Masters in Clinical and Translational Science

Thesis Guidelines
Choosing a Thesis Mentor

- The most important decision of the thesis research phase.

- It’s important to choose a mentor who:
  - Is affiliated with the GSBS.
  - Is funded.
  - Is accessible.
  - Is doing the type of research you’re interested in.
  - Has a track-record of graduate students in his/her lab.
  - Has a realistic project in mind, scope-wise and time-wise.
Timeline

- Students may sign up for their thesis research at anytime during the MSCTS program.

- Full-time students should begin their thesis work no later than the second year of the MSCTS program.

- Within two weeks of the start of the semester in which you register for the thesis phase, a Research Advisory Committee (RAC) must be formed.
  - The RAC consists of (1) your mentor; (2) at least two other faculty members (1 clinician and 1 outside of the MSCTS program). Outside members may be from Rutgers/Princeton or other institutions outside of UMDNJ.
  - Your mentor can help you choose members of the RAC.

- Students must submit an “Approval of RAC Membership” form to GSBS. If the RAC changes for any reason, a new form must be submitted to and approved by GSBS.
Timeline

Within 1-2 months of selecting the RAC, students should arrange a first meeting. Students should provide the RAC with a Specific Aims page. You should, to the best of your ability, provide the RAC with the question you’re seeking to answer, a general background of the problem at hand, your plan for addressing the question, and most importantly, a time-line for the next year or so of research. This will help the RAC streamline your project and will give them the opportunity to provide you with the most direct path to achieving your goals.
Timeline

○ After this preliminary meeting, arrange a more in-depth meeting with your RAC.

○ At this meeting, be prepared to present a more comprehensive research plan.
  ○ You will need to put together a 10-15 page (double-spaced) document outlining your aims, a literature review, references, any data collected etc...treat this like a mini-grant proposal.

○ Your RAC must approve the thesis project at this point.

○ After 3-4 months, schedule another meeting with your RAC so that they can gauge your progress and to trouble-shoot any issues.

○ After every meeting, the RAC should fill out, sign, and submit the “Annual RAC Meeting form”.
Timeline

- Once the RAC is satisfied that you’ve completed the research component of your Masters thesis, they can recommend that you start the thesis writing phase.

- Ideally, this should be 1-month prior to completion of the thesis phase. Give yourselves plenty of time to write-up your thesis. Meet regularly with your mentor. Ideally, the RAC should approve the thesis draft prior to the thesis defense.
The Examination Committee

- The EC may be the student’s RAC, but can also include other faculty, and must include a faculty member from outside of the MSCTS program.

- The EC must be approved by the program Directors and submitted to the GSBS for their approval prior to scheduling the thesis defense.

- Please use the “Approval of Examination/Dissertation Defense Committee” form.
Thesis Defense

- You are responsible for scheduling the thesis defense.
- The defense consists of a 20-30 minute presentation of your work, followed by a 30-minute question and answer period.
- The EC makes a decision and submits a “Report of Final Examination/Dissertation Defense to GSBS.
- Guidelines for thesis preparation can be found on pages 29-32 of the Graduate Student Handbook.
- All forms are available at:
  - http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/education/gsbs/current/forms.html
After the Thesis Defense

- When all appropriate revisions have been made and the thesis is in its final form, each member of the EC and the Program Directors must sign the Final Examination/Dissertation Defense form and this must be sent to GSBS.

- Revisions must be completed within 6-months.

- 1 original and 3 copies of the thesis must be presented to GSBS at least two-weeks before the Board of Trustees meeting in April for May commencement.