

School of Law

Honours Award Level Guidelines 2013

COURSE TITLE (HONOURS)	HONOURS CONTACT DETAILS
Bachelor of Laws	Honours Co-ordinator, Carolyn Sappideen c.sappideen@uws.edu.au ; 9685 9086

Honours Award Level Guidelines 2013

The Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy describes the framework for all Honours courses, both end-on and embedded, at UWS: <http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00156>

These School Honours Award Level Guidelines contain procedural information specific to Honours degrees in the School of Law

Application Process

On-Line Admissions

Students applying for Honours (end-on or embedded) need to complete the on-line application found on the UWS website:

<https://applyonline.uws.edu.au/connect/webconnect>

The final date for applications for 2013 should be submitted by 18th February 2013 for Autumn Semester and by 22nd July for Spring Semester 2013.

Procedures for assessing applications

Students should first consult the School of Law Honours Co-ordinator before making an application. This is because the School may not have staff who are able to supervise all possible thesis topics. As the School of Law honours program is an embedded honours program, generally students will only be accepted if their results are within reach of the minimum requirements for Honours 2.2 . The required GPA in LLB units for Honours 2.2 is a GPA of 5.5. Applications for honours should be sent to the School Honours Coordinator to consider eligibility for admission. In assessing applications only LLB unit results are considered. After receiving the statement of intent, the School Honours Co-ordinator after confirming eligibility then sends applications to the Dean who approves or declines admission.

Criteria for Admission

The criteria for admission to an end-on or embedded Honours Programme are as required by the Honours in the Bachelor Awards Policy Part E Clause 21.

1. Achievement of a threshold Admission Average Mark (AAM) equal to, or above, the minimum of 65; and
2. Statement of Intent or School equivalent; and
3. Appointment of a Principal Supervisor by the Dean of School; and
4. Demonstrated satisfactory academic writing skills appropriate to the discipline.

Calculation of the Admission Average Mark (AAM)

1. **LLB (Hons).** For the purposes of clause (23) the AAM for LLB Honours students will be calculated by reference to all LLB units only.
2. For the purposes of (23) an applicant with an AAM < 65% due to lower relative results in their first year of undergraduate study may be considered for admission if:
 - I. The applicant has demonstrated a marked improvement in their academic performance in recent semesters; and
 - II. A supporting letter from the applicant's potential supervisor regarding the applicant's ability to undertake Honours is supplied.
3. Where advanced standing impedes the calculation of a whole of program AAM, the School Honours Coordinator may recommend to the School Academic Committee that the results in LLB compulsory units be used as a basis of calculating the threshold Admission Average Mark.
4. **Treatment of Compulsory Fail (CF) Grades.** For the purposes of calculating the AAM in the School of Law, Compulsory Fail (CF) grades will be assigned a numeric mark of 42.

Statement of Intent or School Equivalent

The 'Statement of Intent' (or Research Proposal) provides a brief overview of the research that the applicant is planning to undertake. The Statement of Intent is usually expected to be 500 - 1,000 words and should be written by the applicant in consultation with their intended supervisor(s). The Statement of Intent will normally at least include the following:

1. Research Title: proposed thesis title or research topic.
2. Research Question: an overview of the research topic, including a statement outlining the interest and/or the significance of the area of study.
3. Literature: a critical summary of at least 5 academic readings relevant to the area of study.
4. Methodology: a brief statement on how the research will be conducted, data employed and tools for analysis.
5. Where the proposal includes empirical research, it should include a statement that ethics approval is required. [See below Ethics and/or other required approvals.]

Appointment of a Principal and/or Co Supervisors

Admission to an Honours degree is subject to the availability of a suitable supervisor(s) and other resources. The Dean of School appoints supervisor/s on the recommendation of the School Honours Coordinator. Principal and co-supervisors must be currently registered on the UWS Graduate Supervisor Register in order to be eligible to be nominated. The status of nominated supervisors on the Graduate Supervisor Register will be confirmed by the School Dean (or nominee) prior to final endorsement. As a guiding principle, Principal supervisors and co-supervisors should at least hold an Honours Class II Division

award to eligible to be nominated. Principal supervisors should additionally have an established publishing and research track record.

