

Honors Scholar Thesis Option

Students who wish to receive the Honors Scholar designation in the University Honors Program may do so by initiating, and completing, a Senior Honors Thesis. Coordinated by the University Honors Program and the School of Public Health and Information Sciences. On this page you will find helpful information to support the completion of your thesis.

Who is Eligible?

Currently, this option is only available to Honors Scholars in the University Honors Program.

Minimum Qualifications to Propose a Senior Honors Thesis

To qualify to submit a proposal for a Senior Honors Thesis in the School of Public Health and Information Science, you must:

1. Be an honors student on track to receive the honors scholar designation through the university honors program.
2. Have earned more than 89 hours of credit at the university level, with 60 hours at UofL.

Eligibility to Graduate with Academic Honors

To be considered for graduation with academic honors, you must have earned a minimum of 60 hours of degree credit in residence at UofL and completed all requirements of the degree program in the School of Public Health and Information Sciences. Graduation summa cum laude requires a university g.p.a. of 3.9 or higher, magna cum laude requires a university g.p.a. of 3.75 or higher and for cum laude a g.p.a. of 3.5 or higher is required. Successful completion of a Senior Honors Thesis will earn a designation of a University Honors Scholar through the University Honors Program.

Why Pursue a Senior Honors Thesis?

Successful completion of a Senior Honors Thesis is required of anyone who wishes to graduate with a designation of a University Honors Scholar from the University Honors Program. In addition, there are multiple benefits that one could realize from pursuing an independent undergraduate research project.

Pursuing a Senior Honors Thesis will allow you to conduct an independent undergraduate research project about a subject of particular interest to you. With the help of a supervising faculty mentor in your area of interest, your experience in this process can lead to a number of benefits:

- Eligibility for prestigious graduation honors from the School of Public Health and Information Sciences (summa cum laude, magna cum laude).
- Opportunity to enjoy the pursuit of your own unique area of intellectual interest that could help expand the existing body of knowledge in that field.
- One-to-one interactions with knowledgeable faculty mentors in your field of interest.

- Excellent preparation for academic expectations of graduate or professional school (research skills, writing skills, oral defense process)
- Opportunity to publish your findings or present at conferences
- Utilize final product for post-graduation plans
 - Strengthen graduate/professional school application or portfolio
 - Provide as an excellent sample writing for future employers

What is the Process for Completing a Senior Honors Thesis?

If you have already determined that you meet the minimum qualifications to submit a Senior Honors Thesis proposal, the information provided on this page will help you to develop a plan of action to initiate the process and meet the necessary expectations and deadlines.

Before reading the following information about the Senior Honors Thesis process, please be sure that you qualify to submit a proposal.

An honors thesis shall reflect a significant investment of intellectual effort, and greater originality, scope and quality than is normally expected in an upper-division course in the major department. The standards of scholarship of the discipline apply, and the written portion of the thesis should conform to the style and format of the discipline.

Formulating Your Thesis Topic

To initiate the process of preparing and submitting a proposal for a Senior Honors Thesis, you should work with your faculty mentor. Your faculty mentor can provide information regarding the expectations and opportunities for undergraduate research within their department and the School of Public Health and Information Sciences.

A thesis proposal must encompass substantial research effort on work not yet completed. Research that has been completed prior to proposal submission may be included but must be clearly identified with pertinent results presented at a level suitable for evaluation of the proposed work. Transparency is required regarding work that has been completed versus work that remains to be undertaken.

Research conducted before the submission of the thesis proposal should be briefly summarized in the thesis proposal. If the proposed research is a continuation of the previous work, the summary should be in the introduction/background section of the proposal. If the proposed research constitutes a distinct project from the previous work, the summary should be in a stand-alone section of the proposal.

Only research conducted during the student's bachelor's degree at the University of Louisville is permissible for inclusion in the thesis. This research may include work conducted at another institution (e. g., a summer program at another university or an internship).

It is highly recommended that you meet with your faculty mentor, using the thesis worksheet as a guide, to discuss your research plan prior to writing your thesis proposal.

