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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THESIS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THESIS SUPERVISION</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THESIS EXAMINATION</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME LINE</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAMS OF STUDY</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

School Context

Through research and scholarship in the School of Health Administration at Dalhousie University, we promote the health of people in all care settings with effective and efficient programs, system management and policies to achieve quality health outcomes. With the recent creation of the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and also given our many other connections, we have a unique opportunity to work with a range of researchers and the health care system to harness rich and diverse expertise for healthcare innovation. In other words, Nova Scotia is a “Living Lab”.

Our students and faculty use robust data sets and rigorous methods. The strategic issues we need to address include health care inequities, access to care, health system change, and rural/urban and socioeconomic differences, within the context of limited resources. At the same time, our relative “smallness” enables nimble movement of ideas into practice, and a capacity and ability to develop unique and innovative models of care. Thus, we aim to be solution-driven, acting locally but thinking globally. We align ourselves with provincial concerns to achieve national and international excellence and impact. We have limited capacity and so we are selective in what we do, and we support collaboration.

By working directly with the School’s faculty on their areas of research¹, Master of Health Administration (MHA) Thesis Option students can gain valuable experience in research development and practice. Typically, the School offers the Thesis Option to up to three new MHA students per year. Student research topics are to be related to the research interests of School faculty. Access to the Thesis Option is subject to the availability of School Supervisors.

Who should consider the MHA Thesis Option?

The MHA Thesis Option is not for everyone. First, the student must be interested in the research of a full-time or cross-appointed School faculty member. Second, the student should have a well-developed rationale for pursuing the Thesis Option rather than the MHA coursework program. This rationale should relate to the student’s career goals. Interest in and commitment to publication, and PhD studies should also be considered.

If you think that the Thesis Option will be easier or have more flexibility than the MHA coursework program, the Thesis Option is not for you². Experience to date has shown that the Thesis Option is more demanding and takes longer to complete. Students interested in the Thesis Option should speak with

¹ School faculty who can supervise an MHA Thesis Option student and their areas of research are at: http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-administration/research/research-faculty.html

² If you have an interest in research but the Thesis Option is not for you, consider taking research methods or a directed project course as MHA elective(s). Another option for some students is working with a researcher outside of the School as an advisor for your Senior Seminar paper.
past Thesis Option students\textsuperscript{3} and review their theses.

Thesis students may be either full or part time MHA students. They may be joint degree students. JD/MHA students should include both a legal and health management focus in their thesis. The Thesis Option is not recommended for certificate (MHA+) students since they would need an extra nine credit hours and a minimum of 28 months to complete. The MN component of the MHA/MN program is undergoing change; therefore, please be in contact with the School to be apprised of the most current situation.

To be successful as a Thesis Option student, work and other responsibilities of MHA students should allow them to devote themselves fully to their research for concentrated periods of time, e.g. a minimum of a month devoted full time to each of three stages: i) develop research proposal, ii) carry out data collection and analysis, and iii) finish writing their thesis.

**Funding**

*Thesis student stipend:* Some graduate student funding exists for thesis students that is not available to coursework degree students. However, there is considerable competition for these funds. Success typically requires high marks on transcripts, excellent references, a well-written proposal for a clear and viable thesis, and a Supervisor with a strong and relevant research resume. Funding agencies have specific due dates that vary by source and requirements. Examples of funding agencies include: Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships\textsuperscript{4}, Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF)\textsuperscript{5}, Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute (BHCRI), Maritime SPOR Support Unit (MSSU), and the Canadian Frailty Network (CFN). Dalhousie University’s Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) also provides lists of funding sources. Sometimes faculty themselves have sources of funding for specific research projects.

Even if thesis students are not successful in receiving funding, there is value in preparing and submitting a funding application since effective grant writing skills are part of the bedrock of a successful research career. Furthermore, the peer review assessment of your application by the funding agency can be very helpful in understanding your strengths and weaknesses.

