

**Your  
Honors  
Thesis**



## HONORS THESIS CHECKLIST

- \_\_\_ Submit the online Thesis Registration Request Form in order to be registered for the first semester of Honors Thesis (IDH 5975). Specific registration instructions may be found on the back page of this packet.
- \_\_\_ Sample Theses may be reviewed in the Honors Lounge, SVC 1040.
- \_\_\_ Find a Thesis Director and at least one committee member. The Thesis Director should be a USF faculty member; approval of anyone who is not a USF faculty member must be granted by the Dean or Associate Dean of the Honors College with one of the committee members being USF faculty.
- \_\_\_ Sign and have the Thesis Director sign the Thesis Agreement Form. Make sure to give him/her a copy of the Thesis Director guidelines contained in this packet.
- \_\_\_ Narrow your thesis topic.
- \_\_\_ Complete the prospectus by the eighth week of first semester (in Summer C, this means by the fifth week) in which you are working on your thesis.
- \_\_\_ Turn in completed Thesis Agreement Form and Prospectus Approval Form, along with one copy of your prospectus, to the Honors office, SVC 1088. The prospectus requires the Dean's or Associate Dean's approval. Please supply an email address, so we can notify you regarding approval.
- \_\_\_ Continue work and submit online the Thesis Registration Request Form in order to be registered for the second semester of Honors Thesis.
- \_\_\_ Contact Dr. Silverman by email to let him know you will be finishing your thesis in

order to be considered for Honors College Thesis Presentation Day.

- \_\_\_ Submit copies of your thesis (including abstract) to your director and committee member(s) two weeks prior to the presentation.
- \_\_\_ Present your thesis by the last day of classes for the semester (Friday prior to finals week).
- \_\_\_ Have the Thesis Approval Form signed by your director and committee member(s).
- \_\_\_ Deliver two unbound copies of your thesis to the library for binding. Save the binding receipt.
- \_\_\_ Bring one unbound copy of your thesis, the completed Thesis Approval Form, and the library receipt to the Honors office prior to final exam week.

## PROCEDURES

The Senior Honors Thesis is the culmination of the Honors College experience. It emphasizes critical thinking, writing, and independent, creative work. Work on the thesis should be academically rewarding and an enjoyable experience. The thesis may relate to your major, but that is not necessary. We encourage you to select a topic which will allow you to be creative and which you will find exciting and satisfying.

Students preparing a 6 hour thesis will register for IDH 5975 in two different semesters. If you are approved by the Dean or Associate Dean to complete a 9 hour thesis, you will register for two semesters of IDH 5975, and one semester of IDH 5965. A public presentation of the final product must take place prior to completion of the work. You may be chosen to present your work on the Honors College Thesis Day (Friday prior

to finals week). If not, you will need to schedule an individual presentation time, agreeable to your Thesis Director and committee members, by the last day of classes (Friday prior to finals week).

The following timeline is required for successful completion of Honors Thesis.

1. The Thesis Agreement Form must be signed and turned in to the Honors office no later than the eighth week of class of the first semester registered. No other documentation will be accepted until this is received.
2. The prospectus and accompanying Prospectus Approval Form must be received no later than the eighth week of the first semester registered for Thesis. If you are registering for your first Thesis semester with a departmental Honors program, or with a College of Engineering capstone or senior design project, the prospectus will need to be submitted no later than the eighth week of the first semester registered for the thesis/project which will be the beginning of Honors Thesis. The prospectus requires the Dean's or Associate Dean's approval. Please supply an email address so we can notify you regarding approval.
3. For the 9 credit hour thesis, a detailed progress report approved by the Thesis Director must be turned in by the end of the second semester registered. There is no specific form required for this step.
4. The final thesis is due by the last day of classes for the semester (Friday before finals week).

There is no requirement as to the length or dimension of the thesis. Quality is of greater concern. What is important is that

the product reflects six/nine semester hours of work and is approved by your thesis committee and the Honors College. It should reflect a significant time commitment, be of high quality and demonstrate personal intellectual growth.