Writing and Submitting a Thesis Proposal

To submit a proposal to complete a Senior Honors Thesis for the School of Public Health and Information Sciences, you must meet the minimum qualifications as defined under the Eligibility Requirements section and complete and submit the following documentation to Tammi Alvey Thomas based on individually determined deadlines:

1. Completed Honors Thesis Initiation Form
2. Completed Thesis Worksheet
3. Thesis Proposal

The proposal length will vary based on the expectations of your faculty mentor. The proposal must state clearly the objective of the thesis and the method(s) you will use to accomplish that objective. Organize your proposal to provide answers to the following questions: What is your topic? Why does this topic merit further study? What is the context for your investigation of this topic (in other words, what relevant secondary materials have been published on your topic)? How are you going to investigate this topic? What conclusions do you anticipate? Essentially, you are formulating a tentative thesis about your topic, and proposing a line of argument and methodology to support it. Be absolutely certain that you understand the difference between a topic (defined area of study) and a thesis (a statement of the argument you intend to make): proposals that address a topic without venturing a thesis are unlikely to be approved. Your proposal will be reviewed by your faculty mentor, and it may be returned to you with suggestions for revision. When your proposal is finalized, submit a copy to Tammi Alvey Thomas via email at tammi.thomas@louisville.edu

Your Thesis Committee: Preparing for and Scheduling the Thesis Presentation

You will be presenting to your thesis committee which is comprised of a minimum of two faculty members who shall be: 1) your faculty mentor and 2) a faculty member knowledgeable in the subject, agreed upon by you, your faculty mentor; this faculty member's teaching and/or research interests should be close enough to your topic that as reader, they can adequately evaluate your thesis and need for it.

Because the end of each semester is typically very busy for all involved, please start polling all committee members well in advance for available days and times for the oral presentation. Leave enough time between the presentation and the deadline for turning in the final thesis to allow for revisions (about one week). Ideally, the final draft of the thesis (i.e., already approved by your faculty mentor) should be delivered to committee members two weeks in advance of the scheduled defense; if less than this, permission should be sought by the committee members. Some committee members prefer hard copies and others electronic versions; ask committee members for their preference and make the document available to them accordingly.

Students are required to seek out room reservations at least two weeks in advance of their proposed presentation date. Students should contact Linda Dillman at linda.dillman@louisville.edu for assistance with room scheduling. Students should work with their faculty mentor to determine if the location of

the presentation will be on Belknap, HSC or virtually. Also, students are encouraged to seek spaces in their major departments to hold their presentation before they consult Honors for room availability.

Oral Presentation Protocol

The formal oral presentation at a minimum, is to your thesis committee and should be presented as if they have not read the document, providing background and context to set up the argument and findings. The actual format of the presentation will vary by discipline, so advice should be sought from the supervising faculty member on format, timing, etc. After the formal presentation, the committee will ask questions and discuss any revisions requested. Usually, the student will be asked to step out for a few minutes during final committee discussion and voting. If the unanimous committee votes to “pass,” all present will sign the Honors Thesis Evaluation Form, so be sure to bring it to the defense. If the “pass” is with revisions (more than minor revisions needed), then committee members often sign the concluding section once revisions have been completed and submitted.

Notification of Thesis Approval

Once the honors thesis evaluation form is complete with all required signatures, you must return it to Tammi Alvey Thomas by the advertised deadline along with an electronic copy of the final thesis. After you have submitted the final version of your thesis (revised if necessary), this information will be submitted to the Dean's Office so that your graduation honors will be noted on your permanent record, diploma and in the Commencement program. Please note: If you do not submit the final version of your thesis before the deadline for printing the Commencement program, your level of graduation honors may not be designated appropriately. Instead, you will be listed as receiving the level of honors you would have earned based on your university GPA only.

How do I Submit a Thesis Proposal?

The steps that must be completed as part of the thesis are outlined below.

1. Schedule a meeting with Tammi Alvey Thomas, tammi.thomas@louisville.edu to discuss the thesis option.
2. Following the meeting, complete and submit the Honors Thesis Initiation Form to Tammi Alvey Thomas at tammi.thomas@louisville.edu or your academic advisor.
3. You will be provided with several recommendations of faculty that you should contact to serve on your thesis committee and potentially serve as your primary faculty mentor.
4. Once you secure your faculty mentor, schedule an initial meeting to develop the research project, formulate your topic and determine deliverable due dates. The Honors Planning Thesis Worksheet should be completed and a copy should be submitted to the Tammi Alvey Thomas at tammi.thomas@louisville.edu If your project or methodology changes significantly, you will need to submit a new proposal and initiation form as soon as possible. This is at the discretion of the faculty mentor.
5. You will then develop your thesis proposal.

