Thesis Formatting Instructions &
Graduation Requirements
for Doctoral and Master’s Students

http://sackler.tufts.edu/Student-Life/Information-for-Current-Students/Student-Forms

Last Revised: June 26, 2017

Note: Students should not rely on former students’ theses as a template – use only the current format version in this document. Format requirements change and a format that was acceptable in the past may not adhere to the current requirements. It is your responsibility as the student to ensure that the document you submit meets the requirements described in this document.
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1. Introduction

An essential requirement for the Master’s or Doctoral degree from the Sackler School is the successful completion of a written thesis. In keeping with the high academic and educational objectives of the Sackler School, the thesis should constitute a cohesive scholarly work that reflects a student’s original writing and independent research with a thorough understanding of the field of study. The thesis should include a review of the relevant scientific literature, a record of laboratory experience, and intellectual contributions to the field.

This guide is designed to assist a student in preparing a thesis that conforms to the Sackler School’s requirements. Students should not rely on a former student’s thesis as a template for their document – use only the current version of this document as a guide. A format that was acceptable in the past may not meet the current requirements. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the document submitted meets the requirements described in this document.

Consistency of format is essential because it visually guides readers through your document, allowing them to focus on content. Where there are specific directives set out in this document, you do not have the option to ignore those instructions.

2. General Formatting

2.1. Line Spacing: The table of contents, list of tables and figures, copyright materials, and abbreviations at the beginning of the thesis should be single-spaced. In addition, figure legends, long quotations, footnotes, and the Bibliography are to be single-spaced. The body of the thesis is to be double-spaced.

2.2. Font: A standard font should be selected for use throughout the entire thesis. Standard fonts include Arial 11 point and Times New Roman 12 point. Eccentric type styles, such as cursive, are not permitted.

2.3. Page Numbering: Every page in a thesis is assigned a page number. The number should be placed at the bottom center of each page, ½" from the bottom edge.

2.3.1. Lower Case Roman numerals (ii, iii, etc.) are to be used on all of the preliminary pages and although the title page should be counted when numbering successive pages, the number should not appear on that page. The first page on which a number should appear is the Abstract page (numbered ii).

2.3.2. Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) begin with the first page of the Introduction and continue throughout the thesis, including tables, figures, appendices and the Bibliography. For information about how to change page numbers from Roman numeral to Arabic numbers, google “How to create a Word document that uses different page numbering formats.”

2.4. Margins: The margins at the top, bottom and right are to be 1.0 inch; the left-hand margin is to be 1.5 inches. All tables, charts and illustrations are to have left-hand margins of no less than 1.5 inches.
2.5. **Tables and Figures**: Number each table and figure consecutively using two numbers, the first indicating the chapter in which the table or figure is located and the second specifying the number within the chapter. The titles of the tables and figures as well as the page numbers on which they appear should also be listed. For example:

Table 2.1: Enter the Title of the Table Here……………………………………20
Table 2.2: Enter the Title of the Table Here……………………………………25
Table 3.1: Enter the Title of the Table Here……………………………………30

3. **Document Organization**

3.1. **Title Page**: A sample title page is shown in section 7. Students must follow it exactly, using only the font sizes and wording prescribed on the sample page. No bolding, capitalization, or changes to this formatting may be made.

3.2. **Abstract**: The abstract should be about 350 words. The abstract should state the main argument of the thesis so that the reader can quickly review the essential contents and results. A typical abstract includes a statement of the problem, a description of procedures and methods, the primary results, and conclusions.

3.3. **Dedication** (optional): Students may include a page with a brief dedication.

3.4. **Acknowledgments** (optional): This feature offers an opportunity to express the writer's appreciation to persons who have been especially helpful during the research process.

3.5. **Table of Contents (TOC)**: The TOC should list the chapters and other division headings in the thesis, using the same words that appear in the body of the report. The numbers of the pages on which these items appear should also be given. See section 8 for an example. Instructions for creating a table of contents are readily available online.

3.6. **List of Tables**: The list is to start on a new page. Each table listed should include the number of the table, the title, and the page number on which it is located. See formatting instructions in section 2.