The Graduate Supervisor Register may be accessed at:

http://www.uws.edu.au/research/current_research_students/supervision

Prospective Honours students should be advised to first consult with the relevant School Honours Coordinator, who will be able to recommend appropriate supervisors.

Ethics and/or other required approvals

Where the letter of intent indicates that the proposed thesis includes empirical research, then ethics approval is required. The first step for approval is an application to the appropriate Peer Review Committee. The UWS Guidelines are at:

http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchers/ethics/human_ethics#Application

Upon acceptance into the Honours program, the applicant must ensure that approval has been received by the appropriate UWS authority before data collection or other fieldwork commences. Applications for ethics approval will normally be initiated by the thesis supervisory panel.

As the School of Law honours dissertation is a semester long unit, this does not allow sufficient time for students to apply for ethics approval and conduct empirical research. Only in exceptional cases will thesis topics be approved that have an empirical research component.

See also; Appendix 1.

Procedures for dealing with Supervision issues

Where a student is experiencing supervision difficulties, the student will first consult their supervisor and/or co-supervisor. If the difficulty is not resolved, the student should approach the School of Law, Honours Co-ordinator who will facilitate resolution of the issues. If the issues involve the School Honours Coordinator, the student may first approach the Dean of the School of Law or alternatively approach the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) for advice.

Honours Progression

Part G of the 2013 UWS Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy, which deals with progression can be found at: <http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00156#p7>

The School of Law honours program includes a single semester 20 credit point unit LLB Honours Dissertation 200700 taken in the student's final semester of the LLB.

The due dates for submission of the Honours thesis are:

Autumn 2013: 5pm Friday 7th June, 2013

Spring 2013: 5pm Friday 8th November 2013 (**Note earlier date required for students who wish to apply for postgraduate scholarships**).

Procedure for applying for an extension of submission date

An application for an extension should be made to the School Honours Co-ordinator. Applications should be made no later than 3 working days prior to the approved submission date. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional and compelling cases consistent with the Special Consideration Policy. After consultation with the supervisor/s, the Honours Co-ordinator will make a recommendation to the Dean or Deputy Dean as to whether the extension should be granted.

The Request for Extension application form can be found at:

http://www.uws.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/118273/OAR00XXX_0307_Request_for_Extension_WEB.pdf

Note: Supervisors should be aware and advise students as appropriate, that late submission may make a student ineligible for consideration for a postgraduate scholarship determined at the December meeting of the University Research Committee.

Lodgement of Thesis

A hardcopy of the thesis should be lodged with the School of Law by the due date. The hard copy can be given to the Honours Co-ordinator directly or left at reception at the School of Law Campbelltown campus or reception at the School of Law Parramatta campus. Students should also send to the School of Law Honours Co-ordinator a soft copy of the thesis via email prior to the submission date.

Students should, prior to lodging the thesis, utilise the turnitin facility available on the unit vUWS website.

Details relating to the presentation of the thesis are contained in the LLB Honours Dissertation Learning Guide.

Examination Procedures

Appointment of Examiners

Examiners will be appointed in accordance with the Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy, Part I clause (37) which specifies that the significant research component (thesis) will be examined by two suitably qualified examiners. Examiners may be external to UWS or internal to UWS, in Schools where an independent moderation process is used to assure quality and consistency of internal examination. Examiners must normally hold a qualification at or above Honours and have a record of research or scholarly attainment in a relevant field.

Supplemental to clause (37) the School of Law adopts the following processes for the appointment of examiners:

1. Recommendations for examiners will be made by the School Honours Coordinator (in consultation with the thesis Principal supervisor) to the School Academic Committee, who will consider nominations and recommend appointments which are approved by the Dean or Deputy Dean of the School. The School shall be free to decide the composition of the thesis examination panel (i.e. one internal / one external; two internal; two external).
2. Examiners will not be Principal supervisors or co-supervisors of the Honours candidate whose thesis is being examined, nor will the examiners have worked with the Honours candidate on any aspect of their thesis research.
3. The identity of examiners remains confidential, before and during the examination process. The Principal supervisor may discuss the examiners' reports with the Honours candidate concerned after the examination has been completed. At this stage, the identity of the examiners may be revealed provided that the examiners have given consent at the time that the examination report was submitted.
4. The School Honours Coordinator will ensure that each examiner is sent all relevant information and instructions pertaining to the marking of the thesis. It will be the responsibility of the School Honours Coordinator to ensure that examiner's reports are received in a timely manner – see E. Materials Sent to Examiners.
5. Examiners' reports will be sent to the School Honours Coordinator, who will ascertain if a third examiner is required under the conditions specified in the Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy Part I clause (40) – see below The Use of Third Examiner (Arbiters).
6. Copies of the relevant examiners reports will be sent by the School Honours Coordinator to the Principal supervisor. Copies of all examiners reports will be sent by the School Honours Coordinator to the School Academic Committee.

