

## Student Guide to Honors Theses

An Honors College thesis is an independent research project typically completed during a student's final year of undergraduate study and is a requirement for the Advanced Honors Scholar and Distinguished Honors Scholar Awards. A thesis represents a student's ability to conduct research and write effectively. Students work closely with a faculty mentor on selecting a feasible topic and an appropriate research plan for their thesis project.

### Selecting a Faculty Mentor/Thesis Advisor

All thesis projects must be supervised by a full-time UNT faculty member. Most students write a thesis project related to their major plan of study, thus finding a faculty mentor in their major department is the most common practice. Students typically select a professor they had for a previous course because it is ideal to find a mentor that will be a good fit academically and personally. A valuable resource in finding a research/thesis mentor is the [UNT Faculty Information System](#). This database provides information on every UNT member and provides information on a professor's research interests, as well as a link to their curriculum vitae (CV). The CV is a faculty member's academic resume, and will include a listing of their academic and scholarly research.

The major components of the Honors Thesis include:

1. Thesis Proposal
2. Thesis Final Project
3. Thesis Defense

### Thesis Proposal

The proposal provides a roadmap for your potential research project. It informs your thesis advisor and the Honors College what you propose to do for your Honors thesis project. Most students complete the proposal through [HNRS 3500: Honors Thesis Proposal](#) though this document can also be written as part of an Honors Contract, Mentored Research Experience, or independently in conjunction with your faculty mentor. Please speak with an Honors advisor to discuss an appropriate pathway to completing a thesis proposal.

Generally speaking, a thesis proposal will include the following sections:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Thesis statement
- Literature Review
- Methods
- Preliminary results and discussion
- Work plan including time table
- List of references
- A copy of IRB application (if applicable)

If your research is utilizing human subjects you must receive approval from the [UNT Institutional Review Board](#) before beginning your data collection. This can be a lengthy process so it is recommended you submit this application early into your project. Thesis proposals that require IRB approval will not be accepted by the Honors College if an IRB application is not included. If you are unsure of whether you need IRB approval, please consult your thesis advisor.

During this semester you will also identify a second full-time UNT faculty member to serve on your thesis committee. This person may be from the same field as your thesis advisor or they can be from a related field.

### Thesis Final Project

To earn credit for the thesis a student must enroll in a section of HNRS 4951: Honors College Thesis or Department Equivalent (ex. BIOL 4951). If you are writing your thesis with a faculty member from your major department you will sign up for a section of 4951 in your major, as this will provide you with Honors College credit as well as advanced

elective credit that can be applied towards your degree plan (please consult with your major advisor about where this credit will count). To enroll in a section of 4951: Honors Thesis you will need to submit a copy of your thesis proposal to the Honors College (SAGE 320) no later than the first day of the semester in which to plan on completing your project. You must include the Thesis Proposal Coversheet with this document. Please type the information into the coversheet document (handwritten forms will not be accepted) and it must include the signature of your faculty advisor, their department chair, and your second committee member.

While there is no single correct format for a thesis, the dictates of your field should guide the writing/presentation. Choose the style manual most relevant to your field of study and then use it assiduously. Thesis projects must use proper grammar and syntax

### Thesis Defense

A defense is required for all Honors College thesis projects, and it serves as an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to talk intelligently about their field in an academic setting. This is a beneficial experience for undergraduates as it will help prepare you for graduate school by providing you with a forum in which you will need to defend your ideas in front of your faculty committee and others who will be in attendance.

According to UNT policy, thesis defenses are open to the public and mark the completion of a substantial academic achievement. Thesis defenses typically take the following form:

- Brief presentation of your research findings (15-25 min)
- Opportunity for Committee Questions
- Opportunity for General Audience Questions
- Committee deliberations regarding project (committee members only, everyone else will leave the room)
- The student will then receive feedback (pass, pass with Revisions, or did not pass)

This format may change based on your faculty mentor's preferences, but this should provide you with a general idea of the process.

All defenses will take place at the Honors College Thesis Defense Day. The date and location for the Thesis Defense Day is provided on the Honors College website for each semester. You and your faculty advisor will be given the opportunity to select preferred times for your individual defense, but we encourage students to attend other defenses throughout the day to support your fellow students.

### Major Specific Thesis Substitutes/Replacements

The following experiences may count as an Honors Thesis replacement:

- PSCY 4950: Senior Thesis
- PHYS 4955: Senior Thesis
- Senior Engineering Design Project
- Senior Music Recital (A 10pg process journal must be submitted to the Honors College)
- Senior Portfolio for Communication Design majors (A 10pg process journal must be submitted to the Honors College)

## Thesis Timeline –Entering UNT/Honors College as First Year Students

- Step 1**                      **Begin to consider and develop potential thesis topics.**
- As early as possible in your UNT career*                      Read up on and/or enroll in courses related to topics that interest you. Get to know the experts in these fields on campus. Your thesis does not have to be done in your major. However, most people do the thesis in their major area for obvious reasons (e.g., familiarity with and interest in material; graduate school admissions).
- Step 2**                      **Enroll in HNRS 1500 Introduction to Research, or major equivalent**
- As early as possible in your UNT career*                      Please contact an Honors Academic Counselor regarding equivalent introduction to research courses in your major.
- Step 3**                      **Choose an advisor.**
- At least 3 semesters before graduation*                      This is the single most important step in the process. There are numerous things to consider in making this choice. Is the person knowledgeable in the area that you want to pursue? Is their personality a good match with yours? Does their working style complement yours? Do they have the time to commit to the thesis process?
- Step 4**                      **Enroll in HNRS 3500 and write your thesis proposal.**
- 2 or 3 semesters before graduation*
- Step 5**                      **Enroll in the requisite section of 4951.**
- Semester before graduation*                      Provide a copy of the Honors Thesis Proposal Coversheet and your thesis proposal to the Honors College by the first day of the semester that you plan to write your thesis. The Honors College will then enroll you in the 4951 class of your discipline. Keep in mind that completing your thesis will take longer than you expect. A thesis experience is not designed to be a one-semester, single-class project.
- Step 6**                      **Defend your thesis.**
- While enrolled in 4951*                      At a minimum, aim to defend your thesis a full semester before you graduate. (Spring graduates should defend in the Fall; Fall graduates should defend in the Spring.)

## Thesis Timeline –Entering UNT/Honors College as Transfer Students

- Step 1**                      **Enroll in HNRS 3500: Honors Thesis Proposal**
- First semester at UNT*                      An Honors Thesis is required for the Advanced Honors College Scholar Award, thus we recommend beginning the process as soon into your UNT career as possible. During this class you will complete a thesis proposal and begin the process of choosing a thesis advisor.
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- Step 5**                      **Enroll in the requisite section of 4951.**
- 1 or 2 semesters before graduation*                      Provide a copy of the Honors Thesis Proposal Coversheet and your thesis proposal to the Honors College by the first day of the semester that you plan to write your thesis. The Honors College will then enroll you in the 4951 class of your discipline. Keep in mind that completing your thesis will take longer than you expect. A thesis experience is not designed to be a one-semester, single-class project.
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- Step 6**                      **Defend your thesis.**
- While enrolled in 4951*                      At a minimum, aim to defend your thesis a full semester before you graduate. (Spring graduates should defend in the Fall; Fall graduates should defend in the Spring.)