



# **University Honors Faculty Thesis Mentor Handbook**

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## **Mission**

The mission of the University Honors Thesis Project is to enable students to develop and explore intellectual and creative ideas of interest to them. Through the process of the University Honors Thesis Project, students make a genuine contribution to the advancement of knowledge or the creative expression of the human spirit.

## **Expectations of University Honors Students**

To complete the University Honors Thesis Project, students will engage in research, creative activity, or experiential learning that achieves a standard worthy of Honors-level scholarship, as determined by the Honors Thesis Faculty mentor. All University Honors Thesis Projects will culminate in a written Honors Thesis.

Completion of the University Honors Thesis Project will involve effort that is independent of class work. The responsibility for designing and executing the project rests with the student, although it requires close collaboration with the faculty mentor, or their designee (for example, a member of the research group). The nature of the interaction between the faculty mentor and the student will vary across the myriad of disciplines and topics of study. Throughout these relationships, students must have initiative and drive and be willing to invest the time and intellect required of a quality Honors project. It is important to understand that, despite these efforts, not all projects in research and creative endeavor will lead to clear-cut conclusions; this is the nature of open-ended intellectual activity.

Students will participate in one of three general types of University Honors Thesis Projects. First, students may conduct **research** under faculty mentorship. Second, students may engage in **creative activity**, in which they compose, develop, and create an original piece (for example in the fine arts or literature). Third, students may conduct an analysis of a meaningful **experiential activity** (for example an internship, service learning, or study abroad). For this third type, students must evaluate their experiences as part of a larger concept. The experiences should become an example, not the main focus of the project: a lens into wider issues, not simply an exploration of personal growth. These projects should involve research beyond that expected as part of the experience itself: for example archival information, observational data, literature reviews, and interviews with permission. Students choosing this pathway should outline a project with a faculty mentor prior to the start of the experiential activity (for examples see Appendix I).

## **Expectations for Faculty Thesis Mentors**

The Faculty Thesis mentor plays a pivotal role in the development, implementation, and completion of the Honors Thesis Project and the Honors Thesis. Without guidance and support from the Faculty Thesis mentor, the full benefit of conducting the Project and preparing the Thesis will not be realized by the student. We offer here, suggestions for the faculty that may contribute to the fruitful development of the Faculty Thesis mentor-mentee relationship:

1. Listen to the student as they explain their research idea. Guide the development of forming the idea into a researchable question or project.

2. Encourage the student to be independent in their thoughts and ideas. While the project will be done within your program or specialty/interest, the project should not simply be taking an idea from the faculty and implementing it.
3. Dialogue with the student about the steps and protocols that will be needed to answer the question or develop an idea.
4. If appropriate to the thesis project, introduce the student to other personnel in your research program and establish clear reporting lines between the student and your personnel. For example, if the majority of research is to be under the guidance of a post-doctoral researcher or graduate student, make sure all parties understand the structure of our program. Faculty should explain the culture of the research group; for example, time of lab meetings, expectations of participations, etc.
5. Inform the student of the unpredictable nature of research outcomes, the need for individual initiative, accountability, adaptability, and the prospect that the project may not achieve expected results, even if the student performs at full capacity.
6. Inform the student of the expected time commitment for conducting the Project and for writing the Thesis.
7. Understand the timelines for Honors quarterly progress reports. Faculty may wish to set internal deadlines for the student to follow. Review drafts of the Thesis Prospectus, Abstract, Introduction, and Thesis drafts.
8. Meet with the student at least monthly to review progress.
9. Support the student by attending their presentation at appropriate meetings, performances, exhibitions, etc. The Undergraduate Research Symposium is a logical venue for the presentation of Honors Thesis Projects.
10. Accept the invitation to be present at the University Honors Year End Celebration, during which we will recognize the accomplishments of the Honors students and the dedication of you, their Faculty Thesis mentor.