Materials Sent to Examiners

Materials sent by the School to examiners should include, but are not limited to:

- a letter inviting the examiner to formally examine the thesis;
- a 150-200 word abstract of the thesis to be examined that contains the title and author of the work;
- an explanation as to which components of the degree contribute to the determination of the Honours award and specifically the weight given to the research component (thesis);
- specific information concerning the School's expectations of the nature, structure, length and presentation requirements of the research component of the Honours degree;
- the criteria by which the examiner is expected to evaluate the research component;
- information concerning the School's expectations of the examiner (e.g. time frame by which examination needs to be completed, what materials need to be forwarded back to the School to complete the examination process);
- a cover sheet that summarises the examiners' score out of 100 and includes specified criteria for each potential score; and
- any other School-devised scoring materials.

The Use of Third Examiner (Arbiters)

As per the Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy, Part I clause (40), where there is a mark discrepancy of 10 or more marks between significant research component examiners or a difference in the examiner-recommended "grade", a third examiner will be used. The third examiner acts as an arbiter and following review of the thesis and examiner reports he/she determines a mark and grade; this is the final examination result.

Appointment of Arbiters

When required, the arbiter will be recommended by the relevant thesis supervisor(s) in consultation with the School Honours Coordinator and the School Academic Committee. Recommendations for arbiters will be forwarded by the School Academic Committee to Dean of School for endorsement.

Arbitration Process and Outcomes

1. As well as the standard materials sent to thesis examiners, supplementary materials forwarded by the School to the arbiter should include the following:
 - I. a written letter outlining the circumstances under which the present arbitration is required
 - II. thesis reports and marking sheets from the two examiners, with the identity of the examiners withheld

2. The arbiter shall read the thesis to reach an independent assessment of the work contained within. After reading the thesis, the arbiter considers the two examiner's reports and assesses the conclusions that the examiners have reached, and the arguments that they have used to justify these conclusions. The arbiter then prepares a standard assessment report on the quality of the thesis. The arbiter will also produce a report to the School Academic Committee explaining the decision in relation to the two examiners reports.
3. The arbiter's reports, both the standard assessment report and a report outlining the reasons for their decision, should be sent to the Chair of the School Academic Committee and will be forwarded by the School Academic Committee to the Dean for endorsement.
4. The recommended mark for the thesis is decided by the arbiter and will be forwarded by the School Academic Committee to the Dean for endorsement.

Processing and finalizing Honours Marks and Level of Award

LLB (Hons)

In the case of the LLB (Hons), the calculation of the Honours Award level (Class of Honours) is based on the results of Honours Research and the overall course GPA.

1. The award of Honours Class I for the LLB (Hons) requires achievement within the range of 85% - 100 for Honours Research and a GPA of 6.0 or greater in the LLB units.
2. The award of Honours Class II Division I for the LLB (Hons) requires achievement within the range of 75% - 100 for Honours Research and a course GPA of 5.8 or greater in the LLB units.
3. The award of Honours Class II Division II for the LLB (Hons) requires achievement within the range of 65% - 100% for Honours Research and a course GPA of 5.5 or greater in the LLB units.
4. Honours Class III is not awarded in the LLB (Hons).

Honours marks and level of award will be recommended by the School Academic Committee to the Dean of School. Once determined, Honours marks and levels will be sent to candidates by the Academic Registrar's Office

Reviews of Grade and Appeal against Level of Honours for all School of Law Honours degrees are dealt with by Part L and Part M of the Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy respectively.

Note students enrolled in a Bachelor of Laws course or a double Bachelor of Laws degree prior to 2008 may elect to be governed by the LLB (Honours) award rules in force at the time of their first enrolment in that course.