**Research costs:** An MHA Thesis can be completed with no costs. However, depending on the design and modes of knowledge translation, there can be expenses. There can be costs for data, but some data sources have no cost, or no costs to students, e.g. Canadian Longitudinal Study of Aging (CLSA)\textsuperscript{6}, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), General Social Survey (GSS), National Household Survey

\textsuperscript{3} Past MHA Thesis Option students and links to their respective theses are listed at: http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-administration/research/our-graduates/theses--master-of-health-administration.html http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-administration/research/our-graduates/theses--master-of-health-administration.html

\textsuperscript{4} See: https://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/funding/scholarships/nsgrad.html See also: Canada Graduate Scholarships – Master’s Program at http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGRAM-FCM-BESCM_eng.asp

\textsuperscript{5} See NSHRF graduate student thesis funding competition details at: http://www.nshrf.ca/programs-services/programs/research-programs/research-trainee-funding/scotia-scholarships#Process%20to%20Apply

\textsuperscript{6} For information on CLSA, see: https://www.clsaelcv.ca/
(NHS), National Population Health Survey (NPHS), National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), National Child Care Survey (NCCS), National Survey of the Work and Health of Nurses (NSWHN), Survey of Household Spending (SHS), Survey on Living with Chronic Diseases in Canada (SLCDC), Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS), Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS), Barriers to Care for People with Chronic Health Conditions (BCPCHC), and Canadian Tobacco Alcohol and Drugs Survey (CTADS).

Aside from the CLSA, all these datasets are free to use at the Atlantic Research Data Centre (ARDC). Data accessed through the ARDC, which follows strict disclosure protocols according to the Statistics Canada Acts, is exempt from research ethics board review based on the Tri-council policy statement on ethical conduct for research involving humans (TCPS2) article 2.2 (a).

There can also be costs for Open Access submission and publication of papers in journals, as well as conference registration and travel for presentations of research. Poster presentations have a poster production cost, typically of about $150, but there is no requirement that MHA Thesis students present a poster at a conference. There are some journals with no costs for submission and publication. Also, there are some annual opportunities for presentation of one’s work-in-progress while still a registered graduate student that have little or no cost. They are typically held each spring. Participating is encouraged, for example in the Three Minute Thesis competition \(^7\) and the Crossroads conference sponsored by the School of Health and Human Performance. \(^8\) The possibility of some travel support is available from FGS. \(^9\)

**Purpose of this Handbook**

This Handbook describes the thesis guidelines specific to MHA students. This Handbook should be carefully reviewed by MHA students considering the Thesis Option since it documents processes, responsibilities and requirements. This Handbook complements but does not replace FGS regulations and information. See FGS policies and procedures for students, Supervisors, and Schools at: https://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies.html.

**THESIS**

**Purpose of a Thesis**

The purpose of a MHA Thesis Option is to provide the opportunity for the student to demonstrate the skills in health services research scholarly inquiry. The successful completion of a thesis demonstrates that a student can:

\(^7\) Information on FGS's Three Minute Thesis is at: http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/news/3mt/about.html

\(^8\) For information on the Crossroads conference, see: http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-humanperformance/research/crossroads-conference.html and https://hahpgss.com/crossroads-2016/registration/

\(^9\) For information of FGS student travel funding applications, see: http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/funding/grants.html
1. Ask a research question or state a problem, and justify its relevance.
2. Review related literature and show how the literature informs the question or problem under investigation.
3. Carry out research methods that generate data and then analyze the data.
4. Report findings that address the question or problem.
5. Discuss and integrate study findings within the existing knowledge of the field of study related to the question or problem. Discuss implications and the generalizability of the findings.
6. Draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding the data. Discuss policy implications, and identify areas where further research is needed.

Originality of Research

A thesis is to be a student's own work with regard to academic content. The services of professional editors are not permitted other than for proofreading and formatting. While editorial correction of the writing is expected, it is not appropriate for a thesis Supervisor to be involved in substantive re-writing of a thesis. Co-authored papers in a manuscript thesis will be a team effort with the contribution of each author clearly noted. Students should read and are responsible for adherence to Dalhousie University's policy on plagiarism.

Identification of a Thesis Topic

The thesis topic can be developed in various ways. A student can prepare a one-page description about the research topic of interest. This can be discussed with the School’s Director in terms of feasibility and appropriateness. The Director can suggest possible Supervisors with the specialized expertise that matches the student’s research interests. Alternatively, the student can directly approach a full-time or cross-appointed faculty member in the School. Or, a faculty member may approach a student.

Format for Thesis Proposal

The student works in conjunction with their thesis Supervisor to develop the thesis proposal. While developing the proposal, the student should seek input from Supervisory Committee members to incorporate their specialized knowledge and expertise.

The following is a suggested format for the thesis ‘proposal’:

1. Cover page including thesis title, date, name of the student, proposed Supervisor, and proposed Readers.
2. Table of Contents
3. Abstract
4. Introduction: Provide an overview of the research and then focus on the specific issue or problem under investigation. Identify the purpose of the research and its significance. Clearly
state the research question(s) and/or problem to be investigated. One, or maybe two but not more than three, research question(s) is advised.

