

Honors College Thesis Requirements

Instructions for Students and Faculty Mentors

The Honors thesis is the capstone experience for the Honors College. It allows students to explore academic areas of their most passionate interests, engage in the process of discovery, and contribute in their areas of interest and expertise. An honors thesis can take the form of a traditional research or scholarly paper, or it could be an artistic portfolio, a creative writing project, a live performance, an innovative curriculum, or a substantial service project. While the honors thesis is often completed as a part of the student's major, students are free to find a mentor and complete a thesis outside their major as well. Interdisciplinary projects are especially encouraged.

Honors students usually complete the thesis during the capstone course for their major, unless they choose to do a project outside of their major. These courses and options for different majors are listed in a separate document.

If the student completes the thesis as a part of the major capstone course, that course will automatically count in the thesis portion of the student's Program Evaluation. If the student completes the thesis as part of a different course, the student should notify the Director of Honors to file a substitution request for that course to count as their thesis requirement.

Requirements:

The faculty mentor, as the disciplinary expert, is the judge as to whether a student's work meets the standards of the discipline for an Honors thesis. It is the responsibility of the faculty mentor to submit the completed thesis to the Honors Office.

All honors theses share a few broad requirements:

- **Each honors student must work with a faculty mentor**, who will support and guide the students and approve the final work.
- **The thesis work must be presented/performed publicly.** This could take the form of a presentation at the CCU Undergraduate Research Competition or an external conference, a performance or other exhibition, or another form.
- **The work must be approved by and submitted by the faculty mentor to the Honors College.** In the past, print copies of all Honors theses were archived in the Library's collection. Now, Honors theses are archived in and publicly available through the CCU Library's Digital Commons. Alternate arrangements will be made for students whose works cannot be publicly posted on the internet (due to confidentiality, copyright, or

future publication issues). See the Honors Thesis Submission Instructions for more details.

Formats for Honors Theses by Discipline or Area:

Honors theses come in various formats, including:

- Research paper (20+ pages): The result of research in which the student investigates a specific topic in their field under the mentorship of a faculty member. It may include laboratory or field-work and/or research including human subjects (with a guidance of an adviser trained in human subject research and formal approval of the research project).
- Scholarly paper (approx. 25-35 pages): A paper that uses primary and secondary published sources to formulate a thesis question and make a creative and sound contribution to the literature. The paper may be a review and synthesis of the literature or a paper with an original thesis.
- Business plan or analysis (approx. 20 pages): Students (usually in the College of Business) conceptualize a business and create marketing plans, financial reports, and implementation strategies for said business. *If a student's capstone thesis class consists of a group project, the honors student should still complete a 5-10 page of analysis of the project that reflects their own work.*
- Pedagogy (20+ pages): Students (usually those in Education) create an innovative instructional curriculum that could be implemented in public schools.
- Performance or artistic display: Students (primarily those from the Visual and Performing Arts majors) organize a performance presentation or a display of their creative artistry (e.g., dance, music, and voice recitals, art, film, theatrical performance). The student should also produce a 5-10 page paper analyzing or reflecting on the work.
- Portfolio: Students (primarily those from Fine Arts majors) will provide a visual compilation or display of their artistry. The student should also produce a 5-10 page paper analyzing or reflecting on the work.
- Project: (other fields where the thesis equivalent consists of a created work that is not possible to submit as a written thesis) Students will submit a formal reflection or analysis paper that conveys the scope and the importance of the work and, ideally, instructs a reader in how to find and access the created work.

This list covers the formats of the majority of honors theses. Students who are interested in completing a thesis in a different format are encouraged to do so, with the prior approval of their faculty mentor and the Director of Honors.