

POLICY MEMO

SUBJECT: HONORS THESIS GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

DATE: 2024

Honors Thesis Rationale

All University of Oklahoma Honors students must complete an Honors thesis in order to fulfill the requirements for graduation with Honors. The Honors thesis gives you the opportunity to build on the knowledge you have acquired to do an in-depth exploration of an issue or question that interests you. The thesis should demonstrate your (1) understanding of the tools (methods, theories and models) of a discipline and the ability to use these tools, (2) ability to develop an informed, well-reasoned and creative response to a question or problem, and (3) ability to effectively communicate the results of a project in writing and/or creative media, depending on the academic discipline in which the thesis falls.

Successful completion of the thesis demonstrates that you are prepared to learn and work on your own. But you will have help: a faculty member will supervise the project from its inception to its completion. You should ask a professor who has knowledge and expertise in your area of interest to serve in this capacity. Usually this will be someone with whom you are already familiar, whose knowledge you respect, and with whom you get along. It is usually a professor from your major, but this need not be the case.

Procedure

Enroll in 3980: Most theses are the product of HON 3980, Honors Research. As an independent study, 3980 lacks the structure of a standard course, so it requires focus and self-discipline. To ensure that you and your faculty advisor will encounter as little confusion and misunderstanding as possible, the two of you should agree on important procedural matters before you enroll. Together, fill out the HON 3980 enrollment form (found on the Honors College website), with as many specifics as possible; make certain the form states what the expected final product is and how it will be graded. Submit the completed contract to the Honors College for final approval and a signature.

Submit the thesis: When your thesis is complete, you will submit an electronic copy to the Honors College along with an Honors Thesis Submission Cover Form, signed by your professor. Submit your thesis to the College as soon as it is complete, rather than waiting until just before you graduate!

In unusual circumstances, it is possible to submit another project as your thesis, rather than the product of HON 3980. You will still have to complete 3 credits of 3980 to graduate with Honors. For information about alternative theses, contact an Honors College advisor.

Standards for Fulfillment of the Thesis Requirement

- Sufficient and appropriate research to produce a thesis. The finished project should show the student's familiarity with research methods and tools of the specific

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discipline.

- The topic should be sufficiently complex to justify Honors credit and sufficiently narrow to be covered adequately. The student should demonstrate an understanding of the issues involved in the topic and of appropriate ways to investigate that topic.
- If the thesis is a written paper, it should show that the student understands the appropriate way of writing a scholarly piece in that discipline. It should be long enough to adequately develop the topic and to justify three hours of Honors credit. The length of a written thesis varies significantly depending on discipline or field; for example, a typical thesis in History could be a research paper of 25 pages or more, whereas in a STEM field it may be a lab report of 5 or 6 pages.
- If the thesis is something other than a paper, it must be a product that is recognizable within its field or discipline as a substantial and original work, as confirmed by the faculty member advising the thesis.