5. Literature Review: Demonstrate an understanding of related research, identify gap(s) in knowledge (i.e., justification for the research you’re proposing), and show how your research will add new knowledge to the field of study. You may also include a theoretical framework and/or review of relevant data collection instruments.

6. Research Methods: Provide details about research design, sample selection, data collection techniques and procedures, and methods of data analysis. Either quantitative or qualitative research methods may be used but overall the School faculty are more familiar with quantitative than qualitative methods. Identify the Research Ethics Board (REB) process you will use.

7. References

8. Appendices (e.g., may include copies of data collection instruments, letter to study participants, consent forms)

Ethical Review of the Thesis Research Project

All research proposals that involve human subjects must receive Research Ethics Board (REB) approval from the appropriate review committee at Dalhousie University and/or the relevant field location(s) before the research can be conducted. Students should allow a minimum of six to eight weeks for processing and to make any revisions required by the REB after they have prepared and submitted their REB application. Thesis research may not proceed until ethical approval is obtained. If REB approval is not required, a letter from the REB must be obtained stating that REB is not required.

Thesis Structure

The MHA 2.0 credit thesis is to be scholarly, publishable work attaining FGS standards. The American Psychology Association (APA) referencing style is to be used. The entire thesis must conform to the “Guidelines for Thesis Preparation” with respect to font size, line spacing and margin sizes, etc.

The thesis may be written in either a traditional thesis or manuscript style. These days, the manuscript style is generally preferred to aid in prompt publication of thesis findings in peer review journals. When co-authored manuscript(s) are included in a thesis, the student must have made a substantial (e.g., the lead) contribution to the manuscript(s). The student must provide an explicit statement in the thesis regarding the contributions of each author. This statement should appear in a section entitled “Contributions of Authors”. When students opt for the manuscript style thesis, their manuscript(s) must be chapter(s) of their thesis. Thesis chapters must be integrated into a cohesive unit with a logical progression from one chapter to the next. In order to ensure that the thesis has continuity, connecting chapters that provide logical bridges may be necessary.

Responsibilities of Student

1. Submit thesis proposal to the School’s Director, with the approval of the proposed thesis Supervisor and Readers.

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10 See http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/currentStudents/thesesanddefences.html
2. Apply for and receive REB approval for the proposed research prior to data collection.

3. Complete an MHA thesis in a form acceptable to the student’s Supervisory Committee and which adheres to FGS guidelines. The student is to consult the FGS website to become familiar with all deadlines and requirements.

4. Arrange for thesis Examination by working with the Administrative Manager, School of Health Administration, in collaboration with the student’s thesis Supervisor and other Examination Committee members, with the approval of the School’s Director.

5. Submit thesis for Examination to all members of the Examination Committee according to format described in Dalhousie’s FGS Regulations for Submission of Thesis, at least four weeks in advance of the intended Examination date.

6. Make all changes required by the Examination Committee, have these approved using the process required by Examination Committee, and submit the final thesis to FGS in the format and through the processes required by FGS.

**Redirection Opportunity**

MHA Thesis Options students can convert back to a course work MHA prior to submission of their thesis to the Examination Committee. Personal and career factors, as well as a better understanding of the demands of the research process, could lead to this decision. Thesis Option students who revert back to the course work MHA are required to complete all remaining course credits which includes Senior Seminar (0.5 credit) in lieu of the 2.0 thesis credit(s) from the list of MHA required classes.

MHA students can only request and be accepted into the Thesis Option once. If an MHA student commences the Thesis Option and then reverts back to a course work MHA, they are not eligible to apply again for the Thesis Option.

**STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS**

Students are not admitted into the Thesis Option at the time of admission to the MHA program. All MHA students are course work students until they complete first-year required courses. If in their first term of the MHA program, an MHA student is considering the Thesis Option, a research methods or a second year required MHA course should ideally be taken in the winter term of the first year. Admittance to the Thesis Option typically occurs only after completion of first year MHA courses.

To be admitted to the Thesis Option, MHA students must:

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11 If the student opts not to complete the Thesis Option, the research methods class could count as an elective course in their MHA program.

12 Successful attainment of the School’s CA+HME competencies across all required MHA courses is required of Thesis Option students.
• Complete all or most of the first year MHA required courses,

• Attain an A- average (GPA of 3.7) or better in their required first year courses, which usually means that a student has no grades below B+,

• Demonstrate that they are self-motivated, organized, and analytical,

• Identify a thesis Supervisor and Reader in the School who: i) are FGS approved, ii) are a full-time or cross-appointed School faculty members in the School\(^{13}\), iii) agree to supervise the student, iv) have the time to be a thesis Supervisor/Reader, and v) have the content and research methods expertise (along with the other Supervisory Committee members, if needed) to advise the student,

• Submit a letter to the School’s Director requesting the Thesis Option, describing the thesis topic, identifying the thesis Supervisor and Reader, and their MHA Thesis Option course plan by May 1 of the academic year in which the first year courses are completed, and

• Receive approval by the School’s Director that the area of research, capacity of the School, background of the student, and MHA Thesis Option coursework plan are all appropriate.

