

Master's Thesis Guidelines and FAQs

What are the steps for getting an advisor?

Students are responsible for finding their own thesis advisors. It can be someone you have had as a professor or a faculty member or whose research area you are interested in. It may be better to ask a faculty member who knows you or who you have taken a class or two with. The faculty must agree to work with you on the thesis. You should discuss what problem(s) you want to solve or work on for your thesis. You can discuss what you already have in mind for a project and deliberate on how feasible the topic or problem is or the faculty member may assign a problem to you based on your research interests.

Who can be a Master's thesis advisor?

The main thesis advisor can be a tenured or tenure track full-time faculty member at Courant, a clinical faculty member or a post-doc at Courant. Requests for outside advisors must go through the Program Administrator (Betty Tsang).

Who can be my second reader?

If your advisor is not a full-time tenured or tenured track faculty member at Courant, your second reader must be a full-time faculty member at Courant. If your advisor is a tenured or tenure track full time faculty member, your second reader can be a clinical faculty member or post-doc at Courant. Requests for exceptions can be directed to the Program Administrator (Betty Tsang).

Do I have to register for the Master's thesis course?

If you plan on writing the thesis, you have to have a total of at least 32 credits. If you already have 32 or more credits, you do not have to register for the 2 credit thesis course. If you have 30 credits, you can register for the 2 credit thesis course to help you fulfill your remaining required credits. Ideally, you should only register for the Master's thesis course in the final semester of your studies. The Master's thesis course is a pass/fail course.

What should I do if I do not need any more credits and will not be enrolled for any classes during the semester?

If you are not registered for any classes during the semester or zero credits, you must register for "maintenance and matriculation" to maintain your active student status at NYU. The cost for maintenance and matriculation and fees usually totals around \$1000.

When do I need to submit the thesis to my readers?

You must submit your thesis at least 2 weeks in advance of the final degree deadline to both of your thesis readers. For the September degree, it should be around September 10th, for January degree, it should be submitted by the end of December, and for the May degree, May 1st. The Program Administrator will provide and collect the Master's thesis reader sheets and the title page of your thesis to your readers and submit any remaining paperwork to Graduation Services in the Office of the Registrar.

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What is the length of the thesis?

There is no required maximum or minimum length for the thesis. You should discuss the expectations of thesis with your advisor and get feedback on whether your thesis meets his/her expectations for a problem/ topic you are working on and whether the research and work you have completed is satisfactory. The purpose of the thesis is not to write an all-encompassing dissertation but rather to solve a problem or focus on an issue or topic.

How often should I meet with my advisor?

Your meeting/feedback schedule should be mutually agreed upon by you and your advisor. Ideally, you should get regular feedback on the work you are completing but it may be once a month or a few times a semester depending on your advisor. Feel free to take the initiative to reach out to your advisor if you feel that you need more guidance.

How does the thesis get approved and what are the required forms?

The Master's thesis must be approved by two readers. The required forms are the Master's thesis reader sheets for each of your readers and the title page signed by your main advisor.

Please allow at least 2 weeks prior to the final degree deadline for your advisor to read the thesis, approve the thesis and for the approval documents to be sent to Graduation Services, Office of the Registrar. The Program Administrator will distribute and collect the required forms. Make sure to send your title sheet to the Program Administrator.

How do I submit the thesis?

You can submit the thesis directly to your advisor and second reader. Most students will submit it via email but you can ask your readers if they prefer hard copy. The Math department does not need a copy of your thesis, only the title page. We currently do not store or keep theses on file.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Betty Tsang, Program Administrator at btsang@cims.nyu.edu.