

Accepted into Honours

This document provides information to help incoming Honours students understand what their Honours year will involve and what support is available to them.

Content

Administration	2
○ Extensions	
○ Facilities	
○ Full-time/part-time	
○ Funding	
○ Intermission/deferral	
○ Timelines	
Assessment	4
○ Assessment of Honours in this Faculty	
○ Honours classifications	
○ Flinders policy relating to assessment of Honours	
Ethics approval for Honours project	6
Examination of thesis	7
○ Examiners for an Honours thesis	
○ Criteria for assessment of Honours theses	
○ Assessment of Honours theses	
○ Flinders policy relating to examination of Honours theses	
Research project	9
○ Identifying an appropriate Honours research project	
○ Preparing the Honours research proposal	
○ Completing the research project	
Structure of Honours program	10
○ Structure of the Faculty's Honours program	
○ Flinders policy relating to structure of Honours programs	
Student responsibilities	11
Supervision	12
○ Identifying a supervisor	
○ Contact with supervisor	
○ Flinders policy relating to supervision of Honours programs	
Support available	14

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Administration

Extensions

School-based Honours Coordinators may grant extensions (where appropriate) during the Honours year.

Extensions beyond the Faculty deadlines at the end of the Honours year require formal approval at Faculty level. The 'Assignment Extension Application' form should be completed and submitted to the ASA Coursework Office.

Facilities for Honours students

Facilities for Honours students will vary between schools. Some schools may be able to provide access to a (shared) workspace for Honours students. Student should liaise with the school-based Honours Coordinator about facilities.

Full-time/part-time

Honours is a 36 unit program which is normally completed in two consecutive semesters starting in February. In this way the program is completed in 10 months study full-time. It is possible to study Honours part-time which would normally require the coursework component to be completed in the first two semesters (in the first year) and the thesis component in the last two semesters (i.e. in the second year).

Funding for Honours project

Funding for Honours students varies between schools. Schools may be able to provide a small amount of funding towards photocopying and thesis binding. In some cases additional assistance may be available, e.g. to help meet costs arising from experimental or fieldwork research. Students should discuss school-based support with their supervisor.

Intermission/deferral

A student involved in part-time Honours study may be permitted to intermit candidature for up to twelve months after completing the first year of Honours candidature. Such intermission may be approved on the recommendation of the Honour Coordinator where there are exceptional circumstances that could not have been foreseen by the student at the time of commencing the Honours program.

Timelines

Most Honours programs offered by the Faculty commence in first semester (end of February); some programs are able to take in Honours students commencing in second semester (end of July).

All Honours coursework must be completed and the thesis examined by the end of the second semester of study (or equivalent for part-time study).

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Assessment

Assessment of Honours in this Faculty

- Students must complete and submit 36 units of Honours work and must submit work in all components in order to be awarded an Honours degree.
- All Honours work (i.e. coursework topics and thesis) is assessed. Each component of Honours (i.e. each topic and thesis) is awarded a final result as a percentage mark and a grade.
- At least two thirds of a student's Honours work (including coursework) must be double-marked.
- The Honours thesis is always marked by at least two examiners; external examiners may be used. The supervisor is not normally an examiner for a thesis they have supervised. (Under exceptional circumstances and with permission of Faculty Board a supervisor may be appointed examiner; in such cases, there must be at least two other examiners involved.)
- The Honours thesis mark is not purely an arithmetic aggregation of examiners' marks. Instead, the Honours thesis mark is finalised on the basis of discussion, consultation and resolution among the examiners (managed by the Honours coordinator). This process is particularly important where there is disagreement among examiners about the student's competency and/or the merits of the thesis.
- The overall result for a student's Honours program is calculated using the results of all units of Honours work (including coursework and thesis) and all units attempted (including WF).

Honours classifications

Honours classifications, as outlined in Assessment policy Clause 6.2, are as follows:

Honours First Class (H1): Sustained excellence in quality of written, oral and, where relevant, performative work, judged against stated criteria. This level of achievement should be rated as outstanding in the sense that students clearly demonstrate advanced scholarship within the discipline and a high level of ability to undertake independent research. A score in the range of 85 to 100 will be awarded.

Honours Second Class Division A (H2A): An overall high level of scholarship judged against stated criteria, which may include excellence in some areas. Students achieving this classification will have demonstrated the ability to undertake independent research. A score in the range of 75 to 84 will be awarded.

Honours Second Class Division B (H2B): A substantial level of scholarship judged against stated criteria. While showing some variability in performance, students achieving this classification are assessed as competent within the discipline. A score in the range of 65 to 74 will be awarded.

Honours Third Class (H3): A satisfactory level of scholarship judged against stated criteria. Students achieving this classification are seen as having met the minimum requirements for the award. A score in the range of 50 to 64 will be awarded.

Fail : An unsatisfactory level of scholarship judged against stated criteria. Students awarded this classification are seen as not having met the minimum requirements for the award. A score in the range of 0 to 49 will be awarded.