**THESIS SUPERVISION**

**Thesis Supervisor**

Each student shall be supervised by a School faculty member who has been approved for graduate thesis supervision by FGS at the Dalhousie University\(^{14}\). They typically have research expertise and a program of research. In most instances, part time faculty do not have the necessary research education and thesis supervision capability to be approved by FGS as a thesis Supervisor. Co-supervision might be warranted, e.g., if the Supervisor has not had previous experience supervising a Master’s thesis student, but otherwise, co-supervision is not normally advisable.

**Responsibilities of Thesis Supervisor**

1. Provide guidance and advice in planning and carrying out the thesis research both in the preparation of the thesis proposal and the thesis itself.

2. Suggest Supervisory Committee member(s) to complement research expertise required to conduct the thesis research.

3. Adhere to Supervisor responsibilities in the FGS, Dalhousie University calendar.

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\(^{13}\) School faculty who can supervise an MHA Thesis Option student and their areas of research are at: [http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-administration/research/research-faculty.html](http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-administration/research/research-faculty.html)

\(^{14}\) School faculty who can supervise an MHA Thesis Option student and their areas of research are at: [http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-administration/research/research-faculty.html](http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/health-administration/research/research-faculty.html)
4. Review and provide feedback on the thesis chapters and provide ongoing critical evaluation and direction.

5. Ensure that the thesis is written in proper thesis format.

6. Suggest to the School’s Director the names of possible External Examiner(s) and a Chair for inclusion on the thesis Examination Committee.

7. Participate as a member of thesis Examination Committee.

**Thesis Supervisory Committee**

The thesis Supervisory Committee will consist of a minimum of three members, one of whom is the Student’s thesis Supervisor. The second School faculty member is called a Reader and must have Regular FGS Membership. The third member of the Supervisory Committee is also called a Reader and must have either Regular or Adjunct FGS membership. This third member can be external to School or Dalhousie provided they have substantive academic and research background pertinent to the research topic. The selection of the Supervisor and Readers, and the constitution of Supervisory Committee, must conform to the FGS regulations governing graduate student supervision at Dalhousie University.

The functions of the thesis Supervisory Committee are to:

1. Provide guidance to the student where needed in the area(s) of specialized expertise to adequately complete the thesis.

2. Read the thesis research proposal and provide a critical evaluation of the research design and methods being proposed.

3. Provide feedback during data collection and data analysis stages.

4. Accept that the thesis Supervisor, in dialogue with the student, will make the final decisions on how best to proceed if the Reader(s) views differ from that of the Supervisor or if Reader(s) feedback is not provided in a timely manner.

5. Read the thesis chapters and provide critical evaluation prior to the submission for Examination.

6. Participate as members of the thesis Examination Committee.

**Responsibilities of Reader(s) with Regular FGS Membership**

1. May or may not have extensive expertise in the area of the thesis research topic. However, the Reader is expected to provide guidance and advice on clarifying the research question; writing clearly; helping ensure rigour in literature search, design and analysis; identifying strengths and weaknesses; as well as policy/practice relevance, etc. In effect, both in the preparation of the thesis research proposal and the thesis itself, the Reader’s role is much the same as that of a research grant reviewer or a reviewer of a paper submitted to a journal for publication.
2. Review and provide feedback on the thesis chapters and provide ongoing critical evaluation and direction.

3. Ensure that the thesis is written in proper thesis format.

4. Participate as a member of the thesis Examination Committee.

**Responsibilities of Reader(s) with Adjunct\(^{15}\) FGS Membership**

1. Reader must have expertise in the area of the thesis research topic.

2. Provide guidance and advice in planning and carrying out the thesis research both in the preparation of the thesis research proposal and the thesis itself.

3. Review and provide feedback on the thesis chapters and provide ongoing critical evaluation and direction.

4. Participate as a member of the thesis Examination Committee.

**Responsibilities of School’s Director, who serves as Graduate Coordinator**

1. Initially explore research interests with a student in terms of appropriateness and feasibility of research, as needed.