6. This will be followed by conducting your research, analyzing your data and writing your thesis.
7. Upon completion of your thesis, you will work with your faculty mentor to schedule the oral presentation.
8. Following the oral presentation, you will be notified if you passed, passed with revisions or did not pass.
9. Submit a final copy of the thesis and evaluation form to Tammi Alvey Thomas at tammi.thomas@louisville.edu

Departmental Thesis Contact

If you have determined that you meet the minimum qualifications to develop a Senior Honors Thesis, please contact the Undergraduate Program Director – Tammi Alvey Thomas at tammi.thomas@louisville.edu to schedule an appointment.

Senior Honors Thesis Committee

The Senior Honors Thesis Committee is composed of a minimum of two faculty members from the School of Public Health and Information Sciences that work collaboratively with the student to complete the Senior Honors Thesis. Additional faculty members from outside of the School of Public Health and Information Sciences may be added at the discretion of the faculty mentor and the student.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Formal deadlines are at the discretion of the student's thesis committee. All materials and an oral defense must be submitted to the public health program no later than April 1 for a May graduation, July 1 for an August graduation and November 1 for a December graduation.

Resources

Funding Your Research

Students are encouraged to apply for an Undergraduate Research Scholar Grant. For information and application forms see <http://louisville.edu/research/students/undergrad-grad>

Library Resources

When you are working on a Senior Honors Thesis, be sure to take advantage of the [services](#) offered by the reference librarians in [Ekstrom Library](#), with whom you may make an individual research appointment to identify sources applicable to your topic. You will find their advice extremely helpful as you initiate and develop your research. Also, the [University Writing Center](#) (Ekstrom Library, Rm. 132 in the first floor Learning Commons) offers composition specialists who are trained to assist writers with help in argument and structure, as well as with editing and documentation.

Printable Forms

Useful forms you will need as you work through your Senior Honors Thesis.

School of Public Health and Information Sciences Honors Thesis Initiation Form

Student Name:

ID #:

GPA:

of credit hours completed:

Are you an honors scholar? Yes or No

Expected Graduation Date:

Have you contact Sarah Springer (in Honors) to discuss the thesis requirements? Yes or No

Briefly describe your research area of interest.

Approval

Yes, the student meets the requirements.

No, the student does not meet the requirements.

Tammi Alvey Thomas
Undergraduate Program Director

Date

Copy:
Student
Student file

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND INFORMATION SCIENCES HONORS THESIS PLANNING WORKSHEET

Student Name:

Student ID #:

Before you begin to draft your thesis proposal, please set up a meeting with your faculty mentor to discuss the following topics. This worksheet will assist in guiding your conversation with your faculty mentor and help you to create a basic plan for your thesis proposal. Additional categories may be added at the discretion of the faculty mentor.

Categories	Action Steps	Target Date(s)
Identify research topic/question		
Complete literature review/targeted bibliography		
Draft hypothesis/thesis statement		
Explain expected contribution to the field (what is unique about your thesis)?		
Determine if IRB submission needed		
Determine any required trainings that need to be completed for IRB submission, if applicable.		
Identify at least one additional faculty member to serve on Thesis Committee		

Categories	Action Steps	Target Date(s)
Methodology (data collection plan, IRB submission, analysis, etc.)		
Target for thesis draft completion/review by faculty mentor. Determine format (APA, MLA, etc.).		
Target for final thesis review by faculty mentor		
Thesis oral presentation		
Submit final copy of thesis and related paperwork to public health undergraduate program director		

Proposed Thesis Committee Members (1 is required and additional can be added)

Committee Member School/Dept. Date

Committee Member School/Dept. Date

Please sign to indicate that you have read and approve the attached project proposal.

Faculty Mentor Signature School/Dept. Date

School of Public Health and Information Sciences Honors Thesis Evaluation Form

Date:

Student Name:

Student ID #:

Project Title:

Faculty Mentor of Senior Honors Thesis:

The oral defense of this project before the committee named below was completed on:

Decision: _____ **Passed** _____ **Passed with Revisions** _____ **Did Not Pass**

Comments (Include any revisions that must be made with due dates):

Thesis Committee Approval

Faculty Mentor

School/Dept.

Date

Committee Member

School/Dept.

Date

Committee Member

School/Dept.

Date