Handbook for the
Eastern Kentucky University
Honors Thesis

2012

Created by the staff of the EKU Honors Program and

EKU’s John Grant Crabbe Library

Revised and Updated, 2019
THE THESIS PROCESS

To complete your EKU Honors requirements, you must complete an honors thesis. The honors thesis is a substantive research or creative production that typically takes a year to complete. An honors thesis project may take the form of a traditional research thesis or a creative research thesis. Most EKU Honors students (approximately 90 percent) choose to do honors thesis projects that are closely related to their majors, but it is not required that you do so. Some of our very best honors theses over the years have been produced by students working either outside their major entirely or in interdisciplinary projects only partially related to their majors.

The rule of thumb is that a traditional research thesis should be a minimum of 30 pages long with at least 30 scholarly references. Most theses should exceed this minimum, but much depends upon the expectations of the scholarly discipline in which the thesis is being written. For instance:

In the humanities and in other projects based heavily upon textual analysis, strong honors thesis projects almost always easily exceed 30 pages, with most running 40 or 50 pages or more.

In the social sciences—particularly those projects that rely heavily upon quantitative analysis—most honors theses run very close to the 30-page target.

In the natural sciences, it is common for theses to be shorter in terms of text-length than theses in the humanities or social sciences. Experience has shown that excellent honors theses in chemistry, for instance, may run only 15-20 pages of actual text. We nonetheless expect, however, that traditional research projects in the natural sciences still adhere to the 30-page total minimum via inclusion (often as appendices) of detailed graphs, charts, and/or other visuals that demonstrate the scale and scope of the laboratory work or field observations upon which the study is based.

In mathematics, because of the sophistication of the field and the ways in which new formulas and theorems are developed, it is recognized that original work is extremely difficult to execute at the undergraduate level. Accordingly, well-organized synthetic or expository theses that consolidate and explain ‘cutting-edge’ theories, concepts or ideas in the field are entirely appropriate. In mathematics, as with the natural sciences, it is understood that the 30-page length target may include many pages of equations, graphs, charts, etc.

Students from all disciplines are encouraged to consider creative research projects. Excellent creative research projects over the years have included anything from musical performances and/or compositions, creative writing endeavors, visual artistic productions, dance programs, and meaningful intensive service projects of various sorts. In all cases, creative research theses must include a research element that contextualizes the project’s scholarly dimensions. The
project must be accompanied by a scholarly “process statement” that explains the research and other work that went into the thesis. Such statements must run a minimum of ten pages (and most are longer) and be accompanied by a scholarly bibliography or reference list of at very least ten scholarly sources.

All thesis projects require formal presentation at either the fall or spring EKU Honors Thesis Conference. Any thesis that utilizes a variant form of documentation or compilation—i.e., video, audio recording, or image of any kind—must upload that documentation as well as the written statement to accompany it on the digital archive. Exceptions to this requirement may be granted in cases of creative writing or artistic productions that the student expects soon to submit for publication or juried exhibit.

The Proposal and Honors Thesis Mentor

The process begins with the student submitting an Honors Thesis Proposal Form (available at the EKU Honors webpage under “Current Students,” “Thesis Information”) at the end of the semester preceding her/his first-time enrollment in HON 420. For the student beginning in the fall semester, that means May 1 of the preceding semester. For the student planning to begin in the spring semester, s/he must submit their proposal by December 1 of the preceding semester. The student should email the completed proposal form to the mentor. Both student and mentor should type their name and date on the form and save it. The mentor must then forward the form to the Honors Director with a cc back to the student. Note—the proposal form should not be printed. The proposal process is to be done entirely electronically via e-mail attachments.

The student and mentor should also carefully consider and agree upon the relative proportion of each of the components of the project as indicated on the proposal form. The mentor and student together should decide on how they should be weighted. The final product of the thesis itself should count for no less than 50% of the total final grade.

The student and mentor should work on the actual thesis project at their convenience and in a manner that best suits the pair. During the semesters in which a student is enrolled in HON 420, s/he should never go more than two weeks without discussing progress on the thesis project with his/her mentor. Many faculty mentors require even more frequent meetings.

