

School of Science and Health

Honours Award Level Guidelines 2012

The Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy describes the framework for Honours at UWS. The School of Science and Health Honours Award Level Guidelines (2012) contains information specific to Honours degrees in the School. This policy reflects the UWS Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy, as well as guidelines that had been developed and implemented for the previous College of Health and Science.

The School offers Honours program in Health Science, Medical Science and Science. In most cases, an Honours degree is taken by students after completion of a three-year undergraduate degree program (end-on Honours). However, some programs (at present, Occupational Therapy) offer Honours degrees as part of their primary degree structure (embedded Honours). A list of Honours courses available in the School of Science and Health in 2012 is listed below:

- **3611.1** Bachelor of Science (Honours)
- **3610.1** Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours)
- **4657.1** Bachelor of Health Science (Honours)

In programs that offer an embedded honours degree, the bachelor honours course is identified as a unit set distinct from the pass degree.

- **4521.1** Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) Occupational Therapy (*embedded*)

Contact details:

Student Enquiries

Student should contact Tae McKnight with any queries related to honours:

Phone: 4620 3385, t.mcknight@uws.edu.au

Honours Academic Course Advisors:

to be announced

Occupational Therapy:

Dr Ros Bye, Ph: 4620 3353, email: R.Bye@uws.edu.au

Director of Higher Degree Research (incorporating responsibility for Honours), School of Science and Health:

Dr Graham Jones, Ph: 4620 3399, email: graham.jones@uws.edu.au

Applying for Honours

Applications for admission to end-on or embedded honours programs are made on-line at any time of the year following completion of threshold credit point requirements, or in the case of final year students applying for end-on honours, students must be enrolled in sufficient units to complete their degree. Although applications are accepted at any time of the year, the School has a midyear and end of year intake.

Applications will be considered by the Honours Academic Course Advisor (ACA) in consultation with the Director HDR to determine eligibility against Honours policy admission criteria. The Director HDR will make a recommendation of suitability for admission to Honours that will be given to the Dean of the School for approval. It is the responsibility of the Director HDR to ensure applications are forwarded to the Academic Registrar's Office.

Admission to an end-on or embedded honours program is determined on the basis of all of the four following criteria being met:

- i. Achievement of a threshold Admission Average Mark (AAM) equal to or above the minimum of 65. The AAM will normally be calculated on the basis of all units from program commencement. Admission to the Honours program will be restricted to students with a minimum AAM of 65. Students with an AAM of less than 65 may be admitted to Honours, providing their AAM during the last 2 years of their undergraduate degree was at least 65. In these cases, the student and their primary supervisor will be required to provide a letter justifying admission to Honours. Entry will be decided by a meeting between the Honours ACAs and the Director HDR, who will make a recommendation to the Dean.
- ii. Statement of Intent. This is a brief statement of between 500 to 1000 words describing the proposed research the student plans to undertake as an Honours student. This statement of intent must be written in consultation with, and approved by the proposed supervisor.
- iii. Demonstrated satisfactory academic writing skills appropriate to the discipline.
- iv. In instances where the number of applications exceeds the availability of supervised places, the School Research and Higher Degrees Committee (including the Director HDR, Director Research and the Dean) would rank applicants on the basis of AAMs.

- v. Applications for end-on or embedded Honours may be made after completion of a minimum of 200 credit points if the AAM is equal to or greater than 65 and if the course rules permit.

Honours Supervisory Panels

- i. The primary supervisor would normally be a member of the UWS Research Supervisor Register and will normally be qualified to PhD or Masters (Honours) level and have an established record of research or scholarly attainment in a relevant field.
- ii. Honours candidates will have a principal supervisor but may have co-supervisors.
- iii. Honours supervisors are directed to the Code of Conduct and Guide for Supervisors before commencing supervision.
- iv. Where a student is experiencing supervision problems, he/she will in the first instance approach their supervisor and/or co-supervisor. If necessary, the student should then contact the ACA who will facilitate management of supervision issues. In cases where the supervisor involved is also the Honours ACA, the student should approach the Director HDR. The ACA should consult with the Director HDR throughout such processes and, together with the Director HDR, a report will be prepared for the Dean.

Ethics Approvals

Ethics approval is formal approval of the proposed research study by the UWS Human Research Ethics Panel, or the UWS Animal Care and Ethics Committee, or the UWS Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committee, as indicated by the scope and nature of the study and ethical requirements and according to Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research available through the UWS Office of Research Services.

The principal supervisor of a full-time Honours student must have either obtained the appropriate ethics clearances (including from the School Peer Review Committee), and if necessary, Biosafety approval, or the applications must be submitted for processing by the relevant Committees, prior to the student's enrolment in Honours.