A well-researched project should adhere consistently and correctly to a documentation style appropriate for the field of study following, for example, such style manuals as those of the MLA, APA, or the University of Chicago.

You **must** include a bibliography or a works cited page for any type of research project - not just for a traditional research paper, but also such projects as a unit of lesson plans, handbooks, publicity campaign, feasibility study, or any other project which incorporates material drawn from outside sources.

**Please adhere to the process outlined below and do not ask the Thesis Committee or the Honors College to deviate from the schedule. Plan to work on the thesis for two/three full semesters. It is your responsibility to ensure timely completion of all Thesis requirements.**

You should consult with the Dean/Associate Dean of the Honors College or attend a thesis workshop before beginning work to learn about general procedures and a potential Thesis Director. You will choose and contact a potential director and one or two committee members.

The thesis component of the Honors College was designed to be flexible, to complement your major area of study as well as your personal interests. Many types of theses may be acceptable; the final choice is to be determined jointly by you and your Thesis Director prior to beginning the actual work. Work which

merely treads old ground or involves an uncritical restatement of previous work is unacceptable. The thesis is an academic exercise in which one applies critical thinking, investigates current scholarship and engages in valid reasoning. A thesis may take many forms. It may be traditional, as an in-depth critical analysis of imaginative literature, or the discussion and results of a student-designed experiment in the natural or social sciences. You may produce a critical analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of an existing body of knowledge in an area of academic inquiry. A thesis might include the composition, design, and staging of a theater piece, a book of poetry, or the design and construction of a piece of architecture or engineering (or its model). When the thesis is a *creative* work, a substantive written description of the goals and process is required, as well as prior approval by the Dean/Associate Dean of the Honors College. This description must indicate how the creative work meets the goals of a thesis. If you would like to see sample theses prior to beginning work, the Honors College and the library have copies of previously submitted theses for examination.

In general, any regularly appointed faculty member at USF may direct the thesis. The committee member(s) must be approved by the Thesis Director. You will establish the specific nature of the thesis with the Thesis Director. By mid-term of the first semester, please present to the Dean/Associate Dean of the Honors College the Thesis Agreement Form, a two-three page prospectus and Prospectus Approval Form, signed by the Thesis Director. The Prospectus shall include:

1. Your name and email address;
2. Thesis Director's name and the names of the one or two committee members who have agreed to serve;

3. The exact title of the thesis;
4. A statement of the work to be undertaken and its importance;
5. A narrative giving the rationale for this work;
6. A statement of anticipated results (if appropriate);
7. A proposed work schedule and preliminary bibliography.

You should begin the actual work immediately following prospectus approval by the Dean/Associate Dean of the Honors College.

The Thesis shall be presented by the final day of the semester (Friday prior to finals week) in which it is completed. It may be selected for presentation on Thesis Day. The thesis and any supporting material must be delivered in final, typewritten form to the Thesis Committee at least three weeks prior to the presentation to give the committee adequate time to become familiar with the thesis. Following the presentation, forward to the Honors College a Thesis Approval Form signed by all members of the Committee, along with one unbound copy of the final thesis and binding receipt (see below). You will be given a grade of "S" for the semester in which the prospectus is approved and, for the 9 credit thesis, the semester in which the progress report from the Thesis Director is submitted. When the thesis is approved by the committee in its final form, the committee shall recommend one of the following grades which shall be recorded for both (or all three) semesters of thesis (the "S" grade will be changed at that time):

- "A" - Superior performance;
- "B" - Excellent performance;
- "C" - Passing, but student is ineligible to graduate with Honors College distinction);
- "D" or "F" - Unacceptable

Students must take two unbound copies of the thesis to the library for binding. Order forms are available at the Circulation Desk on the first floor of the library. Return the completed form and the two copies to the Circulation Desk. The charge will be posted to your student financial aid account. Bring the receipt of payment to the Honors office. Personal copies can be ordered through the bookstore if you wish. The current cost of binding is approximately \$8.00 per copy. Personal copies cost \$11.95 per copy. Prices are subject to change.

