Monmouth University  
Honors School  
*  
School of Science  
Honors Proposal (HO 498H)/Thesis (HO 499H) Guidelines

(Please note: Honors students outside of the School of Science are to follow a separate set of guidelines available in the Honors School Office and at www.monmouth.edu/honors)

Dr. Kevin Dooley, Dean  
Honors School  
Beechwood Hall  
kdooley@monmouth.edu  
(732) 571-3620

John Tiedemann, Assistant Dean  
School of Science  
School of Science Honors Thesis Faculty Advisor  
Edison Science Building Room 172  
jtiedema@monmouth.edu  
(732) 263 - 5545

Ms. Reenie Menditto, Director of Student Standards, Advising and Services  
Honors School  
Beechwood Hall  
imenditt@monmouth.edu  
(732) 263-5332

Ms. Erin Hawk, Assistant to the Dean  
Honors School  
Beechwood Hall  
ehawk@monmouth.edu  
(732) 263-5308
Overview

In order to graduate from the Monmouth University Honors School, students must complete the honors thesis program. *In order to begin the proposal process, the student will need to have completed 80 credits (with at least 15 credits from his/her major area of study), a minimum 3.5 GPA in his/her major area of study [education majors must achieve 3.5 GPA in their academic area of concentration], and a 3.3 GPA overall.* These standards are designed to ensure that honors students are capable of handling the necessary requirements and have a proven history of academic excellence at Monmouth University.

After completing 80 credits at Monmouth University (and 15 within the major), honors students will have their academic careers evaluated to determine if they have met the minimum 3.5 GPA requirement. If after 80 credits (and 15 from within their major) they have been unable to achieve these requirements, students will be unable to continue in the proposal process*. Detailed information on the honors thesis process is available on the Honors School web site at [http://www.monmouth.edu/honors](http://www.monmouth.edu/honors).

(*If the student’s major GPA is below 3.5, and the student believes that he/she should be allowed to continue, the student may do so by (1) developing a 3-5 page, double-spaced, self-assessment detailing precisely why he/she should be allowed to continue; and (2) have two members of the student’s department who are familiar with the student’s ability and work, write a signed statement on his/her behalf.)

Introduction to the Honors Thesis Process for the School of Science

At the beginning of your junior year, the Honors School will schedule a meeting of the Honors School Dean with you and other students in your major. School of Science Assistant Dean Tiedemann will also attend this meeting. For School of Science students, Assistant Dean Tiedemann will function as your overall Honors Thesis Advisor. He is responsible for overseeing the honors thesis process.

At this meeting, the Dean of the Honors School and Assistant Dean Tiedemann will review the honors thesis process with you, explain how to develop a thesis topic, and assist you with selecting appropriate thesis advisors.

In the semester before you begin preparing your thesis proposal, the Honors School will also schedule Thesis Proposal Information Seminars to review the process and to provide additional guidance. These seminars will also review how you should fill out the appropriate Honors Thesis Proposal and Honors Thesis application forms.

You complete your thesis by taking two courses:

- Thesis Proposal (HO 498), a 2 credit course; and
- Thesis (HO 499), a 2 credit course.
The typical timeline for completing this process for School of Science students is outlined below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>✓ Consult with Dean and thesis advisors ✓ Select an Honors Thesis Topic ✓ Begin literature review &amp; proposal preparation</td>
<td>✓ Register for HO498 ✓ Prepare Honors Thesis Proposal ✓ Begin research</td>
<td>✓ Continue research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Continue research</td>
<td>✓ Register for HO499 ✓ Complete research ✓ Prepare Honors Thesis ✓ Participate in Honors Research Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Year</td>
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**Selecting an Honors Thesis Topic**

In order to select an appropriate honors thesis topic you should consult with your academic advisor, research mentors within your major, or Assistant Dean Tiedemann, the School of Science Honors Thesis Advisor. Ideally an Honors Thesis will be a well-researched study that makes an original, discrete contribution to knowledge within your discipline.

