

East Texas Baptist University

Honors Project Student Guide

Introduction

An honors project enables you to delve deeper into your major course of study. Through the project, you hone research and writing skills, and you learn how to balance a long-term, intensive project with your other daily responsibilities. In short, you acquire useful skills that will benefit you in the work world or in graduate school.

The process of completing the Honors Project can be overwhelming. For this reason, we have assembled this guide for you to consult along the way. The guide is organized by semester, and each section provides a checklist that you can follow to make sure you have taken all the necessary steps. Each item in the checklists comes with a brief description of that step, what documentation is necessary, and whom you should contact. As you work on your project, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact your Project Supervisor or the Honors Program Director.

Forms that you and your Project Committee will need are in **bold** throughout the guide. These forms can be found on the Important Documents page of the Honors Program website. Important, firm deadlines are in **red**, but they refer generically to the day and week of the semester. The specific calendar dates are listed on the Honors Program website: www.etbu.edu/honors_program. Important, contingent deadlines are underlined.

Initiating the Honors Project

Ideally, the following steps would be accomplished before the project sequence begins: the spring or summer before Semester I. Don't worry if you are at the beginning of Semester I and haven't completed one or more of the steps below, *but take care of them as quickly as possible*.

Checklist

- Select a professor from your major to be your project supervisor.

This professor should be someone with whom you work well; after all, you'll be working with this professor for the next four semesters on your project.

- Meet with this professor to develop your project idea and a basic research plan.

You and your project supervisor will need to agree on the idea or question you will be researching. Once you have a direction for research, your professor can help you establish a plan for how to tackle it.

- Obtain two copies of a **Semester I syllabus** from your project supervisor.

As with any other course, the syllabus communicates what your supervisor expects from you regarding assignments, meeting frequency, and deadlines. Go over this syllabus with your supervisor. Keep a copy of it for yourself, and give one to the Registrar's Office.

- Put together your Project Committee with your supervisor's help.

Your committee is made up of three faculty members: the Project Supervisor, the Second Reader, and the Outside Reader. Your Second Reader must be in your discipline, and your Outside Reader must be from outside your discipline. Let your supervisor advise you on which professors might be best to recruit for your committee. Compatibility is important to consider with these committee members, but you also want to consider how their expertise will complement your project.

- Complete the **Honors Course Registration Form** and submit it to the Registrar's Office.

You must have your advisor, project supervisor, and academic dean sign the form before you submit it. Do not forget to submit your Semester I Syllabus, too.

Semester I (HNRS 4205)

Now you are ready to begin your Honors Project. For most students, the project sequence begins the fall semester of their junior (third) year. If you will not be completing your degree according to a traditional four-year plan, please meet with your Project Supervisor and the Honors Program Director to discuss how to complete your project in a reasonable yet timely manner.

<p>The main goal of Semester I is to complete and defend your Project Proposal.</p>

Checklist

- Meet with your Project Supervisor according to the schedule set up in the Semester I syllabus.

It is vitally important to communicate regularly with your Project Supervisor (and it would not hurt to check in periodically with your other committee members). Keep your supervisor posted on how your research and writing are going, and let your supervisor know if you are encountering any issues.

- Submit one copy of your Project Proposal to each member of your committee for review no later than **Friday of the tenth week** of the semester.

You have the first ten weeks of the semester to research and write your proposal. The sooner you can submit it to your committee, though, the more time they have to review it, and the more time you have to revise any weaknesses they discover.

- Schedule the defense with your entire committee to discuss your Proposal.

A defense is a face-to-face meeting with the faculty on your project committee to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your proposal and to give you guidance as you begin working on the project. This meeting may sound intimidating, but remember that your committee members are for you and want to see you succeed.

Prior to the defense, your Project Supervisor will have submitted your Proposal to turnitin.com to obtain an originality report. Your supervisor should give this to you at the defense. Also, your committee members will fill out **Proposal Evaluation Forms** prior to or at your defense. They should give these forms to you once the defense is over. *Do not lose any of these documents.*

- Make sure your committee signs the **Proposal Signature Page**.

A signed Proposal Signature Page indicates that your committee is satisfied with your Proposal and is willing to submit it to the department chair, dean, and honors program director. Therefore, if your Proposal is approved by your Project Committee without any revisions requested, the committee members can sign the Proposal Signature Page. They may want you to make some changes to the Proposal, however. Once the Proposal has been revised to their satisfaction, then they can sign the Proposal Signature Page. Make sure to revise your Proposal as quickly as possible.

- Submit the Project Proposal and the Proposal Signature Page to your department chair no later than **Friday of the twelfth week** of the semester.

Once your committee has signed off on your Proposal, you can submit it and the Proposal Signature Page to your department chair. (If you do not know who this is, your Project Supervisor can tell you.) The department chair will review your Proposal and sign the Signature Page, then forward your documents on to your academic dean. The dean will do likewise, then return your documents to you or to your Project Supervisor.

- Submit the completed Proposal and necessary forms to the Honors Program Director no later than **Friday of the fourteenth week** of the semester.