**To graduate with Honors, you must finish all course work towards the degree in the semester the graduation ceremony occurs. The thesis must be completed, approved in the final form, and turned in to the Dean of the Honors College. If you have credits still to be taken or if your thesis is not approved, you may walk through graduation and not be honored, or wait until the next graduation ceremony to be honored.**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**How does registering for graduate level Thesis credits affect my tuition and financial aid package?**

Tuition for graduate credits is significantly higher than undergraduate credits. However, for the purpose of Honors Thesis, students are responsible only for an amount equal to the undergraduate tuition for those credits. Please disregard any memos from the Office of Financial Aid which request that you submit proof that the Honors Thesis will count toward your undergraduate degree. The only reason you would need to submit paperwork to Financial Aid is if you are

registered for graduate-level credits outside the Honors College.

If you typically receive a bookstore authorization and/or tuition deferment, but the authorization/deferment is not posted on your OASIS account for the semester in which you are registered for Honors Thesis, please send an email to [ContactUs@honors.usf.edu](mailto:ContactUs@honors.usf.edu).

**When should I sign up for Thesis (HON IDH 5975)?**

Most students sign up for IDH 5975 at the beginning of their senior year. If, however, your senior year will include study abroad, an off-campus internship, student teaching, or some other activity which will alter your normal routine, you will want to begin planning earlier, develop a topic, and find a Director. Even if you plan a 'normal' senior year, starting early is to your advantage. Recent graduates have repeatedly stressed the importance of allowing plenty of time. Several students said they found it helpful to begin work the summer before their senior year, or even during spring semester of their junior year. You may register for Thesis in Summer C only.

**How do I find a topic?**

When you look at the examples of recent theses/creative projects in the Thesis Study room, SVC 1040, you will see that many possibilities exist. Topics/projects often come from within the student's major area, but this is not a requirement. In some theses or projects, students combine majors or use internships or study abroad experiences. If you finished a favorite course, feeling that you would have liked more time for a particular aspect of that course, you may be able to turn that observation into an idea for a topic. If you have only a vague sense of what your topic might be, but definitely

know whom you would like as a Director, make an appointment to talk to your prospective Director, who may be able to suggest areas for you to consider.

### **Is it OK to rework an old paper/project?**

A thesis which builds on work already done can be a fine piece of work. An article or presentation that analyzes internship experiences, a presentation based on some aspect of work or study abroad, an article developed from research done as an undergraduate fellow, a video for classroom use which grew out of practice teaching — these kinds of projects represent legitimate development of work already undertaken into a new and more complex form. What is not legitimate is simply to recycle, with minor additions or changes, a paper or papers already submitted. Remember: the Honors Thesis is intended to be the capstone of your Honors education.

### **How do I find a Director?**

If possible, select someone you know and with whom you feel comfortable. If you can't think of someone in that category whose expertise seems to fit with the kind of topic you're considering, ask for suggestions from the Honors staff or from other professors whose judgment you trust.

### **What if I want to change Directors?**

Changing Directors may become necessary in some situations. Talk with the Honors College Dean/Associate Dean before making the change and make sure all appropriate paperwork is complete.

### **May I work withy more than one faculty member?**

Yes! In fact, you must have one Director and at least one other committee member. You should have more than one person evaluating your work in progress and

offering suggestions.

### **May I collaborate with another student?**

Certainly. Several recent theses have been joint projects. You will need, however, to get permission from the Thesis Director and the Dean/Associate Dean of the Honors College before beginning the project.

### **What if I don't finish in a year?**

If you don't complete your thesis during the last semester in which you are enrolled for Honors Thesis, your Director may submit a grade of "I". This will be carried on the record until the thesis is completed and the "I" will be replaced with a permanent letter grade. You should know that it is fairly common for students to take more than one year to work on their projects. The "I" must be changed before the end of the semester in which you plan to graduate. Your Director will need to inform the Honors office in order to replace the "I". **Note:** If you receive an "I" for the first/second semester, you will **not** be able to register for thesis for a future semester and you will not receive your Honors scholarship the next semester. You **must** complete the prospectus within the first semester you are registered, and, if completing a 9 credit thesis, you must have your Thesis Director submit a progress report to the Dean/ Associate Dean by the end of classes in your second semester of thesis.