Timing of Honors Thesis within the Honors Curriculum

While they are completing the thesis, students will register for HON 420 (Thesis Seminar). The first time the student signs up for 420, s/he will also be enrolled in the thesis support class held that semester taught by the honors director or associate director(s). This seminar will help the students refine their project, educate them concerning the process of completing a thesis, and support them as they begin this long-term, intense independent research or creative project. All thesis students will invite their mentors to attend the seminar on the day when they present the results of their Interim Report to the class.
Most students will complete the thesis over two semesters of HON 420 enrollment, taking 3 credit hours of HON 420 each of the two semesters in order to complete the required (and maximum) six total credit hours of honors thesis credit. We strongly encourage students to begin thesis no later than the second semester of junior year. This is because we very strongly encourage our students to finish the thesis no later than their next-to-last semester before graduation, so that they make take their thesis work and seek opportunities during their final semester at EKU to present their research at conferences and/or publish their work.

In rare cases in which a student must complete all six hours of HON 420 credit in a single semester, s/he should discuss plans in advance with the honors director.

**The Final Product and Presentation**

Each thesis project will consist of a written thesis (or comparable project) and an oral presentation that highlights the major components of the thesis.

The written thesis should constitute a substantive amount of work (remember that six credit hours will be awarded the student for its completion).

All theses, regardless of format, must be presented during one of the two annual EKU Honors Thesis Conferences, held typically in November and April. The EKU Honors Thesis Conference is open to all and faculty, fellow students, family members, and friends of the presenters are encouraged to attend.

Students can expect to field questions about the thesis project following the presentation. Each student is given a thirty-minute slot. The oral presentation generally lasts twenty minutes, and ten minutes are allowed for questions. Each student presenter will be assigned another student “discussant” who will begin the question and answer session on the presentation. All honors thesis students are honored at our Honors Scholar Convocation in the semester that they graduate.

**Grading the Thesis Project**

Most students will complete their honors theses through two consecutive semesters of enrollment in HON 420. At the end of the first semester of enrollment, the Honors Director, in consultation with the thesis mentor, will assign a letter grade to the student on the basis of the satisfactory completion of all assignments associated with first-semester enrollment in HON 420. Following the completion of the thesis in the second semester of HON 420 enrollment, the faculty mentor will assign a letter grade to the project, and the Honors Director will record that grade.

In rare cases, students may elect to do the entire thesis project in a single semester, enrolling for all six required credit hours of HON 420 in that semester. Students should discuss this option at length with the Honors Director before registering for the six-hour section of HON 420. In such cases, the faculty mentor will assign the final grade to the project at the end of the semester of the six-hour HON 420 enrollment.
Note that the Honors Director (or Associate Director depending on the semester) is the official instructor of record for all students enrolled in HON 420. No thesis student will ever pop up on their mentor’s EKU Direct account. All mentors need to upload their Thesis Evaluation form to the digital archive by the deadline indicated so that the Honors Director can access them and accurately record the student’s grade by the required deadline.

Note: In rare cases when an honors thesis fails egregiously to meet the basic minimum expectations for an honors thesis outlined in this handbook, but is nonetheless given a high grade by the mentor, the Honors Thesis Coordinator and Director of the Honors Program reserve the right to alter the final grade assigned by the mentor.

The Possibility of an “Extra Semester” to Complete Thesis

Experience has shown that there are times when unforeseen circumstances prevent a student from being able to complete the thesis project within their allotted two semesters of HON 420 enrollment. Under such circumstances, a student who is unable to complete the thesis in the second semester of HON 420 registration may request from the Honors Director permission to take a third semester to complete and present the final project. If a student pushes completion and presentation of the thesis into a third semester, s/he will NOT be enrolled in HON 420 for a third time, since the maximum number of hour that a student may receive for HON 420 is six. Instead, the student will complete thesis work in that third semester without actually being enrolled in HON 420. S/he will receive a grade of “IP” (or “In Progress”) for the 2nd semester of HON 420 enrollment. That “IP” grade will be changed to a letter grade once the thesis is completed, presented, and deposited in the third semester. Honors thesis projects may not extend into a fourth semester.

Students who enroll for all six hours of HON 420 in a single semester likewise have the option of requesting a grade of “IP” and an “extra semester” from the Honors Director to complete the project. Again, such students will not be able to enroll again in HON 420, since they will have already reached their maximum of six hours total enrollment in HON 420. Students under these circumstances must complete and present the thesis in that second (or “extra”) semester. They will not be permitted a third semester.

