

## THE HONORS COLLEGE UW OSHKOSH



### Honors Thesis Policies and Guidelines

#### **What is an Honors Thesis?**

The Honors Thesis satisfies the capstone requirement for Honors students. It is an independent study in the student's major or minor, and it is carried out under the supervision of an Honors Thesis advisor. It represents one of the highest achievements in The Honors College, and therefore, it is an important project for Honors students as they near graduation.

#### **What are the requirements?**

Honors students must have successfully completed Honors 175 and Honors 275 and have senior standing in order to be eligible for an Honors Thesis. In addition, a student must have submitted an approved Honors *prospectus* in order to enroll in the Honors Thesis credits. The prospectus must be read and approved by the thesis advisor, the chair of the department in which the project is being completed, and the Dean of The Honors College.

#### **What is the Honors Thesis process?**

The Honors Thesis is a two-semester project. During each semester, the Honors Director meets with each student at least once a month to facilitate successful communication and progress to completion.

*First Semester:* The student develops a prospectus that outlines the goals of the project and the means for attaining those goals. (See "The Honors Thesis Prospectus Guidelines" below.) This prospectus is then submitted for approval *along with* an Honors Thesis Contract. (The Contract requires multiple signatures; see "The Honors Thesis Contract" below.) The signed Contract allows The Honors College to enroll the student in the Honors Thesis credits for the second semester. The Honors Thesis credits are assigned to the department in which the project is being completed. (For example, a student doing an Honors Thesis in Psychology would be enrolled in PSYCH 474, and the thesis advisor would be listed as the instructor of PSYCH 474.) **The prospectus and Honors Thesis Contract must be received by The Honors College no later than the end of interim.**

*Second Semester:* The student is enrolled in the Honors Thesis credits, and thus, the student executes the plan outlined in the prospectus. It is **crucial** that advisor and student stay in regular contact during this semester. The Honors College **strongly** suggests that the advisor and the student arrange for regular meeting times to ensure the project is moving along on schedule. At the end of this semester, the student will

present the Honors Thesis at the Honors Thesis Symposium. The Symposium takes place during the second-to-last week of the semester, and it is important that the advisor attend the Symposium. **The Honors Thesis must be completed by the last day of the fourteen-week semester, and three formatted copies should be submitted to Oviatt House no later than the last day of interim.**

### **How long is an Honors Thesis?**

This depends almost entirely on the nature and scope of the project. For example, Honors Theses in mathematics and the natural sciences tend to be shorter in length (ca. 20 pages), as they might only require discussion necessary to elucidate certain findings. On the other hand, an Honors Thesis in history or philosophy might require more sustained discussion and argumentation (ca. 30-40 pages). A creative writing thesis might be 50-60 pages. But a thesis in the fine arts might consist mostly of an artistic product (e.g. sculpture, painting, performance, film, etc.) and thus require only a brief discussion (ca. 10-20 pages). In general, while the judgment of the advisor plays the biggest role in determining length, one might consider the Honors Thesis a “mini” master’s thesis.

### **Is the Honors Thesis graded?**

Yes. The Honors Thesis is treated like any other class. The project receives a grade from the advisor, and that grade must be submitted *via* Titan Web by the normal grading deadline.

### **Does the Honors Thesis have to be submitted to The Honors College?**

Yes. The student is responsible for submitting three (3) printed versions of the Honors Thesis to The Honors College in Oviatt House. The Honors College will bind the three Theses and send one copy to the student and one copy to the advisor. The third copy will remain in The Honors College Thesis library.

### **Should the Honors Thesis be formatted in a specific way?**

There are some formatting requirements. See “Guidelines for Honors Thesis Formatting” below. It is also **crucial** that the Honors Thesis is well written: it must be free from grammatical error and organizational defect.

## The Honors Thesis Prospectus Guidelines

Every student who chooses to complete an Honors Thesis is required to submit a prospectus. The prospectus serves as a guide to focus and refine the thesis. It should also help the thesis advisor to better understand the nature of the work and, therefore, provide helpful feedback.