3. Receive and review a copy of the preliminary thesis research proposal. (1-3 pages)

4. Assist in identification of External Examiner and facilitate arrangements regarding the thesis Examination.

5. Assist in identification of a Chair of the thesis Examination Committee who is neither the thesis Supervisor nor a member of the thesis Supervisory Committee, but is FGS-approved for thesis Supervision and a faculty member in the School. The Director can serve as the Chair of the Examination Committee, if not a member of the student’s Supervisory Committee

6. Submit documentation of thesis examination outcome to FGS, if serving as the Chair of the Examination Committee.

\(^{15}\) There are two types of FGS Adjunct membership:

**Adjunct (FGS)** is for a non-Dalhousie scholar with appropriate academic qualifications who has regular involvement with Dalhousie University graduate programs as approved by FGS.

**Adjunct (Scholar)** is for one student appointed to FGS if the Scholar has the necessary academic credentials and is actively engaged in research.

**Adjunct (Retired)** is for a retired Dalhousie faculty member who had held a full-time academic appointment and Regular FGS membership, and do not hold a paid post-retirement position.
THESIS EXAMINATION

Thesis Examination Committee

The Examination Committee Chair will be the School’s Graduate Coordinator or designate and must be a School faculty member approved by the FGS at Dalhousie University. The Examination Committee Chair cannot be a member of the Supervisory Committee. The Examination Committee will also include the members of the Supervisory Committee and an External Examiner who is external to the School and holds Regular FGS Membership at Dalhousie.

Responsibilities of Chair of the Examination Committee

1. Read thesis in advance of the thesis Examination.
2. Chair Examination Committee (see process below)
3. Submit report of the Examination Committee’s assessment of the thesis to FGS with a copy to the student and the Supervisor.

Responsibilities of External Examiner

1. Critically review the thesis in advance of the thesis Examination. The External Examiner may prepare a report in advance of the thesis Examination Committee meeting.
2. Participate as a member of the thesis Examination Committee either in person or via teleconference.
3. Is the first to ask the student question(s) after the student orally presents their thesis for Examination.

Thesis Examination Process

Formal examination is based on the Examination Committee’s review of the thesis that the student submitted. After the student orally presents their thesis in 20-30 minutes, the student is expected to respond to thesis-specific comments, issues, and concerns raised by members of the Examination Committee. Following this, the Examination Committee members meet in camera to determine their decision using the FGS approved grading categories, any revisions that are to be made by the student and which member(s) of the Examination Committee will review and approve the required revisions. Once the Examination Committee’s decisions are made, the Chair of the Examination Committee is to call the student back into the meeting room and inform the student of the Committee’s decisions. The Chair is to submit a written report to the FGS as expeditiously as possible on the outcome of the

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16 In the School at this time, the Graduate Coordinator is the School Director.

17 An External Examiner is called a Reader in some places in the FGS guidelines. In this Handbook, only the term External Examiner is used.

18 The student and all guests are to leave the room.
examination process, including details of necessary revisions. The Chair is to provide a copy of this report to the student and Supervisor.

The thesis signature page may be provided by the student and signed by the Examination Committee members after the Examination Committee’s deliberations, pending revisions, and is then held by the Chair until changes have been made and approved.

The student should review the revisions required by the Examination Committee with the Supervisor. After completing the necessary revisions, the student should provide a summary and details as necessary of all revisions to the Supervisor and/or the Chair of the Examination Committee before final submission to the FGS by the appropriate deadline. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to ensure that all references are properly cited in the thesis, prior to final thesis submission to FGS.

**SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Table 1 outlines the minimum requirements for membership on the Supervisory and Examination Committees.

Table 1: Summary of Committee Membership

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<tr>
<th>Supervisory Committee</th>
<th>Additions to Supervisory Committee to create Examination Committee$^{19}$</th>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor$^{20}$</td>
<td>Examination Committee Chair (School Graduate Coordinator or Designate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reader$^{21}$</td>
<td>External Examiner$^{22, 23}$ with Regular FGS Membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reader$^{24}$</td>
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$^{19}$ The Examination Committee includes all members of the student’s Supervisory Committee plus an External Examiner and a Chair.

$^{20}$ Supervisor must be a Regular FGS Member and a full time School Faculty member (tenure, tenure-track, limited term) or a Dalhousie faculty member cross-appointed to the School.

$^{21}$ Same requirements as for Supervisor.

$^{22}$ An External Examiner is called a Reader in some places in the FGS guidelines. In this Handbook, only the term External Examiner is used to refer to the External Examiner.

$^{23}$ The External Examiner must be a Regular FGS Member but not a full time School Faculty member (tenure, tenure-track, limited term). The External Examiner can be cross-appointed to the School but this is not required.

