

# HCOL THESIS GUIDE

College of Nursing and Health Sciences

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The Honors College requires each of its students to conduct, under the supervision of a UVM faculty member, a project that represents independent research and culminates in an Honors thesis. The purpose of this manual is to aid students writing an Honors College thesis within the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) by providing details regarding the preparation, formatting, and defending of their thesis project. As such, the manual creates a measure of uniformity amongst students in CNHS by requiring the same basic thesis process and outcome.

Honors theses are written in a variety of disciplines and, therefore, the Honors College does not prescribe a particular style, as long as the style used is appropriate to the student's field of study. This manual is simply a guide for form and organization of your thesis. Your final thesis may differ somewhat depending on your particular discipline and project.

It is the responsibility of all students to read the guidelines carefully and to meet the requirements fully. As with all other aspects of the thesis process, students are invited to approach their research mentor or the CNHS Honors College Director with questions along the way.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF THESIS PROCESS</b>	
General Overview	4
Suggested Timetable	4
Defense and Submission	6
Grading	7
<b>PART TWO: STYLE AND FORMAT</b>	
Manuals of Style	8
Page Format & Type	8
Typeface & Size	9
Margins	9
Spacing	9
Pagination	9
Headings	10
Charts, Tables & Figures	10
<b>PART THREE: COMPONENTS OF THE HONORS THESIS</b>	
Title Page	11
Abstract	11
Table of Contents	11
Chapters	12
References	13
Appendices	14
<b>PART FOUR: DEFENDING AND FINALIZING THE THESIS</b>	
Defending the Thesis	15
Submission of Final Thesis	15
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix A: Mentor Agreement	17
Appendix B: Presentation Guidance	19
Appendix C: Evaluating the Thesis	21
Appendix D: Thesis Completion Form	23

## **PART ONE: PREPARATION OF THE THESIS**

### ***General Overview***

The Honors Program curriculum at the junior and senior levels is devoted mainly to the development of a thesis project under the direction of a faculty mentor. At this level, students begin to apply the methods of their chosen discipline to the investigation of a specific topic of interest. The extent and content of Honors thesis projects vary considerably across different fields of study. In any case, the thesis project introduces Honors students to the techniques of research, writing in the discipline, and oral presentation and helps to cultivate the intellectual skills that are essential to critical inquiry and advanced scholarship.

### ***Suggested Timetable***

A suggested timetable for the process of completing an Honors thesis appears below. Note that all requirements and most submission deadlines are subject to modification, with prior approval by the CNHS Honors Thesis Director.

### **Sophomore Year**

*Spring Term:* Discuss the possibility of conducting a thesis project with CNHS faculty in your department or others in the field, especially those with research experience in the area(s) of interest to you. You can begin this process by exploring faculty profiles on your department's Web page, Graduate College faculty webpage, meeting with faculty to learn more about their research, and connecting with the CNHS Honor's College Director to network further.

### **Junior Year**

*NH 195: Thesis Preparation.* The thesis project usually begins in the fall of junior year with a course designed to ready students for undertaking their thesis project. During this semester, students are introduced to the thesis process and timeline and directed toward solidifying a

research mentor who agrees to supervise their research work (Appendix A). In this course, students also complete and submit a draft proposal which outlines the research question and review of the literature. In some cases, students may also be at a point to identify the tentative methods for the thesis project. The supervising faculty mentor should begin conversations and guide the Honors student through the process of conceptualizing and planning their Honors Thesis as well as gaining any needed approvals to conduct the study (see Human Subjects section).

### **Junior Spring & Senior Fall**

*NH 251 and NH 252: Thesis Research.* Initiating the thesis begins in the spring of the junior year and continues into the fall of the senior year through a sequence of courses totaling six credit-hours, with each credit hour roughly corresponding to the time devoted to collecting data and writing the thesis chapters. On occasion, students may sequence these six credit hours differently (e.g., spread over three semesters, or clustering four credit hours during one semester).

Throughout the two semesters, you should work on developing drafts of the required thesis chapters. Submit your work-in-progress to your research mentor for review; students should discuss this work-in-progress timeline with their research mentor. Students generally will write and submit half of their thesis during the junior spring semester and then the remainder of the thesis during their final undergraduate fall and/or spring semester. In NH 252, students complete and submit revised versions of the first three chapters as well as drafts of the fourth and fifth chapters depending on how many credit hours are taken and the stage of the research project.