### **Will IDH 5975 count toward my major or minor?**

A 6 credit thesis, along with Seminar: Major Works Major Issues, fulfills the exit requirements at USF. A 9 credit thesis, alone, fulfills the exit requirements at USF. The work may be counted toward your major with approval from your academic department.

### **What if I am in Departmental Honors?**

Students working on Departmental Honors within a major area are usually asked by the department to do a senior thesis. Honors College students *do not* need to complete two theses. However, the thesis director must be aware that the thesis is satisfying two programs and should be of sufficient weight to accomplish this. See your Honors advisor for specific registration information.

### **How often will I meet with my Director?**

Although the number of meetings will vary depending on the nature of your project, you and your director should work out a mutually satisfactory schedule of appointments at which you can discuss your work in progress. Keep in mind that courtesy dictates that you submit your completed thesis to your director at least three weeks before finals week of the semester in which you are to receive your grade. Remember, too, that directing Honors theses is not part of your professor's regular teaching assignment but is extra work which he or she undertakes as a favor to you. Therefore, try to be considerate about adhering to your agreed schedule and consulting him/her if you need to make changes.

### **Is there a proper format for the thesis?**

The “rule of thumb” is that the faculty mentor will be the arbiter of the final product’s form. The format of a thesis is generally determined by the discipline’s “conventions”. For example, a thesis in Psychology will generally follow APA style recommendations while a thesis in English will follow MLA guidelines. There may be no guidelines for a creative project. However, **every** thesis will include an abstract that details the problem/issue, methods, findings and conclusions. Your thesis **must include** a cover sheet with:

- The title of the Thesis;
- Your name;
- Your mentor’s name;
- The semester in which you completed the Thesis.

### **What are the most common problems students encounter with Thesis projects?**

- Submitting the Prospectus too late in Semester I of thesis project
- Submitting an incomplete Prospectus
- Not keeping Director/Committee members updated regarding progress on the work

### **What if I have started thesis but am not able to complete the project?**

In rare cases, there are unforeseen extenuating circumstances which impede a student’s thesis progress. If it is no longer feasible for you to complete your approved thesis topic, please consult with the Dean or Associate Dean to discuss your options. If you receive approval for a change of topic, you will need to submit an updated prospectus. If any other circumstance arises and you are unable to finish thesis, please meet with an Honors advisor to determine how this will affect your academic record and the fulfillment of your exit requirements.

## **OTHER THESIS OPTIONS**

In certain circumstances, a student may have the option of preparing an extended thesis, completing a total of 9 credit hours toward the project. In this case, students are not required to take the IDH 4000, Major Works Major Issues course.

Another option exists for students in the College of Engineering. Most engineering majors require a capstone course or design project as part of the curriculum. If the

capstone/design professor agrees to serve as a thesis director and the thesis is an extension of the project, then this student will only be required to register for three hours of IDH 5975. Students who combine thesis with the capstone or senior design project will satisfy the exit requirements by completing one semester of IDH 5975 and IDH 4000.

Student with majors in those colleges which require only 6 credit hours of Liberal Arts exit requirements, i.e. College of Education and the College of Nursing, should register for two semesters of Honors Thesis and may omit IDH 4000, Major Works Major Issues.

Be sure to contact an Honors advisor if you have questions about these specific thesis options.

## ATTENTION: THESIS DIRECTORS

Faculty are asked to approach this task assuming that Honors College students are mature and of superior academic ability, capable of serious independent work. On the other hand, Honors College students are undergraduate, not graduate students.

Your student will be required to make a public presentation of his/her research on or before the last day of the semester (the Friday prior to finals week) in which the work is to be completed. Students may be selected to present at the Honor's College Thesis Day. Mentors should plan on attending their student's session.

