

Faculty and Student Guidelines  
CALS Patrick Leahy Honors College  
Distinguished Undergraduate Research

PLHC students can either complete the CALS DUR award requirements or the CALS PLHC requirements to complete their PLHC Thesis. The DUR award and PLHC thesis due dates and documents are being synchronized to avoid confusion. (Some flexibility can be granted for the PLHC thesis process through discussion with the CALS PLHC program director).

### Junior Year

CALS PLHC students are required to complete the CALS 2990 Junior Seminar Course. In this course students develop a draft thesis proposal. This course is offered in the Spring semester. Student who will graduate a semester early or are traveling abroad their junior spring, can take an online version of the course in the Fall. Students should sign up for a minimum of 1 research credit while completing the CALS 2990 course. (**NOTE:** It is important to identify a research mentor before taking CALS 2990).

To apply for a DUR award, students must attend a DUR overview lecture. This is offered within the spring CALS 2990 course. There are other opportunities to attend a lecture scheduled via the CALS DUR awards committee and CALS student services.

### Senior Year

#### May Graduation

##### Due Dates

- Thesis proposal submission by **3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in September by 4:00** pm ET
  - DUR only Resubmissions (if required) 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in October by 4:00 pm ET
- Update of the research project by **1<sup>st</sup> Friday in February by 4:00** pm ET
- Final Thesis by **3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in April by 4:00** pm ET

#### January Graduation

##### Due Dates

- Thesis proposal submission by **3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in April** by 4:00 pm ET
  - DUR only resubmissions (if required) 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in May by 4:00 pm ET
- Research project update by **3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in September** by 4:00 pm ET
- Final Thesis by **2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in November** by 4:00 pm ET

**NOTE:** Highlighted due dates are the same for a PLHC Thesis

## **Documents Required**

- **Thesis proposal submission**
  - PLHC
    - Thesis proposal
      - 4-6 page proposal and timeline for thesis completion
        - Research proposals should follow DUR guidelines
        - Thesis project proposals can vary in format but should include an abstract, background/introduction, objectives, methodology, expected outcomes, potential pitfalls and a timeline.
    - Research mentor letter
      - The mentor's letter must indicate that the proposal has been reviewed by the committee and is ready for submission. Include (1) the level of independence the student will have in conducting the project, (2) the contribution of the proposed project to the field of study, (3) a brief mentoring plan and (4) the probability the project will result in (or contribute to) a peer-reviewed publication. If your mentor/advisor is not a CALS faculty or CALS adjunct faculty member you must also supply a letter of support from your CALS mentor/advisor or have the CALS advisor co-sign the research mentor's letter. This person should be part of your committee.
  - DUR – follow DUR guidelines
    - Thesis proposal
    - Mentor letter
    - Thesis committee form
- **Research Progress Update**
  - DUR and PLHC Thesis – ≤ one page document describing research progress, barriers encountered, any necessary changes to the project, or changes in the timeline.
- **Final Thesis**
  - PLHC
    - Completed the PLHC Thesis cover letter, with signatures (link)
    - Final edited thesis (all committee updates included)
    - Research Mentor Letter

- DUR
  - Completed DUR Thesis cover letter, with signatures (link)
  - Final edited thesis (all committee updates included)
  - Research Mentor Letter
  - Student reflection

**Research Mentor responsibility** A research advisor guides and mentors students throughout the research process, ensuring ethical conduct and academic progress. They provide support in securing funding, managing research, and developing research skills. They also play a crucial role in helping students with thesis preparation, professional development, and navigating academic challenges

1. Advise and guide the student through the research process ensuring ethical conduct and scientific rigor.
2. Provide support in developing research skills necessary for the project.
3. Provide required space and materials for the project. Students can apply for limited funds through the UVM FOUR office.
4. Review the student's thesis proposal and work with the student to develop a polished proposal before submission along with the thesis committee.
5. Review the student's final thesis and work with the student to develop a polished proposal.
6. Attend the student's oral defense and sign the thesis cover letter confirming that the student has successfully completed the requirements.

#### **Committee member responsibilities**

1. Review the student's thesis proposal and work with the student to develop a polished proposal before the proposal due date.
2. Review the written thesis and provide comments and feed back before the thesis due date.
3. Attend the student's oral defense and sign the thesis cover letter confirming that the student has successfully completed the requirements.

**DUR Thesis** – send submissions to [calsstudentservices@uvm.edu](mailto:calsstudentservices@uvm.edu) and CC [Janet.Murray@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Janet.Murray@med.uvm.edu)

**PLHC Thesis** – send submissions to [Janet.Murray@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Janet.Murray@med.uvm.edu)

**NOTE:** Theses can be submitted to Scholarworks for publication with Research mentor approval