All IP grades that remain incomplete will turn into a grade of “NC,” or “No Credit.” The NC grade does not affect your GPA, but it may impact Financial Aid. Any student considering leaving a thesis project incomplete should consult Financial Aid before making the decision to abandoning the project.

Additional information

Students should not expect to be able to use a thesis written in completion of their major program for their honors thesis, or vice versa. However, two such theses could be related in
certain ways. For example, the honors thesis might be an extension (the next chapter so to speak) of a capstone project in the student’s major, or the next logical step in that research. Each department sets its own policy expectations concerning how a major capstone project may (or may not) relate to an honors thesis project.
HONORS THESIS FORMATTING

1. Begin the first page of your text about one third of the way down the page.

2. Margins: Top and bottom margins should be one inch
   - Left margin should be 1 1/2 inches
   - Right margin should be one inch

3. You should use a standard font—Arial, Times New Roman, etc.—and a 12 point font size for the thesis text. Serif fonts are easier for the eye to read; consider using Times New Roman or another serif font.

4. Left justify only.

5. Pages in the front matter (everything that comes before the thesis writing proper) should be numbered with small Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.); pages for the rest of the thesis should be numbered in the top right (flush right) with Arabic numbers. The first page of your text should not be numbered. Begin numbering with page 2. The order of the front matter should be the following:

   - Title page (see template below)
   - Abstract
   - Table of contents
   - List of Figures (if any)
   - List of Illustrations (if any)
   - List of Tables (if any)
   - Acknowledgments page

   Need help numbering your thesis pages in Word? Follow the instructions at https://support.office.com/en-us/article/add-different-page-numbers-or-number-formats-to-different-sections-bb4da2bd-1597-4b0c-9e91-620615ed8c05.

6. All figures included in your thesis—illustrations, tables, graphs, charts, photographs, maps, etc.) need to be listed at the beginning of the thesis (see #4 above for the correct order of front matter), referred to explicitly before they appear in the thesis, numbered, and labeled with a caption of some kind.

7. All photos, illustrations, jpg images, etc. must have the resolutions that will work on the digital archive; we’ll send more info on that separately. If applicable (i.e., you are doing a creative thesis that features a dance performance, other filmed product, or photographed product), you will need to include a CD with all of your images with the hard copy of your thesis that you turn into the EKU Honors Program office. Your films will be uploaded to the archive; separate info on that will be provided as well.
8. Consider including an acknowledgments page. This is your chance to express within the thesis itself your gratitude for the support and help you’ve received while working on it. Professional courtesy requires that you thank your faculty mentor, but you will also undoubtedly find others to whom you wish to express your appreciation for their professional and emotional support.

9. You will also need to write an abstract that summarizes the key questions, findings, and significance of your project. The abstract will be submitted electronically with your thesis and will be searchable via the worldwide web. The abstract should be between 200-250 words, double-spaced, and include your name, your mentor’s name, and your title on the same page. See the Abstract Template below. The abstract is included as part of your front matter; see #4 above.

10. Indent 5 spaces for a paragraph.

11. Double space your text throughout, including the Works Cited or Bibliography page.

12. Label your bibliography appropriately (Works Cited, Bibliography, etc.) Center your page title, but do not underline it or place it inside quotation marks.

13. Select the appropriate style manual for your discipline (Consult your mentor concerning his/her expectations for the discipline):
   A. Humanities: The MLA Style Manual (MLA=Modern Language Association)
   B. History: Chicago Manual of Style (Turabian)
   C. Social Sciences: Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
      a. (APA Style)
   E. Chemistry: ACS Style Guide (ACS= American Chemical Society)
   F. Physics: AIP Style Manual (AIP=American Institute of Physics)
   G. Mathematics: A Manual for Authors of Mathematical Papers (published by the American Mathematical Society)

_locate the current edition of your discipline’s manual and familiarize yourself with it. Know what it contains and where to look for the information you need for correct documentation. Follow one style exclusively._
RESEARCH COMPLIANCE: IS YOUR STUDY ETHICAL?