If you plan to work with vertebrate animal subjects in your research, even if you are simply conducting a survey, you must submit your plan to the university Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for review and approval. IACUC was created to monitor and oversee research activity conducted at, or sponsored by, Monmouth University that involves vertebrate laboratory animals. Your chief Advisor and the Honors Office can help you in this process, but be sure to seek this approval in a timely manner to make sure that you will have enough time to complete your research.


**Selecting Thesis Advisors**

Once you have developed an appropriate honors thesis topic, the next step is to select thesis advisors. During the course of your thesis you will work in collaboration with a Chief Advisor in your major (also known as the First Reader in some academic departments), as well as a Second Reader. You will
choose your own Chief Advisor and Second Reader with the approval of the Dean of the Honors School.

Pick faculty you feel comfortable working with and you feel are comfortable working with you. If you are having trouble doing this, please consult with Kevin Dooley, the Dean of the Honors School, or John Tiedemann, Assistant Dean of the School of Science.

Your Chief Advisor should be a faculty person in your major knowledgeable in the area you wish to conduct research in. Your Chief Adviser helps guide you in developing the scope of your research and your experimental approach. Your Chief Advisor will also recommend particular references, methods manuals, and other pertinent publications and literature for you to consult. You are responsible for reading extensively on the topic you have selected, discussing the readings with your Chief Advisor, and focusing on ways the material can be refined to support your project.

Your Second Reader may be outside your major but it must be someone in the School of Science or an external collaborator who is familiar with your research area.

Both the Chief Advisor and the Second Reader will support you as you proceed with your research and writing, provide advice on your research topic, guide you in developing and conducting your research, identify appropriate reference materials, as well as review and comment on your proposal and thesis.

**Advisor Meetings**

As early as possible in the semesters that you are registered for Thesis Proposal (HO 498) and Thesis (HO 499), preferably during the first week, but no later than the end of the second week, arrange to meet jointly with your Chief Advisor and Second Reader. At these meetings, the three of you will agree on the direction of your thesis research and complete the Thesis Proposal Application Form (HO 498) or the Thesis Application Form (HO 499). If you are unable to arrange a joint meeting with your advisors because of scheduling issues, ask your advisors to consult with one another to ensure that they are in agreement on the direction of your thesis.

After the initial meeting with your Chief Advisor and Second Reader, meet with the School of Science Honors Thesis Advisor (Assistant Dean Tiedemann) to discuss the plans you made with them. Ideally this meeting should also take place during the first week of the semester, allowing an early start on your Thesis Proposal (HO 498) or your Thesis (HO 499).

After your initial meetings at the beginning of the semester, you must meet with your Chief Advisor at least once every two weeks throughout the semester. At these meetings discuss your progress and any problems that you might have encountered, including issues about availability and reliability of reference materials. Your Chief Advisor will help you focus on your topic and serve as a sounding board for your ideas.

You must also meet with your Second Reader and School of Science Honors Thesis Advisor at least two additional times during the semester: by the beginning of the 7th week then by the beginning of the 12th week of the semester. Your Second Reader and Honors Advisor can also help you in developing your understanding of material and focusing on an achievable research goal. If possible, meet with them more often than the prescribed minimum.
At all advisor meetings you need to demonstrate a developing Thesis focus, accompanied by a growing corpus of notes and other materials to support your research project. Be cognizant of methodological issues: do the materials you are collecting meet the goals of your research? Bring your notes and other pertinent information (e.g., data, lab notebook) to each of your Advisor meetings and be ready to discuss any issues or problems you have encountered.

Remember, your Advisors are there to help you. Use them well. Come prepared when you meet with them. Consider taking one of your advisors to lunch through the Honors “Take a Professor to Lunch” program, subsidized by the Honors School. Check with the Honors Office about this.

**Grading**

Final drafts of proposals (HO 498H) and theses (HO 499H) will receive a letter grade from a Blind Reviewer. The Dean of the Honors School will select a member of the MU faculty with knowledge in your area of research to serve as your Blind Reviewer. Neither the supervisor, nor the student will know the identity of the blind reviewer.

