

GUIDELINES FOR FIRST YEAR REVIEW

PHD in Media Study

The PhD in Media Study is a practice oriented degree with the expectation of a final submission consisting of a fully realized professional project and a rigorous historically and theoretically grounded written dissertation. The project and the dissertation taken together are expected to make a significant contribution to the field through innovation in theoretical framework, technique, historical analysis, and creative production of works that operate in a “more than discursive” manner. That said, it is understood that each student will come with a varying degree of background, interest and expertise across these domains. Thus, the expectations and evaluation of each student will vary in weight across the spectrum of the written and the made work. While the configuration of practice will vary with each student’s research agenda, in all cases we expect practice to be put into action in such a way that it produces knowledge and insights that text-centric activities alone cannot create. It is expected that students take on the challenge of defining their own place within different practice oriented methods and approaches.

There are several key moments of evaluation and forward progression over the course of the PhD student’s matriculation:

End of first semester (Graduate Seminar I); First Year Review; Qualifying Exam; Doctoral Defense.

At each juncture, the faculty will evaluate the practice and the critical context for the practice in varying percentages.

Faculty teaching Graduate Seminar I evaluate the end of first semester presentation (Grad Sem I for PhD).

The entire DMS faculty evaluate the First Year Review.

The qualifying exam is evaluated by the Qualifying Exam Committee; the final Defense is evaluated by the Doctoral Committee.

The Director of Graduate Studies may observe the qualifying exam and doctoral defense and evaluates (approves / denies) the final submission of project and dissertation.

Within these expectations we recognize a broad diversity of student profiles that can include, but are not limited to:

- the maker’s maker
- the theorist / historian (primarily discursive and critical where actual production is in supporting role)
- the technical innovator
- the tinkerer / hacker
- the situated ethnographer
- the social / tactical media practitioner
- the collective / organizer / networker
- the media activist

- the community engaged maker
- the hybrid

First Year Review (PhD)

Research Statement (3 pages, roughly 750 words) submitted one week in advance. Please include working bibliography (not part of the total word count).

Presentation (15 minutes)

Across these diverse practices and approaches it is expected that each student:

- articulate 3-5 key research questions (significantly refined since PhD Sem I Final presentation)

- establish historical context and precedents
- establish theoretical sources and references

To varying degrees depending on method and approach:

- present practical component / process (technical, artistic, performative, material, experimental design, etc.)

Criteria for evaluation: the following criteria may be applied in varying percentages based on profile of student (see above)

- degree of refinement / focus of the research questions
- significance of research questions (has the student identified gaps or need for refinement / innovation in the prior discourse / practice / precedents)
- ability to break down the research questions through specific historical / theoretical context and analysis
- ability to meaningfully connect the practical and historical / theoretical
- robustness of practice (degree of productivity, extent of iterative process / trial and error, exhibition / presentation)
- quality, craftsmanship, execution, conceptual integrity / rigor of the finished work (or work in progress)
- creative contribution, novelty, originality, significance of the made work
- written and verbal ability; presentation skills
- ability to design and structure effective presentation within time limits