Key Dates 2013 – Summary

27 March 2013	Confirm student enrolment in Autumn semester LLB Honours dissertation unit 200700. (HECS census).
7 June 2013	Due date for submission of honours dissertation for students enrolled in Autumn 2013: 5pm Friday 7 th June, 2013
30 August 2013	Confirm student enrolment in Spring semester LLB Honours dissertation unit 200700. (HECS census)
31 October 2013	Applicants for postgraduate scholarships: Final date for submission for students who wish to apply for postgraduate scholarships.
8 November 2013	The due date for students undertaking LLB Honours Dissertation 200700 in Spring 2013 is 5pm Friday 8 th November 2013. This submission date only applies to students who are NOT applying for postgraduate scholarships.
November/ December 2013	School Academic Committee meeting.

Appendix 1

School Honours Award Level Guidelines – 2013 - Requirements for Ethics Approval

Human and Animal Ethics and Biosafety for Honours students at UWS

...all research is an ethical undertaking, and all researchers are confronted with ethical choices, whether in the laboratory, the library or the field.¹

Research involving human participants or animals must undergo a formal ethical review to ensure it is carried out in accordance with Australian research practice.

All honours research involving human participants **must** meet the National Statement criteria for Low 1 or Negligible risk research.

In Australia, the honours student's Supervisor is the applicant for both human and animal ethics approval.

Given the short time frame available for Honours study, it is recommended that where ethics approval does not already exist, that ethics approval is sought as a matter of **priority** at the earliest possible time during the Honours program.

All research carried out at UWS involving human participants or animals must be conducted in accordance with national and University frameworks:

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2007)
- Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (2004)
- Health Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003)
- Office of the Gene Technology Regulator
- Australian Standard AS 2243.3 Safety in the Laboratory, Part 3: Microbiology.
- International Compilation of Human Research Standards
- UWS Research Code of Practice

¹ <http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/programs/GReP/GREIM.html>

Before conducting any data collection, experimentation or field work, Supervisors of Honours projects must determine whether ethical review is required and obtain approvals from the relevant ethics committee. All projects are considered the responsibility of the supervisor who will be the applicant for ethics protocol approval.

The following guidance will assist supervisors in managing the ethics review process within the narrow timeframe of undergraduate Honours.

Honours projects involving Human Research

Honours projects meeting the conditions for expedited review by the Human Research Ethics Committee and will be eligible for review at its weekly Executive meetings (Negligible and Low 1 risk levels).

The Risk level will be confirmed by the disciplinary Peer Review Committee which will also confirm that the proposed research plan meets the *National Statement's* requirements of Research Merit and Integrity.

Once your application has met the *National Statement's* Research Merit and Integrity standards – as determined by the Peer Review Committee, the Secretariat of the Committee will forward the application for ethical review to the Human Research Ethics Committee's Executive.

Applications should be presentation standard and all documentation provided. To assist the HREC Executive, applications are screened by the Human Ethics Officer prior to being reviewed. Your early response to feedback arising from that screening will enable your Honours student's project to undergo ethical review at the next scheduled meeting date.

Feedback from the ethical review by the HREC Executive is provided within 7 days of the Executive's meeting date. Final approval, however, will be subject to how quickly applicants are able to respond to any feedback that the Executive provides.

Guidelines for Ethics Application

1. Submit your ethics application as early in the academic year as possible. Approval periods depend on the quality of the application and any feedback from the review processes, however, this may be one (1) month.
2. Refer to the UWS Ethics webpages for Hints and Tips for completing the ethics application, and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page for human ethics. These are invaluable sources of information and will assist in completing a high quality ethics application.
3. If you feel you have not had a response to your application within a reasonable time - at either the Peer Review stage or the Ethics review stage of the process - follow up with the professional staff – PRC Secretary for Peer Review or the Human or Animal Ethics Officer for Ethics review. UWS is a research led university has large numbers of research projects under review at any one time. so it is in your best interest to monitor an application's progress.
4. Ensure that all attachments are included at the time of submission using those available on the UWS Ethics webpages, as these are the most current templates.

Please note that because of the very short time frames for the honours dissertation (12 weeks); save in exceptional circumstances honours dissertation topics will not be approved where they require ethics approval.