

# Honours Thesis Guidelines Overview

Undertaking an honours thesis allows students to conduct a larger research project over approximately eight months (two semesters). Only high achieving 4<sup>th</sup> year students with a cumulative GPA of 3.7 (A-) may complete an honours thesis.

## **Winter Term (of 3<sup>rd</sup> year)**

1. Determine if you are eligible to enrol in the honours thesis course by consulting with the Academic Advising Office. They can check your GPA and advise you on the application process.
2. Determine your research topic. Your topic may come from something you encountered in a previous course and would like to explore more deeply or it may be something not covered in any of your classes.
3. Speak with your instructors about your research idea. Based on your conversations with them, determine who you would like to work with. (Only full-time instructors are able to supervise students.)
4. Meet with the instructor and ask if she or he is willing to supervise you. Remember—instructors may say “no” if they do not feel like they have the necessary knowledge of your topic or if they are already supervising the maximum number of students. Do this by May 30.
5. Once you have confirmed your thesis supervisor, complete the application form. You will need to write a brief proposal that includes your thesis question/hypothesis, an overview of your topic, a sample reading list, and so on. Do this by June 30.

## **Summer Term (between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year)**

1. Once you have been approved for the honours thesis course, you will need to start planning for the upcoming academic year. Starting in the Fall term and throughout the Winter term, you should expect to spend 6 to 9 hours per week on your honours thesis in order to be thorough in your research and to write a well-organized thesis.
2. Read key books/scholarly articles on your topic over the summer.
3. Create a detailed reading list on your topic. You will discuss this reading list with your supervisor at your first meeting in the Fall term.
4. Determine your methodology for data collection. You will discuss this with your supervisor at your first meeting in the Fall term. If applicable, submit Research Ethics approval application: <http://research.uoit.ca/faculty/ethics-safety-research-conduct/research-involving-human-participants/index.php>.
5. Create a proposed timeline for completing your thesis. Remember to be realistic in what you can accomplish. A detailed timeline that outlines which articles/books you will read each week and when the parts of your thesis will be due will help you to stay on track.

## **Fall Term (of 4<sup>th</sup> year)**

1. Meet with your thesis supervisor during the first week of classes to confirm your timeline, due dates, and meeting schedule.

2. Meet with your thesis supervisor regularly – once a week, every two weeks, or monthly – as agreed upon between you and your supervisor. Ask questions, bring your research notes, and be prepared to explain the work accomplished as you go.
3. Do your readings every week and meet your deadlines. Doing so not only keeps you on track for completing your thesis, but also demonstrates to your supervisor your commitment to the process.
4. At the end of the term, submit a literature review (or other assignment) as agreed upon with your supervisor.

### **Winter Term (of 4<sup>th</sup> year)**

1. Meet with your thesis supervisor during the first week of classes to confirm your timelines, due dates, and meeting schedule during the 2<sup>nd</sup> term.
2. Continue to meet with your thesis supervisor regularly, do your readings and meet your deadlines.
3. Complete your first draft of your thesis by mid-February; ensure you allow time to receive feedback, rewrite, and edit your thesis. You will rewrite/edit your thesis several times before it is completely finished. At the end of the term, you will hand in your thesis.

### **Components of the Thesis**

Roughly speaking, the thesis will include similar components to a standard research article. Depending on the type of research being done, the body of the thesis may include the following sections:

- (1) **Introduction:** This section will include a brief statement of the problem and its significance. Students must clearly define a research question, an argument, or a hypothesis to be tested. This is where you will tell the reader why your topic, research and argument matters and who should care about. In other words, answer the questions: So what? and Who cares?
- (2) **Review of the Literature/Theoretical Framework:** This section summarizes the existing body of knowledge on a given topic, and provides a critique of the literature in its broader scholarly context so that the student's current work is logically justified.
- (3) **Methodology:** This section articulates in detail the methods used to collect data, such as: the sample, the measures, the data collection technique, the theoretical foundations or framework, etc.
- (4) **Results/Analysis:** This section includes a report of the findings of the data collection process, relevant tables and figures. This section may not be necessary if your research uses primarily secondary sources. Sometimes, the findings and discussion are intertwined to create a coherent and logical narrative that supports your argument and answers your research question(s).
- (5) **Discussion:** Your discussion provides a narrative of what your results mean and what implications come out of your findings.
- (6) **Conclusions:** This section provides an overview of your results and what they mean, the limitations of the results, what your conclusion is, and possible avenues for future research.
- (7) **Front matter** (e.g., Title page, Abstract, Table of Contents) and **back matter** (e.g., references, tables, appendices, glossary).