

# SOPHOMORE PORTFOLIO REVIEW



**2021**  
**HANDBOOK**

2021 PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION DEADLINE

# JUNE 6, 8:00 PM PSU.GD/SPR

**NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED**

Submissions open June 3, 9:00 am

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## What is the Review?

### AN INTRODUCTION

In order to take upper division courses in graphic design at PSU, all students are required to meet all prerequisite requirements. This includes both those courses which are listed as prerequisites of the BA/BS degree or the BFA degree and the Sophomore Portfolio Review (SPR) itself. If students have not passed the Review, then *regardless of experience or class standing* they are not qualified to take 300- or 400-level courses. Transfer students who are ready to begin third and fourth year requirements must also pass the Portfolio Review. The purpose of this Review is to ensure that students are learning skills required for successful completion of the program.

Portfolios are reviewed by members of the graphic design faculty according to the Evaluation Criteria (at the end of this booklet), and are assigned scores of 1 to 4, with 2–4 representing a passing score.

*Do not assume that having received good grades in classes assures a passing score in the Review.* Course grades are determined by factors such as attendance, participation, quizzes and tests, reading assignments, process work, exercises, and software skills, as well as the creative work. Portfolio pieces for the Review, however, will be judged according to their own merits, without reference to all the factors named above.

The Sophomore Portfolio Review is based primarily on creative performance. Supporting documentation such as a the writing sample, contextual statements, and process notebook contribute to the evaluation as secondary elements. The focus of the Review is on the totality of the projects presented, with emphasis placed on the ability to demonstrate the expertise needed to be successful in upper-division courses.

### SCORING

0	1	2	3	4
Not Enough to Evaluate No pass	Below Average No pass	Evolving Skills Pass	Above Average Pass	Advanced/ Senior Level* Pass (rare)

\*The PSUGD Program on a whole uses a 0-5 scale, but we do not give out 5s for the Sophomore Review.

# Submission Requirements

## Portfolio

### 7 Projects + Process

The portfolio itself will consist of seven of your best design projects. These seven projects will likely come from our 200-level courses, however you are welcome to incorporate self-driven or freelance work. Work that consist of multiple parts, like an identity system, or campaign, counts as one project.

Of the seven, one must be from DES 200 and show your page layout skills (if you are a transfer, a multi-page document that shows both page layout and type detail / hierarchy is what we're expecting). Also, from the seven projects, pick one that you will show process for. The process should show solid research, and breadth and depth at each stage in the design process. It should show the steps that were done from beginning to completion in a cohesive and elegant way.

The portfolio itself should also be well-designed and treated with care. It should clearly demonstrate your skills in layout and image-making. Images should be crisp, type should be refined, and craft should be skillful. How you present work matters—if a reader cannot separate projects from one another or clearly tell the form of a project from photos, the work won't shine. Choose work that best demonstrates your ability to meet the portfolio criteria and represents a variety of skills.

Remember, there must be seven projects. Fewer than seven will result in an automatic disqualification.

## Supplemental Materials

The supplemental materials are also a required part of the portfolio submission, and you will upload these files separately.

### 1. PDF Writing sample

The writing sample should be a rationale for one of your projects (typeset, approx. 300 to 400 words long) from DES 224, 225, or 254. Demonstrate your critical thinking skills regarding your work, explaining your design decisions. If you do not have a rationale, there are a few examples of what one looks like on the psu.gd website.

### 2. PDF of the complete page layout project

We want to be able to see your type detail in-depth, and so will require the full project PDF to be included as part of the supplemental materials.

### 3. PDF DARS/Transcript

All PSU students must submit a PDF copy of their DARS. For transfer students, we would like you to upload both your DARS and an unofficial copy of your transcript from your last attended school.

Remember, these are required parts of the portfolio submission. You will not be able to complete the online form if you do not have these parts.

## SOPHOMORE REVIEW CHECKLIST

### INFO SESSION ATTENDANCE

Watch the informational video and attend a mandatory info session. Dates are listed on psu.gd/sophomore or on page 4.

I have attended a session

### PORTFOLIO PDF

A final portfolio with: a table of contents, seven projects with descriptions for each, one project dedicated to page layout, and process for one of your projects.

I have my portfolio

<input type="checkbox"/>								
Cover with name & ID#	Table of contents	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Project 4	Project 5	Project 6 page layout	Project 7 plus process

### WRITING SAMPLE PDF

The wrting sample should be a rationale for one of your DES 224, 225, or 254 projects (typeset, approx. 300 to 400 words long). Demonstrate your critical thinking skills regarding your work, explaining your design decisions.

