

# 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. **Thesis applications must be submitted by the following deadlines:**
  - Students graduating Spring 2018: Due September 15, 2017
  - Students graduating Summer 2018: Due November 17, 2017
  - Students graduating Autumn 2018: Due February 2, 2018
- 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. **The Undergraduate Thesis Application should be approved by the ASC Honors Office before the student registers for 4999H course work.**

## Project Requirements

- The **Department of Mathematics** and the **Department of Psychology** have different and/or additional requirements from those listed below. Students should contact the department for details early in the thesis process.
  - a. Mathematics: <https://math.osu.edu/undergrad/current-majors/requirements/honors#distinction>
  - b. Psychology: [http://undergrad.psy.ohio-state.edu/html/u\\_research1.php](http://undergrad.psy.ohio-state.edu/html/u_research1.php)
- 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 project advisor's home department/school is the academic unit that sets and enforces the thesis requirements. Acceptable standards for the **written paper** will be determined by this academic unit and students should check with this unit for details. If the advisor's 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), a written component is also required.
- 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*.

- For students pursuing graduation “with Honors Research Distinction in [the major]”, **a co-signer from the major department** will be required only if the faculty 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.**

### **Defense Requirements**

- A satisfactory **oral defense** of the thesis or project is required. The oral defense will last one hour, and the candidate and project advisor will work together to determine a time and place for the defense that does not conflict with the student’s other academic obligations, such as class attendance. The candidate and project advisor will assemble a committee of no fewer than three faculty members to evaluate and certify the oral defense. The project advisor will be the first member and chair the committee. The faculty members who make up the committee will, together, fulfill the following criteria:
  - a. At least two committee members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty.
  - b. At least two committee members must have appointments in the College of Arts and Sciences.
  - c. At least one committee member must NOT have an appointment in the same department as the field of distinction. (For example, if the field of distinction is Political Science, and a faculty member from the History Department also has a “partial” or “courtesy” appointment in the Political Science Department, they are welcome to serve on the committee, but their presence would **not** fulfill of this requirement.)
  - d. At least three members must be Ohio State “faculty” as defined in Faculty Rule 3335-5-19.

These four criteria can usually be met with just three faculty members on the committee, but for students pursuing research in interdisciplinary fields or outside of the College of Arts and Sciences, it may be necessary to have four or more committee members. The typical committee includes a second faculty member (other than the Project Advisor) from the field of distinction, but this is not required.
- 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 2017: Due September 29, 2017
  - Students defending Spring 2018: Due February 16, 2018
  - Students defending Summer 2018: Due June 8, 2018
- 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 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 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 their major will graduate ***with honors research distinction in [the major]***. Others will graduate ***with honors research distinction***.

- The approved thesis or written component will be submitted to the Ohio State **Knowledge Bank**. If confidentiality (for a limited time) 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>. Once submitted, the thesis serves as a record of a requirement to earn the *with honors research distinction* graduation designation. Therefore, the thesis will remain permanently published and may not be withdrawn.

### **Working on the Project**

The 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 project advisor may still judge that sufficient work has been done to merit a grade of “S” (or, in the case of A-E graded research credit, 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 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. All 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 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 (it will also be posted at <http://aschonors.osu.edu/oralexam>).

## 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. The Knowledge Bank employs an authorization process which may delay your submission by up to two business days. Therefore, it is recommended that you begin the Knowledge Bank submission process before the final deadline.

**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:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Beowulf</i> and Anglo-Saxon Perspectives on Kingship</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Undergraduate Research Thesis</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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</p> <p style="text-align: center;">by Jane Doe</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Ohio State University May 2016</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Project Advisor: Professor John Smith, Department of English</p>
---

**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* must submit the standard Application for Baccalaureate Degree (graduation application). This application will be submitted during an appointment with an honors counselor in the ASC Honors Office either the semester before or very early in the semester of the expected date of graduation. 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 Rachel Steele, Academic Advisor, ASC Honors Program (tel. 292-5104, [steele.682@osu.edu](mailto:steele.682@osu.edu)), or to any honors counselor in the ASC Honors Office, 3180 Smith Laboratory, 174 West 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Undergraduate Thesis Application can also be found on the ASC Honors Program website at <http://aschonors.osu.edu/honors/research-thesis>.