The following forms must be given to the Honors Program Director:

- Project Syllabus for Semester I
- Proposal Signature Page
- Proposal Evaluation Forms from Project Committee (3 total)
- Originality Report from turnitin.com for Proposal
- Final, revised version of your Proposal
(Please submit a hard copy and an electronic copy.)

The Honors Program Director will give copies of your Proposal to the members of the Honors Committee, a separate group of faculty members who will review your Proposal and give final approval for you to proceed with your project. The director will notify you that your Proposal was approved no later than Friday of the first week of Semester II.

Semester II (HNRS 4106)

The second semester of the Honors Project sequence is the least structured of the four, because you are doing the bulk of the research for and writing of your project at this time. This means it is up to you and your Project Supervisor to provide structure and accountability to the semester. Do not let these fifteen weeks slip by without making substantial progress on your project.

The main goal for Semester II is to work steadily on researching for and writing your Honors Project.

Checklist:

- Submit the Honors Project Registration Form and Semester II Syllabus to the Registrar’s Office.
- Schedule regular meetings and deadlines with your Project Supervisor and other committee members.

Do not allow more than two weeks to elapse between meetings with your Project Supervisor. Establish with your supervisor goals for completing portions of your research and deadlines for drafting sections of your thesis. Make use of your other committee members’ expertise by meeting with them from time to time. Share with them what you are learning in your research and sections of your thesis as you get them written. These regular meetings will make the final submission process go more smoothly, as your committee members will already be familiar with the development of your project.

- Keep in regular contact with your Project Supervisor over the summer.

Most students will have a summer between Semester II and Semester III. Although other things may occupy your time during the summer, such as an internship or study abroad experience, do not completely neglect your project. Continue to make steady progress over the summer so that you are not rushing to complete the project when you return in the fall. Your Project Supervisor can help you establish substantial yet reasonable goals for your summer work.

Semester III (HNRS 4207)

Time management is crucial throughout the Honors Project sequence, but it becomes especially so during the final two semesters. With all of the deadlines mentioned below and in the Semester IV checklist, it will be to your benefit to submit your work as early as possible. Budget your time well, stay in communication with your committee, and keep in mind the procedure as you complete your project.

The main goal for Semester III is to complete and defend your completed project.

Checklist

- Submit the Honors Project Registration Form and Semester III Syllabus to the Registrar’s Office.

- Meet with your Project Supervisor according to the schedule set up in the Semester III syllabus.

Continue to meet on a regular basis with your Project Supervisor as you finish your project. The more input you receive from your committee members while you work on your project, the more smoothly the project defense will go. You are likely to have fewer revisions to make to the finished product if you get regular feedback as you write the thesis.

- Submit one copy of your completed project to each member of your committee for review no later than **Friday of the tenth week** of the semester.

As mentioned above, Friday of the tenth week is the *latest* you can submit your completed project to your committee members. Do your best to submit the project earlier than that.

- Schedule the defense with your entire committee to discuss your completed project.

This face-to-face meeting is a chance to discuss what you have learned by doing your honors project. As with the proposal defense, your committee members are there to support you, and they want you to submit the best project possible; the questions and suggestions they give you are to help you fine-tune your project so that it will be of the highest quality.

At the end of the defense, your committee will give your project one of the following designations: “Passing,” “Pass with Correction,” or “Not Passing.” If you have been diligent and honest in your work and conscientious in communicating with your Project Supervisor, the “Not Passing” designation is highly unlikely. Most likely your committee will have a few suggestions for revising the project and will designate it “Pass with Correction.” Do not panic—you will have the remainder of Semester III and the beginning of Semester IV to make the corrections your committee recommends. If your committee deems your project “Passing,” you are then ready to begin the final submission process, which is detailed in the Semester IV guide.

As with the proposal defense, your Project Supervisor will have submitted your completed project to turnitin.com to obtain an originality report. Your supervisor should give this to you at the defense. Also, your committee members will fill out **Project**

Evaluation Forms prior to or at your defense. They should give these forms to you once the defense is over. *Do not lose any of these documents.*

Semester IV (HNRS 4108)

There are many steps to turning in your finished project to the Honors Committee, and they require your close attention and rapid completion. Take care of each step as soon as possible—the farther ahead of the deadlines you can be, the less stress you will have in completing the process. At any point, please contact your project supervisor or the honors program director for guidance.

Again, please note that the deadlines listed below are *the latest you can complete each step*. Do everything you can to accomplish these tasks more quickly.

The main goal for Semester IV is to submit a complete, polished project to the Honors Committee.

Checklist

- Submit the Honors Project Registration Form and Semester IV Syllabus to the Registrar's Office.
- Finish revisions on your Honors Project.

If your project received a “Pass with Corrections” designation from your committee in Semester III, you have until **Friday of the fourth week** of Semester IV to finish your revisions and resubmit the project to your committee for review. You do not have to defend your project again, although one or more of your committee members may want to meet with you. The committee then has until **Friday of the sixth week** to declare your project “Passing” or “Not Passing.”

Due to time constraints, you cannot go through another round of revisions: if your Project Committee is not satisfied with your project at this point (designating your project “Not Passing”), then you are not permitted to finish the process and graduate with distinction.