I have my writing sample

### PAGE LAYOUT PDF

Include a PDF of the project you selected for page layout demonstrating flowed text across multiple spreads with 2 spreads minimum

I have my page layout PDF

### DARS PDF

Print your DARS (and transcript for transfers) and include it in your portfolio so judges can check that all prerequisites have been taken. **Do not typeset or redesign your DARS.**

I have my DARS

# Preparation

## MANDATORY: Attend an Info Session

**Winter Term:** Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021  
Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021  
**Spring Term:** Tuesday, Apr. 6, 2021

Three Information Sessions are held prior to the Review to discuss the Review process. All students who want to participate in the Review **must** attend one of these sessions. These sessions give a thorough overview of what is to be expected, an opportunity to see examples of past portfolios, and info about accessing help from a variety of resources.

## Find a Mentor

Fill out the mentee survey online and get yourself a mentor! Your mentor will have already passed the Review and will be a junior or senior in the program. They can offer insight into how to get through the Review, show you their own portfolio, help you plan and strategize and be your guide through the next few months. Go to them if you have questions or need feedback.

## Critique & Revise

As you finalize your projects in your classes, you may receive final notes or critique for how you can expand or improve it. This can be vital when preparing for the Review. Many or all of your projects may need to be revised to pass the Review. Set up times with your

instructors during their office hours, plan critiques with other students, and check-in with your mentor to make sure you are making the proper changes to move forward in the program. Engaging in critique from a variety of sources is strongly suggested.

## Keep to a Schedule

Keep yourself accountable to a schedule, that will allow equal time and energy on all seven of your pieces. It is also important to take into consideration how much time it will take to actually assemble and finalize your actual portfolio.

## Select Work

Your portfolio must contain seven projects. The majority of your work will be from 200-level courses with an emphasis on conceptual and creative solutions. In the case of related pieces or campaigns (e.g. letterhead + business card + envelope), these are considered one piece.

Choose work that best demonstrates your ability to meet the portfolio criteria and represents a variety of skills. Refer to the evaluation page for requirements and evaluation criteria under the Process section. Faculty are available to help in the selection of work, but mentors and classmates can also be helpful.

## Label Your Pieces and Portfolio Correctly

**It is required that a cover page is included at the beginning of your portfolio with your name, contact information, and student ID number.** The second page of your portfolio should be a table of contents. The table of contents should list all pieces included in your portfolio by number, title, and the course for which the project was completed. Say which projects are for page layout and for your process. **At the beginning of each project, please include the number, title, class and a short description of the project.** This description should be concise (no more than two short/medium sentences) and address the project's main goals and themes, including your audience and conceptual solution.

## Compile Process Book

**Include a process book for one well-developed project of your choice that shows the steps from beginning to completion.** This should include some or all of the following: field research, academic research, visual research, notes, mind maps, readings on your subject, sketches, digital roughs (various rounds), mock-ups, materials experiments, etc. This gives insight to how you work, and the effort you put in. Choose a project that demonstrates this well—in other words one that shows in-depth research and the thought process that lead to your successful and unique design solution.

## Select a Writing Sample

Include a design rationale for a project from DES 224, 225, or 254 (typeset, approx. 300 to 400 words long). Demonstrate your critical thinking skills regarding your work and your ability to address the assignment in a notable way. Be sure to explain the “why,” rather than give a summary of “what.” Refer to the evaluation page for requirements and evaluation criteria under the “Written Sample” section.

## Sign Up & Submit

**The deadline for submitting your portfolio is Sunday, June 6, 2020 at 8pm.** Submit early—no late submissions will be accepted. Notices will be posted on psu.gd, social media, and in the weekly newsletter.

## Registration

You will need to register for the review online ([psu.gd/spr](https://psu.gd/spr)). After evaluations, your score will be sent electronically.

## Fall Classes

All students taking the review are restricted from registering for the 300-level classes until the outcome of the review. This hold is expected. Once you receive your score, the registration restrictions will be lifted and you can register for the 300-level design classes. We know how many students pass, and ensure enough spaces in DES 320, which is only offered once a year and required of all students in the program.

