**HONORS COLLEGE THESIS MENTOR’S PACKET**

**HONORS THESIS OR PROJECT**

The Honors Thesis is a comprehensive research effort of original scholarship. Typically completed in the senior year, it offers students an opportunity to work closely with faculty members on advanced research topics or creative endeavors. A thesis involves developing and working toward answering a research question, while a project involves an alternative academic enterprise of equivalent intensity and scope, e.g. creative work (art theater music), engineering invention, case study, and so on.

The Program incorporates structured coursework during the year before graduation by supporting the student’s development of their Thesis Proposal. This Honors Thesis or Project is sustained effort on a single topic. Whether the intended end result is a thesis or project, each begins with creative inquiry and systematic research, includes documentation of substantive scholarly effort, and each culminates in a public presentation at the annual Research and Scholarship Days event given biannually within the Honors College. Honor students engage in the multi-month long research, some working in established campus laboratories or under the umbrella of faculty sponsored research projects, each engaging in this scholarly endeavor as a seeker of new knowledge.

Thesis faculty are charged with the responsibility to model the highest standards of ethical research while working with their thesis mentee.

**PROCEDURES FOR MENTORS OF HONORS COLLEGE RESEARCH THESES**

The research thesis officially culminates the academic career of an undergraduate in The Honors College at Oakland University. One Honors College assessment document puts it this way: A major assessment tool for evaluating the success and achievement of Honors College students is the quality of the senior independent thesis. The thesis grows out of an original idea a student discovered either in a classroom or laboratory environment, and allows the student to develop that idea in greater detail. The project should manifest:

* A cogent argument and/or
* A creative intention
* A high level of critical thinking
* Detailed methodology, methods or approach

Thank you for agreeing to be a faculty research mentor supervising the thesis of an Honors College student. We consider the relationship between a recognized faculty member and a research student to be one of the most important elements contributing to the success, and potential value, of the research thesis.

In your mentoring role, we would appreciate if you could arrange an appropriate schedule of conferences with the student in order to provide the quality of research guidance and direction to ensure the most spectacular results.

Your duties as an HC Mentor are as follows:

***Thesis Proposal***

1. Meet with student to develop the best approach to the research project proposal.
2. Direct student to new research information and/or raise questions about related areas of research necessary to strengthen the proposal.
3. Read the student’s draft thesis proposal closely and offer suggestions before it is submitted to the HC 390 professor and the Honors College Council.
4. Ensure if the student requires IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval that they undertake CITI training and seek IRB approval for their project in good time to commence research.
5. The proposal requires your approval. Please sign and date the Mentor form AFTER reviewing their final draft.

***Thesis Research***

1. Assist student with revisions of the thesis in order for it to manifest the highest possible academic level of research.
2. Establish a reasonable timeline with student for completing research and drafts, including the final draft. Review the final draft before completion.
3. If a student is working on a project that required IRB approval, discuss with the student their project in relation to IRB requirements.
4. Write an evaluative paragraph of the final thesis to be placed at the front of the completed document.
   1. Students must submit the final draft of their thesis to you for revisions on September 15 for Fall graduates and January 15 for Winter graduates,
   2. The completed thesis is due on **Thesis Turn in Day** (October 15 for Fall graduates and February 15 for Winter graduates) in the semester in which the student intends to graduate.
5. You will be invited to be our guest at the student’s final thesis presentation at an Honors College Research Day at the end of the semester during which they graduate.

**Caveat**: The Honors thesis is the student’s, as much as the topic might be of immense interest to you as the mentor, and may, in fact, have emerged from your classroom or lab. While the research project will necessarily reflect your guidance, interest, and signature, it should manifest that caliber of work representative of a student, albeit an extremely creative, industrious, and exceptional student!

**BEGINNING THE PROPOSAL**

Each student approaching The Honors College Council for review of an independent research project must submit a full proposal. The proposal should include the following **8 elements** **(**see the **Thesis Proposal Layout document for layout guidance):**

1. **A 150-word summary.** This should be suitable for a general audience. ie. a description that can be published and understood by all. It should be on a separate page, approximately 150 words in length and answer the following questions:

* What key thing(s) will your thesis project explore?
* What new knowledge will your project provide (in other words, what are aiming to find out)?
* What are the likely results of your thesis project?
* Who will benefit from your project?
  1. When submitting your proposal, please include the License Agreement and Authorization to Publish form which can be found on our website. This form will allow us to publish your summary/abstract on the Honors College website.

