



**Boston University** School of Medicine  
**Division of Graduate Medical Sciences**  
**M.A. in Clinical Investigation Program**

## MACI Thesis Description

Students in the MACI program are required to complete a *research* thesis that provides a culminating experience and applies the principles and methods learned in the coursework to a real-life clinical study.

Students may conduct their thesis research in wide variety of settings, including academic medical centers and local drug or device companies. Possible thesis topics must be discussed with the MACI Director and Assistant Director before submitting the thesis proposal.

Students generally identify their research mentor and develop their thesis proposal while they are completing their course work or practicum. The thesis research must involve the analysis and interpretation of data. Students are encouraged but are not required to conduct primary data collection. The thesis proposal, research mentors and thesis readers **must be approved by the MACI Program Director** (Dr. Fish) prior to the thesis beginning, and prior to the submission of the Thesis Title Approval page to the GMS Office.

The brief thesis proposal (usually 1-2 pages) which describes the nature of the thesis research, with a clear statement of the research question or hypothesis must be submitted for approval to Dr. Fish. The specific primary outcome measure that will be used to answer the study question should be clearly described. A brief description of the planned statistical analysis is required. The proposal should conclude with a description of your role in the thesis research. The minimum role is formulating and conducting the analysis, and interpreting and writing up the results. In addition, a proposed time line for completion should be agreed upon by the student and the MACI Director.

**Thesis Readers:** Each student must select at least 2 readers for their thesis. One of the readers must be a subject expert. If either of the readers are not Faculty within the GMS Division, a Special Appointment form [[Special Appointment Form](#)] must be completed and submitted to the GMS Office, along with the readers CV for approval. [PLEASE NOTE: A Special Appointment form must be completed for *each* non-GMS Faculty reader]

**Note: Reader Outside of BUMC:** If one of the readers is not Faculty at BUMC, they must be assigned as a second reader and the Special Appointment requirements apply.

**Thesis Defense:** The near final draft of your thesis must first be approved by your readers **BEFORE** moving forward with your actual defense. Once the near final draft is approved, the student will give a 20 – 30 minute oral presentation on the thesis research to the thesis readers, research mentor, MACI students and faculty members, and any other interested parties.

The purpose of the oral presentation is to demonstrate the student's ability (1) to describe clearly the thesis research question, methods, and results; (2) to demonstrate an understanding of the study design, analytic principles, conclusions and limitations of his/her research; and (3) to place his/her research into a clinical context, while then proposing the next steps which should be taken with respect to future research. The presentation is followed by a question and answer period.

The near final draft the thesis must be distributed (via email) to Sue, Stacey, your readers and Research Mentor a week **PRIOR** to your defense.

You must submit (via email) your power point presentation of your defense to Sue & Stacey 2-3 days **PRIOR TO** your defense.

The final thesis document must be prepared according to the BU guidelines for theses and dissertations.