

Code of Practice for Supervision of Honours Theses

Approved by the Faculty Board on Monday 10 May 2010

The thesis is the heart of an Honours program and is one of its distinctive features. This document explains the basic responsibilities of students writing theses, their supervisors, and the programs in which the research is being undertaken. Departments and programs may wish to set out further expectations of their own.

I. Responsibilities of the Department or Program

These responsibilities are those of the chair of department (or director, in the case of an interdisciplinary program). In many departments, however, some or all of these responsibilities are delegated to an Honours Coordinator or a departmental committee. Such delegations should be explained clearly to students.

Departments and programs are responsible for:

- ensuring that applicants for admission to Honours are properly qualified both with respect to the minimum requirements for admission to the degree concerned and with respect to the particular research topic proposed
- ensuring that the project proposed is appropriate for an Honours thesis and that it can be undertaken with the time and facilities available
- ensuring that the candidate receives proper supervision throughout the period during which the thesis is researched and written
- ensuring that the examination process maintains the standards required of Honours, is expeditious, and is consistent with relevant Faculty of Arts and Academic Board policies
- informing students of the rules and conventions relating to the length, presentation, production and submission of the thesis

- encouraging supervisors to participate in supervision training activities provided within the university
- ensuring that opportunities exist within the department or program for the development of profitable intellectual relationships among Honours students and staff and that all students are encouraged to participate in appropriate departmental, school, or faculty activities
- informing students whose research methods (including questionnaires and interviews) raise ethical matters about the requirements of the Faculty of Arts Honours Ethics Committee, and ensuring that supervisors know how to help their students prepare an application to the Honours Ethics Committee.
- monitoring the student-supervisor relationship and working to resolve any problems with it
- making Honours students aware of people within the department or program, the faculty, and the wider university to whom they can turn for advice
- ensuring that students and supervisors are aware of the university's policies and procedures with respect to intellectual property, including questions of authorship and exploitation of inventions and other intellectual property

Departments and programs supervising Joint Honours theses have further responsibilities that are set out in the Faculty of Arts policy on Joint Honours.

II. Responsibilities of the Supervisor

Supervisors must:

- ensure that the student is aware of the standards expected for an Honours thesis
- identify with the student the particular research methods and analytical skills that will need to be developed
- negotiate with the student a plan for the researching and writing of the thesis, which may include a deadline for submitting a complete draft, arrangements for supervision meetings, and so on
- make themselves available to meet with a thesis student for half an hour every two weeks, on average, during term time; meetings may be shorter or less frequent while the student is concentrating on coursework, and longer or more frequent in the later stages of the thesis

- return written work with constructive criticism within two weeks or a shorter agreed time
- provide the student with feedback on progress, identify any problems, and suggest ways of addressing them
- provide appropriate and timely advice on requirements regarding content, style, presentation and production of the thesis
- work with the student in preparing an application to the Faculty of Arts Honours Ethics Committee if the thesis research involves human subjects or for any other reason requires consideration by the Honours Ethics Committee
- be aware of the support services for students which exist within the University
- keep the Chair of Department or Honours Coordinator informed of any problems that occur during the researching and writing of the thesis
- keep copies of email and other correspondence with their thesis students, as well as any other documents relevant to the supervisory relationship. If a problem with the student's progress or the supervisory relationship is identified, the supervisor should lodge copies of relevant correspondence and other documents in Records Online after consulting the chair of department or Honours Coordinator

III. Responsibilities of the Student

The student:

- is solely responsible for the content, style, presentation and production of the thesis that is finally presented
- must devote sufficient time to the thesis
- must ensure that there is sufficient time allocated to write up the thesis and to ascertain what is necessary in terms of content, style and presentation
- should negotiate with the supervisor a plan for the researching and writing of the thesis, which may include details of a deadline for submitting a complete draft, arrangements for supervision meetings, and so on
- should draw the attention of the supervisor or Honours Coordinator to difficulties being experienced, and should make herself or himself aware of the mechanisms that exist for helping with supervisor-student

difficulties and to take advantage of them if necessary

- must be familiar with any departmental, faculty or other university written rules or guidelines relating to Honours (including ethics requirements for research with human subjects)
- must work with the supervisor in preparing an application to the Faculty of Arts Honours Ethics Committee if the thesis research involves human subjects or for any other reason requires consideration by the Honours Ethics Committee
- is solely responsible for enrolling in Honours units and varying enrolment (switching from full-time to part-time study, for instance)