1. **A description of current research/knowledge** in your research area **incorporating 3-5 sources**. **(**Guideline: **1 page).**
2. **Aims and Objectives.** A list of the **Aims** and **Objectives** of the research**.** An aim is what you will do. An objective is why you will do it (see some **examples** of Aims and Objectives below)

* Commonly, a research project will have a number of aims and a number of **linked objectives. (**Link your Aims and Objectives by using matching numbers or letters).
* Some of those aims and objectives might be primary and some might be secondary. As noted, examples are included below.
* As a guideline, two aims and two objectives would be a small number; half a dozen of each would be a large number.
* It is often useful to set these aims and objectives out in numbered point form. **(**Guideline: **1 page)**

1. **Methodology.**  Include the methodology, methods or approach to be used in your research. Consult your mentor, as needed, to determine the correct methodology for your research/disciplinary area.

(Guideline: **½ page**)

1. **IRB\*:** Are you working with human subjects? If so, go to the IRB [website](https://www.oakland.edu/?id=25305&sid=177) and start the online, mandatory [CITI training](https://www.citiprogram.org/). Don’t delay….you will need either IRB approval or an exemption and you can’t start your research until you get it.

\*Include a statement in your proposal stating that you are seeking IRB approval

1. **Outcome/s.** What will be the results of the research? This does not assume a project will produce a definitive or complete result. If it aims to do so, that is terrific! Whatever the case, it is assumed here that some outcome can be stated and that this outcome (or outcomes) has importance both for the researcher and for her or his research/disciplinary area. **(**Guideline: **½ page)**

**7.** **Biographical Note**. A brief biographical note, making reference to educational, personal and/or professional

back ground as it relates to the proposed research project **(**Guideline: **200 words).**

**8.** **A selected bibliography (**Guideline: **¼ - ¾ page)**. A **minimum of 7** primary and secondary sources examined prior to proposal submission should be thorough enough to establish the fact that a solution to the problem would be an original contribution to scholarship. The selected bibliography must be reflected in the survey of scholarship undertaken in #1, and must be incorporated, where necessary, in the proposal. The style-sheet used for the Thesis should be consistent with that used in the field of study (for example, MLA for a thesis in English)

**MENTOR FAQ’S**

* **How much time do I need to be a mentor and how to I monitor the student’s thesis progress?**
  + In the year before graduation, the student and mentor are asked to sign an agreement that indicates they will continue to work on the project collaboratively as needed until it is completed.
  + Students are encouraged to meet with their mentor at least once/month until the project is completed.
* **Can I be a mentor to more than one student at a time?**
  + Yes, you may have more than one student working with you. However, each student must have their own separate project that is outcomes driven and specific to that student.
  + Students can work in groups on their thesis project. However they must work on separate aspects of a larger project with a distinct research question.
* **What if the student wants to work on my already funded and IRB approved study?**
  + The student can work on a portion of your study. However, the students must have their own outcomes driven aspect of the larger research project.
  + The Internal Review Board (IRB) must consider all student run Capstone projects minimal risk. An IRB must be submitted if human research is involved in the project.
* **Is there training for the mentors?**
  + Currently there are information sessions for the Mentors during Fall and Winter semesters. Please Contact Karen Conn for more details (contact information listed below).
  + If human subjects research is involved in the thesis project, mentors must complete human investigation training through the CITI program.
* **How much time does the student have to work on their Capstone Project?**
  + The student will typically begin the process in fall or winter of their 3rd year.
  + The final thesis is due the semester of graduation:

**For Students Graduating in May**:

* **January 15th**- Final Thesis submitted to Mentor for revisions
* **February 15th** - Final Revised Thesis (including checklist) submitted to the Honors College

**For Students Graduating in December**:

* **September 15th**- Final Thesis submitted to Mentor for revisions
* **October 15th** - Final Revised Thesis (including checklist) submitted to the Honors College
* **Is there funding for the Capstone projects?**
  + Yes, there is up to $1,500 per project for supplies justified through the Thesis grant request form.
  + Grant application must be submitted with the final proposal. No changes will be made after grant is approved.
  + $200 of the above funds may be requested for conference expenses for presentation of thesis work at relevant meetings.
* **Is there a required length for the final thesis?**
  + Yes**,** the final thesis should be a minimum of 20 pages
* **Am I expected to comment on the student’s final project?**
  + Yes, you will be asked to write an **evaluative paragraph** at the completion of the project that:
    - is a minimum of 150 words in length.- a maximum length of 1000 words is suggested;
    - addresses the quality of the work produced - mostly likely commenting with regard to whether it is in the top 5% of undergraduate research you have seen, top 10%, top 20%, for example;
    - mentions a key feature (or features) of the work completed, in terms of the student's achievement;
    - includes any personal comment the mentor feels relevant to the experience of having worked with the student researcher.

Dr. Graeme Harper

Dean of The Honors College

248-370-4450

gharper@oakland.edu

Karen Conn

Honors College Administrative Assistant

248-370-4419

conn@oakland.edu