# Outcomes

0

**Not Enough to Evaluate**  
No pass

1

**Below Average**  
No pass

2

**Evolving Skills**  
Pass

3

**Above Average**  
Pass

4

**Advanced/Senior Level**  
Pass (rare)

## No Pass

### SCORES OF 0

Portfolios that are incomplete or do not provide enough material to evaluate are given a score of 0.

### SCORES OF 1

Portfolios receiving a score of 1 do not demonstrate critical skills and proficiencies necessary to perform successfully in upper-division coursework. Students who do not pass the Review are still fully supported in the Program; we encourage these students to meet with an advisor immediately following the review to put a plan in place for the future. Receiving a No Pass does mean that students are ineligible for 300-level required courses and will not be able to register for 300-level classes until they successfully pass the Review. For students who continue pursuing a graphic design degree after receiving a No Pass, it is recommended that they take or

retake specific courses to improve their portfolio. **No Pass portfolios generally indicate that the student's work will be improved best when supported by continued class structure (often through auditing class or two) and interaction with instructor(s), advisors, and classmates.** No Pass portfolios may be revised and resubmitted in the following year's Review for reconsideration.

## Pass

### SCORES OF 2 OR GREATER

These portfolios demonstrate critical skills and proficiencies necessary to perform successfully in upper-division courses. Students who pass may register for 300-level graphic design courses. Students who pass receive a score between 2 and 4. Do not aim for a 2, be safely above it. 4s are rare.

# Objectives & Conduct

Students of graphic design gain useful experience by compiling and presenting a graphic design portfolio. Portfolios are the primary tool used in the profession to evaluate and hire graphic designers.

Students will receive feedback regarding their overall body of work. This will be an online evaluation form outlining relative areas of strengths and weaknesses, based on the evaluation criteria found within this document. This feedback is a very important aspect of the Review, as a student's strengths and areas that need improvement are evaluated best by providing marks and commentary across a body of work. For example: reviewing an entire body of work may demonstrate strong typographic ability, but may reveal that similar color and compositional solutions are employed on multiple assignments.

Students work on their critical thinking skills by writing about their ideas and design process with regard to one piece of their own work or submitting an analytical rationale. This is crucial, as professional designers are expected to communicate effectively both orally and in writing about their work and design in general.

### STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Portland State's Student Code Of Conduct ([pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct](http://pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct)) aims to: "promote a campus environment that supports the overall educational mission of the University; protect the University community from disruption and harm; encourage appropriate standards of individual and group behavior; and to foster ethical standards and engaged citizens."

Any behavior that violates the student code of conduct will result in immediate dismissal/failure from the Sophomore Portfolio Review. This includes but is not limited to: obstruction or disruption of class or other university activities, harassment, **plagiarism (including copying of another's visual works or writing)**, cheating, threatening others, stalking, or any other illegal activities. We support a safe, equitable and inclusive environment for all of our students, faculty, and administrators.

**Students found to be in breach of the code of conduct will not pass the review, and will not be given any portfolio feedback.**

# Evaluation Criteria

	0	1	2	3	4
<p><b>WRITING SAMPLE</b></p> <p><i>Writing demonstrates critical thinking, analytical skills, and uses design vocabulary appropriately</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Writing skills need further development	Evolving skills: Writing skills are evolving but need to be pushed further	Above average: Writing skills are good	Advanced: Writing skills are advanced
<p><b>RESEARCH</b></p> <p><i>Uses multiple types of research (audience, competitor, academic, field, and visual research) is identified and gathered into a process book to inform the project</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Needs to incorporate more research	Evolving skills: Incorporates research but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Incorporates a good amount of research	Advanced: Incorporates advanced research
<p><b>PROCESS</b></p> <p><i>Uses a design process to develop ideas from conception to completion, exploring multiple directions at every stage</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Needs to further develop process	Evolving skills: Incorporates process to develop work and ideas but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Incorporates a good amount of process	Advanced: Incorporates advanced process
<p><b>COMPOSITION AND GESTALT (2D DESIGN PRINCIPLES):</b></p> <p><i>Use of scale, rhythm, proportion, unity, texture, emphasis, hierarchy, etc.</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Compositional principles need further development	Evolving skills: Compositional principles are evolving but need to be pushed further	Above average: Compositional principles are good	Advanced: Compositional principles are advanced
<p><b>COLOR:</b></p> <p><i>Use of color and color theory</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Use of color needs further development	Evolving skills: Use of color is evolving but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Good use of color	Advanced: Color-use is advanced