- Have your committee sign the **Project Signature Page**.

Once the committee approves your project as “Passing,” they need to sign the Project Signature Page.

- Submit your project and the signature page to the department chair.

Within one week of your project receiving a “Passing” designation, you must submit the project and signature page to the chair of your department. (If you do not know who this is, your Project Supervisor can tell you.) The department chair will review your Project and sign the Signature Page, then forward your documents on to your academic dean. The dean will do likewise, then return your documents to you or to your Project Supervisor.

- Submit your project and the signature page to the University Reviewer.

Within one week of receiving your project from the department chair and dean, you must submit the Project and Signature Page to the University Reviewer (UR).

The UR’s job is to look over your Project and make sure that it is free of spelling and punctuation errors and that the format of the Project conforms to the appropriate method of citation (MLA, APA, etc.). Once the UR has reviewed your project, s/he will give it back to you to make corrections, after which you will submit it once more to the UR. Once the UR is satisfied with your corrections, s/he will sign the Project Signature Page and return all documents to you.

IMPORTANT: The UR does not review for content, organization, or sentence fluency; problems with these aspects of your Project should be addressed by your Project Committee and corrected by you prior to submitting it to the UR.

Your Project must be approved by the UR no later than **Friday of the eleventh week** of Semester IV.

- Submit the completed Project and necessary forms to the Honors Program Director within one week of receiving approval from the University Reviewer.

The following forms must be given to the Honors Program Director with your completed project:

- Project Syllabi for Semesters II-IV
- Project Signature Page
- Project Evaluation Forms from Project Committee (3 total)
- Originality Report from turnitin.com for final project
- Final, revised version of your Project
(Please submit a hard copy and an electronic copy.)

The Honors Program Director will give copies of your Project to the members of the university's Honors Committee, a separate group of faculty members who will review your Project and recommend you to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for Graduation with Distinction. The Director will notify you of the committee's decision no later than **Friday of the thirteenth week** of Semester IV.

The process of proposal, defense, review, and revision, as well as the documentation submitted with the project, is to ensure that you are receiving the feedback you need to produce a quality Honors Project. When you, your project committee, your department chair, and your academic dean are following this procedure, there should be no reason why the Honors Committee would not recommend you for Graduation with Distinction. However, if the committee does decide to withhold its recommendation, the evidence for why should be discernible in the documentation submitted to the committee.

If you or your Project Committee disagrees with the decision of the Honors Committee, you have three business days to make an appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

- Apply for graduation with the Registrar, informing them that you are graduating with distinction and providing the title of your honors project.

Congratulations! You have worked hard to get to this point. The recognition you will receive at Commencement is well deserved. Contact the Registrar to make sure that you provide all necessary information about your project and to confirm that your honors stole has been ordered.

Now look forward to your Graduation Day!

Presenting Your Honors Project

Students who complete Honors Projects are expected to publically present their work one or more times during the process. This presentation typically would happen at an academic conference that welcomes undergraduate research, but there are a number of acceptable forms this public presentation could take. Talk with your Project Supervisor and other readers to determine where and when you will present your project. If you and the faculty are uncertain whether a venue would be appropriate, consult with the Honors Program Director.

When you have publically presented your project, send an email to the Honors Program Director, informing him or her of the venue and date of the presentation.

Appendix: Project Timeline in Brief

Semester I	
Weeks 1-10	Student works on proposal under Supervisor's guidance
By Friday of Week 10	Student submits completed proposal to Readers for review
Weeks 10-12	Project Committee (PC) reviews proposal, then meets with student (defense), signs the signature page
By Friday of Week 12	Student gives proposal and signature page to department chair/academic dean for approval
By Friday of Week 14	Student gives proposal, syllabus, signature page, committee evaluation forms, and originality report to Honors Committee (HC)
	HC gives approval by Week 1, Semester II
Semester II	
Weeks 1-15	Student works on project under Supervisor's guidance
Semester III	
Weeks 1-10	Student works on project under Supervisor's guidance
By Friday of Week 10	Student submits completed project to PC for review
Weeks 11-15	PC reviews project, then meets with student (defense). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If project receives "Passing" designation, committee signs signature page • If project receives "Pass with Corrections" designation, project is returned to student for revision

Semester IV	
By Friday of Week 4	If project received “Pass with Corrections” designation, student works on revisions to project with guidance from Supervisor, then re-submits to PC
By Friday of Week 6	PC reviews project and gives designation of “Passing” or “Not Passing.” Second defense is optional.
Within one week of PC approval	Student gives project and signature page to department chair/academic dean, who must review and give approval by Friday of Week 8
Within one week of Dean approval	Student gives project and signature page to University Reviewer (UR)
By Friday of Week 10	Student makes grammatical and formatting corrections to project, re-submits project to UR for approval
By Friday of Week 11	Student submits completed, corrected project to HC, along with following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabi from Semesters II-IV • Project signature page • Project evaluation forms • Originality Report for final project
By Friday of Week 13	HC makes recommendation for Graduation with Distinction