

A Guide to Writing Honors Proposals, Theses, and Defenses

Writing a thesis is a requirement for the Advanced Honors Scholar and Distinguished Honors Scholar Awards. Certain degrees require a thesis. In those cases, the Honors College defers to those departments as to the thesis process they would like you to follow. The following guide is for Honors College students who would like to write a thesis, but a thesis is not a requirement for their degree.

Thesis Proposals

- Thesis students must complete HNRS 3500, resulting in a thesis proposal of 10 pages (sans references, appendices, etc.). You are providing a “roadmap” to your project – not writing a term paper.
- The thesis proposal should include a general introduction, a brief review of the relevant literature that clearly lead the reader to the proposed project, and a detailed methodology of what you will do and how. The proposal should have no opinions or findings following the methodology section.
- Proposals should be written so that “non-experts” can understand them.
- Grammar and syntax matter. The expectation is that Honors graduates demonstrate above average writing ability.
- Find a mentor to serve as your thesis advisor and chair your thesis committee. Your mentor must be a full-time UNT faculty member.
- 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.

Theses

- While there is no single correct format for a thesis, the dictates of your field should guide the writing/presentation. Regardless, each student will submit a fairly lengthy written document—a process journal for those doing creative thesis projects—to satisfy the Honors thesis requirement.
- Choose the style manual most relevant to your field of study and then use it assiduously.
- Assume that you will make changes before the thesis is completed and submitted to the Honors College.
- Theses must have proper grammar and syntax.
- Find 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 from another department if your thesis has implications in that field as well.

Thesis Defenses

- Thesis defenses are an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to talk intelligently about their field in an academic setting.
- Students should provide a brief (10-15 minute) overview of their project. Then the committee may ask questions.
- Although questions will generally focus on the research project, students may be asked to assimilate other relevant information (e.g., relation of their research to the “real world”) into the thesis defense.
- Defenses typically last between 45-60 minutes.
- If a student has technical requirements (e.g., power point, DVD player) for the defense, the Associate Dean of Honors should be notified as early as possible.
- Certain majors and disciplines may benefit from different defense formats (e.g., music, photography). If you and your advisor believe that this may be the case, please contact the Associate Dean of the Honors College to discuss the matter.

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)

A Timeline for the Thesis Process

Step 1

As early as possible in your UNT career

Begin to consider and develop potential thesis topics.

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

As early as possible in your UNT career

Enroll in HNRS 1500 Introduction to Research, or major equivalent

Please contact an Honors Academic Counselor regarding equivalent introduction to research courses in your major.

Step 3

At least 3 semesters before graduation

Choose an advisor.

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

2 or 3 semesters before graduation

Enroll in HNRS 3500 and write your thesis proposal.

Step 5

1 or 2 semesters before graduation

Enroll in the requisite section of 4951.

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

1 semester before graduation

Defend your thesis.

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.)

Step 7

Your final semester at UNT

Graduate as an Advanced or Distinguished Honors Scholar Award recipient!

(These awards also requires a cumulative GPA of 3.5)

UPDATE THE RED TEXT WITH YOUR INFORMATION! USE YOUR OWN NAME AND YOUR ADVISOR'S NAME!!

Honors Thesis Proposal Coversheet

Dr. **First Last Name** – Thesis Advisor

First Last Name – Honors Scholar

In order to fulfill the responsibilities of advisor and scholar in the preparation of an Honors Thesis, we propose the following:

- I. That we will meet once a week during the **FALL/SPRING** semester of **WHAT YEAR. SPECIFY DAY OF WEEK, TIME, AND LOCATION (e.g. every Tuesday at 2PM in Sage Hall 257)**
- II. That we will perform research on the topic of _____. **BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF YOUR STUDY AND YOUR GOALS**
- III. That the student will read works suggested by the advisor and other works that the student may find relevant to the study. **PROVIDE A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF YOUR READING LIST**
- IV. That during weekly discussions, the student will relate understandings, opinions, and elaborations on readings and writings; the advisor will review, question, and clarify the student's efforts. **BE PRECISE REGARDING WHAT THE ADVISOR EXPECTS FROM YOU AND WHAT YOU NEED FROM YOUR ADVISOR**
- V. That our goal in the thesis preparation course will be for the student to build upon the thesis proposal by conducting the research and writing about the findings. **BE SPECIFIC ABOUT ANY OTHER GOALS YOU AND YOUR MENTOR SET**

Student Information

Name: _____ UNT ID: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Mentor Information

Name: _____ Department: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____