

## Faculty Guidelines for Senior Honors Thesis Director

**Overview:** Students start the process a full year before their graduation, and in certain fields as much as two years in advance. We expect the students to be responsible for the majority of paperwork associated with the process (available at [www.uh.edu/seniorhonorsthesis](http://www.uh.edu/seniorhonorsthesis)). You may review past theses by field here: <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/handle/10657/4110>. Please also consult college-specific guidelines at <https://www.uh.edu/honors/undergraduate-research/honors-thesis/college-information-thesis/>.

**Committee Formation:** The Thesis Directors are selected by the student. They often recommend a Second Reader, either from within their department, or in the case of an interdisciplinary thesis, the department representing the second discipline. It remains the student's ultimate responsibility to approach the Second Reader. Once these members approve the student's prospectus, the student submits the Prospectus Approval Form along with the prospectus to the Office of Undergraduate Research and Major Awards (OURMA) at the Honors College, and an Honors Reader is assigned. This reader and an OURMA staff member must also approve the prospectus.

**Thesis Director Responsibilities:** Thesis Directors guide the student through the entire conceptualization, research, time management, and writing process. The thesis director should:

- Ensure that the topic is narrowed sufficiently so that the project is feasible.
- Help the student develop a calendar for when various steps should be completed and set the expectations for frequency of meetings to track progress, manage the steps in the timeline, and enforce deadlines.
- Help the student construct an appropriate reading list for the literature review and guide the student to demonstrate incorporation, analysis, and synthesis of sources with appropriate citations in writing.
- Guide the student to allot sufficient time for preliminary revisions before a defensible version is presented to the other readers. For example, a student starting the thesis in the fall ought to have a full draft completed no later than mid-February.
- Convey the importance of good writing skills and alert the student to grammatical and mechanical problems in preliminary drafts. Urge students with particular difficulties with writing to seek help from the UH Writing Center or other outside resources.
- Ensure that the formatting guidelines for Senior Honors Thesis available from each College are being followed. General guidelines are available at [www.uh.edu/seniorhonorsthesis](http://www.uh.edu/seniorhonorsthesis). It is assumed that the readers will not sign a thesis that has not been properly formatted.
- Serve as instructor of record for the 3399/4399 course sequence (see below).

**Course Credit:** The student registers for the first Senior Honors Thesis Course (3399) through the Department, and the thesis director will assign an IP (an in-progress) at the end of the semester. The student then signs up for the second semester course (4399). The thesis director is responsible for assigning the grades for both courses after the defense, and must submit a grade change request for the first semester through Faculty Center in MyAccess.

### Prospectus:

- The student works with the Thesis Director to write a brief prospectus, usually about five pages in length, including 1) details of the intended research, 2) its importance to the field, 3) proposed structure of the thesis, 4) proposed timeline, and 5) at least 10 scholarly references central to the project. Thesis directors should help the student construct an appropriate reference list for the prospectus and insist on professional, quality writing.
- The prospectus must be completed before the start of the semester of thesis hours, but after preliminary research – such as literature reviews or beginning work in a lab – has commenced. (See specific guidelines for creative theses.)
- If there are special technical skills needed to complete the thesis, these should be identified and specific means for gaining them should be outlined.
- As the student’s thesis progresses, the original project may evolve. Any major changes should be reflected in a revised prospectus, and the committee should receive a copy.

### Oral Defense:

- All committee members must be available for the final defense, which should take place at least two weeks prior to the college-specific filing deadline; the student should be reminded to begin scheduling the defense early.
- The Second Reader and Honors Reader will require at least two weeks to read the defensible version before the defense.
- The oral defense usually runs an hour and begins with a brief presentation by the student.
- Readers frequently ask for some final revisions before passing the thesis, and typically the Thesis Director checks to see that the revisions were faithfully executed.
- Readers may ask for a second defense, if major revisions are necessary. If the student fails the oral defense and thesis, the Thesis Director is responsible for assigning a grade based on work completed by the student, who will not receive the Honors in Major designation.

### Signatures:

- The student should bring the [Final Defense and Evaluation Form](#) to the Oral Defense.
- The readers should not sign until the thesis is approved and final revisions have been made. Often, when the revisions are minor, the Thesis Director is the only one to withhold a signature.
- Once the Final Defense and Evaluation Form is signed by all three readers, the student will submit this and the final thesis to their college representative for college approval. The OURMA representative should be copied in this email.
- Following college approval, the student should ensure that OURMA received the Final Defense and Evaluation Form. The student will then upload their final thesis version to the [Senior Honors Thesis Electronic Submission Portal](#) to be included in the UH Libraries repository.
- The Honors College does not require a printed and bound copy of the thesis. However, students should note individual department or college requirements for printing.

Final Evaluation: At the end of the process, the Thesis Director must fill out the Defense and Final Evaluation Form and submit it to OURMA. This form includes the opportunity to recommend the student for “The Outstanding Student Thesis Award”, which is presented at the

Honors College Awards Banquet each May. The Thesis Director will then assign a letter grade for both the 3399 and 4399 courses.

Graduation: As soon as the grades for 3399 and 4399 have been turned in, the student may graduate, but only after the approved thesis is submitted to the online submission portal will the transcript carry the designation “Honors in Major.” Students who are slow to submitting the final version or late defending the thesis may not have the designation on their transcript until the semester after they have graduated. The Honors College may provide a voucher for the binding of the thesis up to \$150 if the student actively participates in the Writing Studio program.