Blind Reviewers will receive a final report from the appropriate Chief Advisor and Second Reader and Honors Thesis Advisor prior to administering a final grade to the Dean of the Honors School. The Dean of the Honors School will then submit the grade on behalf of the blind reviewer. The purpose of the blind reviewer is to make sure that students receive a thorough and independent assessment of their research.

*Honors proposals must receive a letter grade of B in order to register for the Honors Thesis, HO 499.* If proposals fail to receive a grade of B or higher, students will be unable to proceed to the honors thesis and will be unable to re-register for HO 498. Honors theses (HO 499) must also receive a grade of B in order to graduate from the Honors School.

Quality Honors Thesis Proposals are also eligible to receive a $1,000 Freed Award.
Preparing the Honors Thesis Proposal

To register for the Honors Thesis Proposal (HO 498) complete the Honors Thesis Proposal Application Form which can be found as a link on the Honors School home page or at [www.monmouth.edu/registrar/forms/HO498HonorsThesisProposalApplicationFA10.pdf](http://www.monmouth.edu/registrar/forms/HO498HonorsThesisProposalApplicationFA10.pdf)

Bring the completed Honors Thesis Proposal Application Form to the Honors Office for approval by the Honors School Dean. This must be done no later than the end of the third week of the semester. The Honors School Office will forward the completed application to the Office of Registration and Records for registration.

Unless your Chief Advisor and Second Reader direct otherwise, you must provide them with at least two drafts of your proposal during the semester. Creating the drafts will help you focus your ideas and will allow your Advisors to provide feedback. As you continue your research, incorporate the comments of your advisors to improve your work.

Typically, the first proposal draft is due by the beginning of the 7th week of the semester. Provide a hard copy to all advisors: Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and School of Science Honors Thesis Advisor.

The second draft is subsequently due at least by the beginning of 12th week of classes. Again, provide a hard copy to all advisors: Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and School of Science Honors Thesis Advisor.

Your Chief Advisor and Second Reader may decide on a different process and deadlines for submitting drafts, so be sure to discuss this with them. Failure to submit drafts could affect your grade, so be sure to comply with your advisors’ decisions concerning drafts.

Your final proposal is due by the last day of classes or on the day specified by your Chief Advisor. Provide a hard copy to all advisors: Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and Honors Thesis Advisor and an email attachment to Reenie Menditto at [imenditt@monmouth.edu](mailto:imenditt@monmouth.edu).

The responsibility for meeting with your advisors is yours, not that of the faculty. Consequently, your Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and Honors Thesis Advisor will assess not only your work, but also your reliability in meeting with them and providing them with drafts of your work, so be sure to fulfill all your obligations to them.
School of Science
Honors Thesis Proposal Format

Thesis Title

Your Name
Your Department

Date

Advisor Names:

Chief Advisor
Second Reader
Honors Advisor

Introduction

The introduction provides a brief overview of the research topic being considered and identifies the nature of the specific question(s) you will pursue or problem you will address.

Background

The background section describes the state of knowledge that gave rise to the question(s) examined by the research and should explain the significance of the proposed work. This section demonstrates your complete mastery of the relevant literature. Discuss this literature in detail with proper citations. Cite references directly in the text by author and year.

The background section should lead you up to a clear, concise statement summarizing the problem or research question(s) you propose to investigate.

Objectives

Clearly state your hypothesis and articulate the goals and objectives of the proposed research; i.e., what specific question(s) will you ask?

Project Description

Materials and Methods –

Describe the geographic location of the study area if appropriate (provide a map in figure form).

Describe the research design and how the results will be analyzed.

Describe the methodology to be used in the proposed study and explain the rationale behind these methodological choices. Use subheadings as appropriate.

Q
Expected Outcomes –

Briefly discuss what you hope to accomplish and how this relates to your stated objective.

Project Schedule –

Describe the major tasks and milestones for task completion. The project schedule can be summarized in a simple table as below:

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**Literature Cited**

The literature cited section gives the full citations for each source cited in the proposal.

Notes on literature cited formats:

Unless otherwise specified by your Chief Advisor, literature cited sections should be prepared according to guidelines outlined below.

