

Grad Written Thesis Peer Review Guidelines

First, make an agreement with your peer review partner about how much time you will spend with each others' writing, so that your investment will be equitable. **Second**, ask the author if there are specific elements on which you might decide to focus. **Third**, answer the following questions in a separate document. You can also make notes on the paper itself. Use specific examples to make your advice as useful as possible.

Content

- In the abstract and/or introduction, underline the main points of the thesis.
- Summarize them in a few written sentences, reflecting back what you've read.
- Are these points clear, nuanced, and well defended throughout the text?
- Are new terms clearly defined?
- Are the author's works/projects described clearly enough so that you can picture them?
- Is their meaning interpreted convincingly?
- Has this work been placed in an illuminating context (cultural, theoretical, historical, art-historical or otherwise)?
- Has the author used sources effectively to support their ideas? Is documentation thorough and correctly formatted?
- Are there additional areas of inquiry or references you feel the author could fruitfully pursue? Conversely, does any of the content seem tangential or work against meaningful interpretation?
- If there are images incorporated into the draft, are they clearly situated and contributing to the meaning of the text?

Organization

- Is the introduction clear and compelling? Does it convey the relevance of the author's work and ideas in an engaging way?
- How is the paper constructed/organized? Is the structure appropriate to the work? Is it logical, non-repetitive, functional? If there is no outline or table of contents, sketch one out, based on what's here.
- Are there clear transitions between chapters, and within those chapters, between paragraphs?
- Do ideas progress clearly and logically from one sentence to the next?
- How does the paper conclude? Does the conclusion leave you wanting more (in either positive or negative ways), speculating, convinced, satisfied, intrigued?

Style

- Check spelling, syntax, verb tense, punctuation, etc. (Don't feel obligated to line edit the whole thesis, but if you observe writing habits that inhibit comprehension, make note.)
- Evaluate the "rhythm" of the writing. Do the sentences "flow"? Highlight examples of especially effective sentences.
- What is the general tone or voice of the paper (scholarly, accessible, personal, objective)?
- Who is the intended audience? Is the language appropriate to the topic and to the artist or designer's work?