

School of Law

Honours Award Level Guidelines 2014

COURSE TITLE (HONOURS)	HONOURS CONTACT DETAILS
Bachelor of Laws	Honours Coordinator: LawHonours@uws.edu.au

Honours Award Level Guidelines 2014

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 need to complete the on-line application found on the UWS website: <https://applyonline.uws.edu.au/connect/webconnect>.

Application Deadline - Applications for admission in 2014 should be submitted by:

- 17 February 2014 for students applying to commence in Autumn Semester 2014; and
- 21 July 2014 for students applying to commence in Spring Semester 2014.

Students should first consult the School Honours Coordinator before making an application. This is because the School may not have staff who are able to supervise all possible thesis topics.

Criteria for Admission

The criteria for admission to the LLB honours program are set out in the Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy, Part E, clause 21.

1. Achievement of a threshold Admission Average Mark (AAM) equal to or above the minimum of 65 or, in the case of the embedded Bachelor of Laws Honours program, demonstration of the likelihood, as assessed by the Dean or delegate in exercise of their discretion, of completing the Bachelor of Laws degree with a GPA of at least 5.5; 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.

Procedures for assessing applications

As the Bachelor of Law honours program is an embedded honours program, students may be accepted where they have demonstrated achievement of a threshold Admission Average Mark (AAM) equal to or above the minimum of 65 or, in the case of the embedded Bachelor of Laws Honours program, demonstration of the likelihood, as assessed by the Dean or delegate in exercise of their discretion, of completing the Bachelor of Laws degree with a GPA of at least 5.5.

Applications for admission into the Bachelor of Laws honours program should be sent to the School Honours Coordinator for consideration of eligibility for admission. In assessing applications only Bachelor of Laws unit results are considered. After receiving the statement of intent, the School Honours Coordinator, after confirming eligibility, will forward each application to the Dean who will approve or decline admission.

Calculation of the Admission Average Mark (AAM)

1. Bachelor of Laws (Hons) - For the purposes of clause (23), the AAM for Bachelor of Laws Honours students will be calculated by reference to all Bachelor of Laws units only.
2. For the purposes of clause (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.
 - III. In the exercise of the discretion of the Dean (or delegate), the student has demonstrated a sufficient and reasonable likelihood of completing the degree with a GPA of at least 5.5 in their Bachelor of Laws units.
3. Where advanced standing impedes the calculation of a whole of program AAM, the School Honours Coordinator may recommend to the Dean (or delegate) that the results in Bachelor of Laws 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 "Ethics and/or other required approvals" section below.

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 appoints supervisor/s on the recommendation of the School Honours Coordinator. The Principal supervisor will hold qualifications at AQF Level 8, or above, and have a record of research or scholarly attainment in a relevant field, to satisfy the Higher Education Threshold Standard of "equivalent professional experience".

Students should first consult the School Honours Coordinator before making an application. This is because the School may not have staff who are able to supervise all possible thesis topics.

Ethics and/or other required approvals

Ethics approval will be required where the Statement of Intent indicates that the proposed thesis includes empirical research. 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 Bachelor of Laws 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.

See 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 Honours Coordinator 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 embedded School of Law honours unit, 200700 Law Honours Dissertation, is a yearlong 20 credit point unit that is to be undertaken where a student has completed no less than 160 credit points of Bachelor of Laws units and no more than 200 credit points of Bachelor of Laws units (where the GPA requirements are also met). Students must apply for admission to 200700 Law Honours Dissertation by way of a rule waiver.

The due dates for submission of the Law Honours Dissertation are:

- For students commencing in Autumn 2014: 5pm, Monday, 3 November 2014.
- For students commencing in Spring 2014: 5pm, Monday, 1 June 2015.

An earlier date may be 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 Coordinator. 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 School Honours Coordinator 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/Request_for_Extension_RO_00205_0112.pdf

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 Law Honours Dissertation

1. The dissertation must be submitted electronically via the Turnitin link on the vUWS site for unit 200700 Law Honours Dissertation on or before the prescribed due date. Please read the Turnitin Instruction Manual prior to submission.
2. Students must ALSO submit a hard copy of their dissertation on or before the prescribed due date following the specific instructions set out the 200700 Law Honours Dissertation Learning Guide. Further information in regard to the submission of the assignment may be posted on the vUWS site for this unit.
3. Students are required to keep a hard copy and electronic copy of all written work which is submitted.

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 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 which will

consider nominations and approve appointments. The School of Law shall be free to decide the composition of the examination panel.

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 regarding "The Use of Third Examiner (Arbiters)".
6. The School Honours Coordinator will provide copies of the relevant examiners reports to the Principal supervisor. Copies of all examiners reports will be included in School Academic Committee consideration of results .

Materials Sent to Examiners

Materials sent by the School of Law 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 the Dean 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 finalising Honours Marks and Level of Award

Bachelor of Laws (Hons)

In the case of the Bachelor of Laws (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 Bachelor of Laws (Hons) requires achievement within the range of 85% - 100 for Honours Research and a GPA of 6.0 or greater in the Bachelor of Laws units.
2. The award of Honours Class II Division I for the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) requires achievement within the range of 75% - 100 for Honours Research and a course GPA of 5.8 or greater in the Bachelor of Laws units.
3. The award of Honours Class II Division II for the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) requires achievement within the range of 65% - 100% for Honours Research and a course GPA of 5.5 or greater in the Bachelor of Laws units.
4. Honours Class III is not awarded in the Bachelor of Laws (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 2014 – Summary

31 March 2014	Confirm student enrolment in 200700 Law Honours Dissertation (Autumn HECS census date) for students commencing the unit at the 2014 Autumn Semester entry point.
31 August 2014	Confirm student enrolment in 200700 Law Honours Dissertation (Spring HECS census date) for students commencing the unit at the 2014 Spring Semester entry point.
TBC	Applicants for postgraduate scholarships: Final date for submission for students who wish to apply for postgraduate scholarships.
3 November 2014	The due date for students undertaking 200700 Law Honours Dissertation commencing at the 2014 Autumn Semester entry point is 3 November 2014. This submission date only applies to students who are NOT applying for postgraduate scholarships.
1 June 2015	The due date for students undertaking 200700 Law Honours Dissertation commencing at the 2014 Spring Semester entry point is 1 June 2015. This submission date only applies to students who are NOT applying for postgraduate scholarships.
TBC	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

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

- UWS Research Code of Practice

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.