

## **Provision for Multimodal Theses and Dissertations, California State University Fresno, Division of Research and Graduate Studies**

In this era of interactive possibilities and a constantly transforming media culture, the traditional paper-and-ink master's thesis or doctoral dissertation has been scrutinized by some who believe that it may not reflect a graduate student's career goals or let them demonstrate skills beyond the borders of academia. Universities have responded with updated guidelines that allow students to work on and produce nontraditional theses and dissertations that move beyond the book-length manuscript.

The purpose of this statement is to address this emerging trend and provide Fresno State's graduate students with an operational framework they might use as a guide in preparing an alternative format, or multimodal thesis or dissertation.

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All theses and dissertations must contain a written component. Theses and dissertations may, however, include other components in addition to text. These final products shall be known as *multimodal* theses or dissertations, key elements of which may depend on direct experience or interaction with an alternative mode. Such modes may include slides, film or video, audio files, and/or electronically interactive word/image-based text.

Students producing a multimodal thesis/dissertation should consult with the [Fresno State Digital Repository](#) website for advice on formats supportable for preservation. [This table](#) prepared by the UK Data Archive contains data formats identified as optimal for long-term preservation and can serve as a guide.

Pursuant to the California State University's Accessible Technology Initiative (ATI), "It is the policy of the CSU to make information technology resources and services accessible to all CSU students, faculty, staff and the general public regardless of disability." All CSU campuses, therefore, must ensure their "websites, instructional materials and electronic and information technology products and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities." In the production of a multimodal thesis or dissertation, it shall be the student's responsibility to ensure accessibility (e.g., captioning of multimedia and video); through the ATI, the CSU has provided helpful direction and resources on [accessibility and captioning](#).

For students producing multimodal works using human subjects (e.g., classroom participants, volunteers in behavioral studies) in video or other modes, steps must be taken to protect their rights and health while still promoting free inquiry and research at the University. As with more traditional, text-based theses and dissertations, investigators must obtain informed consent from potential subjects indicating their willingness to participate in a study using multimodal formats. Investigators must thoroughly review the [Policies and Procedures for Research with Human Subjects at California State University, Fresno](#), before commencing their study.

Approved by the University Graduate Committee, October 2, 2018