1. **Are you compliant with federal regulations?** Compliance with federal regulations governing the use of human subjects, animal care, radiation, legend drugs, recombinant DNA, or the handling of hazardous materials in research is monitored by a number of federal agencies. Because of these regulations, research compliance is another area of importance to all researchers including undergraduate honors students. If your research requires approval by one of the university’s ethics committees—the Institutional Review Board for the Study of Human Subjects (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)—both you and your mentor will need to complete the on-line training appropriate for your area of study and file the proposal and paperwork for your project and have it approved by the relevant committee prior to the collection of any data. The number on your approval form from either the IRB or the IACUC will be required for the successful submission of your thesis on EKU’s digital archive, Encompass. The HON 420 class always includes a session on IRB and IACUC approval; if you have any other questions, contact either the Honors Program Director or the Division of Sponsored Programs (www.research.eku.edu/).

2. **Thesis research involving human subjects.** All research involving human subjects must comply with federal regulations from the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research subjects. Proposals for research projects involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to the collection of data. Applications are available on the Sponsored Programs website at http://www.sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/IRB_SITE/. Federal regulations require mandatory training for all researchers, including students writing theses or dissertations. To satisfy this training requirement, EKU requires that all researchers participating in projects involving human subjects complete the National Institutes of Health’s Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams Tutorial and supply a copy of the certification of completion to the IRB prior to the approval of research protocols. A link to the tutorial is provided on the IRB website.

3. **Thesis research involving animal subjects.** All research involving animal subjects must be reviewed by and receive approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to the beginning of the research project. The IACUC application and guidelines are available on the Sponsored Programs website at http://www.sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/IACUC/.
EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Paper Title

(Note that the first letter of each important word is capitalized and that the title is not underlined or placed in quotation marks.)

Honors Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements of HON 420
Spring 2011

By
A Brilliant Student

Mentor
Correct Title and Name
Department or Professional Affiliation
Discovering the People of Africa through *National Geographic Magazine*

Honors Thesis
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
Of The
Requirements of HON 420
Fall 2007

By
Michael Phelps

Faculty Mentor
Dr. David Zurick
Department of Geography and Geology
ABSTRACT TEMPLATE

Title of thesis

Name of thesis author

Name with correct title (Dr., Prof., Mr., Ms., etc.) of thesis mentor and department or professional affiliation

Abstract description: this should run 200-250 words (but no more than 250 words) and it should contain the most relevant information regarding the subject of the thesis, its central investigations and key questions, and its final results. Do not indent the abstract but do double-space it.

*Keywords and phrases:* you will need to list no less than 5 and no more than 10 of these; these will be the words that are coded and most likely to be picked up in an internet search: e.g., thesis, honors thesis, honors project, capstone, undergraduate research.
GUIDELINES FOR IMAGES

1. Make a copy of your original file. This is what you will edit in preparation for embedding into your document. The changes you will be making to this file are not changes you will want to make to your original file.

If you are using a photograph or images, please upload the original file as an additional file in Encompass Digital Archive. This way, people will be able to download the original high-quality file rather work with a lower quality image in your Word document that will then take too long to download.

2. Recommended file format:
   - JPEG – use for photographs and other images that use a continuous range of color or shades of grey
   - GIF – use for charts, graphs, or other computer-generated images with sharp boundaries between different colors and/or contain text

3. Recommended resolution: 300 dpi/ppi
   This is the print industry standard. Ensures that the image will look good when printed.

4. Image file size: Aim for 500 KB or less. If your file is larger than this, consider reducing it. Remember: don’t do this to your original file!

   Make sure you title your image files with names that are easily identifiable: i.e., LastNameFigure2.

Options for reducing file size:
   - Resize – Best to resize by percentage (i.e. choose to reduce the image to 80% of its size)
   - Compress – most image editing software gives you the option to compress your file. This reduces the file size without compromising the image quality. Choose the highest quality setting or make sure to set the dpi to 300 so the image resolution is not affected.

5. PDF or word document? Word documents uploaded to Encompass are automatically converted to PDF. You may upload your documents in the archive as jpg files, but it’s not necessary.
Honors Thesis Student Workflow
(for Honors Thesis Students only)

Go to the Honors Theses section of Encompass Digital Archive (http://encompass.eku.edu/honors_theses/).

Click the “Submit Research” link in the “Author Corner” section of the left hand column.
Fill out the required fields (marked with an asterisk *):

- Email address (use your EKU email)
- Name
- Password

Enter “Eastern Kentucky University” in the “Institutional Affiliation” box.

When you click the “Sign Up” button, the system will send you a confirmation email.
Check your EKU email account for the confirmation request (the sender email will be: support@dc.bepress.com).

