

**University Honors Program
Advisor/Liaison Guidelines for the Senior Thesis**

All students in the University Honors Program or doing Honors in Major only will write a thesis in their senior year. What is a thesis?

Background: The 1984 Senate Motion establishing the University Honors Program gave the UHP oversight of Honors in Major programs throughout the university. Central to that mission were two expectations: one, that the faculty in the various departments and disciplines were charged with establishing curricula in the Honors in Major programs that reflected disciplinary practices and pedagogies; two, that the UHP was charged with ensuring consistency across the university with regards to the central values of an “Honors experience.”

Those central values encompass the following:

*a student will be expected to pursue opportunities in the discipline that demand greater depth and rigor than those normally required by the major;

*they will be expected to complete the curriculum at a consistently high level of achievement;

*they will be expected to engage in independent study and research (under the supervision of a faculty member) beyond the requirements of their course-work;

*and they will be expected to present publicly a culminating project that synthesizes aspects of their study.

The thesis, therefore, should be a significant research project through which the student can demonstrate these values in ways that demonstrate, synthesize or elaborate on their expertise in their field of study.

Departments should develop thesis procedures appropriate to their disciplines. For many departments, a traditional one- or two-semester research project will be a preferred option; some departments ask that students initiate their thesis work in the junior year or earlier. Other departments may wish to structure portfolio options which collect and synthesize the student’s progress through the major; or couple a senior project or internship with an additional research component and public presentation. Departments should consult with the UHP when devising alternative options for the traditional thesis.

We ask that departmental liaisons require students to submit a form that affirms that they have an approved thesis topic and an advisor before they are allowed to sign up for the thesis credits during pre-registration. Many departments have their own forms and procedures. Those that do not may use the UHP form at www.unh.edu/honors-program/forms.html. We also request that departmental liaisons submit copies to the UHP.

Why?: **One**, in order to be considered for a University Honors designation, students need to inform the UHP of their intent to complete the thesis in the semester in which they register for the project—that is, before the start of the semester in which they will do the work. This form serves as the basis of the department’s graduation certification list. **Two**, it also serves as the department’s notice to the UHP that the student will anticipate a degree with an Honors designation. **Three**, it allows for departments to ensure that their graduating seniors have their thesis plans settled in a timely manner. **Four**, liaisons submitting forms in a timely manner will enable their students to earn graduate student borrowing privileges at Dimond Library for the duration of their thesis work.

University Honors Program
Student Guidelines for the Senior Thesis

All students in the University Honors Program or doing Honors in Major only will write a thesis in their senior year. What is a thesis?

A thesis is a significant research project that enables you to demonstrate, synthesize, or elaborate on your developing expertise in your field of study.

Each department develops thesis procedures appropriate to its discipline. **Your department will have its own preferred structures, and therefore you must consult as early as possible with your departmental liaison and your departmental advisor.**

To successfully complete the thesis, you must do the following:

- * you must pre-register for the thesis in the semester prior to the one in which you intend to earn thesis credits.

- * in the semester that you pre-register for the thesis, you must consult with faculty in your department. You will need an approved topic and an advisor to pre-register for the thesis.

- * when you have a topic and an advisor, you will complete the Honors Thesis Agreement and submit a copy to your departmental liaison. Many departments have their own forms, but if yours does not, the University Honors Program provides one at www.unh.edu/honors-program/forms.html.

- * your Liaison will provide the UHP with a copy of your Honors Thesis Agreement. Your liaison's timely submission of the agreement will result in your earning graduate student borrowing privileges at Dimond Library for the duration of your thesis work. Be sure, then, to remind your liaison to hand in your agreement. Your agreement also lets us know that you plan on graduating with an Honors designation.

- * prior to graduation, you will publicly present your thesis, either at the annual Undergraduate Research Conference, or at another departmentally approved public event.

- * when you complete your thesis, we expect that you will submit copies both to your department and to the UHP. Please see the "Guidelines for Submission" for details.

Keep in mind that although departments vary in the specifics of the formats for the thesis, all require that the thesis demonstrate the culmination of the following central values of the University Honors Program:

- *students will be expected to pursue opportunities in the discipline that demand greater depth and rigor than those normally required by the major;**

- *they will be expected to complete the curriculum at a consistently high level of achievement;**

- *they will be expected to engage in independent study and research (under the supervision of a faculty member) beyond the requirements of their course-work;**

- *and they will be expected to present publicly, and in some cases defend, a culminating project that synthesizes aspects of their study.**

Honors Thesis Student/Sponsor Agreement

(This form is to be completed during pre-registration of the semester prior to registering for the thesis. Copies will be retained by the department and by the UHP. This form serves as notice to the UHP that the student will be eligible for any of the three honors designations listed below:)

Student Name: _____

Intended Designation (check one): _____
Univ. Honors Honors-in-Major Univ. Honors-in-Major

Student e-mail address: _____

Faculty Sponsor: _____

Faculty e-mail address: _____

Term in which thesis will begin: _____, **and will complete:** _____

Year and Term of Graduation: _____

Thesis Topic: _____

Presentation Plan (please submit a copy of your presentation proposal to the UHP):

Signatures:

Faculty Sponsor/date

Student/date

Departmental Liaison/date

Liaison: Please submit a copy to the UHP.

In signing this agreement, student and advisor agree that:

- 1. The thesis meets the definition of a thesis under the guidelines of the UHP and the departmental Honors in Major program.**
- 2. The student has the necessary background and motivation to complete the thesis successfully.**
- 3. The advisor will make any appropriate and necessary resources available.**
- 4. The student and advisor agree to a series of regular meetings as necessary to ensure the successful completion of the thesis.**
- 5. Please note: it is expected that the student will submit a copy of the thesis to the University Honors Program. Please see “Guidelines for Submission” on the UHP website.**