### **Support provided by University Honors**

1. University Honors will support the development of students to prepare them to conduct research, engage in creative activities, or participate in experiential activities at a level worthy of Honors distinction. The outcome of this distinctive work will be the Honors Thesis.
2. Assistance to students during the development of the thesis question and thesis prospectus in HNPG150 and HNPG151.
3. Training students to optimize library resources, including:
  - a. Navigating databases
  - b. Intercampus loans

- c. Special collections
  - d. Bibliographic management tools
  - e. Proper source citation (what is the right style manual for the discipline?)
  - f. Distinguishing reputable & current academic sources
4. Assistance to students in identifying and applying for research grants, scholarships and awards.
  5. Assistance to students in preparing their oral presentations.
  6. Writing support from the Writing Support Program of the Academic Resource Center, when needed, to write and review the Honors Thesis.
  7. Provided communications with the Faculty Thesis Mentor to foster a team effort in assisting the student with the Thesis Project process.

### **Timeline of the Honors Project**

The Honors Thesis Project typically takes place during the third and fourth years of the student's academic career at UCR. While some students may be ready at an earlier stage, the central component required to initiate a Thesis Project is the development of a question or hypothesis or framework to conduct the work.

Courses and activities in the first 2 years of University Honors have been designed, along with coursework in the student's major, to prepare them for upper division scholarship. A robust Honors Thesis Project is the general learning outcome of the Honors lower division preparation.

#### First Year

Coursework and Seminars taken in the first year lays the foundation upon which the Honors Thesis Project question can be placed. Lower division courses in the majors provide the vocabulary and building blocks in the student's discipline. In addition, University Honors provides the following:

HNPG001A (2 units) "Transitioning to UCR and Success in Honors" Offered in the first quarter, this class challenges student's perceptions of success in college, and helps them discover how to become expert learners. Students are encouraged to take a proactive role in their own education.

HNPG015 (4 units) "Honors Ignition Seminar" Offered in fall, winter, and spring, this class enables students to engage with faculty in an intimate, interdisciplinary learning environment, showing students how faculty use critical thinking skills in intellectual discourse. Subjects expand the young student's mind to new ideas and ways of learning.

HNPG001B (2 units) "Motivation of a University Honors Student" Offered in the spring quarter, this class investigates what motivates people to do things and act like they do. Pulling from experiments in human behavior, the course will challenge societal norms and enable students to question their personal beliefs about what motivates them.

## Second Year

The second year curriculum, while continuing to focus on coursework in the major fields, exposes the students to the process of Civic Engagement. Students will be challenged to investigate the application of their major-based knowledge to solving social and global problems. This will provide Honors students with a broad perspective in which to develop their Honors Thesis Project. University Honors offers:

HNPG002A (2 units) “Principles of Civic Engagement” Offered in the fall quarter, this course aims to cultivate, enhance, and facilitate students’ interest in social change, and bridge their academic and personal lives by providing knowledge and tools for civic engagement.

HNPG002B/C (1 unit) “Implementing Civic Engagement” Offered in the winter and repeatable in the spring, this optional course guides students through the initiation, planning, research and implementation of a civic engagement plan, and helping them apply the principles of civic engagement towards creating social change on campus and in the community. (optional)

HNPG150 (2 units) “Research Methods Across the Disciplines” Offered in the winter quarter, this course begins with the theory of knowledge and how we generate knowledge through research. The course then surveys how research and creative activity are conducted in the humanities, social sciences, arts, business, science, and engineering. Students are encouraged to begin developing ideas for a feasible Honor Thesis Project and to consider potential faculty mentors for their project.

## Second/Third Year

The timing of when the Honors Thesis Project is conducted varies across the disciplines. For science and engineering students, the project may need a full 2 years of research, while for arts and humanities students, the project may be completed in 1 year. University Honors has developed a course (HNPG151) for students to initiate their project, and because of the variation in timing, a student can take this course during their sophomore or junior year.

HNPG151 (2 units) “Individual Honors Projects” Offered in spring quarter, this course will provide two functions. First, it will serve as a forum for each student to discuss the development of their thesis with faculty in the appropriate discipline. Second, the class will provide workshops giving essential information related to development of the thesis project. Through these activities, the student will prepare a written document outlining their plan for their thesis project (thesis prospectus, precise, proposal, etc.) which is due no later than the end of the quarter the course is taken.