During the first or second semester of research, each Honors student and his/her faculty mentor should formalize a defense committee, including at least: 1) the supervising research mentor, who serves as committee chair and “first reader,” 2) the CNHS Honors College Director and “second Reader” and 3) a third reader, usually another faculty member from the College. In

rare circumstances, the third reader may be a person from outside the university, particularly in those cases where extensive research is conducted at an outside facility.

### ***Human Subjects***

Any UVM Honors College student whose research involves the use of human subjects must submit their research protocol to the UVM Institutional Review Board (IRB) and receive written approval PRIOR to starting any activities related to human subjects. This includes, but is not limited to, research involving surveys, questionnaires, and interviews, whether conducted in person, over the phone, or by mail. Conducting research involving human subjects without IRB approval is a violation of University policy.

### **Senior Year Spring**

Enroll in and complete any remaining research credits if you have not yet taken a total of six credits of Honors research. It is important to work with your faculty mentor to assure you are progressing smoothly and can finalize your thesis, defend the project before your faculty committee, make any necessary revisions, and submit final copies before graduation.

### ***Defense and Submission***

Early in the graduation semester, the Honors student should e-mail the members of the committee to coordinate the time and place of the thesis defense. The thesis committee should be provided (e-mailed) a copy of the thesis at least two weeks prior to the thesis defense. The thesis defense typically consists of an oral presentation and overview of your research project followed by a question and answer session. Usually defense sessions last around an hour, are held in the faculty mentor's home building, and culminate in the faculty panel's evaluation of the overall project and the oral defense (Appendix B). The final deadline for submission of the completed thesis is firm and unyielding. Please plan carefully. Failure to meet the final deadline will preclude graduating from the Honors Program.

***Grading:***

The Honors College requires completion of 6 credit hours for this project. Students in the CNHS begin the project in the spring semester of the junior year and generally are expected to finish by the end of the fall term. At the end of the spring term in NH 251 and fall term in NH 252, students will earn an XC grade; the course will be considered as a two-semester unit. No grade will be issued until the project is complete. Grading for the Honors Thesis courses will be awarded at the conclusion of the project as determined by the faculty mentor in concert with the CNHS Honors College Director and other committee members. (See criteria for evaluating the thesis in Appendix C).

## **PART TWO**

### **STYLE AND FORMAT**

The responsibility for the content of your project rests solely with you and your thesis committee. With guidance from your faculty mentor and your committee, though, you are responsible for presenting the document in proper writing style and format. The purpose of this set of guidelines is to assist you in completing your thesis effectively and efficiently, ensuring a reasonable degree of uniformity among all the theses written while still accommodating the discipline-specific needs of thesis writers in each academic field.

These guidelines indicate the style expectation, prescribe the format for pages, specify required margins and spacing, discuss the necessary divisions within the thesis document, and give formatting directions for the reference pages.

#### Recommended Manuals of Style

The manuals of style generally recommended for Honors students who are writing theses should be made in conversation with your faculty mentor. It is common for theses to be written using the American Psychological Association (APA) format or the American Medical Association (AMA) style. Students should discuss which style is preferred with the research mentor.

#### Page Format and Type

The thesis should be printed on 8.5x11 inch paper and all pages in the submitted final thesis should be single-sided. Align text at the left margin (except for paragraph indentations). The right margin may be either uneven (ragged) or right-justified; select the form of justification that is appropriate for your discipline.



### Typeface and Size

Generally, use 12-point Times New Roman throughout the document, although 10-point type may be used for notes to tables or figures and in footnotes and endnotes. Italicize rather than underscore. Boldface type generally is not used anywhere in the document.

### Margins

Margins are 1” at the bottom, top, left and right. Please ensure that all footnotes, charts, graphs, figures, tables and photographs adhere to the prescribed margins.

### Spacing

Double-space the text throughout except for the following: Captions for tables and legends for figures are single-spaced. Block quotations are single-spaced. Likewise, footnotes or endnotes are single-spaced within and double-spaced between entries. Do not allow typed pages to have “widows” (a single line that ends a paragraph and is printed alone at the top of a new page) or “orphans” (the first line of a paragraph that is stranded at the bottom line of a page).

### Placement of Page Numbers

Beginning with the first page of Chapter One, pagination (in Arabic numerals, beginning with page 1) is continuous throughout the document, including the reference pages. Pages that precede the beginning of Chapter One are referred to as preliminary pages. Some preliminary pages do not bear page numbers (e.g., abstract, title page), whereas the paginated preliminary pages (e.g., table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, preface, acknowledgments, dedication) carry lowercase Roman numerals centered at the bottom of the page. Page numbers are the only typing on any page that goes outside of the margins specified above. All pages, including paginated preliminary pages, should be numbered at the bottom of the page, centered between the right and left margins.