	0	1	2	3	4
<p><b>USE OF EXISTING IMAGERY:</b> <i>Ability to work with existing imagery</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Imagery needs further development	Evolving skills: Imagery is evolving but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Imagery is good	Advanced: imagery is advanced
<p><b>CREATION OF ORIGINAL IMAGERY:</b> <i>Creation of original graphics, photos, illustrations, collages, etc.</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Image-making needs further development	Evolving skills: Image-making is evolving but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Image-making is good	Advanced: Image-making is advanced
<p><b>TYPOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE:</b> <i>Working with text and text bodies, including structure, hierarchy, grid use, and technical formatting (kerning, leading, line wraps, etc.)</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Typography needs further development	Evolving skills: Typography is evolving but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Typography is good	Advanced: Typography is advanced
<p><b>EXPRESSIVE TYPE &amp; LETTERING:</b> <i>Expressive use of existing type or original letterforms</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Typography needs further development	Evolving skills: Typography is evolving but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Typography is good	Advanced: Typography is advanced
<p><b>CONCEPT:</b> <i>How ideas are communicated through design elements</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Concepts need further development	Evolving skills: Concepts are evolving but need to be pushed further	Above average: Concepts are good	Advanced: Concepts are advanced
<p><b>TECHNICAL AND HAND CRAFT:</b> <i>The craftsmanship of individual projects and the overall portfolio</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Craft needs further development	Evolving skills: Craft is evolving but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Craft is good	Advanced: Craft is advanced
<p><b>RISK-TAKING AND ORIGINALITY:</b> <i>Evidence of taking creative risks, pushing beyond safe forms, and developing original solutions</i></p>	Did not include enough to adequately assess	Below average: Creative risk-taking needs further development	Evolving skills: Creative risk taking is evolving but needs to be pushed further	Above average: Creative risk-taking is good	Advanced: Creative risk-taking is advanced

# FAQ

## Evaluation & Scoring

### Can I appeal my score on the Sophomore Portfolio Review?

Outcomes of the Sophomore Portfolio Review process are final. *Final Evaluation Scores are not subject to an appeal.*

### What if I turn in my portfolio late?

*No portfolio will be accepted after the specific date and times specified, without exception.*

### What if I am unable to make the portfolio drop-off time?

Turning in portfolios within the time listed is mandatory for all students, and no portfolios may be accepted late. Submitting online early before the deadline is your safest bet.

### How are portfolios evaluated? Are classroom/project grades considered?

Portfolios are judged from a holistic perspective considering the range of student work across the curriculum plus the wider body of contemporary graphic design. The School acknowledges that Sophomore work exists at a different level than that of truly experienced practitioners. However, for the sake of providing a realistic assessment of design work to-date, the bar for the Review is intentionally set high.

Although classroom grades incorporate aspects such as participation, attendance, etc., the overall quality of each portfolio is gauged according to its own merits. Those characteristics not directly related to the apparent strengths of visuals, concepts, etc. are not taken into consideration. Further revision and critique are strongly encouraged even for projects with high marks.

### How can I get everything done in time?

Preparing a portfolio can be very rewarding and enlightening, but it is also an extremely labor-intensive endeavor. Mastering one's time management, remaining open to diverse feedback from peers, and taking personal responsibility for one's performance are crucial qualities to foster and maintain throughout the process.

There are numerous channels and networks through which you can receive advice, feedback, and help. These include: faculty advising appointments; student mentors, online help groups; posts online at psu.gd; and casual support/feedback from other students, both those going through the Review and those upper-division students who have already passed the Review.

### What do I do if I don't pass?

It's OK! Work with your faculty advisor to come up with a plan will help keep you on track to graduate on time. Also, your advisor can help you figure out what classes to take next year to continue to fulfill degree requirements while also continuing to develop your skills moving forward.

### What if I have questions or concerns about my review feedback?

Contact one of your Graphic Design advisors. Bring your PDF portfolio to the meeting.

## Eligibility

### What classes do I need before I'm eligible for the Sophomore Portfolio Review?

You need all coursework that comes before the Sophomore Portfolio Review as listed in the course checklists and you must have earned a grade of C- or higher.

## Portfolio Contents

### How many projects are required?

Portfolios must include seven (7) projects, including one that includes typographic detail and flowed text across a minimum of 2 spreads. Do not include more or less than 7 projects. Students who do not meet the minimum number of pieces or do not follow instructions cannot receive a passing score.