3.7. **List of Figures**: The list is to start on a new page. Each figure listed should include the number of the figure, the title, and the page number on which it is located. See formatting instructions in section 2.

3.8. **List of Copyrighted Materials**: If any part of the thesis has been published, the student must list the source document here with its full citation. This includes other people's graphs or images and reusing the student's own work that has been published. The student is responsible for securing permission to use this material from the copyright holder. If the information used is from a journal that is Open Access, upload a copy of the Statement of Use. The permission letters should be uploaded in the Supplementary Files section on the ProQuest/UMI website. In addition, include all citations in the thesis Bibliography.

3.9. **List of Abbreviations**: A complete list of abbreviations used in the text must be included.

3.10. **Body of the Thesis**: Students present detailed information about their research activities. See section 5 for formatting instructions.
3.11. Appendix (optional): The appendix may include but is not limited to a more extensive presentation of materials and methods to assist other investigators who wish to utilize procedures developed by the candidate. The candidate may also wish to include as appendix material more detailed presentations of data than appropriate for a scholarly journal or thesis.

3.12. Bibliography: At a minimum, each reference must include the names of all authors, the title of the article, the name of the journal, the volume number and the pages of the article. The bibliography of the thesis must be compiled at the end of the thesis.

4. Important Copyright Information

4.1. Copyright Release: Students who plan to publish their work prior to defending their theses should ask permission from the publishers to retain the right to use their work in their theses. If approval was not pre-arranged, students must obtain permission from the copyright owner to republish already published work in their theses.

4.2. Evidence of Copyright: There is no specific form the evidence must take, as long as it is clear that permission to re-use the content has been granted. Evidence of copyright release should be uploaded as a Supplemental Form in the ProQuest website. For further copyright guidelines, go to http://www.proquest.com/en-US/products/dissertations/copyright/.

4.3. How to Cite Copyrighted Information: In the past, many students have used the terms "adapted" and "modified" to indicate they have made changes to copyrighted material. These terms are ambiguous because they do not specify exactly what has been changed and what has been retained from the original. To clarify what work belongs to the student and what was part of the original, students are required to summarize any changes they make to copyrighted material.

4.3.1. If no changes were made to the original document/s, use this notation: "Reprinted with permission from [SOURCE]."

4.3.2. If changes were made to the original document/s, use this notation: "Adapted with permission from [SOURCE]. Changes include (enter specific information such as cropping, reversing axes, adding labels or emphasis, combining tables, or adding or removing data elements)." This is not an exhaustive list of possible changes, and students are responsible to state all alterations they made to the original document.

5. Body of the Thesis: Two Format Options

5.1. Choosing a Thesis Format: The format of the thesis will be, in part, dictated by the scope and complexity of the research project. The Traditional Format should be used for highly-focused Master’s level or PhD level research projects. The Manuscript Format may be used by doctoral candidates whose theses are composed of several related projects described in multiple manuscripts. To use the Manuscript Format, students must be first authors on the manuscript/s and, if the manuscripts have been published, provide evidence of copyright permission (see 4.2.). A student must choose between these two formats. No combination of the two formats is acceptable.
5.2. Traditional Format

5.2.1. Introduction: This chapter serves two major purposes: a review of the literature, and a statement of the research question under investigation. The student should provide a comprehensive background to the research project followed by the working hypotheses and introduce the thesis research. While a student’s previously published review may form a substantial part of the introduction, it must be altered as necessary to encompass all data and conclusions presented in the thesis. See the “How to Cite Copyright Information” in section 4.

5.2.2. Methods and Materials: This chapter should provide a full description of the animals, organisms, or subjects studied as well as their numbers, materials used and their sources. Research methodologies should be referenced as appropriate, including equipment used, and any modifications or deviations from published analytical procedures fully described. To assess the quality of the data, this section should include how and when data were collected, the methodologies employed and the reliability and validity of the procedures used. The protocols and procedures used in the research should be presented in sufficient detail to allow reproduction of the experiments. Figures and tables must be inserted into the text where they are discussed.

