

FAQs: Honors Thesis Advisors & Committee Members

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an advisor for our Honors students. We appreciate and recognize the time and work you will put in as mentors, and are grateful for your support of advanced undergraduate independent projects at UHM.

What are my duties?

You are the main adviser for your student's senior thesis research or creative project. You should

- discuss the student's project with them, ensure feasibility and Honors rigor of the project
- advise them on their process (skill development for project, relevant literature, appropriate methodology, research ethics clearances, timeline)
- be clear with your expectations, your availability
 - first semester HON 496 students will come to you with a contract and a calendar that you should discuss and sign
- be aware of criteria for Honors projects (attached)
- troubleshoot areas that need addressing
- advise them on two additional committee members (faculty, instructors, postdocs, advanced graduate students, community members)
- agree on the deliverables (dates for drafts, meetings with committee)
- give feedback on the student's final oral presentation of their project, and ideally, attendance at the spring symposium or fall forum (scheduled at the end of the semester)
- write a progress report (for HON 496 first semester)
- write a thesis evaluation (for HON 496 second semester and final thesis project)
 - coordinate the committee's meeting with student for feedback prior to presentation and final submission

What kind of support will I have from the Honors Program?

- Clear and regular communication of deadlines, forms you will need, etc.
- A more user-friendly website
- A workshop for first-time HON 496 students that will guide them through the logistics at our end
 - Includes a "contract" for project deliverables for HON 496 (especially for first semester)—which needs to be approved by you
 - Calendaring their research timeline (with your approval)
 - Reviewing criteria for honors projects
 - Explanation of research protocol, research ethics
 - Explanation of relationship with advisors and committee members
- Advising by Honors director for all HON 496 students to make sure process is going well
 - Orientation for students at the beginning of every semester
 - One other mandatory meeting per semester
- Access to Honors director regarding any questions or concerns for individual advisees

I'm a committee member. What's my role?

- Ideally, you are there to support the student with your expertise in your field, and give feedback on their project (especially if it is going in a problematic direction)
- Communicate with student (copy the main advisor) with concerns and feedback
- Communicate with advisor regarding any concerns you might have about the student's direction or project—the earlier, the better

What if the committee doesn't agree?

- Ideally, the committee has consensus on the student's project and the rigor/execution of the project, and any disagreements have been addressed much earlier in the process
- In the rare case that committee members cannot agree on the evaluation, the dissenting committee member may submit a separate evaluation detailing their own perspectives on the process and the project

What's the ideal process?

- Student and committee have regular meetings to discuss the project's development
- Clear timelines have been established
- At least one month before the semester end conference (early November or early April), the student has submitted a largely finished draft to their committee for review
- Ideally, the student and advisor convenes a meeting to solicit feedback and address any lingering questions
- Student finishes final draft for submission around the same time of final presentation at semester end conference
- Thesis advisor, with input from committee, writes up evaluation of final student project for submission to Honors program, collects signatures for the form

What happens after the student submits their thesis and we submit our evaluation?

- The Honors Program compiles the student materials (including GPAs, CVs, statement) for review by the Honors Council
- At least two members of the Honors Council will read the thesis and review the student's complete file
- Based on the overall record of the student, but with most weight on the final project, and in relation to the entire field of Honors students at UHM, the Honors Council awards the appropriate designation of no Honors, Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors
- We inform you of student's status and thank you for your service
- With student permission, senior thesis is published in ScholarSpace