Information for Students:

Students may sign up for their thesis course at any time during the MS CTS program; however, it is expected that full-time students will begin their thesis work no later than their second year in the CTS program. Students may register for 2-8 credits of research and should review the Thesis Research syllabus for information regarding thesis requirements. Students should discuss their choice of thesis advisor with one of the CTS Program Directors before registering for Thesis Research. Most students register for two semesters of CTSC 5108S for 4 credits each semester. Should a student require more time, students may register for Thesis Continuation (MSBS 7000S) for 1-8 credits each semester until they are ready to defend. Students in Thesis Continuation are charged a flat fee and do not pay a per credit tuition charge.

Important information to remember for full-time students:

1) Within two (2) weeks of the start of the semester in which a student first registers for Thesis Research, a Research Advisory Committee (“RAC”) must be formed to advise the student during their thesis. The RAC consists of the student’s research mentor and at least 2 other faculty members, ideally including at least one (1) clinician and at least (1) member who is outside the research mentor’s department (usually someone who is outside of the Clinical and Translational Science program). Please note that with the exception of the outside faculty member, all other committee members must be faculty affiliated with GSBS. The outside faculty member may be faculty at a non-UMDNJ institution (e.g. Rutgers, Princeton, etc). Students must submit an “Approval of Research Advisory Committee Membership” form to the Graduate School after the RAC has been selected for approval. If the membership of the RAC changes for any reason, students must submit a new “Approval of Research Advisory Committee Membership” form.

2) Within 1-2 months of selecting a RAC, the student should meet with their RAC. Prior to the meeting, the student should put together a Specific Aims page along with pertinent data relating to the proposed research for RAC review.

3) Please note that the RAC must formally convene and approve the student’s proposed thesis work. The student must prepare a ten to fifteen (10-15) page (double-spaced) document which includes a literature review, specific aims, tables and figures as appropriate, and references. Please view syllabus for more complete information. This step may be coincident with step #2.

4) After three to four (3-4) months in the Thesis Research course, another meeting between the student and their RAC should be scheduled to assess progress and troubleshoot. At the very least, students must meet at least once annually with their RAC.

5) After every meeting, the RAC should fill out the “Annual Research Advisory Committee Meeting” form and submit to the GSBS.
6) Within one (1) month of completion of the thesis component, the RAC should meet to make certain the thesis is well in hand AS FAR AS THE WRITING PROCESS IS CONCERNED. IDEALLY, the RAC should approve the thesis draft prior to the thesis defense.

7) Students will need to set up an Examination Committee (“EC”) for their Thesis Examination (aka “Defense”). The EC may be the student’s RAC, but can include additional faculty with expertise in the student’s research area for the purpose of the defense and must include a faculty member from outside the CTS Program. The EC must be approved by the Program Director and submitted to GSBS prior to the Thesis Examination. Please use the “Approval of Examination/Dissertation Defense Committee Membership” form.

8) The student is responsible for scheduling his or her Thesis Examination. The Thesis Examination consists of a thirty to forty-five (30-45) minute public presentation by the student, followed by a question and answer period. The EC may choose to continue questioning in a closed setting. The EC makes a decision regarding the defense and, after any required revisions have been made to the thesis, submits a Report of Final Examination/Dissertation Defense to the GSBS.

ALL forms are available on line at http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/education/gsbs/current/forms.html or through the Program Directors or the Graduate School at RWJMS.