5.2.3. Results: The Results chapter/s should contain only the original contributions of the student that represents a documentation of the research experience that is clearly written without interpretation. Each result chapter should end with a brief discussion of the significance of the findings. Tables and figures are to be numbered in order and placed within the text where referenced.

5.2.4. Discussion: A thesis should end with a general discussion of the studies that have been conducted and how they have answered the research question/hypothesis posed in the Introduction. It should include an overall assessment of the significance of the research, arguments for interpretations presented, and suggestions for future experimental work to address unanswered questions.

5.3. Manuscript Format: The student must be either the sole author or the co-first author of each manuscript that is submitted as a manuscript chapter in the thesis.

5.3.1. Overall Format: Students may not change the content of their manuscripts, but they are required to change the format to meet the Sackler School’s format requirements explained in sections 2 above (e.g., line spacing, font, page numbering).

5.3.2. Introduction: This format begins with an overall Introduction chapter and ends with an overall Discussion chapter. In this way, the thesis will be presented as a unified product, rather than simply a collection of related but separate manuscripts. The Introduction serves two major purposes: a review of the literature, and a statement of the research question under investigation. The student should provide a comprehensive background to the research project followed by the working hypotheses and introduce the thesis research. While a student’s previously published review may form a substantial part of the introduction, it must be altered as necessary to encompass all data and conclusions presented in the thesis. This chapter informs the reader of the
structure of the thesis, including the use of manuscripts. See the “How to Cite Copyright Information” in section 4.

5.3.3. **Manuscript/s:** The body of the thesis may be in the form of manuscripts that have been or are ready to be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. Each manuscript will constitute a separate chapter. Only manuscripts in which the student is the sole author or the co-first author may be included. **A student must not add, delete, or edit any information included in the manuscript/s. The only change allowed to the manuscript is to re-format it to meet the format requirements in this document.**

**Manuscript Chapter Cover Page:** The names of all authors, in journal-submitted order, and the name of the journal with volume, page numbers and date (if known), and article status (i.e., “published,” “accepted for publication,” “submitted,” or “to be submitted”) must be given as a footnote to the title on the first page of each manuscript chapter. A sample chapter cover page in section 7.

5.3.4. **Discussion:** The final Discussion chapter should tie together all of the major results. Unavoidably, this will duplicate some of the introductory and concluding material in each article. This chapter should include a general discussion of the studies that have been conducted and how they have answered the research question posed in the Introduction. It should include an overall assessment of the significance of the research, arguments for interpretations presented, and suggestions for future experimental work to address unanswered questions.

6. **Graduation Dates, Deadlines, Requirements, Timeline, and Forms**

6.1. **Degree Granting Dates and Commencement Ceremony:** Tufts University grants degrees to Sackler students in August, February, and May. Sackler students who are awarded degrees in August and February are invited to attend the May commencement ceremony along with the May graduates. In order to participate in the May ceremony, students must successfully complete their thesis defense no later than the second-to-last Friday before Commencement. Students who attend before their official graduation date are not included in the Commencement Program; however, they will be included the following year when their degrees have been completed.

6.2. **Graduation Deadlines:** To be considered for a degree, a student must fulfill all University, Sackler School, and Program requirements. Students must meet the requirements listed below by the deadline dates listed on the Sackler website (http://sackler.tufts.edu/Student-Life/Information-for-Current-Students/Graduation-Information/Schedule-for-Awarding-Degrees).
6.3. **PhD Student Graduation Timeline and Requirements (in red below):**

6.3.1. Schedule a meeting with the Associate Dean to discuss the graduation process two weeks before your Thesis Advisory Committee meeting in which you plan to request Permission to Defend.

6.3.2. Submit the *Thesis Advisory Committee Evaluation Form* with the Permission to Defend box checked by your Committee to the Sackler Registrar.

6.3.3. Schedule a Defense Date soon after receiving Permission to Defend. The defense must occur within three months of the date permission to defend was granted. Be sure to tell the Program Coordinator and the Sackler Dean’s Office the date as soon as it is set.

