

FAQ: Honors Thesis

Interested in completing an Honors Thesis and graduating with Highest Honors?

View the frequently asked questions below to learn more. If you have any other questions, contact HONORS@SHSU.EDU.

- ***Do the honors thesis hours count toward my regular honors graduation requirements?***
No. The honors thesis is six hours above and beyond your regular honors graduation requirements.
- ***How many semesters does the thesis require?*** The thesis is a two-semester project (HONR 4398 and HONR 4399), usually the final two consecutive semesters before graduation (but exceptions can be made).
- ***Are any exceptions available to the requirement to register for two semesters of the honors thesis?*** If a student is in the McNair program, MCNR 4301 (Introduction to Research and Graduate Study) may serve as the first half of the honors thesis; you are expended to expand your McNair research project and continue to work with your McNair advisor in HONR 4399.
- ***When should I begin the thesis?*** While you are not required to begin actual work until the first semester of the thesis, you are much better off to have chosen a topic and a thesis faculty director (and to have at least discussed your topic, methodology, and timeline with your thesis director) prior to the beginning of your first thesis semester.
- ***Can the thesis be done during the summer?*** Not entirely. You may complete the thesis in one long semester plus one summer term, but not in two summer terms.
- ***Must the thesis be done in my major?*** No. The student's academic major is almost always the location of the thesis, but this is not absolutely required. A faculty member in a department other than the student's major may supervise the thesis. Interdisciplinary theses are welcomed, and students may choose to work with two thesis directors.
- ***What paperwork is necessary for the honors thesis?*** The Thesis Proposal Form at the beginning and the Thesis Final Approval Form as well as the Thesis Binding Form at the end, plus at least two hard copies of the final thesis (printed one-sided only, following the Thesis Template). Forms and the template are available at: <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/honors/documents-and-forms/>
- ***When are the forms due?*** The Thesis Proposal Form is due by the 12th class day of the first semester of the thesis. The Thesis Binding Form and Final Approval Form are due the last class day of the semester.

- ***What is the role of the Honors Dean in the honors thesis?*** The Honors Dean reads and approves all thesis proposals and will read the final thesis but otherwise has no part in the conduct of the thesis. The conduct of the thesis is up to the student as guided by the thesis director. However, the Honors Dean is available for questions or consultation with both the student and the thesis director at any time. The Honors Dean will also serve as mediator, if necessary, between the student and thesis director.
- ***How long should the written thesis be?*** The final length of the thesis depends on the subject and treatment. Usually theses in certain disciplines, such as English, History, or Political Science, are long, perhaps as long as 40-60 pages. Theses in certain other disciplines are often shorter. Some past honors theses have had brief main bodies (around 20 pages) but lengthy supplemental materials (such as appendices containing computer codes, experiment results, performances, written musical scores, or statistical tables and computations). At a minimum, the thesis will include the written text described above.
- ***Are there any other requirements for the thesis?*** Yes. (1) Students must present a portion of their research at an academic conference, either in their fields of study or at the Undergraduate Research Symposium (held on campus, free of charge, every April). A copy of the conference program or an email to the Honors Dean from the thesis director must be submitted. (2) In lieu of a conference presentation, students may submit some portion of their research to a journal for publication (which often happens with those students in the Sciences or Humanities). An abstract of the journal submission or email to the Honors Dean from the thesis director must be submitted. (3) Students must use the thesis template for the written portion of the thesis (to ensure uniformity in the theses across disciplines). *(4) Students may, with their thesis directors' approval, upload their completed theses to Scholarly Works @ SHSU: this counts as a formal publication on students' resumes.
- ***What style guide should I use for my thesis?*** You should use the style guide most appropriate to your discipline or major. Your thesis director can help, as can the Academic Success Center.
- ***What if I want to do something different than stated in these guidelines?*** Different approaches are possible. Consult with the Honors Dean.
- ***Is there a formal thesis defense?*** No. The final approval of the thesis is entirely up to the thesis director.
- ***How are the thesis grades reported?*** The Honors Dean is the instructor of record. The grade for the first thesis semester (HONR 4398) is reported as "IP" (In Progress). Toward the end of the second thesis semester (HONR 4399), the Honors Dean will contact the thesis director for a final overall grade, which the Honors Dean will then

report for both semesters. (While the grade decision is up to the thesis director, history suggests that you will receive six hours of “A” for your honors thesis).

- ***Is there any special recognition for thesis students?*** Yes. At the Honors College Bowers Medallion Ceremony, thesis students are announced as graduating with “highest honors,” and the thesis titles and faculty are announced. At commencement, the honors thesis graduate will be announced as graduating “with Highest Honors, Honors College.” Students may also, pending approval from the chairs of their departments and deans of their colleges, use the honors thesis to count toward “Academic Distinction in the Field.” This recognition will also be announced at the Medallion Ceremony and commencement. The Academic Distinction form is found on the Registrar’s webpage.
- ***Will I receive a bound copy of the thesis?*** Yes. One bound copy will remain in the Honors College thesis library, and you will receive one copy courtesy of the Honors College. (You may purchase additional copies if you wish).
- ***What if I don’t complete the thesis?*** If you do not complete the thesis, an IP (in-progress) grade will remain on your transcripts. This grade will not convert to an F as with Incomplete (X) grades.