Biology majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines contained in *A Short Guide to Writing About Biology* (Jan A. Pechenick).

Chemistry majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines contained in *The ACS Style Guide: Effective Communication of Scientific Information* (Anne M. Coghill and Lorrin R. Garson, ed.).

Computer Science and Software Engineering majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines prescribed by IEEE, ACM or AAAI as prescribed by your advisor.

Mathematics majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines contained in *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA).
Preparing the Honors Thesis

To register for the Honors Thesis (HO 499) complete the Honors Thesis Application Form which can be found as a link on the Honors School home page or at www.monmouth.edu/honors.

Bring the completed Honors Thesis Application Form to the Honors Office for approval by the Honors School Dean. This must be done no later than the end of the third week of the semester. The Honors School Office will forward the completed application to the Office of Registration and Records for registration.

Unless your Chief Advisor and Second Reader direct otherwise, you must provide them with at least two drafts of your thesis during the semester. Creating the drafts will help you focus your ideas and writing and will allow your Advisors to provide feedback. As you continue writing your thesis, incorporate the comments of your advisors to improve your final product. Use subheadings as appropriate.

Typically, the first draft of your thesis is due by the beginning of the 7th week of the semester. Provide a hard copy to all advisors: Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and School of Science Honors Thesis Advisor.

The second draft is subsequently due at least by the beginning of 12th week of classes. Again, provide a hard copy to all advisors: Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and School of Science Honors Thesis Advisor.

Your Chief Advisor and Second Reader may decide on a different process and deadlines for submitting drafts, so be sure to discuss this with them. Failure to submit drafts could affect your grade, so be sure to comply with your advisors’ decisions concerning drafts.

Your final thesis is due to all advisors and to the Honors School office two days before the Honors School Research Conference held at the end of the semester, which is where you will present your project. Provide a hard copy to all advisors: Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and Honors Advisor and an email attachment to Reenie Menditto at imenditt@monmouth.edu.

The responsibility for meeting with your advisors is yours, not that of the faculty. Consequently, your Chief Advisor, Second Reader, and Honors Advisor will assess not only your work, but also your reliability in meeting with them and providing them with drafts of your work, so be sure to fulfill all your obligations to them.

You must present your Thesis at the Bi-Annual Honors Research Conference in December or April. The Honors Office will let you know the exact deadline for registration at the conference shortly before it is to take place. When you register, you should also include a 150-200 word Abstract that will be published in the Conference Program, as well as a page or less of Acknowledgements. This abstract will be edited, so get it to your Advisors and Honors office as early as possible, but no later than the 12th week of the semester in order to allow time for editing.
Abstract

In the Abstract, briefly summarize the problem addressed, why the problem was addressed, your approach to the problem, and any major findings and conclusions of the study. The abstract should be no longer than 2-3 paragraphs in length.

Introduction

The introduction provides a brief overview of the research topic being considered and identifies the nature of the specific question(s) you will pursue or problem you will address.

Background

The background section describes the state of knowledge that gave rise to the question(s) examined by the research and should explain the significance of the proposed work. This section demonstrates your complete mastery of the relevant literature. Discuss this literature in detail with proper citations.

The background section should lead you up to a clear, concise statement summarizing the problem or research question(s) you propose to investigate.

Objectives

Clearly state your hypothesis and articulate the goals and objectives of the proposed research; i.e., what specific question(s) did you address?
Materials and Methods

Describe the research design and how the results were analyzed. Describe the methodology used in the proposed study and explain the rationale behind these methodological choices. Discuss any additions, changes, or refinement of methodology from that contained in the proposal.

Results

The results section presents your results and summarizes your observations. This section may contain tables and figures that support the findings or reveal any trends you have found. Avoid interpreting the data in this section.

Discussion

The discussion section provides the interpretation of your results:

- How do your results relate to the objectives of the study?
- How do your results relate to the results to your expected outcome stated in your proposal?
- How do your results relate to the results that might have been expected from background information contained in the literature?
- Do your results agree with your hypothesis or provide evidence against it?

