aesthetic reasons you wish to produce your thesis project on video, you must first receive permission to do so from the Thesis Committee (Film Production faculty) as part of your Thesis Proposal (below). Access to video equipment may be restricted.

Producers, DPs, and Editors must complete certain required courses beyond the basic production sequence and demonstrate an affinity for the chosen role in order to elect one of these thesis options. DPs must take FT593 Cinematography and FT527 Lighting. Editors must take FT502 Sound Design and FT565 Digital Editing. And Producers must take FT552 Line Producing. Producers, DPs, and Editors work on two qualified films, one of which must be a thesis film, for thesis credit.

Upon acceptance of your Thesis Proposal (below), you will receive \$1,000 towards completion of your thesis. All other thesis funding is your responsibility.

The Thesis Committee & First Reader

The Thesis Committee is made up of the full-time Film Production faculty. Upon acceptance of the thesis proposal (below) you will be assigned a First Reader from among the committee who will be chiefly responsible for overseeing your thesis project, indicating when you are ready to proceed from one stage of your project to the next. Although you will consult with your First Reader throughout all stages of the thesis, you are encouraged to seek out additional support and feedback from other faculty, including faculty outside of Film Production.

First Year Review

At the end of your first year, the Thesis Committee reviews a selection of your work to assess your progress and to determine your suitability to begin, and appropriate direction of, your thesis. The possible outcomes of the First Year Review include **Clearance** to begin the thesis, **Conditional Clearance** pending some remedial and/or additional work, or **Termination**, in the unlikely event that you have not demonstrated adequate progress towards a successful thesis in the first year. You will be informed of the results of the First Year Review by mail and email.

Thesis Proposal

If cleared to begin your thesis, you submit a written Thesis Proposal early in your third semester, which must be accepted by the Thesis Committee. If accepted you will be assigned a First Reader and may begin the Thesis Project.

The proposal to **Direct** a thesis film includes a complete script, or a detailed treatment for a non-fiction film, and a **reflective statement** of goals and objectives for the thesis project, which places it in an appropriate context of ideas and related work. Explain why you want to make this film and how you intend to go about making it in a way that reflects your personal filmmaking vision and your goals as a filmmaker. In addition, describe any unique technical or logistical requirements of the project, such as permissions, travel, special effects, etc. If for logistical or aesthetic (but not financial) reasons you wish to shoot your thesis film on video, you must provide a suitable rationale in the Thesis Proposal.

Producer, Director of Photography, and Editor thesis candidates identify the films they plan to work on and describe their preparation for their chosen role, including coursework and other relevant experiences. They also provide a **reflective statement** to define and contextualize their goals and approach in relation to that role. For example, DPs and Editors might include a discussion of films and/or film criticism from which they draw inspiration and describe what they hope to accomplish as a result of the thesis.

The Thesis Proposal must be typed, double-spaced, and the cover sheet must include the following:

- Your name & BU-ID
- Local Address, Phone & Email
- Thesis Option (Director, Producer, Director of Photography, or Editor)

The Thesis Committee will schedule a meeting to discuss Thesis Proposals with each candidate. You must distribute copies of your written proposal to each member of the Thesis Committee in advance of this meeting. Be prepared to present an oral summary of your proposal and answer questions about your project and goals at the meeting.

The Thesis Committee may **Accept** the Thesis Proposal, **Conditionally Accept** the proposal, pending revisions, or **Reject** the proposal, in which case you must submit a new proposal. If accepted, you will be assigned a First Reader with whom you will begin working to develop the thesis through all stages to its completion. You will be informed of the results of the Thesis Proposal by mail and email.

Changes to the Thesis Project

Any major change to the nature of the project or a change of thesis category must be negotiated with your First Reader, and may require a new or revised thesis proposal, subject to approval of the Thesis Committee, before you may continue.

Thesis Progress

The Thesis Record document, available separately, provides additional information about specific requirements of each thesis option and serves as a record of your progress towards completion of your thesis. Fill out the information at the top of the appropriate Thesis Record and make a copy of it for your First Reader to put on file. Keep the original, and use it to collect the signatures of your First Reader at each required stage of your thesis. Do not lose this record, as it will validate your progress as you complete your thesis project.

It is your responsibility to maintain contact with your First Reader and present your work in progress through all phases of the thesis. Please keep in mind that some faculty may be less available during summers and at other times. You must plan and schedule your thesis accordingly.

Equipment reservations and other thesis-related forms, such as Risk Management letters, must be signed or otherwise authorized by your First Reader.

Final Thesis Review

Upon completion of all thesis requirements with approval of your First Reader, you submit the Thesis Project along with relevant supporting materials, **including the original thesis record form**, to your First Reader who then schedules a Final Thesis Review with the Thesis Committee. If the committee decides that the thesis is not acceptable or not complete, you may be called to a meeting with the committee to discuss the results of the review and any required changes to the Thesis. The results of the review shall include **Pass**, **Provisional Pass** pending minor revisions, **Unacceptable** requiring major revisions or a new thesis, or **Failure** in the event that a candidate has not met minimum thesis requirements including academic and professional conduct. You will be informed of the results of the Thesis Review by mail and email.

When you pass the Thesis Review the Thesis Committee signs the Thesis Record as certification and your First Reader submits a passing grade (or grade change for incompletes) for your thesis. Assuming that you have fulfilled all other requirements for graduation, you will receive the M.F.A. degree at the next scheduled graduation in September, January, or May. It is your responsibility to observe all deadlines and requirements for graduation.

Additional Conditions

The manner in which you carry out your thesis work is just as important as the finished project. If you act in bad faith, mistreat equipment or break rules governing its use, ignore deadlines, violate the code of academic conduct including its provisions on plagiarism, or act in a non-professional manner, you may be dropped from the program and not awarded a degree.

Failure to pay tuition and fees will result in loss of access to production and postproduction facilities.

Summary Thesis Timeline

First Year Review	End of 2 nd semester
Thesis Proposal	Early in 3 rd semester
Thesis Progress Reviews	As determined by First Reader
Final Thesis Review	Upon completion of all thesis requirements at first scheduling opportunity
Graduation	First available date following successful Thesis Review or approval of required revisions