

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

**Thesis & Defense Preparation Points**

We wanted to take a moment to bring to your attention some very important information with respect to your thesis, defense and graduation. These elements are equal in importance and represent the culmination of many semesters of hard work! As such, each element should be considered with serious regard as they build upon each other and conclude with a Masters degree in Clinical Investigation!

**Thesis**

While we understand that at this point many of you may likely feel as though you just want to “get your thesis over with”, this is a very important phase of your graduate work. Your thesis reflects how well each of you has learned and has been able to apply the core principles and methods learned in the coursework to real-life clinical research! As such we expect that you will pursue this aspect of your education with the passion and professionalism you have throughout your academic career at BUSM.

**Writing your thesis**

As your thesis is a culmination of your graduate work in the program, we expect that you will approach writing your thesis seriously. While your readers, Stacey and Sue are your sources of review, we are sources for content review, not format or grammar review. You are all in graduate school, and we expect that you will show professionalism in writing your thesis. What this means is that when you submit your thesis to your readers, it should be of high quality and in a state of near completion. When you submit to your readers, you should be proud of the work you have done!

Here are some hints/suggestions to help you achieve this level of professionalism with your thesis:

* Formal Language – you **must use** formal language in your thesis. This is scientific writing and should reflect as such. (example: “we couldn’t do ….” Would be better to say “xxx could not be done”)
* Redundant & Complicated Sentences – please re-read what you write! Keep your sentences short and to the point, and say it just once. Be concise! And please use transition sentences from one paragraph to another so that the information flows throughout your paper.
* Tenses – please re-read what you write! Your sentence tense should be the same throughout each section. You should not switch haphazardly from the present, to the past, to the future tense.
* Grammar and Spell Check – please re-read what you write! Make sure your grammar is correct, and that you have your spell check and grammar check feature turned on when writing.
* Writing Numbers - Spell out single-digit whole numbers. Use numerals for numbers greater than nine.
* **Examples:**  
  I want five copies.  
  I want 10 copies.
* Write out a number if it begins a sentence.
* **Examples:**  
  Twenty-nine people won an award for helping their communities.That 29 people won an award for helping their communities was fantastic!**OR**  
  That twenty-nine people won an award for helping their communities was fantastic!

\*\***For more information, see** <http://www.grammarbook.com/numbers/numbers.asp>

* Outline – BEFORE writing your thesis, create an outline of the key concept, topics, points you intend to cover to keep you on track!
* Use Heading – use headings to highlight the topics within your thesis, and not just the headings presented in the outline of your thesis.
* References - you must be sure that you use AMA format for all your references. For more information, see <http://www4.samford.edu/schools/pharmacy/dic/amaquickref07.pdf>
* Paper Stock for Thesis –the paper stock **required** for your final thesis is difficult to find so please pick up this supply well ahead of when you will need it (to avoid the stress of last minute searching).

\*\*The minimum requirement is 20lb-weight paper with minimum 25% cotton or rag content - it must have the water seal and be bright white (not beige, gray or off-white). A few examples of the types of paper are:

* Southworth Exceptional Legal Document Paper (or exceptional business) 100% cotton, 20lb, white, watermarked
* Southworth Fine Business Paper, 25% Cotton, 20 lb, White, watermarked

**Thesis Defense**

While it is perfectly acceptable to set your defense data ahead of time, you should not go forward with your defense ***UNTIL*** your first reader has given you approval to do so. This means that your thesis should be in a state of near completion such that the only revisions that will be needed after the defense are those changes, questions, or points that result from your defense!

**Preparing your Defense**

We are going to expect ***professionalism*** from you during your presentation, meaning that we will expect :

* your power point presentation to be no more than 30 minutes in length, so that the remaining 30 minutes are available for questions and answers.
* you to have developed a thorough power point presentation, and that you are ***accountable*** for the material you are presenting .
* you to have ***practiced*** your presentation so that:
* your presentation flows smoothly,
* you are confident in your preparations,
* you are confident in your role as presenter (i.e. (1) you are speaking clearly and loudly enough so that those in the back row can hear you easily; (2) you are *not* monotone in your delivery; (3) you are *not* reading the slides on the screen or on the computer, rather that you are speaking to and making eye contact with your audience).

**Scheduling your Defense Date**

It is anticipated that there will be a number of students defending their theses this Semester. Scheduling can be challenging given that the due date of final thesis submission is x/x/xx.

Please email Stacey with a number of dates and times that you would ideally like to defend, and with the email information for your Readers, and Research Mentor. Stacey will then create a Doodle Scheduler and send it to your readers on your behalf.

Stacey will then confirm the date and time with you, after which she will schedule a room (for the defense) and send an email confirmation with the date, time and room assignment (for your defense) to your Research Mentor and Readers.

Working with others, performing presentations, and facilitating group discussion are essential attributes of a successful clinical researcher. We want you, in this final phase of your graduate work, to exhibit key qualities of a professional clinical researcher by;

1. aspiring to be ***accountable*** for the material your present and how you present it,
2. being committed to ***excellence*** which involves a conscious effort to exceed ordinary expectations, and means learning from your mistakes,
3. displaying ***honor and integrity*** while working with others and talking with your peers, instructors, and colleagues
4. showing ***respect*** for others including peers and instructors, and researchers
5. demonstrating timeliness with respect to:

* submitting your drafts, near final copy and final copy of your thesis in a timely manner to your readers, instructors and to Millie, and allowing your readers and mentors adequate time in which to complete their review,
* completing your presentations in a timely manner, and being aware of the time as you facilitate discussion amongst your peers.

1. After the Q & A aspect of your defense, we will ask you and all members of the audience - except myself, your Readers and Mentors - to step outside for a few minutes so that your Committee has time to deliberate about your defense. When you return, your Committee will inform you whether you have passed.

**Final IMPORTANT Points:**

1. Your **Diploma Application** (<http://www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/files/2011/12/NEW.-Diploma-Application-and-Submission-Guidelines-for-the-Degree-of-Master-of-Arts-and-Master-of-Sciences4-Secured-and-Reader-Enabled.pdf>) is **DUE**:

- **~ January** 25th or a **May** graduation

* **~ June** 22nd for a **September** graduation
* **~November** 1st for a **January** graduation

1. Deadline for submitting your **FINAL APPROVED THESIS** to Millie is:

- **~ April 4th** for a **May** graduation - **~ August 2nd** for a **September** graduation - **~ December 8th** for a **January** graduation

**You MUST HAVE defended your thesis prior to this date and have allowed adequate time after your defense to make any changes to your thesis that may have resulted from your defense.**

1. Your FIRST READER must give their approval of your NEAR FINAL THESIS in order for you to move forward with your actual defense.
2. You must submit you NEAR FINAL THESIS to Sue and Stacey **1 WEEK PRIOR TO** your defense (via email is fine).
3. You must submit to Sue and Stacey a copy of your power point presentation (of your defense) **2-3 days PRIOR TO** your defense. (via email is fine)
4. You must have your NEAR FINAL THESIS (after your defense) reviewed for formatting by Millie at least **2 weeks before** the final submission deadline.

**Please refer to this site on the GMS website for additional information regarding details and due dates for your thesis:** <http://www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/gateway/students/ma-and-ms-programs/ma-and-ms-test-split-student-forms-page/>.

*We have every confidence that you all have the ability to succeed. Prepare and practice!!*