



2. GETTING STARTED

When to Begin

In order to accommodate the various curricular demands of the majors the HHP serves, a great deal of flexibility is allowed as to when students may begin work on their thesis. In general, students can start their thesis whenever they have chosen their topic and are ready to begin. Typically, a thesis is not started before a student's sophomore year and, no later than the second term of a student's junior year. As a general rule, an Honors Thesis takes at least a year to complete. The process of conceiving of the thesis and identifying a Faculty Thesis Advisor must begin at least one semester before you plan to register for the first thesis section, HON 4997: Honors Thesis Proposal.

Choosing a Topic

As you proceed through your university education, you should keep an eye out for topics you are passionate about and in which you would like to develop expertise. These topics may relate to your major, but they don't need to. Past Honors students have completed scholarly theses on a wide range of topics, including, for example, women's representation in the US judiciary (Political Science major), the interaction between *Veillonella parvulus* and *Streptococcus* biofilm formation (Biology major), the history of adoption literature (English major), the universal oxidation method for 2' and 5' positions of uridine (Biology major), the future of sustainability in Jesuit education (Business Administration major). Others have completed creative projects such as documentaries, plays, collections of poetry, and short story sequences. Truly, the possibilities are endless.

Finding a Faculty Thesis Advisor

When you have identified at least a preliminary topic of interest, reach out to a professor you have worked with to inquire whether they would be willing to serve as your Faculty Thesis Advisor. The Faculty Thesis Advisor should be someone you know from a previous class or project and have expertise in your area of interest so that they are able to guide the development of the thesis. Students should begin seeking out a Faculty Thesis Advisor as soon as possible, ideally in the semester before they register for HON 4997: Thesis Proposal.

3. ENROLLING IN THE HONORS THESIS SECTIONS

Once you have identified a thesis topic and a Faculty Thesis Advisor, you are ready to register for the first of three credit Honors Thesis sections. These sections are individually created for each student, with the Faculty Thesis Advisor as the instructor of record for each section. Note for Faculty Thesis Advisors: your college may grant you one credit for each Honors Thesis section (HON 4997, HON 4998, and HON 4999) for which you are the instructor of record. Check with your Dean's office to see what policy applies. Collecting a certain number of credits may grant you a future course release.

To request to register for HON 4997, HON 4998, and/or HON 4999, fill out the [University Honors Program Thesis Sections Form](#) [link to external site].

4. HON 4997: HONORS THESIS PROPOSAL

Over the course of HON 4997, the student will be expected to produce a proposal for their Honors Thesis. The proposal should reflect a carefully thought-out approach to the subject with sufficient elaboration to enable any intelligent layperson to

Forming the Honors Thesis Committee

Additionally, before a student registers for HON 4999, they must identify at least one other faculty member to serve on their Honors Thesis Committee. The committee may consist of between two and four faculty. While the Faculty Thesis Advisor should have expertise in the thesis topic, the additional committee members may just have some degree of familiarity with the topic. The additional committee members are expected to take part in the Honors Thesis Defense, but they are not required (though they are certainly welcome) to provide feedback on the thesis ahead of the defense.

*Required minimum grade for HON 4999 is B

6. HON 4999: HONORS THESIS DEFENSE

By the end of HON 4999, the student must complete, defend, and submit the Honors Thesis. Below is a recommended schedule, with requirements noted:

Week 1: Preliminary meeting with the Faculty Thesis Advisor to set goals and expectations

Week 3: Set thesis defense date with Thesis Committee and Honors Director(s) (required)

Week 3: Submit draft of thesis to Faculty Thesis Advisor

Week 4: Meeting with Faculty Thesis Advisor to discuss thesis draft

Week 6: Submit revision of thesis to Faculty Thesis Advisor

Week 7: Meeting with Faculty Thesis Advisor to discuss thesis revision

Weeks 8-12: Honors Thesis Defense in Gardella Honors House (required no later than week 12)

Week 14: Complete final revisions, if any are requested by the committee, and submit the final thesis manuscript to Thesis Committee and Honors Director(s) (required later than week 14)

The Honors Thesis Defense

The final draft of the thesis must be submitted to the Thesis Committee 6 weeks before the defense date. Committee members may request final submission as much as one month in advance of the defense. The student should make every effort to accommodate such requests.

The defense is an oral presentation held in the Gardella Honors House. Video components such as PowerPoint slides may also be part of the presentation. Students have the option of making the defense private (for their committee only) or public (for the Honors community, or for the wider university community). Students may also choose to invite friends and family. During the defense, the Honors student delivers a presentation of their thesis project.

Students should consult with their Faculty Thesis Advisor on the format and structure of the defense. A suggested format

Total time: One hour

Minutes 0-20: The student delivers an oral presentation that reflects on the process of selecting the thesis topic and composing the thesis, while also covering the main points of the project, such as its central argument or findings and its supporting evidence. For creative theses, the student may offer a reading of the work completed along with commentary and reflections on the work.

Minutes 20-55: The committee asks questions of the student. These questions may ask for clarification on any aspect of the thesis or the oral presentation. The student should address each

Figures, illustrations, tables, charts, photographs, maps, etc. should be listed at the outset in a separate page (not paginated; see order of pages above). These figures should be referred to in the text before they appear and should be captioned.

7. THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY THESIS ADVISOR

The Honors Thesis is an independent, student project, in which the author transitions from being a student to becoming a scholar or artist, from being a consumer of knowledge to becoming a producer of knowledge. The Faculty Thesis Advisor's role is to guide and support the student, making sure the student is adhering to the standards of the student's (and the faculty member's) discipline. The Faculty Thesis Advisor is tasked with reading, providing feedback, and meeting with the student in support of the satisfactory



udmercy.edu/honors