

**GRADUATE THESIS (M.A. WITH THESIS) TIMELINE FOR FULL-TIME M.A. STUDENTS**  
(Dates are given according to whether the student was originally admitted in fall or spring)

The M.A. can be completed with either a 3-credit capstone course or a 6-credit thesis. This decision should be made, in consultation with an advisor, in the second semester, at least 13 months prior to the anticipated graduation date. The thesis is subject to acceptance of your proposal and completion of work to meet the deadlines set out below. Note that many of these deadlines indicate the *latest possible date* by which a step may be completed. It is advised that students aim to complete these steps well in advance of the deadlines given below.

1. If you would like to apply to do a 6-credit M.A. Thesis, you must contact your preferred advisor **at the beginning of your second semester (by January 31/September 30)** about your research interests and start working on your proposal.
2. **By 13 months before submission date (March 1/November 1)**, obtain a conditional acceptance from an advisor, subject to the proposal's approval by the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Committee.
3. **By April 15/November 15**, contact the second and third readers to confirm their agreement to serve on the examination committee. Submit your thesis proposal to the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Committee. If accepted, see 4 below. If denied, you must take the 3-credit capstone option in your final semester instead of the thesis.
4. **By the start of the Add/Drop period in the third semester**, register for 840:701, and submit to your advisor a clear plan of individual chapters and evidence that all bibliographic materials are at hand. Failure to meet this deadline will mean you will have to abandon the thesis and register for an extra course and do the 3-credit capstone option instead, to reach the necessary 30 credits by the end of the academic year. In exceptional circumstances, and with the understanding that you will end up graduating later than planned and incur extra fees, the advisor may give you a new deadline.
5. **By the start of the Add/Drop period of your final semester**, register for 840:702, and submit three quarters of the thesis to your advisor. Failure to meet this deadline will mean you will have to abandon the thesis and register for an extra course and do the 3-credit capstone option instead, to reach the necessary 30 credits by the end of the academic year and graduate (in which case the capstone project may make use of the work you have done by this stage on the thesis). In exceptional circumstances, and with the understanding that you will end up graduating later than planned and incur extra fees, the advisor may give you a new deadline.
6. **Before Spring Break/Thanksgiving Break of your final semester**, submit the final draft of your complete thesis to your advisor.
7. **By the deadline of the first Monday after Spring Break/Thanksgiving Break**, submit the thesis to the defense committee.
8. **By the deadline for defenses, which are April 1 and December 20**, defend the thesis successfully before a three-person committee.
9. **By April 1/January 6**, submit all necessary forms to the Graduate School (<https://grad.rutgers.edu/academics/graduation/masters-degree-thesis-checklist>).