

University Honors Program Thesis Guidelines

Revised Spring 2019

In 1990, the University Honors Program adopted the requirement that all participants complete a thesis or project. These regulations and guidelines are intended to describe the nature of the UHP thesis/project, but they are not meant to supersede or contradict departmental or school requirements for a thesis or senior project. The UHP guidelines may, however, supplement the requirements of a department or school.

1. The thesis/project will normally be brought to completion during the senior year. The thesis/project should engage each student in research, reflection, and writing; and it should also provide participants with the opportunity to work closely with faculty members who will guide them in beginning, pursuing, and completing a long-term thesis/project.
2. Because of wide variations in method and expectations among the various departments of the University, the Program hesitates to impose a specific description or to demand certain requirements of the thesis/project. It is envisioned as a research or independent study endeavor typically lasting at least three quarters and resulting in a final product judged to be of appropriately high quality by two faculty members, the **mentor** and the **reader** of the thesis/project.
3. The mentor and reader should provide guidance to the student in preparing the thesis/project.
 - a. As a general rule, the thesis/project mentor and the reader should hold full-time faculty appointments at Santa Clara University, but the Director of the University Honors Program may approve other qualified persons to serve in either or both capacities.
 - b. In order to encourage interdisciplinary thought, and again as a general rule, the student is encouraged, but not required, to select a mentor and reader from different departments.
 - c. The mentor will have primary responsibility for directing the participant in preparing the thesis/project. The mentor will ordinarily be a member of the department in which the participant is completing a major but, if appropriate, may represent another department or discipline.
 - d. The reader's participation is intended to extend the participant's interaction with faculty members concerning the thesis/project and, ideally, to improve the interdisciplinary scope of the endeavor. It is presumed that the reader will assume a role secondary to that of the mentor. The reader's contributions may be limited to providing comment on an advanced draft of the thesis/project, but this guideline is not intended to exclude more extensive participation on the reader's part.
 - e. As described below, the mentor and reader will submit independent decisions regarding the suitability of the thesis/project for fulfilling the thesis/project requirement. Of course, the mentor and reader may consult with each other or with others during the preparation of the thesis/project and before judging its outcome.
4. Participants will be enrolled in HNRS 195 during the Fall Quarter of their senior year. The Director of the University Honors Program will be the instructor of record. This "class" does not have official meeting times. Enrolled students will receive an "N" grade until the thesis is finished in Spring quarter. NB: "N" means "not finished" not "No Pass."
5. The thesis/project will be considered completed when the student submits the following to the thesis dropbox on Camino or in hard copy to the Honors program office:

- the completed and signed *Declaration of Thesis/Project Requirement Completion* form
 - the completed thesis/project
 - Engineering students who do group projects also need to include a short description of their contribution to the project. Written approval of the thesis/project by the mentor and reader is independent of the HNRS 195 course grade that will be assigned to the thesis/project.
- a. If the mentor and reader agree that the thesis/project is unacceptable, the thesis/project requirement cannot be considered complete.
 - i. In such a case, the participant should consult the mentor and reader about steps necessary for the approval of the thesis/project.
 - ii. A participant may choose to appeal a final negative decision by both the mentor and reader to the Director of the University Honors Program. If the Director finds merit in the participant's appeal, the Director may name two other faculty members to evaluate the participant's work and recommend a course of action.
 - iii. In the case of a negative decision by both the mentor and reader that is supported by the Director, any further appeal will be submitted to the appropriate Dean, whose decision is not subject to appeal.
 - b. If the mentor and reader of a thesis/project disagree about a thesis/project's acceptability, the Director of the University Honors Program will decide the question. As above, participants may appeal the Director's decision to the appropriate Dean, whose decision may not be appealed.
6. Participants must submit to the University Honors Program Office the completed and signed *Declaration of Intent to Complete Thesis/Project Requirement* form by the date published by the University Honors Program (by the **end of Week 2** in Fall term of their senior year). Participants are advised to begin planning for their thesis/project **before** the start of their senior year.
 7. Deadlines. Students must submit a completed thesis approved by both mentor and reader by the date set by the UHP office (**June 1** for students graduating in June), and the thesis must be uploaded to Camino by the due date. Signature page with approvals is also due to the Honors Program office at that time. For majors with thesis due dates after the UHP due date (e.g. Engineers), theses may be turned in by the designated departmental due date. In the event that a student does not submit an approved thesis by the established due date, that student has two options:
 - a. Withdraw from the Honors Program and receive an "NP" for HNRS 195.
 - b. Finish the thesis during the next term and degree is conferred at the end of that term. (Note: in this case, the student will NOT pay extra tuition if they are not taking any other SCU classes during this term).

Please see the Director for a more detailed explanation of these options.
 8. Early Graduation. Students who plan to graduate early must make an appointment to meet with the Director of the Honors Program as soon as possible (and **no later than one year before graduation**) to discuss how the student will fulfill the year-long thesis project, as well as the Poster Session requirement. No UHP requirements will be waived or amended to accommodate early graduation.
 9. Students planning to study abroad during their senior year must make an appointment with the Director before spring quarter of their junior year in order to discuss timing for completion of their year-long Honors project.

10. In individual cases, and always for just cause, the Director of the University Honors Program may approve partial or even complete exceptions to these regulations and guidelines. Any exemptions or alterations in procedure should maintain the integrity and intent of the curriculum specified for the University Honors Program while also serving the legitimate academic goals of individual participants.