No experimental or field work can be undertaken without the appropriate ethics approvals.

Components of Honours Programs

Embedded and end-on honours programs will include compulsory Research Training and Significant Research components. The honours program may also have a third Optional Coursework Component. These components may be integrated or may be unit sets. The program's Academic Course Advisor (ACA) will monitor honours candidates to ensure that all complete the two compulsory components as a condition to apply for graduation. Each of these components of the Honours program is explained in more detail below:

1. Research Training Component

The compulsory Research Training component must include:

- a. Formal Research Proposal (including the literature review)
- b. Research Training Program: Students should attend a formal research training program supported by the primary supervisor. The research training program should be common to all Honours students for that program and should be devised with input and active participation from academic staff in the School. Part of the Research Training Program should include attendance at research seminars. It is the responsibility of the primary supervisor to ensure the student maintains a diary of attendance throughout the research training program. The diary should also be signed by the primary supervisor. The diary of attendance may also be viewed by the ACA.

The compulsory Research Training Component may also include, but should not be limited to training in the ethical conduct of research – for example, supervised preparation, or contribution to the preparation, of applications for consideration by the UWS Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committee, UWS Animal Care and Ethics Committee, UWS Human Research Ethics Committee, UWS Human Research Ethics Panel, or Peer Review Committee, depending upon the nature of the study.

2. Compulsory Significant Research Component (40-60 Credit Points)

An end-on or embedded Honours program must contain a Significant Research Component of 40 (embedded) or 60 (end-on) Credit Points.

Submission of Honours Theses for Grading

The timeframe for the examination process for Honours theses is restricted to ensure all Honours candidates are allocated an equitable amount of time to complete candidature requirements and to ensure that all candidates' grades are processed in time for consideration of higher degree scholarships.

1. The thesis submission date will be announced at the beginning of each Honours year
2. Students must submit a single pdf file containing their thesis to Turnitin.
3. Students must submit three 'soft-bound' copies of their thesis to the main office of the School of Science and Health reception on their home campus by the due date.

Examination of Honours Theses

Selection of Examiners for Theses

- i. It is anticipated that most of the examiners will be selected from the staff of the University of Western Sydney, providing staff with requisite expertise are available. External examiners may be appointed at the discretion of the School Research and Higher Degrees Committee. If external examiners are nominated, a short CV and justification should be provided. The cost of external examination will be paid for by the School.
- ii. Examiners must have at least a Bachelor Honours, First Class but normally will have a Masters or PhD with at least 3 years experience post-graduation. The qualifications and experience of the examiners will be scrutinised by the School Research and Higher Degrees Committee for the suitability of each examiner.
- iii. Two examiners are required for examination of a candidate's thesis.
- iv. The principal supervisor will provide a list of up to three potential examiners of the thesis to the School Research and Higher Degrees Committee. This committee will include the Honours ACAs and the Director HDR and will be responsible for the selection of two examiners, plus a third to act as an arbiter of the final thesis mark if required.
- v. The principal supervisor may also recommend that a specific examiner is not selected, but will need to provide justification for this request.
- vi. The identity of the examiners is confidential.
- vii. The examiners must not have worked with the Honours candidate on any aspect of their project work.

- viii. Examiners should undertake the thesis examination strictly independently. There should be no reference to another examiner, supervisors or anyone else involved in the student's project or the examination process. This needs to be made clear to examiners as part of the request to them to mark the thesis.

Examination of an Honours Thesis

- i. Theses will be distributed to examiners by the professional staff within one week of the deadline of Honours thesis submission.
- ii. Examiners will grade theses using the examination criteria detailed in the assessment sheet.
- iii. Examiners will make independent determinations on the significant research component and will each award a mark out of 100, which will be averaged to give a total score.
- iv. Examiners should submit their assessment sheet and a report summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis. Examiners should include a list of corrections (with page and line number, where appropriate), rather than state that these have been made on the thesis.
- v. Assessment sheets and examiners' reports should be e-mailed to Tae McKnight, t.mcknight@uws.edu.au.
- vi. Copies of examiners reports and PDF version of the thesis will be forwarded to the relevant ACA.
- vii. Hard copies of theses will not be returned to students.
- viii. Where there is a discrepancy of 10 or more marks between examiners or a difference in the examiner-recommended "grade", a third examiner will be used as an arbiter. The arbiter reads the thesis to reach an independent assessment of the work, and they read the examiners' reports and assess the conclusions that they have reached, and the arguments that they have used to justify these conclusions. The arbiter determines a mark and grade and this is the final examination result.
- ix. The arbiter then prepares the standard report on the quality of the thesis for the School Honours Committee/Research and Higher Degrees Committee, explaining their decision in relation to the reports of Examiners 1 and 2, and the published criteria for the different ranges of marks that may be awarded for a thesis. This report will also be tabled at the examination meeting (see point x.)
- x. Within one week of receiving all examiners reports, each Honours ACA will chair an examination meeting. Where there are a large number of theses in a particular program, it may be necessary for the ACA to chair multiple examination meetings. The purpose of