Flinders policy relating to assessment of Honours programs

- Honours programs (<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm>)

Clause 8 of the Honours Programs policy addresses the issue of Honours assessment and delegates the detail of Honours assessment to the Faculty.

- Assessment policy and procedures
(<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/assessment-policy.cfm>)

Clause 6.2 of the Assessment policy outlines Honours classifications.

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Ethics approval for Honours projects

Many research projects in this Faculty involve human subjects. Such research projects require approval from the appropriate university ethics committee before potential research participants are approached and/or data is collected.

Students should discuss the ethics implications of their research with their supervisor. Supervisors will be able to assist in the application for ethics approval (where required).

For information about research ethics at Flinders:

- Ethics at Flinders (<http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/info-for-researchers/ethics/>)

For details about ethics committee requirements (including deadlines for applications):

- Social and behavioural research ethics committee (<http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/info-for-researchers/ethics/committees/social-behavioural.cfm>)
- Clinical human research ethics committee (<http://www.flinders.sa.gov.au/research/pages/ethics/7017/>)

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Examination of Honours thesis

Examiners for the Faculty's Honours theses

The Honours thesis is always marked by at least two examiners.

External examiners may be used.

The supervisor is not normally an examiner for a thesis they have supervised. Under exceptional circumstances and with permission of Faculty Board a supervisor may be appointed as examiner. In such cases, there must be at least two other examiners involved.

Criteria for assessment of Faculty Honours theses

As identified in Clause 6.2 in the Flinders Assessment Policy and Procedures, Honours assessment criteria include (but are not limited to):

- Originality and creativity of thinking or performance
- Evidence of ability to undertake independent research
- Critical awareness of scholarship within the discipline
- Breadth and depth of understanding
- Comprehensiveness of treatment of subject material
- Capacity for achieving objectives
- Accuracy and clarity of presentation

Assessment of Faculty Honours theses

The Honours thesis mark is not purely an arithmetic aggregation of examiners' marks, particularly where there is disagreement among examiners.

The Honours thesis mark is finalised on the basis of discussion, consultation and resolution among the examiners (managed by the Honours coordinator). This process is particularly important where there is disagreement about the student's competency and/or the merits of the thesis.

Flinders policy relating to examination of Honours theses

- Honours Programs policy (<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm>)

Clause 8 of the Honours Programs policy outlines Honours assessment issues leaving many details to be determined by the Faculty.

Two sub-clauses specifically address the requirements for a written thesis report and the use of the supervisor as examiner respectively.

8.5 The assessment process will include written reports on the thesis incorporating a short statement of the reasons for the grade or mark awarded to the thesis.

8.7 A supervisor will not normally be an examiner for an Honours thesis that they have supervised. On a case by case basis, a Faculty Board may, on the recommendation of the School, permit a supervisor to be an examiner for a thesis that they have supervised. In such cases there must be at least two other examiners of the thesis.

- Assessment Policy and Procedures
(<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/assessment-policy.cfm>)

Clause 6.2 of the Assessment policy identifies criteria for Honours assessment.

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Research project

Identifying an appropriate Honours project

It is important to agree on the general content and direction of the Honours research project early in the Honours year. Once the project is defined, it is possible to identify appropriate coursework topics which complement the project and it is possible to make a start with the research proposal.

The advice of the Honours Coordinator and the guidance of the supervisor should be sought when searching for a suitable project. Supervisor may already have identified projects that a student can participate in or will discuss the student's own project ideas. Students may have ideas for projects but must accept the guidance of the supervisor regarding suitability of the project. After all, student project ideas may not be appropriate for Honours, may be too ambitious, may require specialist skills, may be too narrow in scope or may not be feasible because of ethics considerations.

An appropriate project is one for which supervision is available, which is do-able within the limited time of an Honours year and which is achievable with the resources available.

Preparing the Honours research proposal

Once a project has been identified, work can start on the research proposal. The Honours research proposal should normally be completed by the end of the first Honours semester (or part-time equivalent).

During the Research Methods topic students normally learn what is required of the Honours research proposal. Most textbooks on Research Methods provide details of research proposals.

Research proposals of all kinds usually have very similar content. Hence, the Honours research proposal is likely to contain sections which describe the purpose and objectives of the proposed research, explain the general background of the proposed research, identify research questions/hypotheses, outline the proposed research method, mention scope and limitations of the research and provide a timeline for completion.

Completing the research project

Once the research proposal has been approved/accepted by the School, the research project can commence properly. The research project is then documented and written up in the Honours thesis.

Structure of Honours program

Structure of Faculty's Honours programs

The Honours program is two semesters (36 unit) in length, or equivalent part-time.

The Honours programs culminates in the submission of the Honours thesis. The thesis must be submitted at the end of the second semester (or equivalent when studying part-time). Hence, most students aim to keep the second half of their Honours year relatively free from coursework so as to be able to concentrate on the research project and completion of the written thesis.

The Honours year is normally structured as follows:

- First semester. One or more research method topics are undertaken, other advanced coursework topics are completed and work is started on the Honours research proposal.
- End of the first semester. The Honours research proposal is finalised and presented for approval; a serious start is made with the actual research project.
- Second semester. The research project is completed and the Honours thesis is written.
- End of second semester. The Honours thesis is submitted for examination.

