

# YALE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE GUIDELINE

## THESIS INFORMATION & GUIDELINES

### **Thesis Requirement**

The MD thesis, a requirement at Yale since 1839, is a hallmark of the Yale curriculum. It is designed to develop critical judgment, habits of self-education, and the application of the scientific method to medicine. It also gives students a chance to work closely with faculty who are distinguished scientists, clinicians and scholars.

Many students start their thesis research in the summer after the first year. A large percentage of students choose to take a fifth year to continue their research project in more depth.

All students at Yale University School of Medicine engage in research and are required to write an M.D. thesis during medical school, with the exception of students who have a Ph.D. degree in the biological sciences before matriculation. A wide choice of subjects for research is permitted. Students may choose basic laboratory projects or clinical projects or may select to do research in an array of disciplines including, but not limited to: epidemiological, humanities and medicine (including ethics and the history of medicine), sociology, economics, or education research. Publications in the literature may serve as the source of data for research. Four basic requirements apply to all thesis research projects: (1) the subject chosen must address an important question in medicine; (2) there must be a clear, concise aim that can be addressed by new knowledge generated by the student's research; (3) data must be collected and analyzed with the most rigorous methods suited to the research question; and (4) the research mentor must be a full-time faculty member at the School of Medicine.

Stipends are provided for summer and other short-term research periods. There also are many one-year research fellowships available.

### **Project Restrictions**

- Dissertations written jointly by two or more students are not acceptable. This does not mean that they may not work on related problems.
- Research involving human subjects must be approved by the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) ([www.yale.edu/hrpp](http://www.yale.edu/hrpp)) of the School of Medicine. Applications and guidelines are available online or in the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Office at 55 College Street.

See Yale's Thesis Digital Library (<http://ymtdl.med.yale.edu/>) for examples of MD theses from past medical students.

For more information about the thesis requirement, visit the

- Office of Education (<http://info.med.yale.edu/education/>)
- Office of Student Research (<http://medicine.yale.edu/education/osr/>)

### **Thesis Committee**

The thesis committee oversees all aspects of the medical student thesis program. This includes:

- Setting rules and regulations for the thesis requirement
- Establishing thesis deadlines
- Determining the guidelines and processes for the awarding of thesis honors and graduation prizes, and choosing the recipients
- Determining which students make oral presentations on Student Research Day

The thesis committee reviews the curriculum to make sure there is enough time for thesis research. It evaluates the participation and effectiveness of faculty mentors, assesses the quality of the student's research experience, and makes stipend-supported research fellowships available.

### **Research Done Outside of Yale**

Some students do research projects outside of Yale. The approval of an outside preceptor will be granted by the Office of Student Research upon receipt of a statement by a full-time Yale faculty member acting as sponsor, in whose area the research work will be done. If research is done at another institution during the summer between the first and second year only, the student is responsible for arranging stipend support. The most that OSR will contribute to the stipend is 50% (see Thesis Guide on the OSR website-- [http://medicine.yale.edu/education/osr/2015-16%20Thesis%20Guide%20\\_235698\\_174720\\_5.pdf](http://medicine.yale.edu/education/osr/2015-16%20Thesis%20Guide%20_235698_174720_5.pdf)). This applies only to the summer between the first and second year. Full stipends are available in other years.

The faculty advisor is responsible for reviewing the progress of the thesis with the student, reviewing the written thesis and giving faculty approval. The same regulations concerning the dates of submission and review by the appropriate departmental committee chair apply to theses done outside of the medical school.

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