$^{24}$ Same as for Supervisor, or either of the two following categories:

**Adjunct (FGS)**. Non-Dalhousie scholar with appropriate academic qualifications who have regular involvement with Dalhousie University graduate programs as approved by FGS.

**Adjunct (Scholar)** for one student appointed to FGS if they have the necessary academic credentials and are actively engaged in research.

**Adjunct (Retired)** is for a retired Dalhousie faculty member who had held a full-time academic appointment and Regular FGS membership, and do not hold a paid post-retirement position.
TIME LINE

Thesis Option students are expected to complete their MHA within a similar time frame as coursework MHA students. This is normally 20 months\(^{25}\) although the time period is likely to be longer for Thesis Option students. If the thesis is not successfully defended before September at the start of the third academic year, redirection from the Thesis Option to the course work MHA should be seriously considered.

**Deadlines\(^ {26}\) for Full Time MHA Thesis Option Students**

**Second term of academic Year 1:** Any student interested in the Thesis Option should talk to possible thesis Supervisors about pursing the Thesis Option and a thesis topic.

**By May 1 of Academic Year 1:** Student submits in writing the reason she/he is requesting the Thesis Option and a preliminary thesis proposal (1-3 pages). The student’s application for admission to the Thesis Option will be reviewed by the School’s Director, proposed thesis Supervisor, and proposed Readers.

**By May 21 of Academic Year 1:** Decision on request for admission to MHA Thesis Option.

**Summer Residency:** The Residency is required for all Thesis Option MHA students. This is a management, not a research, Residency. However, the Residency can be in a location that provides the student with content knowledge relevant for the thesis. Student and thesis Supervisor will be in regular contact regarding the research question that is to be basis of thesis proposal.

**By mid-August, before the beginning of Academic Year 2:** Thesis student commits time to writing and editing his/her thesis proposal, as well as preparing the thesis proposal for submission to ethics review.

**September/October of Academic Year 2:** Student submits written thesis proposal to Supervisory Committee and for ethics review. Format for Thesis Proposal is provided elsewhere in this Handbook. This fully developed thesis proposal is expected to be at least 10-20 pages.

**Fall of academic Year 2:** Complete MHA course work\(^ {27}\). Make progress on literature search, research design revisions, and data collection as time permits. Data collection cannot begin until ethics approval has been received.

**January to March of Academic Year 2:** Complete data collection (as necessary), carry out analysis, and draft thesis.

**April of Academic Year 2:** Finalize writing the thesis for submission to the Supervisory Committee and begin planning arrangements for the Examination.

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\(^{25}\) Given for full time students. Part time students should substitute an appropriate, equivalent timing.

\(^{26}\) Students and their Supervisors should also consider relevant research funding, REB, conference abstract submission, and other deadlines.

\(^{27}\) Successful attainment of the School’s CA+HME competencies across all required MHA courses is required of Thesis Option students. See Table at the end of this Handbook.
May of Academic Year 2: Make corrections required by Supervisory Committee, and then send to the Examination Committee, after the thesis is approved by the Supervisor, at least four weeks before the Examination date.

Sometime between May and July: Examination and final thesis submission to FGS.

End of August of Academic Year 2: If the student has not successfully defended their thesis, or if this is not to happen in the very near future, the student should seriously consider reverting to the MHA course work option, and register for the remaining course work credits to complete their MHA in their third academic year.

Final Thesis Submission Deadlines

- The deadline for the student’s final thesis submission to FGS, for those expecting to graduate in May 2018 without registering for the winter term, see Dalspace. In the past, this date was in mid-December.

- For the deadline for the student’s final thesis submission to FGS, for those expecting to graduate in May 2018 after completing their winter term, see Dalspace. In the past, this date was the first week of April.

- For the deadline, for those expecting to graduate in October 2018, to submit their approved thesis to FGS, see Dalspace. In the past, this date was in late August.

The dates are also noted on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website:
http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/currentstudents/thesesanddefences/submission.html

Doctoral Studies

Both MHA course work and Thesis Option students can consider pursing a PhD after their MHA. One example of a PhD program at Dalhousie is the PhD program in the Faculty of Health. However, unlike the situation for MHA Thesis Option students, MHA course work students are required to complete an extra year (three-year program) that would include research courses and a research project as their additional first year.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies website provides more detailed information with regard to formatting, deadlines, and regulations. The guidelines can be found at http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/currentStudents/thesesanddefences.html.