### Do I need to include a project demonstrating page layout or type detail?

Yes. We need at least one project to gauge your skills using large amounts of text over multiple pages, with various hierarchies. You should have at one such project from DES 200. If unsure, ask a faculty advisor. You will include the piece in the PDF layout as well as a separate PDF of the whole booklet for detailed review.

### Do I need to photograph my work?

No. We suggest you only photograph your work if you feel you can execute it well. Otherwise, it can distract from the design you worked so hard on.

### Can I include anime or other cartoon characters within a project?

No. We want to see your original work—not drawings of someone else's drawings.

### What text is required for each piece?

Each piece should include: the title of the piece; a brief description; sources for images (illustration/photo) and text; the course number and instructor (if completed as part of a class).

### Do I need to include the same number of spreads for every project?

No. Include the number of spreads that is appropriate for the size and needs of each project individually.

### Do I need to include an art history paper?

No. Do not include anything from DES 290. The purpose of this writing sample is to see how you can evaluate and analyze your contemporary design work. We want you to submit a rationale from a project in DES 224, 225 or 254.

### Do I need a process book?

Yes. See "Required Preparation" for more about process book requirements.

### How do I include my DARS?

Please just include a PDF of your DARS from Banweb—do not alter or redesign it. The first person who looks at your portfolio will review your DARS to verify your prerequisites and grades.

### Do I need to include a photo/profile of myself?

No. In fact, we'd rather you didn't.

### What should be on the front of my portfolio?

Your full name. Please make sure we can read it, but also remember that this is like a book cover, so you can use this as a place to make a first impression.

# BFA Course Checklist

STUDENTS ENROLLED FALL 2017 TO SUMMER 2020

## First year

	COURSE N <sup>o</sup>	COURSE TITLE	OFFERED	PREREQUISITES
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 101	CORE: Surface	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 102	CORE: Space	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 103	CORE: Time	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 104	CORE: Digital Tools	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 105	CORE: Ideation	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 106	CORE: Intro to Visual Literacy	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 111	Design Thinking	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 120	Digital Design	F W S	ART 101
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 121	Intro to Type & Communication Design	F W S	ART 101 & DES 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	ARH 206 ♦	History of Western Art III	F W S	

## Second year

	COURSE N <sup>o</sup>	COURSE TITLE	OFFERED	PREREQUISITES
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 200	Digital Page Design I	F W S	DES 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 210	Digital Imaging & Illustration I	F W S	DES 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 224	Narrative & Communication Design	F W	DES 120 & 100/121
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 225	Communication Design Systems	W S	DES 224
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 254	Typography I	F W S	DES 120 & 121
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 290 ♦	History of Design	F S	

♦ STUDENTS MAY SUBMIT IF ONE ART HISTORY REQUIREMENT IS MISSING, BUT WE RECOMMEND FULFILLING THAT REQUIREMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

# BFA Course Checklist

STUDENTS ENROLLED FALL 2020 TO PRESENT

## First year

	COURSE N <sup>o</sup>	COURSE TITLE	OFFERED	PREREQUISITES
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 125	Show & Tell	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 111	Design Thinking	F W S	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 120	Digital Design	F W S	ART 101
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 121	Intro to Type & Communication Design	F W S	ART 101 & DES 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 140	Foundations in Motion, UI, and UX	F W S	DES 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	ARH 2** ♦	Any 200-level Art History Course	F W S	

## Second year

	COURSE N <sup>o</sup>	COURSE TITLE	OFFERED	PREREQUISITES
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 200	Digital Page Design I	F W S	DES 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 210	Digital Imaging & Illustration I	F W S	DES 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 224	Narrative & Communication Design I	F W	DES 120 & 100/121
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 225	Communication Design Systems	W S	DES 224
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 254	Typography I	F W S	DES 120 & 121
<input type="checkbox"/>	DES 290	History of Design	F S	

## Advising & course planning information

Note: not all courses are offered each terms; check the Course Planning Guide to ensure required courses are taken when available. Missing requirements due to insufficient planning cannot be waived.

**Design, Creativity, and Performance Pathway Advising:**  
[pdx.edu/advising/design-creativity-and-performance-pathway](https://pdx.edu/advising/design-creativity-and-performance-pathway)

**PSUGD Faculty Advising:** [art-design.youcanbook.me](mailto:art-design.youcanbook.me)

**PSU Course Planning Guide:** [cpg.sa.pdx.edu](https://cpg.sa.pdx.edu)

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**JUNE 6, 8:00 PM**

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