Instructions for Graduation with Honors Research Distinction: Undergraduate Thesis Requirements in Arts and Sciences

Candidacy Requirements

- Arts and Sciences (ASC) Honors students in good standing who have an approved Honors Contract on file with the ASC Honors office may complete a thesis (or creative project) and graduate with honors research distinction. At the time of graduation, honors students must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.4 on at least 60 graded Ohio State credit hours to graduate with honors research distinction.

- Students who are not members of the ASC Honors Program may be eligible to complete a thesis project and graduate with research distinction. (See http://undergraduateresearch.osu.edu/thesis.)

- The Undergraduate Thesis Application for Graduation with Honors Research Distinction must be submitted to the ASC Honors Office in order for the honors student to qualify for graduation with honors research distinction. The proposal form must be signed by the faculty project advisor, ensuring that all parties have a common understanding of the proposed plan to complete a research project for a given graduation deadline. The thesis application must be submitted by the fourth Friday of the term prior to the term of graduation or the term of the defense:
  - Students graduating Spring 2016: Due September 18, 2015
  - Students graduating Summer 2016: Due November 20, 2015
  - Students graduating Autumn 2016: Due February 5, 2016

- Students must register for at least 4 credit hours of thesis research, using course number 4999H. (Note: Psychology requires enrollment in a 4999H course sequence.) These 4 credit hours may be divided and taken over the course of multiple semesters. Course number 4998H will designate general honors undergraduate research credits, and course number 4999H will designate undergraduate research thesis credits. Ideally, the Undergraduate Thesis Application will be approved by the ASC Honors Office before the student registers for 4999H course work.

Project Requirements

- The Department of Mathematics has different requirements from those listed below (graduate-level course work taken in addition to the approved major program). Contact the Math Department for details.

- An honors student may complete a thesis within his/her major or in other disciplines, provided the student has a tenured or tenure-track faculty member serving as his/her project advisor.

- The academic unit that sets and enforces the thesis requirements will be the faculty project advisor’s home department (or school). Acceptable standards for the written paper of the research thesis or project will be determined by this academic unit and students should check with this unit for details. If the advisor’s home department does not offer undergraduate courses, the requirements of the student’s major apply. Note that in some departments in which the thesis is a project or performance (e.g. Art, Architecture, Music), some written component is also required.
• A co-signer from the major department will be required only if the project advisor is affiliated with a college outside of Arts and Sciences, OR if the project advisor is affiliated with a department outside of the department of distinction. The co-signer should be either the departmental Honors advisor or the chair of the department. Honors students pursuing distinction in an interdisciplinary major (e.g. International Studies, Comparative Studies, etc.) will most likely require a co-signer. **NOTE: If you are a Neuroscience major, you must have a Neuroscience advisor co-sign for your research project.**

• Because graduation *with honors research distinction* is an individual diploma designation, any student earning this designation is expected to submit an individually-written thesis document, even if the research is based in part on collaborative work. ASC Honors will not accept any jointly-written research projects or theses to fulfill the requirements for graduation *with honors research distinction*.

**Defense Requirements**

• A satisfactory oral defense of the thesis or project is required. The oral defense will last one hour and will be evaluated by a *committee of three faculty members*. The chair of the oral defense committee is the faculty project advisor. At least two of the committee members must hold appointments in the College of Arts and Sciences, and at least two of these faculty members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty. One of the faculty members must be from a discipline other than the field of distinction. The student will form the defense committee in consultation with the project advisor.

• Honors students will submit a Defense Committee Proposal online through the ASC Honors website (http://aschonors.osu.edu/oralexam). For this proposal the student will provide a tentative date for the oral defense and the names and information for his/her defense committee members. This information must be submitted online **no later than the sixth Friday of the semester in which the student plans to defend** (or the date specified for students graduating in Summer):
  - Students defending Autumn 2015: Due October 2, 2015
  - Students defending Spring 2016: Due February 19, 2016
  - Students defending Summer 2016: Due May 13, 2016

• The Certification for Graduation *with Honors Research Distinction* form, signed by each of the committee members at the oral defense, will be submitted by the thesis committee chair to the ASC Honors Office as soon as the oral defense has been completed. Students will receive both the link to the Defense Committee Proposal and a copy of the Certification for Graduation *with Honors Research Distinction* form via email from the ASC Honors Office early in the proposed semester of defense. The Certification form is also available on the ASC Honors website.

• For the transcript designation, an honors student who completes a thesis in his/her major will graduate *with honors research distinction in [the major]*. Honors students who complete approved interdisciplinary research may substitute the interdisciplinary field for the major in the transcript designation. Others will simply graduate *with honors research distinction*.