28 All theses must be submitted to FGS for format review prior to final submission. See FGS Formatting Your Thesis for additional information

29 Information on the Faculty of Health PhD is at:
http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/programs/phd-in-health.html

30 Further details are at: http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/programs/phd-in-health/program-details.html
PROGRAMS OF STUDY

MHA - THESIS OPTION\textsuperscript{31,32}

First Year - (5 credits = 30 credit hours)

Fall
HESA 5330, Management & Design of Health Care Organizations
HESA 5345, Financial Accounting, Governance & Management Control
HESA 6360, Healthcare Law
HESA 6370, Comparative Healthcare Funding and Insurance Systems
HESA 6505, Statistics for Health Administration
IPHE 5900, Interprofessional Health Education\textsuperscript{33}

Winter
HESA 5315, Managing Change in Health Systems
HESA 5335, Information Systems in Health Administration\textsuperscript{34}
HESA 5320, Managerial Epidemiology
HESA 5341, Healthcare Economics: Evaluation and Policy
HESA 5350, Management Control and Funding Systems in Healthcare
IPHE 5900, Interprofessional Health Education

Summer - (1 credit = 6 credit hours)
HESA 6390, Health Administration Residency

Second Year - (5 credit = 30 credit hours)

Thesis (2.0 credits)
1.0 credit research courses (from available existing graduate research courses)
0.5 credit directed reading or project – e.g. to work up aspects such as literature review, thesis proposal, ethics review application, funding application(s), or HEAS required course
0.5 credit additional research course, HESA required course, or directed reading/project
IPHE 5900, Interprofessional Health Education

MHA Thesis Option students must also choose at least two of the following (1.0 credit)
HESA 6100, Ethical Decisions in Health Administration
HESA 6305, Analyzing the Outcomes of Healthcare
HESA 6310, Healthcare Policy
HESA 6330, Strategic Planning in Healthcare
HESA 6340, Human Resources in Healthcare
HESA 6365, Quality Management in Healthcare

TOTAL: 11 CREDITS (66 credit hours)

\textsuperscript{31} Successful attainment of the School’s CA+HME competencies across all required MHA courses is required of Thesis Option students. See Table 1 at the end of this Handbook.

\textsuperscript{32} MHA Thesis Option students may take more than 11 course credits, but are not required to do so.

\textsuperscript{33} All MHA students must register for IPHE 5900 during every term of the MHA program.

\textsuperscript{34} Coursework MHA students have an elective instead of HESA 5335 in their first year Winter MHA, and then take HESA 5335 in the Winter of their second year MHA. This is fine for MHA Thesis Option students also. However, it can be advisable for MHA Thesis Option students to take either a ‘research’ elective course, or HESA 5335 Information Systems, or HESA 6310 Healthcare Policy, or HESA 6365 Quality Management, in the Winter of their first year.
**JD/MHA - THESIS OPTION**

**First Year – MHA (5 credits = 30 credit hours)**

**Fall**
- HESA 5330, Management & Design of Health Care Organizations
- HESA 5345, Financial Accounting, Governance & Management Control
- HESA 6360, Healthcare Law
- HESA 6370, Comparative Healthcare Funding and Insurance Systems
- HESA 6505, Statistics for Health Administration

**Winter**
- HESA 5315, Managing Change in Health Systems
- HESA 5320, Managerial Epidemiology
- HESA 5341, Healthcare Economics: Evaluation and Policy
- HESA 5350, Management Control and Funding Systems in Healthcare
- 0.5 credit: Approved graduate research methods course

**Summer - (1 credit = 6 credit hours)**
- HESA 6390, Health Administration Residency

**Second Year**

**First Year of Law School**

**Summer between Years 2 and 3 (0.5 credits = 3 credit hours)**
- 0.5 credit directed reading or project - to work up aspects such as literature review, thesis proposal, ethics review application, funding application(s)

**Third Year**

Complete year 3 JD requirements and make progress on thesis.
Register for MHA Thesis and continue registering until finished (2 credits = 12 credit hours)

**Summer between Years 3 and 4**

Work on completing thesis

**Year 4**

Complete remaining JD requirements
- HESA 5335, Information Systems in Health Administration (0.5 credits = 3 credit hours)

*Complete remaining MHA requirements.*
- Students must choose 2 of the following half credit classes (1 credit = 6 credit hours)
  - HESA 6100, Ethical Decisions in Health Administration
  - HESA 6305, Analyzing the Outcomes of Healthcare
  - HESA 6310, Healthcare Policy
  - HESA 6330, Strategic Planning in Healthcare
  - HESA 6340, Human Resources in Healthcare
  - HESA 6365, Quality Management in Healthcare

