

**Boston University** School of Medicine

**Division of Graduate Medical Sciences**

**M.S. in Clinical Investigation Program**

**Research Mentor & Readers**

**Research Advisor--- per GMS policies and procedures:**

A candidate for the M.A., M.S., or Ph.D. degree is required to have, as a research advisor, a full member of the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences faculty. This advisor must be a member of the major department, if the major department so requires. The research advisor is always the first reader of the M.A./M.S. thesis/Ph.D. dissertation. Under certain circumstances, a Special Service Appointee may serve as a first reader. When the first reader/research advisor only has a Special Service Appointment in the Division, then the second reader of the thesis/dissertation must be, at a minimum, a full member of the Division, or depending upon departmental requirements, a full member of the major department or program.

**Summary**

1. **Scenario 1**: If the **Research Mentor is a BUMC faculty member**, then s/he can serve as first reader. There should then be two additional readers who are independent of the research project. At least one of these additional readers should be a content or subject matter expert.
2. **Scenario 2**: If the Research mentor is **not** a BUMC faculty member, then s/he should not be a thesis reader. There should be two thesis readers. The first must be a BUSM faculty member who takes responsibility for the content of the thesis and the work done.

Readers must be approved by the Director or Assistant Director of MSCI.

**Thesis Mentor & Readers Responsibilities**

The purpose of the thesis in the MSCI program is for the student to demonstrate to faculty that they have attained the body of knowledge necessary to design, conduct, analyze, and communicate a clinical research study. The readers assesses whether or not the student has sufficiently demonstrated that. As such the readers are required to read the first draft and the "near final" draft of the thesis, to participate in the thesis defense (***ask questions of the student presenter to make sure he/she understands what is presented***), and then sign off on the "final final" version of the thesis.

In practice, we suggest to students that they send portions of the thesis to their readers for feedback as they are initially completed. Hence, a reader might see the background section, followed by the methods section with revisions to background, followed by the results/discussion section with revisions to prior portions, etc.

The student will then present the ***near final*** thesis to their mentor and readers, MSCI faculty, students and guests. The *near final draf*t of the thesis ***must be approved by the readers prior to the student’s defense***. Once the *near final draft* is approved by the readers, the student will give a 20 – 30 minute oral presentation on the thesis research to the thesis readers, research mentor, MSCI 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.**

**Role of the Research Mentor in the clinical research thesis at BUSM** is to:

1. Provide guidance in the development of a hypothesis, timeline and outline for the project.
2. Provide supervision of the research including assistance in the experimental design as well as the interpretation and statistical analysis of collected data.
3. Provide critical review and guidance during the final writing stage, as needed, in order to assist the student in their completion of the thesis according to BUSM guidelines and deadlines with the submission of a thesis of the highest quality.

**Role of the Readers in the clinical research thesis at BUSM** is to:

1. Provide support as needed during the completion of the thesis *during the writing stage.*
2. Provide a critical eye as an additional evaluator of content and quality during the writing stage and submission of the thesis.