## Third Year

For students who have not had HNPG151, they will take this course during spring of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Other students will be well underway in their research project. At the end of HNPG 151 students are expected to submit the Thesis Proposal Form which includes an abstract and the signature of the thesis mentor for their thesis project. If this is not possible a plan is required outlining how they are going to obtain a mentor and finalize a thesis project to write the abstract.

### Summer Fourth Year

Many students will conduct research on their projects over the summer before their 4<sup>th</sup> year. Students will be reminded that they must submit a Quarter Progress email (see below for QP info) at the start of Fall quarter that outlines progress made over the summer and expectations for the fall quarter.

### Fourth Year

The 4<sup>th</sup> year will include deadlines aimed at keeping the student on track for completing the Honors Thesis Project. The activities and deadlines are:

## **University Honors Thesis Project Completion Schedule**

We have developed four areas that all students need to complete in order to fulfill the Honors Thesis project. This document outlines what these items are, when they are due and how to submit them.

1) The thesis “clock” starts when the Thesis Proposal Form is submitted. 2) University Honors expects quarterly updates in the form of Quarter Progress (QP) emails. 3) All students must present their work orally. 4) A hard copy of the final approved and signed off on thesis must be submitted.

Maintaining communication with the Honors coordinator and faculty thesis mentor is important to ensure success in completing the Honors Thesis project. University Honors provides many resources and assistance such as the services of a Writing Support Specialist (from the ARC) who can help with the mechanics of writing. Failure to complete any of these items without communicating with the Honors coordinator may result in being placed on probation or dismissed.

**(1) Thesis Proposal Form:** After Honors students have taken HNPG151, turned in their Thesis Proposal (in HNPG151), and officially begun work on their Honors thesis, they will be required to email their Quarterly Progress (QP) throughout the academic year, and when applicable, in summer (please see timeline below for more details).

**(2) Quarterly Progress (QP):** The student should email their QP directly to their Faculty Thesis Mentor and copy (Cc) the Honors Coordinator by the deadline dates indicated below. The QP includes:

1. A summary of their progress thus far on the thesis. The Honors coordinator sends an email outlining what questions they will need to answer. It will generally ask for a summary of their research and writing accomplishments and their goals for their thesis.
2. A word document with what students have actually written thus far for their thesis.

The purpose of the QP is to allow both the Honors student's Faculty Thesis Mentor and Honors Coordinator to mentor and evaluate progress toward thesis completion and ensure that communication between student and mentor is indeed happening. University Honors asks that Faculty Thesis mentors review the written progress and if necessary, encourage the use of the Writing Support Program for students with any challenges related to writing a thesis.

### **Quarterly Progress (QP) Timeline:**

The student should email the QP (which includes the 2 items above) directly to the Faculty Thesis Mentor AND be copied (Cc'd) to their respective Honors coordinator by the deadlines indicated below. The students should address the QP to their Faculty Thesis mentor. QPs are due as follows:

- QP reflecting thesis work the student has completed over the summer: Due Friday of 3rd week in Fall quarter (October 24, 2014)
- QP reflecting thesis work the student has completed over the Fall: Due Friday of 3rd week in Winter quarter (January 23, 2015)
- QP reflecting thesis work the student has completed over the Winter: Due Friday of 3rd week in Spring quarter (April 17, 2015)
- QP reflecting thesis work the student has completed over the Spring: Due Friday of 3rd week in June (June 19, 2015)

Any student who is having difficulty with their Faculty Thesis Mentor should communicate these concerns to their Honors coordinator before the due dates of the QP.

### **(3) Oral Presentation:**

Students must complete the oral presentation requirement **PRIOR** to the date they are turning in their thesis. Please see below for various deadlines for FINAL thesis submission.