**Notes:**

MHA Credit requirement in JD/MHA:
- **10 CREDITS** (with HESA 6360, Healthcare Law) = 60 credit hours
- **9.5 CREDITS** (without HESA 6360, Healthcare Law) = 57 credit hours

MHA Thesis Option requirement:
- **11 CREDITS = 66 credit hours**

JD/MHA Thesis Option requirement
- **11 CREDITS = 60 credit hours**

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35 Students may complete the remaining 1 credit MHA requirement and HESA 5335 in Years 3 or 4, depending on thesis progress/plan. IPHE 5900, Interprofessional Health Education – register each term.
Example of how a Part Time student could complete MHA THESIS OPTION\textsuperscript{36} in less than five years, for those working full time in health system. NSHA (and IWK) want all staff (including Managers) involved in research e.g. via TRIC grants.

First Year - (2.0 credits = 12 credit hours)
Fall
HESA 5330, Management & Design of Health Care Organizations
HESA 6505, Statistics for Health Administration
IPHE 5900, Interprofessional Health Education\textsuperscript{37}
Winter
HESA 5315, Managing Change in Health Systems
HESA 5320, Managerial Epidemiology
First Summer - (0.5 credit = 3 credit hours)
HESA 6395, Directed Reading – Background review of literature related to MHA thesis topic

Second Year - (2.0 credits = 12 credit hours)
Fall
HESA 5345, Financial Accounting, Governance & Management Control
HESA 6360, Healthcare Law
Winter
HESA 5341, Healthcare Economics: Evaluation and Policy
HESA 5350, Management Control and Funding Systems in Healthcare
Second Summer - (0.5 credit = 3 credit hours)
HESA 6394, Directed Project - Prepare and Present Thesis proposal, Research Ethics Board, Data access request, learn relevant ethics and research methods, and/or contribute to research grant application, etc

Third Year\textsuperscript{38} - (2.0 credits = 12 credit hours)
Fall
HESA 6370, Comparative Healthcare Funding and Insurance Systems
0.5 credit research course (from available existing graduate research courses)
Winter
HESA 6390, Health Administration Residency (1 C=credit = 6 credit hours)
Third Summer - (0.5 credit = 3 credit hours)
HESA 6396, Directed Reading – on Knowledge Translation/ Implementation Science to improve outcomes, quality, human resource planning, etc

Fourth Year - (2.0 credit = 12 credit hours)
Thesis (2.0 credits)
Fourth Summer - (0.5 credit = 3 credit hours)
HESA 6397, Directed Project –Knowledge Translation/Exchange of Thesis findings, policy, planning, etc

Fifth Year - (1.0 credit = 6 credit hour)
Fall
MHA Thesis Option students must complete at least two required Second year MHA courses\textsuperscript{39} (1.0 credit)

TOTAL: 11 CREDITS (66 credit hours)

\textsuperscript{36} Successful attainment of the School’s CA+HME competencies across all required MHA courses is required of Thesis Option students. See Table 1 at the end of this Handbook.

\textsuperscript{37} All MHA students must register for IPHE 5900 during every term of the MHA program.

\textsuperscript{38} To be accepted as an MHA Thesis Option, must apply to and be accepted by Director of School by end of year three at the latest. If not accepted as a thesis option, up to three directed project/reading or research courses successfully completed can used as electives in completing the MHA coursework MHA.

\textsuperscript{39} HESA 6100, Ethical Decisions in Health Administration, HESA 6305, Analyzing the Outcomes of Healthcare, HESA 6310, Healthcare Policy, HESA 6330, Strategic Planning in Healthcare, HESA 6340, Human Resources in Healthcare, HESA 6365, Quality Management in Healthcare
Table 1: National Center for Health Leadership (NCHL) Competency Equivalency for Exempted Second year MHA Courses

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MHA Thesis Option students may replace up to four of the following six required second year MHA courses by completion of this table by working with their Supervisor, and having their NCHL competency equivalence approved by the Director of the School of Health Administration: Ethics (6100), Outcomes (6305), Policy (6310), Planning (6330), Human Resources (6340), and Quality (6365).

For example, review/critique/application of specified readings relevant to thesis research methods/context/policy; TCPS and/or other ethics modules; student’s contribution to Research Ethics Board and/or data access request process; student’s contribution to thesis proposal; student’s contribution to research funding application(s) either directly related to student’s thesis or other research of the supervisor(s); student’s directed studies paper; Dal/other Research course learning/evaluation; Crossroads, Three Minute theses, or other presentation.

Assessments of output related to various learning experiences.