
OVERVIEW OF THE HONORS THESIS

- All Honors students must complete a year-long Honors Thesis project which is due in the student’s last semester.
- Upon its completion, students must pass a thesis defense with their advisor and a second reader in attendance.
- The thesis is to be original and good enough to submit to a graduate school in the student’s field as a sample of his or her best scholarly work.
- The thesis must be a minimum of 25 pages unless an exception is granted by the Director.
- The thesis may be completed in any field but is most commonly in the student’s major.
- Examples of acceptable topics include those that involve laboratory research (sciences); critical analysis of works of literature, philosophy or art (humanities); research using original sources or field work (social sciences, marketing); original programming (computer science); analysis of business practices, laws or standards (accounting, finance, management); or a creative piece of work (art, poetry, theatre).
- The thesis must be completed under the supervision of a faculty mentor in that field.
- Students must obtain academic credit in some form for their thesis work. In order to do so, students can take one of a number of approaches. One option is to use a “springboard” course (often called a Capstone course or Senior Seminar) which is designed to produce a thesis. If there is no Capstone course in the student’s major, the student may get credit for the thesis through an Independent Study course in that field or by taking HON 499. HON 499 is a one-credit course that is geared toward the Senior Thesis. The class focuses on research methods for all majors and disciplines. The Business Honors Program also offers the following thesis courses for its students: FIN 495, ACC 495, MGT 495, MAR 495, and ACC 692Q (for BBA/MBA students only). For more information about acceptable courses for the thesis, refer to the “List of Acceptable Springboard Courses” form.
- All students must present their thesis at a thesis presentation at the end of their last semester. At the thesis presentation, the student provides an overview of his or her work in a presentation open to the public in addition to their thesis advisor and a second reader (an additional member). Students must pass the thesis presentation in order to pass their thesis. If a student is asked to make revisions to the thesis, the student has a week to do so.
Expectations of thesis advisors:

Faculty advisors should regularly meet with the student throughout the academic year, either in a Capstone class setting or individually. The advisor’s roles are to:

- Work closely with the student in developing a research topic and a plan for investigating it.
- Develop a timeline with the student, setting both short-term and long-term deadlines for the completion of various stages of the project.
- Assist the student with research methods when necessary.
- Assure that the student’s work is truly independent.
- Meet regularly with the student to evaluate the progress of his or her work, to discuss problems and provide whatever direction is necessary.
- Approve the student’s thesis as complete and satisfactory prior to review by the examining committee. Advisors must sign a form that verifies that they have read the thesis and found it to be satisfactory.
- Prepare student for the thesis defense. The student must be prepared to provide an overview of their work in a presentation open to the public in addition to a brief questioning by the thesis advisor and second reader. Students must pass the thesis defense in order to pass their thesis. The thesis advisor and second reader can make suggestions for revisions to the thesis which must be completed by the time the thesis is due.
- Take part in the thesis presentation. The thesis advisor would, along with a second reader, facilitate a brief scholarly dialogue with the student about his/her thesis. The thesis advisor would help to assess the thesis; suggest necessary revisions to the student; and secure the signatures for the Honors Thesis Assessment Form.

NOTE- if the thesis advisor is not available to participate in the thesis presentation, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the Honors College Director at least two weeks prior to the defense so that another faculty member can take the advisor’s place at the presentation.

Expectations of students:

To successfully complete the Honors thesis and thesis presentation, the student must work closely with a thesis advisor (ideally over the period of a year). The student’s responsibilities are to:

- Identify a faculty member from their field and ask them if they would be willing to serve as a thesis advisor. Students should set up a meeting with their potential advisor early in their senior year (if not at the end of their
junior year. Students should bring the *Honors Thesis Information Form* and the *Guide for Honors Thesis* form to the meeting.

- Notify their advisors of important Honors College deadlines (i.e. *Honors Thesis Information Form* deadline; first draft deadline; Thesis Presentation dates; and final draft deadline)
- Identify an acceptable “springboard course” to satisfy their senior thesis. For help, student should refer to the *List of Acceptable Springboard Courses* form or talk to an Honors advisor.
- Early in the first semester of the student’s last year, the student should meet with his/her thesis advisor to develop a research topic and a plan for investigating it.
- If graduating in May, students must inform the Honors Director of their thesis advisor and topic by mid-October.
- Hand in the *Honors Thesis Information Form* to the Honors College by mid-November (for students graduating in the spring semester) or by the third week of April (for students graduating in the fall semester). A one-page description of the thesis project must be included. NOTE- the thesis advisor must sign this form.
- Meet regularly with thesis advisor over the year to discuss the project and make revisions to the thesis as needed
- Stick to the timeline developed with thesis advisor and meet deadlines provided by the Honors College
- E-mail the first draft of thesis to the thesis advisor AND the Honors Director one week before the thesis defense date.
- Pass the thesis presentation. At the thesis presentation, the student provides an overview of his or her work in a formal presentation open to the public in addition with the thesis advisor and second reader present.

**OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS DEFENSE**

The culmination of the senior thesis is a 30 minute thesis presentation given by the student, with the advisor and second reader in attendance. The thesis presentation is a mandatory part of the Honors thesis. In order to pass the thesis, students must successfully complete the thesis presentation. It is an opportunity to formally present their paper and enter into a scholarly dialogue about their ideas and his or her approach to the project.

**Role of Thesis Advisor with regard to the Thesis Defense**

The thesis advisor is asked to take part in the thesis presentation. The thesis advisor would, along with a second reader, facilitate a brief scholarly dialogue with the student about his/her thesis. The thesis advisor would help to assess the thesis; suggest necessary revisions to the student; and secure the signatures for the *Honors Thesis Assessment Form*. 
NOTE- if the thesis advisor is not available to participate in the thesis presentation, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the Honors College Director at least two weeks prior to the defense so that another faculty member can take the advisor’s place at the presentation.

The responsibilities of the thesis advisor with regard to the thesis defense include:

1) read the latest draft of the thesis before the presentation;
2) attend students’ thesis presentation;
3) facilitate scholarly dialogue with student at the thesis presentation;
4) suggest revisions when necessary;
5) assess the thesis using the following grades—pass, pass provisionally; or rejection (see Honors Thesis Assessment Form);
6) sign the Thesis Assessment Form along with the thesis advisor and return the form to the Honors Office within 24 hours; and
7) sign the Thesis Advisor Confirmation Form to be included in the final bound copy of the thesis once all revisions have been made.

Role of the Second Reader

The second reader plays an essential role in assessing the theses and the thesis presentations. Second readers are professors in a related field and hired by the Honors College to perform the duties described herein.

1) read the theses that have been assigned to them;
2) attend students’ thesis presentations;
3) help facilitate scholarly dialogue with student at the thesis presentation;
4) suggest revisions when necessary;
5) assess them using the following grades—pass, pass provisionally; or rejection; and
6) sign the Honors Thesis Assessment Form along with the thesis advisor and return the form to the Honors Office within 24 hours.