



DEPARTMENTAL THESIS ADVISOR FACT SHEET: SERVING AS AN HONORS THESIS ADVISOR

Honors Thesis Expectations

In the final year of undergraduate study, all University Honors students complete an Honors thesis. The thesis is a serious research project in the student's field of study and represents a valuable opportunity for Honors students to work closely with a faculty advisor from their major department. Students generally take 8 credits of thesis coursework to complete the project in two terms: HON 403 Thesis: Prospectus and HON 403 Thesis: Continuation. An additional section of HON 403 Thesis: Continuation or a section of HON 401 Research may be taken if needed to complete the thesis.

In general, the thesis project may be original work done with a body of evidence or it may undertake a carefully framed survey of criticism and scholarship on a particular question of key importance to a field. The style and format of the thesis will vary according to the expectations governing work in the field to which the major belongs. As a rule of thumb the baccalaureate thesis should be as long as a typical journal research article in the field.

Role of the Departmental Thesis Advisor

The Departmental Thesis advisor is a faculty member in the student's major field of study and serves as the content expert for the thesis, while writing support is provided by Honors College thesis faculty. Advisors commit to working with the student for 2-3 terms.

HON 403P – Thesis: Prospectus

During the first term the student enrolls in HON 403 Thesis: Prospectus. As a Departmental Thesis Advisor, you'll meet with your advisee at least three times during this term as they work with you to formulate and revise their research question, bibliography, and develop a schedule for completion of the thesis. Students will require your signature on the Thesis Prospectus Signature Sheet to confirm that they are moving through the foundational steps for thesis; advisors assign 60% of the grade (A-F only) for HON 403 Thesis: Prospectus.

The completed, fully signed form is due to the HON 403 instructor at the last class session of the term.

HON 403C – Thesis: Continuation

In the second term, students enroll in HON 403 Thesis: Continuation, in which they complete the thesis. During the continuation term, the student should work with the advisor to develop a schedule of meetings and deliverables to keep the thesis on track. Honors faculty teaching HON 403 also schedule check-ins with students to provide writing support. An additional section of HON 403 Thesis: Continuation may be taken if needed.

Eligibility to Serve as an Honors Departmental Thesis Advisor

Honors students are encouraged to take an active part in their education, and by the time they are in their third or fourth year, most of them have already identified and recruited a PSU faculty member in their major who will serve as their departmental advisor. While we prefer Honors students to work with PSU faculty in their major department, we do recognize that some students may wish to recruit advisors from outside the PSU community. We have established the following guidelines for advisor selection.

Who CAN serve as a Departmental Thesis Advisor:

- A full-time member of the teaching or research faculty at PSU (tenured or non-tenured) with a terminal degree (Ph.D. or M.F.A.) in the discipline in which the student is writing the thesis.
- A full-time academic professional faculty member at PSU with a terminal degree (Ph.D. or M.F.A.) and substantial teaching experience in the discipline in which the student is writing the thesis.
- An equally-qualified faculty member currently on staff at OHSU.
- An equally-qualified faculty member currently on staff at another accredited university.

With the proper documentation (CV and evidence of current professional activity - documentation MUST be provided and approved before the prospective advisor begins working with the student) Honors may also accept:

- A licensed clinician or social worker--these professionals will have at least a Masters degree (MSW, etc) in their field and considerable professional experience.
- A working professional in the fine or performing arts with appropriate, demonstrated expertise in their field.
- Other qualified professionals in the field of the thesis--accepted qualifications will depend upon the discipline.

Who CANNOT serve as a Departmental Thesis Advisor:

- A PSU-AFT represented part-time faculty member at PSU. While many adjunct faculty are amply qualified to serve as advisors, the current AFT contract prohibits this activity.
- Prospective advisors without evidence of disciplinary education or expertise.

For More Information:

The current version of the Honors Thesis Handbook is published on the Honors website under the Fourth Year tab. The handbook contains a section for Departmental Thesis Advisors and a detailed FAQ.

- Cornelia Coleman (colemanc@pdx.edu) is contact for all thesis & PDX.Scholar issues.
- Harry York (why@pdx.edu) is the contact for faculty teaching HON 403.



University
Honors College

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY