

UNIVERSITY HONORS COMMITTEE

Guidelines for Department Chairpersons and for Sponsors of Departmental Honors Theses

ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

Students who are seniors in the Honors College are required to become candidates for Departmental Honors in order to remain in the College; all students, whether or not they are in the Honors College, are eligible, provided they have a 3.0 overall grade point average, with a 3.2 in the Department in which they intend to become a candidate. Any uncertainty about a student's eligibility should be resolved by the **Department Chairperson**.

Students should select faculty advisors with whom they can work comfortably, and who have general expertise in the area of the student's topic. It is a good idea for students to select their sponsors the semester before they submit their prospectuses. Sponsors receive one-half a teaching credit for each of the two semesters. The first semester, with permission of the relevant Dean, the student enrolls in [Dept.] 499, Independent Study; the second semester, the student registers for Thesis Research Departmental Honors 495, provided that the thesis prospectus was accepted by the Reader. The student registers for the 495 course with the permission of the chairperson of the University Honors Committee (presently, Dr. Krystyna Górniak-Kocikowska of the Philosophy Department).

At the beginning of the independent study semester, the student obtains a two-page application for independent study from the relevant Dean. The student and his/her thesis Sponsor should meet on the first or second day of classes to discuss filling out this form, which the Sponsor must sign. The chairperson of the Department also signs, indicating that the Department has accepted the student as a candidate for Departmental Honors. This form is due at the end of the add-drop period in the office of the Dean. Once approved, the student receives a revised schedule adding three credits for independent study.

At the beginning of the semester, the chair of UHC sends a letter to all Department chairpersons asking for names, addresses, and student ID numbers of candidates for Departmental Honors; theses titles; and the names of theses Sponsors. After receiving this information from Department chairpersons, the UHC chairperson sends a letter to the candidate, explaining the next steps that need to be taken. The thesis Sponsor receives a copy of this letter and the calendar of deadlines.

THESIS PROSPECTUS

The Thesis prospectus is due in late October in the fall semester and in late March in the spring semester to be submitted to the chairperson of the UHC. Most prospectuses are six to ten pages long, and contain a fairly complete description of the student's project, including background literature that forms the context of the study, a statement of purpose or hypotheses, methodology, the nature of the evidence to be used, the limits of the study, and its significance.

The prospectus should be drafted by the student, reviewed carefully by the Sponsor, and revised, if necessary, before it is submitted to the chairperson of the UHC. If the student is in the Honors College, please be sure that the student submits a second copy to the Director of the Honors College (currently Dr. Terese Gemme, Music Department). The UHC chairperson sends the prospectus to the faculty member (the Reader) with knowledge of the appropriate field; that person has about two weeks to make a decision to approve the prospectus, to ask for revisions, or to reject the proposal. All communication between that faculty Reader and the student are sent through the UHC chair to the student's Sponsor.

HONORS THESIS RESEARCH AND WRITING

Once accepted as a candidate, **with an approved prospectus**, the student should register for Dept – 495. The permission for on-line registration is given by the UHC chairperson only, **not** the Department chairperson.

The student should steadily work on research and writing steadily in order to complete the thesis by the March deadline (for graduation in May) or the November deadline (for graduation in December). The student should be urged to submit a complete draft to the Sponsor and other readers about a month before the deadline in order to receive critical comments from them and be able to revise or correct the thesis as indicated.

THESIS DEFENSE

When the thesis is complete, the student distributes copies to the Examining Committee: the Sponsor, the Reader who approved the prospectus for the University Honors Committee, a representative for the Department, and (if needed) a representative from the Honors College. One member of the Examining Committee may represent two of these categories, but the Committee must have at least three members. The student should also deposit one copy of his/her thesis, properly and sturdily bound, in Buley Library with Ms. Vickie Elizabeth Mick (BU 119), and in the case of the Honors College students, one more copy in the Honors College Archive. The Honors Thesis copy deposited in Buley Library must be bound and provided with a sturdy cover.

The student is responsible for arranging a time and a place for the hour-long oral exam before the Examining Committee. At the end of the oral exam, the Committee's vote decides whether the student receives Departmental Honors. In order to receive the Departmental Honors the student must receive at least a "B" grade from the Examining Committee. If the result is a positive decision, the student's sponsor will send the UHC chairperson the "goldenrod sheet;" this will enable the student to receive his/her diploma at the next Honors Convocation following the oral exam. The date of the Honors Convocation is announced in the Spring Semester Schedule of Classes.

If the student cannot complete his/her thesis in due time but intends to do it in sufficient time in order to qualify for the next year's Honors Convocation, he/she may receive an Incomplete. The Thesis Sponsor should write a letter to the Records Office explaining the situation and asking that the student's grade not change into an "F" in the usual way. A student cannot complete her/his thesis after she/he graduates. Once a student graduates, his/her records are sealed.

Please direct all questions regarding problems unforeseen here to Dr. Krystyna Górnjak-Kocikowska, Chair of the University Honors Committee; Philosophy Department, EN D217; Tel.: (203) 392 6784; Fax: (203) 392 6779; e-mail: Gorniakk1@southernct.edu.