• The approved thesis or project written component will be submitted to the Ohio State Knowledge Bank. If confidentiality is desired, the thesis can be embargoed when it is submitted. Instructions for submissions of Undergraduate Research Theses to the Knowledge Bank are available at http://kb.osu.edu/dspace/handle/1811/133.
Links to Websites of Departments with Other Requirements

- Psychology: [http://undergrad psy.ohio-state.edu/html/u_research1.php](http://undergrad psy.ohio-state.edu/html/u_research1.php)

Working on the Project

The faculty project advisor is responsible for overseeing the entire project. The student and faculty member should establish mutually acceptable guidelines for frequency of consultation, submission of preliminary drafts, and deadlines for submitting work. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in termination of the project.

If the faculty member will be absent during any part of the project, s/he must appoint another faculty member to supervise the project during that period, and the ASC Honors Office should be informed of this appointment. If the student will be conducting research off campus, the student and faculty member should devise mutually acceptable guidelines for maintaining contact and reporting progress. In some cases this might include the designation of an “on-site” advisor, and the ASC Honors Office should be informed of these arrangements. The project advisor also should inform the student if it appears that his/her research will require approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects research or approval of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for animal subjects research.

Completion of the Thesis and Oral Defense

If it appears that the work, while satisfactory, will not be of such superior quality to qualify for graduation with honors research distinction, the student and faculty member may agree to continue the project as regular independent study or to terminate the project. The ASC Honors Office must be notified of the decision not to complete the project for graduation with honors research distinction. If the project is not completed, the faculty advisor may still judge that sufficient work has been done to merit a grade of “S” (or, in the case of Psychology, a passing letter grade) in the 4999H course hours.

In most cases, completion of the thesis and oral defense will take place during the semester in which the student graduates, but earlier dates are acceptable in most departments. The ASC Honors Office must be notified if a student intends to defend the thesis prior to his or her semester of graduation. The oral defense committee should be assembled early in the semester of the defense and the student should submit the Defense Committee Proposal form to the ASC Honors Office at that time. The defense must include a one-hour oral examination. All three members of the committee must be present at the oral defense (video-conferencing is allowed if necessary).

The faculty member should inform the student well in advance of specific departmental requirements with regard to written examinations, major area or course work requirements, and his/her expectations for the oral defense. While there is no single format which would do justice to all disciplines, the ASC Honors Committee encourages defense committees to broaden the scope of the examination beyond a simple review of the thesis. In this manner, the integrity and rigor of the defense process will be maintained and enhanced.

After satisfactory completion of the oral defense, the defense committee will certify the student as qualifying for graduation with honors research distinction. The Certification for Graduation with Honors Research Distinction form must be returned by a specified date to the ASC Honors Office, and the student will be informed of this date via email from the Honors Office.
Final Copy and Title Page of Thesis

Deadline: The thesis must be submitted electronically to the University Libraries’ Knowledge Bank no later than the last day of final examination week of the semester in which the student will graduate.

Manuscript Format: The ASC Honors Office does not require any particular manuscript format and leaves that decision to the project advisor, who is familiar with the practices of the discipline.

Title Page: The title page for the undergraduate thesis should follow the example below:

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Beowulf and Anglo-Saxon Perspectives on Kingship

Undergraduate Research Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation “with Honors Research Distinction in Medieval and Renaissance Studies” in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

by

Jane Doe

The Ohio State University
May 2016

Project Advisor: Professor John Smith, Department of English
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NOTE: Students pursuing graduation with honors research distinction by completing a thesis in an area outside the major field should not include the area of distinction on the title page. Using the example above, if the student was not majoring in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, she would have written, “Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation ‘with Honors Research Distinction’ in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University.”

Graduation

Candidates for graduation with honors research distinction still must submit the standard Application for Baccalaureate Degree (graduation application). This application should be submitted through an appointment with an honors counselor in the ASC Honors Office very early in the semester of the expected date of graduation.

Graduation applications are available in the ASC Honors Office. More information about applying to graduate may be found online at http://aschonors.osu.edu/graduation.

Candidates who file a graduation application with the ASC Honors Office and complete all requirements for graduation with honors research distinction will have the appropriate designation inscribed on the diploma.

Questions may be directed to Meagan Toohey, Director of the ASC Honors Program (tel. 292-5104, toohey.4@osu.edu), or to any honors counselor in the ASC Honors Office, 3180 Smith Laboratory, 174 West 18th Avenue. The Undergraduate Thesis Application, as well as further information and a list of Frequently Asked Questions, can also be found on the ASC Honors Program website at http://aschonors.osu.edu/honors/research-thesis.

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