6.3.4. Complete the Sackler Student Exit Survey: [https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnvZH782w0i1vVX](https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnvZH782w0i1vVX). Students must enter their student IDs to ensure that only Sackler students complete the survey. However, the ID numbers will not be associated with any individual survey response, and students’ identity cannot be traced.

6.3.5. Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates (PhD candidates only): [https://sed-ncses.org](https://sed-ncses.org)

6.3.6. Obtain approval of the thesis format by uploading the thesis to the ProQuest/UMI web site ([http://dissertations.umi.com/tuftssackler](http://dissertations.umi.com/tuftssackler)) 72 hours before distributing it to Thesis Advisory Committee members. See 6.6 below for instructions on how to complete the ProQuest/UMI upload. Dean’s Office staff will review the thesis format to ensure it meets the requirements described in this Thesis Formatting Instructions and Graduation Requirements for Doctoral and Master’s Students. Allow 48 hours for the approval process.

6.3.7. After receiving approval of the thesis format, make copies of your thesis for TAC.

6.3.8. Distribute copies of the thesis to the Committee two weeks before the defense date.

6.3.9. Defend.

6.3.10. Obtain the required signatures for the Thesis Defense Form and submit the original form (not a copy) to the Sackler Dean’s Office within 3 days of the defense.

6.3.11. Watch for an email from the Associate Dean with the stipend end date. A student's stipend and health insurance benefits continue during the period of thesis revisions, which is set by the Thesis Advisory Committee.

6.3.12. Complete the thesis revisions requested by your Thesis Committee

6.3.13. Obtain the required signatures on the Approval of Thesis Revisions Form and submit it to the Sackler Dean’s Office.

6.4. **PDD-MS Student Graduation Timeline and Requirements (in red below):**

6.4.1. Schedule a meeting in February with the Associate Dean to discuss the graduation process, either as a group of second year students or individually.

6.4.2. Complete the Sackler Student Exit Survey: [https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnvZH782w0i1vVX](https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnvZH782w0i1vVX). Students must enter their student IDs to ensure that only Sackler students complete the survey. However, the ID numbers will not be associated with any individual survey response, and students’ identity cannot be traced.

6.4.3. Work with your adviser to write a draft of your thesis. Master’s theses are on average 25-40 pages long, including the Bibliography.

6.4.4. Obtain approval of the thesis format by uploading the thesis to the ProQuest/UMI web site ([http://dissertations.umi.com/tuftssackler](http://dissertations.umi.com/tuftssackler)) 48 hours before distributing it to your faculty reader. See 6.6 below for instructions on how to complete the ProQuest/UMI upload. Dean’s Office staff will review the thesis format to ensure it meets the requirements described in this Thesis Formatting Instructions and Graduation Requirements for Doctoral and Master’s Students.

6.4.5. After receiving approval of the thesis format, email the thesis to your faculty reader and thesis adviser a minimum of one week before the graduation deadline.

6.4.6. Complete the thesis revisions requested by your adviser and reader.

6.4.7. Obtain the required signatures on the Thesis Defense Form and the Approval of Thesis Revisions Form and submit them to the Sackler Dean’s Office by the deadline.

6.5. **CTS-MS Student Graduation Timeline and Requirements (in red below):**

6.5.1. Schedule a meeting in February with the Associate Dean to discuss the graduation process, either as a group of second year students or individually.

6.5.2. Schedule a date for the CTS Advisory Committee to review your thesis.

6.5.3. Complete the Sackler Student Exit Survey: [https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnvZH782w0i1vVX](https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnvZH782w0i1vVX). Students must enter their student IDs to ensure that only Sackler students complete the survey. However, the ID numbers will not be associated with any individual survey response, and students’ identity cannot be traced.

6.5.4. Work with your adviser to write a draft of your thesis. Master’s theses are on average 25-40 pages long, including the Bibliography.

