Code of Practice for Supervision of Honours Theses

(Approved by the Faculty Board on 19 August 2011)

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 Faculty of Law.

I. Responsibilities of the Faculty

These responsibilities are those of the Faculty. However, some or all of these responsibilities are delegated to the Honours Coordinator and the Faculty Honours Committee. Such delegations should be explained clearly to students.

The Faculty is responsible for:

- ensuring that applicants for admission to Honours are properly qualified both with respect to the minimum requirements for admission to the program concerned and with respect to the particular research topic proposed
- 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 Law 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 or the Faculty
- monitoring the student-supervisor relationship and working to resolve any problems with it
- ensuring that students and supervisors are aware of the university’s policies and procedures with respect to intellectual property, including questions of authorship and other intellectual property.

II. Responsibilities of the Supervisor

Supervisors must:

- ensure that the student is aware of the standards expected for an Honours thesis
- ensure that the project proposed is appropriate for an Honours thesis and that it can be undertaken with the time and facilities available
- identify with the student the particular research methods and analytical skills that will need to be developed
- inform students whose research methods (including questionnaires and interviews) raise ethical matters about the requirements of the Faculty of Law Honours Ethics Committee
- negotiate with the student a plan for the researching and writing of the thesis, which should include a deadline for submitting a complete draft, arrangements for supervision meetings, agreed methods of communication 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 earlier in the semester and longer or more frequent in the later stages of the thesis
- provide the student with timely 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
- assist the student in preparing an application to the Faculty of Law 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 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.

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 should include details of a deadline for submitting a complete draft, arrangements for supervision meetings, agreed methods of communication and so on
- must meet all agreed deadlines
- 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 Faculty or other university written rules or guidelines relating to Honours (including ethics requirements for research with human subjects)
- must prepare an application to the Faculty of Law 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 the Honours unit and varying enrolment.