Flinders policy relating to the structure of an Honours program

Flinders Honour Program policy (click-through)

(<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm>)

Clause 5 of the Honours Programs policy outlines the required structure of the Honours program:

5.1 Honours programs consist of 36 units of work (one year full-time equivalent).

5.2 Honours programs will contain a mix of advanced theory, research training, and a research project leading to a thesis. The research project leading to a thesis will be a minimum of 13.5 units and a maximum of 27 units.

5.3 Honours programs will include components involving the development of both written and oral communication skills. For example, students may be required to provide a seminar on their thesis or to engage in an oral defence of their work.

Student responsibilities

The responsibilities of students enrolled in the research component of an honours program include:

1. becoming familiar and complying with the Rules governing the degree, and the University's student related policies and procedures, including the Policy on Honours Programs;
2. planning, with the supervisor, an appropriate research project within the time limits defined by the research component of the honours degree;
3. discussing with the supervisor an agreed method of working and schedule of meetings;
4. drawing to the attention of the supervisor any problems or difficulties being experienced with the research and thesis writing and sharing responsibility for seeking solutions;
5. maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages and time lines agreed to with the supervisor;
6. meeting with the supervisor at regular intervals and discussing the progress towards, and impediments to, maintaining the agreed timetable;
7. participating in research training opportunities provided in the honours program, which may include attendance and presentations at seminars;
8. becoming familiar with, and adopting, safe working practices relevant to the field of research;
9. becoming familiar with, and adhering to, the ethical practices appropriate to the field of research;
10. becoming familiar with, and adopting, appropriate research practices relevant to the field of research for the retention and storage of research records and data;
11. becoming familiar and complying with the requirements of the University's intellectual property policies;
12. accepting responsibility for preparing the honours thesis for examination, including the standard of presentation;
13. discussing with the supervisor, in the first instance, any difficulties with the supervision relationship, and if the concerns are not resolved satisfactorily, seeking advice from the honours coordinator (or equivalent).

[Flinders policy regarding student responsibilities in an Honours program \(click-through\)](http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm#appendixb)
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm#appendixb>

Supervision

Identifying a supervisor

It is important that the Honours student has an appropriate supervisor as soon as possible in the Honours program. The supervisor will be able to help with the selection of relevant advanced coursework topics and an appropriate research project. The supervisor should have (some) expertise in the area of the research project.

The Honours Coordinator can assist individual students in identifying an appropriate supervisor.

Contact with supervisor

Regular contact with a supervisor is advisable. Contact with the supervisor is likely to ebb-and-flow throughout the Honours program. There may be less need for contact when the student is focusing on coursework or is absorbed in data collection or writing a thesis chapter. Contact with the supervisor is more urgent when developing the project and the research proposal and also when completing thesis chapters. Students are advised to discuss contact arrangements with their supervisor from the start of their Honours program.

Students may find that a preferred supervisor is not available because of leave arrangements or overseas travel; alternative supervisory arrangements need then be made. Students are advised to discuss supervisor availability early in their Honours year.

Flinders policy regarding supervision in Honours programs

Flinders Honour Programs policy (click-through)

<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm>

Clause 6 of the Honours Programs policy addresses the issue of supervision.

6.1 Normally, the academic staff involved in supervising Honours students will be active researchers or at least have a sound background in research. The principal supervisor will be a Flinders University academic staff member or a person holding full academic status. Co-supervisors may also be appointed.

6.2 Where appropriate, involvement in supervision by qualified non-academics, for example from industry, will be encouraged.

6.3 The University will provide opportunities for supervisor training and development, and will ensure that University guidelines on good practice in Honours supervision are provided by faculties to all supervisors. Responsibilities of the supervisor :
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm#appendixa>

6.4 University guidelines on the responsibilities of Honours supervisors and students will be provided by faculties to all supervisors and students. Responsibilities of the Honours student:
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/honours-programs.cfm#appendixb>

Support available

- Flinders library. The library databases, loan service and the librarians are an invaluable resource for Honours students.
- Honours coordinator. School or program Honours Coordinators manage Honours programs locally and are a major administrative support person for Honours students.
- Research method topic. School-based Honours programs normally include a research method topic which provides the research training necessary for completing the research project and writing the Honours thesis.
- Supervisor. Regular meetings with the Honours supervisor should help keep the project and the thesis on track.
- Workshops. There are many seminars, short courses and workshops which help with various aspects of the Honours program: writing a thesis, overcoming writer's block, doing a literature review, time management, academic writing skills, referencing, etc. Workshops are offered by:
 - o Centre of Educational IT (<https://www.flinders.edu.au/staffdev/index.php/it>)
for courses on Endnote, SPSS, NVivo, Advanced Word, etc
 - o Student Learning Centre <http://www.flinders.edu.au/current-students/slc/>
For lunchtime seminars on research skills, writing a proposal, doing a literature review, etc

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