#### **What qualifies as an oral presentation?**

1. An oral presentation is typically anywhere from approximately 15 minutes in length to an hour (depending on the location) performed in front of an audience at an "official" venue. There is no specific number for how many people need to be in the audience.
2. An "official" venue can include any discipline specific conference at UCR or any other higher education institution, the UCR Undergraduate Research Symposium (<http://ugr.ucr.edu>) or any other off campus location (even another country). Please note that most venues typically require submission of an application and abstract well in advance of the conference or event date. It is the student's responsibility to look up the deadlines for the various venues and ensure that they secure an oral presentation slot.
3. Proof of oral presentation. Whether students fulfill this requirement on or off campus, they must submit proof of their oral presentation the following ways:
  - Email or provide a physical copy of the program/agenda for the venue the student will be presenting at
  - Email or provide a physical copy of a letter from the staff or faculty present at that venue confirming that the student presented at that particular venue.
  - If either of the options above are not possible, the student should speak with his/her Honors Coordinator.

It is best if students confirm that their oral presentations are acceptable and will fulfill the oral presentation requirement by contacting their respective Honors Coordinator before deciding that a venue is an acceptable one. It is also the students' responsibility to request assistance from the Honors Coordinator or Thesis Faculty mentor if they are having difficulty in securing a presentation venue for this requirement.

#### **(4) Final Honors Thesis Submission:**

All students are required to submit a written report of their Honors Thesis Project: the Honors Thesis. Given the variety of research, creative activities, and experiential activities that exist, the student, together with the Faculty Thesis Mentor, will decide on the content of the Honors Thesis. However, some attributes are common to all Honors Theses, and to the best of their ability, the student should use the guidelines on this website: [http://honors.ucr.edu/current\\_students/thesis/](http://honors.ucr.edu/current_students/thesis/) for formatting when preparing the Honors Thesis.

*All students are required to have the faculty thesis advisor(s) sign the title page of the final submission.* University Honors will obtain the Faculty Director's signature on the title page.

Hard copy submission of the final thesis/capstone is due Friday of the 8th week of the quarter in which the student completes their thesis. If for any reason the student feels that they would like to turn in the thesis earlier or encounters unforeseen circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to request guidance from their Honors Coordinator and/or Faculty Thesis Mentor.

- Honors students finishing their thesis in the Fall: Final thesis due Friday of 8th week in Fall quarter (December 1, 2014)
- Honors students finishing their thesis in the Winter: Final thesis due Friday of 8th week in Winter quarter (February 27, 2015)
- Honors students finishing their thesis in the Spring: Final thesis due Friday of 8th week in Spring quarter (May 22, 2015)

## APPENDIX I

### Examples for students who wish to develop particular experiences into Honors Projects

Internships as the University Honors Projects: An Honors student has an internship at a policy “think tank” and decides to frame her experiences by analyzing why and how that organization has acted to influence policy, law, or practices over the past few years. Another student interns with a governmental agency and contextualizes his experiences within a broader analysis of the role of that agency in policy shifts and implementation. If the agency is not a government one, Honors students might delve into the contemporary roles –and debates over the roles-- of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the U.S. or wherever the particular NGO operates. If the student interns at a foundation, s/he might analyze the politics of grant-giving and grant-getting in shaping research and activities in the field(s) in which the foundation operates. A student interested in organizational behavior might analyze the class, race, and gender issues at the workplace and in the organization, and how that organization reflects or departs from the literature on those issues in other workplaces or agencies.

Study Abroad Examples of University Honors Projects: An Honors student opting to study in Barbados develops a project analyzing the impact of British colonialism on the higher educational system in that country, efforts by government and other interested parties to “decolonize” the system after Independence, and how the curriculum, access to university education, ways of teaching, and teacher-student interactions articulate with that history and struggle. An Honors student studying in Barcelona might want to examine the impact of Catalan’s history of anarchism and the regions famed opposition to Franco’s fascist regime in Spain on students and university education to the present day. Another might look at gender relations in the university in which they are studying, and embed the observations in gender theory. A student studying in Denmark might explore how access to universal health care and other features of a “welfare state” affect the options for study and careers for Danish students interested in the Arts, or how issues of race and citizenship differ in Denmark, by focusing on Greenlanders and their presence/absence in higher education.