## Headings

Each chapter should be numbered and the chapter title centered at the top of the page. Each chapter should begin on a new page. Headings are then used to identify major sections within a given chapter. For any sub-sections within these major sections, the sub-heading is typed flush at the left margin and text begins following a double-space below.

## Charts, Graphs, Tables and Figures

If a thesis contains charts, graphs, tables or figures a separate list of charts (or graphs or tables or figures) is required and should be inserted after the table of contents. Each figure, chart, graph or table must be numbered and captioned (caption should be 10-point Times New Roman font). The caption must appear on the same page as the illustrative material it references.

## **PART THREE**

### **COMPONENTS OF THE HONORS THESIS**

This section of the guide details the sequence and specifications pertaining to main components of the thesis. Please note that the title page, the table of contents, the body chapters, and the reference list are required components of the thesis. You will want to be concerned with the organization, neatness, mechanical correctness and consistency of all final thesis submissions.

Title Page – The final thesis submission must include a properly formatted title page.

The title on the title page must be written in all capital letters, centered, and double-spaced if more than one line. All the text on the title page should be 12-point Times New Roman. Toward the bottom of the page type “By”. After a double-space, type your name. On the next line, type your program of study and Department. After this, double-space and type the month and year of graduation without a comma between the month and year. The date should be the month you intend to graduate (May, August or December). The title page is technically counted as page “i”, but the page number is not typed onto this page.

Abstract – The abstract briefly summarizes the research study. It is a concise summary of no more than 250 words that addresses the rationale and purpose, scope, methodology, and results of the thesis. The word “ABSTRACT” is a first-level heading and is capitalized, centered, and positioned just below the top of the page. Text of the abstract is single spaced. The Abstract page is an uncounted, un-paginated page.

Table of Contents/List of Figures – Each thesis must contain a table of contents and list of figures (if appropriate). The table of contents should include a listing for each chapter or section of the thesis and *at least* all of the first level headings. If a thesis contains charts, tables, graphs,

figures or photographs, every illustrative material must be listed in an appropriate List of \_\_\_\_ (Figures, Photographs, Charts, etc.) Material that appears in the thesis before the table of contents (abstract, preface, etc.) should not appear in the table of contents.

### Chapters

The body of the document will consist of several sections called chapters. The number of chapters and their titles will vary by discipline and topic of the Honors thesis. Consult with your mentor to determine if certain standard chapter designations are appropriate in your program or academic discipline. For most Honors theses, CHAPTER ONE will be entitled “Introduction”; CHAPTER TWO, “Literature Review”; CHAPTER THREE, “Methods”; CHAPTER FOUR, “Results”; CHAPTER FIVE, “Discussion and Conclusions”.

### Chapter 1: Background, Statement of the Problem, Hypothesis (if appropriate), Key Terms

In Chapter 1, you will offer a brief introduction to your topic and statement of the problem. This sets the context and justification for your study as well as sets the table for what is to follow. If a quantitative study and appropriate, one or more research hypotheses are stated (each hypothesis must be linked to a specific and independent research question as well as tested in your statistical plan). Typically, key words and/or definitions as included in this chapter. This chapter is generally 3-5 pages in length depending on the topic and discipline.

### Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth overview of the research literature on your topic. It offers a recent and relevant research synthesis that progresses logically and intentionally from a broad overview of the topic to a more specific focus on the specific research question being proposed. This chapter includes multiple headings (the number of which varies depending on topic and explanation needed). The length of Chapter 2 also varies greatly but typically ranges between 10

and 20 pages. Your thesis mentor will be instrumental in determining the depth and length of your literature review.

### Chapter 3: Design, Subjects, Measures, Procedures, and Analysis

Chapter 3 includes all details related to the methodology of your study. Here, you will describe your subject sample (i.e., inclusion/exclusion criteria, recruitment strategy). The specific instruments or tools you are using and the procedures you follow are also included. Additionally, how you analyze your data is described. Each of these sections are detailed within separate headings. The general length of this chapter again varies depending on specific methodology associated with your topic and discipline although 8-10 pages is reasonable.