6.5.5. **Obtain approval of the thesis format by uploading the thesis to the ProQuest/UMI web site** ([http://dissertations.umi.com/tuftssackler](http://dissertations.umi.com/tuftssackler)) **48 hours before the deadline to submit for the CTS Advisory Committee. See 6.6 below for instructions on how to complete the ProQuest/UMI upload.** Dean’s Office staff will review the thesis format to ensure it meets the requirements described in this Thesis Formatting Instructions and Graduation Requirements for Doctoral and Master’s Students.

6.5.6. After receiving approval of the thesis format, email the thesis to the CTS Program Office **a minimum of five days before the CTS Advisory Committee meeting.**

6.5.7. CTS Advisory Committee meeting. For students who successfully defend, the CTS Program staff submits the Thesis Defense Form to the Sackler Dean’s Office.

6.5.8. Complete the thesis revisions requested by the CTS Advisory Committee.

6.5.9. Complete the Approval of Thesis Revisions Form and submit it to the Sackler Dean’s Office by the deadline.

6.6. *ProQuest/UMI Uploading Procedures*


6.6.1. **Publishing Options:** There are two publishing options. Sackler students should choose the *Traditional option.* This option does not cost anything and allows the public to view thesis abstracts online for free. However, it requires payment to view the entire thesis, sharing some of the revenue with the author. Because all Tufts’ theses are available as *open access* through the Tufts Digital Library, there is no need select the ProQuest *Open Access option* that costs $95.

6.6.2. **Delayed Release:** Students may impose publishing restrictions that delay the release of their work, except for their abstracts, to allow them to finish writing and publishing papers. Students may choose a delay of 6 months, 1 year, or 2 years.

6.6.3. **Retain Electronic Thesis Format:** For electronic documents, it is important to retain the thesis format that is stored in the PDF file. Then, regardless of any computer’s fonts, the document will always look the same. The process used to achieve this is called “embedding fonts.” If you need assistance embedding fonts, click on the link provided by ProQuest/UMI.

6.6.4. **Supplemental Files (optional):** Sackler students who have received copyright releases to reprint parts or all of their previously published papers should upload copies of the releases in this section.

6.6.5. **U.S. Copyright:** Since students are the authors of their theses and, therefore, protected by Intellectual Property laws, Sackler School students do not need to choose this option. If a student is involved in a patent, Tufts University will handle this process. Thus, students usually do not ask UMI to file for copyright on their behalf for an additional cost of $55.

6.6.6. **Bound Thesis Copies:** Most Sackler students choose to order bound copies through a local vendor. While students may purchase bound copies of their theses from UMI, it is important to note that there may be a substantial delay in obtaining the bound copies because UMI only prints and binds theses after any delay in publishing selected by students. Thus, students usually prefer to work with a local vendor such as Acme Bookbinders ([www.acmebook.com](http://www.acmebook.com)).

6.7. **Degree Approval Process:** After completing all degree requirements, students must be approved to graduate by the Sackler School Executive Council. The names of candidates are then forwarded to the Tufts University Board of Trustees for final approval.

6.8. **Diplomas:** Official diplomas are ordered by the Sackler Dean’s Office after the Board of Trustees has approved student degrees. August and February graduates will receive their diplomas through the US Mail. May diplomas are presented at commencement or mailed to graduates who do not attend the ceremony. It is crucial that students provide the Sackler Dean’s Office with their current mailing addresses in order to receive their diploma.

6.9. **Health Insurance Coverage after the Defense:** Sackler School doctoral students in the basic science division who are graduating and enrolled in the student health insurance plan have the option of either cancelling their health insurance on the date their stipend
ends, or making a payment to continue enrollment in the plan until the end of the current insurance semester. The Fall term ends at the end of February and the Spring term ends on August 31.

Students must notify the Student Advisory & Health Administration Office of their intent within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date the stipend ends by completing a Sackler Graduating & Cancelling Health Insurance Form and by paying any extra cost in full. Failure to submit the required form and full payment will result in the student’s health insurance policy being cancelled on the date the stipend ends.

Note that MD/PhD students are handled differently. As Medical students, health insurance continues through August 31 after May graduation.