Honors Projects based on volunteer work: Local schools, prisons, hospitals, old-age homes, and non-profit organizations concerned with the environment, public health, social justice and other important causes can be the foundation for experiential learning that leads to an Honors Project. Volunteering or interning in such activities is normally aimed at providing support for people less fortunate than oneself, or for society as a whole, but as an Honors Project it is more than that. It is learning what life looks like from a perspective one did not appreciate before. Examples included: How does an elderly person at the dusk of life look back at the arc of life? How does a prisoner relate to society and understand the reason why he or she is in prison? What does an environmental activist feel and do when most people seem to simply ignore global warming? The Honors Project will appreciate a distinctive point of view and culminate in a fruitful paper that puts the project's harvest into scholarly perspective.

## APPENDIX II

### The Honors Thesis

All students are required to submit a written report of their Honors Thesis Project; the Honors Thesis. Given the variety of research, creative activities, and experiential activities that exist, the student, together with the Faculty Thesis Mentor, will decide on the content of the Honors Thesis. However, some attributes are common to all Honors Thesis, and to the best of their ability, the student should use the following guideline when preparing the Honors Thesis.

- Title Page (blank number)  
The title page lists the project title, name of author(s), signature lines for Faculty Thesis Mentor(s), and Faculty Director of Honors.
- Abstract (page ii)  
The abstract is a brief summary of the project, which provides an overview of the problem being addressed, the research question, the procedures and methodology used in the project, the outcome or conclusions, and the contributions of the work. This will be different from the original abstract submitted at the start of the Thesis Project. The abstract should not exceed 350 words.
- Acknowledgement (Optional) (page iii)  
This section is optional. However the student may wish to thank people who were helpful to the completion of your thesis. For example, faculty mentors, librarians, interviewees, advisors, lab mates, family, etc. Acknowledge the University, University Honors, or outside agencies who provided financial supported for the project.
- Table of Contents (page iv)  
The titles of each section should be aligned to the left and page numbers of those sections flush to the right.
- List of illustrations/Lists of tables/Lists of Figures (when needed) (page v-?)
- Introduction (begin with regular Arabic numerals centered at the bottom of the page, i.e. page 1)  
The section introduces the topic of the Thesis (what, why, and how) and summarize the background information (literature review) that the reader should know to best understand the relevance of your work in the broader field of study. Present a statement of position, arguments, and/or hypothesis being studied. Describe the motivation for creative activities.
- Methodology, Materials, and Theoretical Paradigms.  
Describe how results were obtained, and the process for data gathering. How were data analyzed... what statistical methods were used? Explain how the outcomes are interpreted. Describe the sources of inspiration for creative activities and how these sources were interpreted for your original work.
- Results

Discuss the findings of the study, as revealed through the methodology outlined above. If appropriate, show dates in tables, graphs, or illustrations. Present the creative piece(s) (art, literature, music, etc.).

- **Discussion.**  
Summarize the results and place the study in the broader context of the field of inquiry. Comment on new questions that were generated in the process of this project. For creative activities, discuss how the creation of the “product,” has influenced your growth in the discipline.
- **Conclusion**  
Provide a brief summary of the main findings and implications of your work.
- **Bibliography**  
Include all of the works cited in the Thesis. Include endnotes when appropriate. For bibliography format, follow the approved formatting in the field of study (see journal guidelines or style manuals).
- **Appendices (as needed)**  
The appendices contain material that is pertinent to the text, but not directly included (raw data, questionnaires, consent forms, etc.). For many journals these are on-line supplements. If there is only one appendix, it is called "APPENDIX" (not Appendix A) and is given a title. If there are two or more appendices, each is labeled, given a title, and entered on a new page.

In the performing arts, the performance, production, and other live events are the medium in which individual creativity is best displayed. The student must notify University Honors well in advance of the performance and every attempt will be made for a representative of the University Honors Faculty to attend. The student should arrange to tape the event, so a permanent record is kept with the Honors Thesis. The student will submit a written component of their creative work as their Honors Thesis adhering, to the best of their ability, to the format above.

Students are welcome to discuss their ideas about the Honors Thesis format with University Honors Faculty and Coordinators.

All Honors Theses are bound annually in a volume set and deposited in the Special Collections at the Tomás Rivera Library.