Click the provided link to confirm your account.
You will be taken to the “Submission Instructions and Agreement” page.

The distribution option referred to in the submission agreement is the “Restricted Access Thesis” option. This makes your honors thesis accessible to EKU users only, on- and off-campus.

Check the box at the bottom of the page and click “Continue.”
Now you can start entering information about your honors thesis.

**If your honors thesis work is in a different format (such as an image, audio file, video, etc.), you will upload a word document of your title page and abstract, and your process piece, and you will then add the honors thesis project itself as an additional file. The *EKU Honors Thesis Handbook* has more information about recommended file types and the proper formatting of images. More information on uploading additional files is on page 8.**

Read the instructions for each field; they will tell you what kind of information you should provide in each field, and how to enter it.
Select the appropriate semester from the dropdown menu and enter the year of your award. EX: "Spring 2012"

Enter your mentor's information here. This is the same as what you have to include on the title page and abstract of your honors thesis.

Select the "Restricted Access Thesis" option.
### Degree Name

**Leave this field alone**

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<th>Degree Name:</th>
<th>Honors Scholars</th>
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**Optional** - choose your department from the list

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<th>Department:</th>
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### Keywords

**Enter your keywords here. Keywords make your honors thesis more “findable.”**

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### IRB Approval Number (if applicable)

**Ignore these fields if you did not apply for approval from these boards.**

### IACUC Approval Number (if applicable)

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### Presentation

**Optional** - include a link to your presentation if you have it

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If your honors thesis is largely contained in a different format (such as an image, audio file, video, etc.), upload it as an additional file. Upload your title page/abstract document under the “Upload Full Text” option.

If you have supplementary materials for your honors thesis document, upload them as additional files.

*If you included images in your honors thesis, you may want to consider uploading the original files of the images as additional files, especially if you had to edit them for inclusion in your honors thesis document. This way, those who are interested in seeing the original, full-scale image will have access to it.*

The *EKU Honors Thesis Handbook* has more information on recommended file types and how to format images for uploading to the Encompass Digital Archive.
When you click “Submit,” you will see this confirmation page:

![Confirmation Page](image)

The confirmation page will tell you whether the upload was successful or not.

You will also receive a confirmation email informing you whether your honors thesis has been successfully uploaded.

You will receive additional emails as your honors thesis goes through the review process and is posted to the Encompass Digital Archive. This process will take several weeks from start to finish. The final email should include a link to your posted honors thesis.
Honors Thesis Mentor Workflow
(for Honors Thesis Mentors only)

Creating an Encompass Digital Archive Account

Before you can start the honors thesis review process, you will need to create an Encompass account. If you have a SelectedWorks page, you already have an Encompass account and can use this to login.

You can create your Encompass login now, or wait until you receive the email requesting your review of your honors student’s thesis. When you click the link within the email, you will be prompted to create an account.

Go to Encompass Digital Archive (http://encompass.eku.edu).

Click on “My Account” in the upper right hand corner.

Click the “Sign Up” button.
Fill out the required fields (marked with an asterisk *):

- Email address (use your EKU email)
- Name
- Password

You will get an email requesting you to confirm your account. Once you do so, you are all set.
The Honors Thesis Review

You will get an email inviting you to review the honors thesis assigned to you. The email will contain a link directing you to a webpage where you can confirm your commitment. If you have not already created an Encompass account, you will be prompted to do so when you click this link.

When you click “I will review it,” you will be taken to a webpage containing a PDF of the honors thesis to download and a link to submit your review. You do not have to submit your review at this time. You do need to submit a completed grade sheet by noon on the Friday before grades are due.

You will receive an email containing information about composing your review. This email will contain a link you can use to submit your review when you are ready. While there is an option...
to add a letter that will only be seen by the director, you need ONLY attach the actual grade sheet to the review site.

Submit your review as a Word document (Option 1). Your student will be able to see your review.

If you have anything confidential that you need to share with the director, use the Cover Letter section at the bottom of this webpage. The student will not be able to see this. The Cover Letter is NOT required to complete your review/grading of the honors thesis.
When you have uploaded your report, click “Submit report” at the bottom. The system will notify the director that your review has been submitted. S/he will be able to retrieve the grade sheet him/herself and will then post the honors thesis in Encompass Digital Archive.