6.10. **International Students:** Sackler international students who chose to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) should make an appointment with the Associate Dean at least 90 days before they plan to defend their doctoral thesis or, for Master’s students, 90 days before the end of the semester in which they plan to graduate. Before students are allowed to apply for OPT, they must obtain a letter from the Dean’s Office with three dates: 1) the defense date, 2) the date they are likely to complete all graduation requirements, and 3) the official expected date of graduation. Students may begin OPT after they have completed all degree requirements (#2 above) and receive their Employment Authorization Document, which is commonly referred to as an EAD card.

6.11. **Transcripts:** Degrees and thesis titles are posted the week after graduation. As alumni, unofficial copies of your transcript are available for you to download from SIS, and official copies may be requested online.

7. **Policies Related to the Thesis**

7.1. **Thesis Writing and Defending Time Limit Policy:**
After students have completed most or all experiments, they may request permission to defend from their Thesis Advisory Committees (TAC). Students must defend their theses within three months of the date they receive permission. If extenuating circumstances arise, the TAC may extend this time with the approval of the program director and the associate dean.

7.2. **Time from Thesis Defense to Completion Policy:**
After a successful defense, the time needed by basic science division students for completion of thesis revisions typically ranges from two to four weeks. During the deliberations of the thesis examination committee, the committee should determine, with input from the student, the amount of full-time effort (in days) needed to complete any required changes and include that on the Thesis Defense Form. The student's stipend and benefits continue during this period of full-time effort. Extensions of stipend and benefits beyond the recommended time must be justified, reviewed, and approved by the program director, the thesis advisor, and the associate dean. In no case may the student continue to receive a stipend or benefits once he/she has started in another paid position.

7.3. **Thesis Defense Required Before Employment Policy:**
Basic biomedical science division Sackler students must successfully defend their theses before undertaking new work positions. If not all requirements are completed by the end
of the semester in which the defense takes place, the student is required to enroll in subsequent semester/s until all graduation requirements have been fulfilled. Tuition and fees may apply.

8. **Sample Pages and Forms**
   8.1. Sample Thesis Title Page
   8.2. Sample Table of Contents for the Traditional Thesis Format
   8.3. Sample Table of Contents for the Manuscript Thesis Format
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   8.5. Thesis Defense Form
   8.6. Thesis Revision Approval Form
8.1 Sample Title Page

Please follow these formatting guidelines exactly to avoid being asked to make revisions.
- Times New Roman font
- 18 point font for thesis title
- 14 point font for all other text
- Centered
- Double-space between lines
- No bold
- Italics, subscript and superscript as appropriate in the title only

Title of Thesis

A thesis submitted by

[student’s name]

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

[Master of Science] or [PhD]

in

[name* of graduate program]

Tufts University

Sackler School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences

[Official graduation month and year: February 20__, May 20__ or August 20__]

Advisor: [First name, Last name, Degree]

(CTS students: only list your Thesis Committee Chair)
*Official Names of Sackler School Graduate Programs

**Doctoral Degrees:**

- Biochemistry
- Cellular and Molecular Physiology
- Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology
- Clinical and Translational Science
- Genetics
- Immunology
- Molecular Microbiology
- Neuroscience
- Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics

**Master’s Degrees:**

- Clinical and Translational Science
- Pharmacology and Drug Development
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# 8.3 Sample Table of Contents for the Manuscript Thesis Format

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   1.2.1 Sub-sub-topic
   1.2.2 Sub-sub topic
1.3. Sub-topic
1.4. Sub-topic
1.5. Sub-topic
1.6. Sub-topic

Chapter 2: Title of Manuscript 1

2.1. Sub-topic
   2.1.1 Sub-sub topic
2.2. Sub-topic

Chapter 3: Title of Manuscript 2

3.1. Sub-topic
   3.1.1 Sub-sub topic
3.2. Sub-topic

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1. Sub-topic
4.2. Sub-topic
   4.2.1 Sub-sub topic
4.3. Sub-topic

Chapter 5: Appendix

Chapter 6: Bibliography
Chapter 2: The Title of Your Chapter Belongs Here

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