### Chapter 4: Results

The results of your analyses are offered in Chapter 4. Here, there is no discussion or interpretation of the results, rather the specific findings are detailed. It is important to associate these findings, if appropriate, with any and all hypotheses previously offered.

### Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitations, Conclusion/Implications

The last chapter of your thesis is an important one. It is in this chapter that you discuss your findings in light of the current research existing and explain how your findings compare or contrast this literature **AND why**. You will also offer insight into the limitations of your research study and recommendations for future study on the topic. Implications and practical application of the study are also discussed.

### List of References

Every thesis must include a list of references regardless of the citation style used throughout the thesis. The full publication information for all sources cited in the thesis must be included. Regardless of discipline, entries should be single-spaced with a double-space between

each entry. The style of the entries should follow the style manual appropriate to the author's discipline.

### Appendices

If necessary, the appendix or appendices should follow the references in the thesis organization. Supplementary materials such as surveys, questionnaires, charts, tables, photographs, etc. the author chose not to include in the body of the thesis may be included in the appendices. This material may all be included in one appendix (listed in the table of contents as simply Appendix) or may be organized and divided into two or more labeled appendices (labeled Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.).

## **PART FOUR DEFENDED & FINALIZING THE THESIS**

### Defending the Thesis

You should plan on defending your thesis one to two weeks prior to the end of your final semester at the latest. This will allow ample time to make any changes or needed edits prior to the deadline for submission. It will be important for you to communicate with your committee early enough in the semester to find a time that all are able to attend and a room that is available for your defense. As you can imagine, coordinating all these people and pieces can be complex so best to start the dialogue and planning early.

Your thesis presentation should last about 15-20 minutes. After this, your committee and any invited guests will have time to ask questions. Appendix A offers some important logistics and valuable tips related to your presentation.

### Submission of Final Thesis Copies

A final copy of the thesis must be submitted to the research mentor and thesis committee by the submission deadline, generally the last week of classes of the graduating semester. The final grading form and confirmation that the student has successfully completed the thesis in in Appendix D. The final thesis may also be submitted to ScholarWorks Honors College Digital Repository. This is a digital thesis archive that the Honor's College has partnered with UVM Libraries to create. ScholarWorks @ UVM collects, preserves, and shares the scholarly and creative works of UVM faculty, staff, students, and their collaborators. It serves as the institutional repository of the University and promotes discovery and research by providing open access to a wide range of digital resources created by the UVM community.

You will first need to submit to the Honors College a signed copy of the *Thesis Completion Form and Advisor Permission for Submission to ScholarWorks* that can be found here: [https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/ScholarWorks\\_FormS18\\_0.pdf](https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/ScholarWorks_FormS18_0.pdf) .

## APPENDIX A





**College of Nursing and Health Sciences  
Honors College Program  
Honors Project Mentor-Student Agreement**

Re: \_\_\_\_\_  
HC Student Name

Dear Project Mentor,

Thank you for your willingness to mentor a student from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences Honors Program. By now, you should have met with the student whose name appears above and together outlined a project that the student can complete under your direction. The Honors College requires completion of 6 credit hours for this project. Students in the CNHS begin the project in the spring semester of the junior year and generally are expected to finish by the end of the fall term. Students may work on the project over the summer if you agree but are not required to do so. At the end of the spring term in NH 251 and fall term in NH 252, students will earn an XC grade; the course will be considered as a two-semester unit. No grade will be issued until the project is complete. The expectation is that the student will spend between 3 and 6 hours per week on the project.

Once you have agreed to provide guidance for the student, the project will not be directly monitored by the CNHS Honors College director on a regular basis. The student will be asked to provide periodic status reports over the course of the two semesters and may have seminars occasionally to work on selected aspects of writing the project proposal or report. The final project presentation occurs at the end of the fall semester senior year or end of the spring semester senior year. Each student will have a limited period of time to present the nature of the project and any findings. An oral presentation in the format of a professional meeting will complete the project. Students are encouraged to apply for undergraduate research grants. Publications resulting from the research project, while laudable, are not required.

At the end of the project your input will be crucial for the determination of the student's grade. You will be asked to rate the student's performance in the areas of attendance/accountability, professionalism, quality of work, and time/effort put into the project as well as the quality of the final presentation. Your scores will play an important role in determining the grade for both courses.

Your signature below indicates that you have discussed a project with the student and are willing to mentor the student for the two-semester duration of NH 251/252. *Please return the signed form to the student whose responsibility it is to give it to the Honors Program Director.* A copy of the student's HC project proposal, when completed, will be filed with this form. Again, many thanks for agreeing to mentor a CNHS Honors College student.