The prospectus should be written *clearly* and *concisely*, and it should be *devoid* of grammatical error and awkward construction. The prospectus should be between six (6) and fifteen (15) pages in length depending on the nature of the project. The outline of the prospectus should be as follows:

- I. **Problem:** What is the specific research question you are looking at or challenge that you have set for yourself? This section should only be about three sentences.
- II. **Importance / Background:** This is a brief survey of literature on the topic, and it is the place where you show that you are prepared to take on the problem identified in the first section. As the longest section of the prospectus, it is typically at least three pages. Much of what you write here will reappear in the final document for your thesis.
- III. **Methodology:** How are you going to go about finding the answer to your problem? Will you need approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB)? What techniques, technology, instruments, library resources, etc., are you going to utilize? If you are going to analyze data, how are you going to analyze it? If you are going to design a survey, what kind of survey design are you using, and why? If you are going to need to get training, how are you going to get that training? This should be approximately a page or a page and a half in length.
- IV. **Working Thesis:** What do you think, at this point, you will find? This section should only be about three sentences. If you are doing a creative thesis, this is likely moot.
- V. **Timeline:** We recommend you start figuring out what you need to be doing when by working backwards from the last week of the semester during which you intend to complete your thesis, as that is the date the thesis document will be due to your advisor. (Shortly thereafter the Honors office needs to receive three copies of the final draft. See above.) Include an approximate date for the thesis symposium (the beginning of May for Spring completers; the beginning of December for Fall completers), for this is the date you need to have final results, even if you don't have a polished written thesis. The earliest date on the timeline should be the moment you submit your final prospectus to Oviatt House.
- VI. **Working Bibliography:** This itemizes your secondary research—texts and articles and even manuals you have identified that you know you need to look at, materials that you have already read, and those that you think you may need to read. Depending on discipline, this can range from a single page with approximately six entries to five pages of entries.

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**Honors Thesis Contract**

Instructions: The Honors student is responsible for making sure this form is filled out *completely* and *accurately*. This form *must* be accompanied by an Honors Thesis prospectus and must be submitted by the end of the interim prior to the completion semester.

**Anticipated Completion Semester:** \_\_\_\_Fall \_\_\_\_Spring      **Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name and Student ID:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Campus Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_      **State:** \_\_\_\_\_      **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Permanent Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_      **State:** \_\_\_\_\_      **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**College:** COB\_\_\_\_ COEHS\_\_\_\_ COLS\_\_\_\_ CON\_\_\_\_

**Course Number:** \_\_\_\_\_-474      **Total Credits:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tentative Title of Honors Thesis:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Advisor (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Signatures: By signing below, you certify that you have read the "Honors Thesis Guidelines," and you agree to complete (student) or supervise (instructor) the project as presented in the attached Honors Thesis prospectus.

**Student's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson:** \_\_\_\_\_      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(appropriate to course number)

**Honors Dean signature:** \_\_\_\_\_      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Guidelines for Honors Thesis Formatting

Every Honors Thesis should be submitted with the formatting described below. The cover page of the Honors Thesis is shown as a template on the last page of this document.

**Cover page of Thesis:** See the template below. This is the first page. It should *not* have a page number.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The next few pages should be numbered in lower-case Roman numbers (i, ii, iii, ...) and these numbers should be centered at the bottom of the page.*

**Page ii: Abstract (The centered heading, “Abstract,” should appear at the top.)**

The abstract should be one paragraph in length, summarizing your problem/research question and your findings. This abstract can be the abstract you write for the Honors Thesis Symposium program.

**Page iii: Table of Contents**

This is your table of contents and it can be arranged in a number of ways. It can be listed by chapter, but most likely it will be listed by section. Sections can also have subheadings listed by number or letter. Be sure to include on the right-hand side of each listed section the number of the page on which each section begins.

Possible sections to include:	Introduction
	Problem/Research Question
	Literature Review
	Background
	Methods
	Results and Discussion
	Conclusions
	Suggestions for Future Research
	Bibliography/References/Works Cited
	Appendices

**Page iv: List of Figures and Tables** (only if you have figures and tables)

Be sure to number the figures and tables, give them titles, and list page numbers.

**Next: The Thesis Proper** begins! This is page 1, but there should *not* be a number on the first page. The page numbers should be in Arabic numerals and located in the upper, right-hand corner of the page. But if you are printing back-to-back, then the page numbers should alternate accordingly from upper right-hand to upper left-hand corner. (Since the Honors Thesis will be bound, you should not place numbers near the binding.)

[Thesis Title]

by

[Your Name]

Senior Honors Thesis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The Honors College  
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Advisor: [Name, Department]

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

[Month, Year]