

M.S. Thesis Deadlines (Writing Portion) for a May 2024 Graduation

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Assignment	Description	Due Date
Thesis Objective Statement	1-2 sentence description about the purpose of the thesis. This is the “elevator pitch” – if you had 30 seconds with a very important person to tell them about the point of the thesis, what do you say?	July 14, 2023
Broad Thesis Outline	If you do not know what an outline is, Google it. Here’s where you should sketch out a rough idea of what sections the thesis contains, with overarching ideas. Get your school’s Formatting Guidelines to organize document.	August 4, 2023
Detailed (annotated) Thesis Outline	Using the thesis components document, outline EXACTLY what each section of the thesis will contain. Be as specific as possible. It is not sufficient to say “Experimental Methods” anymore. What methods will you discuss, what theory, etc? Use your school’s Formatting Guidelines to organize document.	August 18, 2023
Experimental Plan	A Detailed list of EVERY experiment you will run (have run), WHY you are going to run each experiment (i.e. what is the purpose, what will the experiment tell you?). Include how you will analyze the results of every experiment, and what each analysis or characterization will tell you. Be sure you know the why behind each experiment.	Sept 1, 2023
Thesis Introduction	A polished draft of the introduction, including ALL citations and components as listed on the school’s Guidelines. This is usually rather short and just “sets the stage” for need of research but doesn’t go into theory.	Sept 22, 2023
Background, Part I	A rough draft of the literature survey of the background on prior science and findings, digs into the theory. (~10 pages, double-spaced, 25 citations is a good starting place)	October 13, 2023
Background, Part II	A polished draft of the background that fully identifies a knowledge gap, supports this through story telling of past literature findings, and gives evidence of why the work is done. Integrates theory and prior knowledge from literature. (~20 pages, double-spaced, 50-100 citations on average)	November 3, 2023
Materials & Methods	A polished draft of the Materials and Methods section, including all fabrication, characterization and analysis techniques, with relevant theory, equations, and application.	December 1, 2023
Data Compilation	All data files and samples must be made available to the Advisor and future laboratory students. Thesis students will publish all data (as reasonably possible) in the Appendix of the thesis. All data are to be submitted electronically to the lab’s cloud storage; the sample names/preparation for each data file will accompany this submission for the Advisor to sign off on the thesis for graduation. The student’s laboratory notebook remains property of the Advisor and laboratory; student keeps a copy of the book. As such, now is a good time to organize your data to be sure you’re ready to write your Results!	December 22, 2023

Results	A document containing FORMATTED tables and figures that will be in the results section. **This deadline is extremely important; it will allow for sufficient time for advisor to see if additional experiments must be run. Annotations for each figure/table that indicate what the results mean, and how they relate to each other. (This will form the basis of the Discussion!)	January 12, 2024
Results and Discussion, Part I	Write the story about what your results tell you. Compare your results to literature (do trends/findings agree with prior work?). Make sure you do another quick literature review in case new things are published since writing background	January 26, 2024
Results and Discussion, Part II	Now put your results “in context.” Discuss how your findings impact the field. Convince the reader what you’ve done is important. (This is the graduate degree part...)	Feb 9, 2024
Conclusions and Recommendations	Summarize major findings, tell us your contribution, and what could be done next.	Feb 23, 2024
Appendices and Front Matter	While your Advisor is reading your final pieces, put together all Appendices. Each Appendix must have an introduction about “what’s in it ” and every Figure and Table must have a full, descriptive title. Write Abstract and Executive Summary	March 1, 2024
Final Edits to Submit to Advisor	This is the home stretch – pull it all together with comments, format according to Department/University guidelines. OBTAIN advisor’s approval BEFORE you submit to committee	March 8, 2024
Submit to Committee	Take advisor’s edits, make quick changes and submit to committee (this gives Committee 3 weeks – minimum in my view!)	March 22, 2024
Defense Presentation	Prepare presentation based on thesis document. Review with advisor. Practice with lab-mates. Make committee presentation by April 12 (might need time to fix stuff before grad school deadline...!)	April 12, 2024
Completed Revisions Due to Committee	Final draft, addressing all committee members’ comments – must be checked by committee members and advisor	May 3, 2024
Submit to Proquest/Grad School	For example, see Cornell’s instructions at: https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/thesis-dissertation/submitting-your-thesis-dissertation/	May 10, 2024