Mentor Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Student Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Name and Title (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B**

## **Presenting & Finalizing Your Thesis**

1. Complete acceptable draft (Chapters 1-5)
  - a. Must be approved by Thesis Advisor prior to presenting
  - b. Forward copy to Thesis Committee 1-2 weeks prior to presentation date
2. Invite Key people to presentation
3. Develop Presentation and related PowerPoint
  - a. 20 minutes to present followed by 10 minutes of discussion with audience
  - b. Remember the largest amount of time should be dedicated to your findings and discussion
  - c. Handouts? Abstract?
4. Professional appearance
  - a. Business casual attire
  - b. Pay attention to nervous habits (umm, giggles, playing with hair, etc.) that you will want to minimize during your presentation
5. Professional delivery of content
  - a. Practice!
  - b. Eye contact
  - c. Look at audience not at the screen
  - d. Don't read slides verbatim
  - e. Keep track of time-don't embellish/ad lib too much
  - f. OK to have notes-again try not to read your presentation in its entirety
6. Grading: average of scores provided by committee members for the following criteria for work during SP and Fall semesters
  - a. Demonstration of responsibility, accountability and maturity in work on the project
  - b. Your willingness to seek assistance as needed and your ability to access appropriate resources to complete your work
  - c. Demonstration of your skill and knowledge of the subject area as evidenced in your written work
  - d. Your ability to reach logical conclusions based on project activities or data gathered and analyzed
  - e. Your demonstration of commitment to a quality outcome as evidenced by your proposal, paper, oral presentation and conduct with subjects, research mentors, colleagues and faculty throughout the project
7. Be sure to complete "Request for Continuing Review" form to IRB once data collection is over and if applicable
8. Incorporate edits from committee members and/or suggestions from presentation to create your final project
9. Don't forget to thank your advisor (and key personnel) when you forward a final copy of your project
10. Work with thesis advisor to publish your project if applicable.

## APPENDIX C

### CNHS Honors College Thesis Evaluation Form

Student:

Date of Presentation:

Title of Presentation:

Mentor     
  Advisor/Committee Member     
  CNHS Honors Program Director

Please rate the student's performance on a scale of 1-5 (5 is the highest) on the following criteria.

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrated responsibility, accountability and maturity in work on the project					
Willingness to seek assistance as needed and ability to access appropriate resources to complete thesis/project					
Demonstrated skill and knowledge of the subject area as evidenced in written work					
Ability to reach logical conclusions based on project activities or data gathered and analyzed					
Demonstrated commitment to a quality outcome as evidenced by proposal, paper, oral presentation and conduct with subjects, research mentors, colleagues and faculty throughout the project.					

Comments:

Signed:

Note: Scores from all committee members will be averaged and grade assigned via the UVM grading scale.

Please return your completed form to Susan Kasser, CNHS HCOL Director.

## APPENDIX D

## Evaluation of the Honors College Thesis Defense

This form should be completed by the Thesis Committee Chair and submitted to the CNHS Honors College Director upon completion of the Honors Thesis Defense.

### A. Information

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department in which Honors work was performed: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ (Thesis Advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Thesis Committee Member)

\_\_\_\_\_ (CNHS HCOL Director)

Location of Thesis Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Time and Date of Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Qualification for Honors Work

The decision of the Thesis Committee is that this student: (check one)

- Passed the defense at the Honors level
- Failed the defense at the Honors level

### C. \*Grade and Signatures

The grade submitted for this work is: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Thesis Advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Thesis Committee

Member)

\_\_\_\_\_ (CNHS HCOL Director)

A copy of the successfully defended College Honors Thesis must be submitted to the CNHS HCOL Director no later than the Friday preceding Commencement.

I will submit the final version of this thesis/creative project so that it conforms to the formatting guidelines contained in the Honors College Thesis Handbook and on the College Honors website. As a condition of approval of this thesis/creative project, I grant royalty-free permission to UVM to reproduce and publicly distribute copies of the thesis/creative project.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (Author of thesis/creative project)

\*It is the responsibility of the Thesis Supervisor and the student to see that a change of grade form is submitted to the Registrar's Office, so that the student's first semester grade of UP or SP is replaced by a letter grade. The Chair of the Honors Committee will send a memorandum to the Registrar requesting that the following notation be made on the academic transcripts of all successful Honors candidates: "Awarded College Honors."