Students need careful direction in the choosing, planning, execution and writing of their theses. We ask Faculty to undertake the direction of a thesis only if they can devote the time necessary to ensure that a high quality thesis is produced. Thesis Directors should consult the Honors College Dean/Associate Dean when questions arise concerning this work, especially if there is any possibility that the student will not complete the Thesis as scheduled. The Director and the student will make decisions together regarding the scope of the project, meeting to discuss work in progress, format, documentation, and so on. We offer the following advice, compiled from the comments of recent thesis directors:

1. As you talk with your student about the scope of the project, you may want to chart a course that is *via media* between the conventional research paper and the M.A. thesis. Although the senior Honors thesis probably will not be as extensive a project as a Master's level thesis, it should

represent more expense of time and talent than an ordinary term paper. Remember that your student will receive six or nine hours of 5000-level credit for the work he or she does on this senior Honors Thesis.

2. Early in the process, get a clear indication from your student of just what he or she proposes. The prospectus requirement should facilitate your understanding.

3. When meeting to discuss work in progress, make clear that you also want to see work that has been done, drafts of written texts, collected data, results of surveys, preliminary sketches, photographs, or whatever relevant material you need to examine in order to make sure the project is on track. Doing so will help to protect you and your student from the unpleasant discovery, near the end of the term, that the work which has been done is unacceptable.

4. For a research paper, specify the documentation style you require and be prepared to offer examples of correct form. Remind the student that a bibliography, reference list, or works cited page must accompany a research paper.

5. As you check work in progress, evaluate both content and form, and don't hesitate to ask for revisions in either area. It is a good idea to let your student know that both you and the Honors College expect completed papers to be free of errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

6. You may want to remind the student that he/she will be responsible for making more than one copy of the completed thesis or creative project. The copy which has your comments and the grade you

have assigned will be for the student to keep. The Honors College receives an unmarked copy, from which any errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation have been eliminated. Additionally, two clean copies will be submitted to the library for binding.

7. As a thesis/creative project advisor, you are free to assign whatever grade you consider appropriate. Keep in mind, however, that theses and projects are stored in both Special Collections and the Circulating areas of the USF Library. Understandably, you may be reluctant to sign a thesis that represents merely passing work. This is another reason for the importance of regular meetings with your student and careful checking of work in progress.

Using this approach, you should be able, in a timely manner, to 'redirect' a thesis or project which has taken a wrong turn and save yourself and your student from end of term difficulties.

## HONORS THESIS REGISTRATION

The class numbers used for thesis are: IDH 5975 for Honors Thesis and IDH 5965 for Honors Project. Students completing a two-semester thesis will take two semesters of IDH 5975, and those approved to complete a three-semester thesis will take IDH 5965 for the third semester. The Honors Thesis (IDH 5975) will have two sections: 001 for first semester thesis students and 002 for second semester thesis students.

In order to be registered for Honors Thesis and Honors Project, students are required to complete the online Thesis Registration Request Form. Once the form has been received, an Honors staff member will enroll the student in the appropriate course. The Thesis Registration Request Form may be found on the Honors website (<http://honors.usf.edu>) under Related Links, Online Forms.

**The Thesis Registration Request Form is needed because Honors staff needs to verify:**

1. That students have earned the minimum number of hours (90) required to enroll in the first semester of Thesis.
2. That students have submitted the Thesis Agreement Form, the prospectus and the Prospectus Approval Form. This paperwork must be received prior to Honors staff registering a student for the second semester of thesis, and the student to receive a satisfactory (“S”) grade.
3. That the Thesis Directors for students completing a three-semester thesis have submitted a “Satisfactory” work progress statement in order to be enrolled in the third semester of thesis (IDH 5965).

**Students enrolled in Honors Thesis are also required to create an Undergraduate Research profile. The procedure is as follows:**

1. Log on to [www.ur.usf.edu](http://www.ur.usf.edu)
2. Create a profile by clicking My-URUSF Login and entering your net-id
3. Under “What types of research interest you?” include the words “HONORS THESIS” in addition to your topic area.
4. Once you find a thesis director, submit a research update.

UR USF—The Office of Undergraduate Research is charged with tracking all undergraduate research taking place on campus. We also offer funding to present your work at conferences. Please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with our website. And, feel free to stop by our office located within the Honors College. We will be happy to assist you.