Conclusion

Briefly discuss what has been learned, how this contributes knowledge to the field, any implications or applications of this information. You may also wish to discuss the implications of your findings related to any new hypotheses that might now be formulated and tested with further research as a result of your work.

Literature Cited

The literature cited section gives the full citations for each source cited in the proposal.

Notes on literature cited formats:

Unless otherwise specified by your Chief Advisor, literature cited sections should be prepared according to guidelines outlined below.

Biology majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines contained in A Short Guide to Writing About Biology (Jan A. Pechenick).

Chemistry majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines contained in The ACS Style Guide: Effective Communication of Scientific Information (Anne M. Coghill and Lorrin R. Garson, ed.).
Computer Science and Software Engineering majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines prescribed by IEEE, ACM or AAAI as prescribed by your advisor.

Mathematics majors – The literature cited section should be prepared according to guidelines contained in *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*(APA), or at the discretion of the advisor.
Attachment A

Honors Thesis Proposal
Information Checklist

Your Name ____________________________ Thesis Title ____________________________

You are responsible for arranging all advisor meetings. Please bring this checklist to those meetings and fill out the dates:

I. At least by end of second week of semester, arrange to meet with your three advisors to discuss your research, writing, and timetable. Provide their names and meeting dates:

1. ____________________________________________
   Chief Advisor (Name and meeting date)
2. ____________________________________________
   Second Reader (Name and meeting date)
3. ____________________________________________
   Honors Advisor (Name and meeting date)

II. After your initial meeting, arrange to meet with your Chief Advisor at least every other week. Provide the meeting dates at the time of your meetings:

1. ______  2. ______  3. ______  4. ______  5.______  6.______  7. ______  8. ______
9. ______  10.______ 11.______ 12.______ 13.______ 14.______ 15.______

III. After your initial meeting with your Second Reader and Honors Advisor, be sure to meet with them at least twice more: by the 7th week of the semester and by the 12th week. Provide them with drafts of your work, as well as this checklist:

   Second Reader ____________________________
   Honors Advisor ____________________________

   Midterm meeting Final Meeting

IV. Unless directed otherwise by your advisors, submit two preliminary drafts of the proposal:
   • one by the beginning of the 7th week
   • one by the 12th week of the semester
   • failure to submit drafts could affect your grade

V. Unless directed otherwise, submit your Final Thesis Proposal by the last day of classes to all advisors in hard copy and an email attachment to Reenie Menditto in the Honors office.
Appendix B

Honors Thesis
Information Checklist

Your Name  
Thesis Title

You are responsible for arranging all advisor meetings. Please bring this checklist to those meetings and fill out the dates:

I. At least by end of second week of semester, arrange to meet with your three advisors to discuss your research, writing, and timetable. Provide their names and meeting dates:

1. ____________________________
   Chief Advisor (Name and meeting date)

2. ____________________________
   Second Reader (Name and meeting date)

3. ____________________________
   Honors Advisor (Name and meeting date)

II. After your initial meeting, arrange to meet with your Chief Advisor at least every other week. Provide the meeting dates at the time of your meetings:

1. ______  2. ______  3. ______  4. ______  5. ______  6. ______  7. ______  8. ______


III. After your initial meeting with your Second Reader and Honors Advisor, be sure to meet with them at least twice more: by the 7th week of the semester and by the 12th week. Provide them with drafts of your work, as well as this checklist:

     Midterm meeting  Final Meeting

Second Reader  ___________  ___________
Honors Advisor ___________  ___________

IV. By the beginning of the 7th week of the semester submit a first draft of the thesis to all advisors.

V. By the beginning of the 12th week of the semester:
   - Submit a second draft of the thesis to all advisors
   - Register for Honors School Research Conference
   - Provide an Abstract (150-200 words) and page or less of Acknowledgements to all advisors and to Reenie Menditto via email

VI. The final copy of the thesis is due to all advisors and to Honors School office two days before the Honors School Research Conference

VII. All students present their projects at Honors School Research Conference