the examination meeting will be to review all thesis grades and reports. All UWS-based examiners, arbiters and supervisors should attend the meeting where relevant theses are discussed. Where possible, the Director HDR will attend each meeting.

- xi. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for academic staff to view the results of Honours students from across the School, with the expectation that such meetings will promote transparency and uniformity of assessment of Honours students. Any request to alter a final mark, including any that might arise as a result of the report and/or marks of the arbiter, will be dealt with through the normal appeals procedure outlined in the University of Western Sydney Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy.
- xii. Following the examination meeting, examiners' reports will be sent to principal supervisors. The examiners will receive all of the reports for the theses that they examined after finalisation of the level of Honours.
- xiii. The Director HDR, in consultation with the ACA for Honours considers examiner reports, marks and other information as specified in the School Honours Award Level Guidelines 2012 and recommends the level of award to the School Academic Committee, which approves the Honours award outcome.
- xiv. The final examination result is made available to students. Students will receive examiners reports and mark-sheets for their thesis after finalisation of their results.

School of Science and Health

Honours Thesis Assessment 2012

Instructions

Please complete the attached Assessment Sheet and Report. Both of these will be returned to the student and supervisor but your identity will be removed to keep the examination process confidential.

Assessment Sheet:

You must enter numerical values out of 100 into each of the assessment criteria. Please do not use ticks, crosses or leave these blank.

The final mark is the average of these values.

Report

Your report should summarise the strengths and weaknesses of this thesis. Please include a list of corrections rather than state that these have been made by you to the thesis.

Please email the assessment sheet and report to Tae McKnight (t.mcknight@uws.edu.au) within a week of receiving this thesis.

The examination of an Honours thesis must be an independent and confidential process and must not be discussed with other staff, including other examiners, the student's supervisors or of course the student. Your assessment sheet and report must remain confidential and should only be provided to the School Honours coordinator.

Thank you for your time and effort in marking this thesis.

School of Science and Health

Honours Thesis Assessment Sheet



Student: _____

Project Title: _____

Examiner's Name: _____

Criteria	Mark / 100
Abstract and Introduction (including Literature Review)	
Grasp of problem	
Description of techniques	
Quality, analysis and presentation of results	
Discussion of results	
Conclusions and suggestions for further work	
Significance of the research	
Clarity of expression	
Final Mark (average of above)	

Signature..... Date.....

A large rectangular area with a dotted border, intended for writing or drawing. The area is empty and occupies most of the page.

Please feel free to attach extra pages if required.

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH

HONOURS THESIS

EXAMINATION CRITERIA

≥ 95	An exceptional thesis in all respects. The work is both very highly significant and original, and could be published.
90 – 94	An outstanding thesis showing significant evidence of originality and insight, along with a wide knowledge of the subject area. Presented in a logical, accurate and concise manner. The work is significant or original and could be part of a published manuscript.
85 – 89	A very good thesis showing evidence of insight and critical thinking. Layout and details are very good, but possibly falling short on excellent presentation. Must carry the conviction that the work is thoroughly understood and its implications appreciated. The work is significant and original and could be part of a published manuscript.
80 – 84	A good comprehensive thesis showing good understanding of the work with reference to all of the relevant literature. Shows some insight or originality. Mostly accurate and logical. Presentation very good.
75 – 79	An adequate thesis showing good understanding of the work with reference to good coverage of the relevant literature. Shows some insight or originality. Mostly accurate and logical. Organisation and presentation good.
70 – 74	A fair thesis showing good understanding of the work, but probably more notable for content and organisation rather than insight and originality. Mostly accurate and logical. Presentation good.
65 – 69	A thesis with reference to most of the relevant literature. Mostly accurate and logical, but lacking in the synthesis of information and ideas. Presentation satisfactory.
60 – 64	A thesis showing little or no evidence of original thought, and poor coverage of the relevant literature. Analysis mostly accurate and logical; presentation adequate.
50 – 59	A thesis containing the basic relevant information, but with lapses in accuracy and somewhat illogical, or maybe a thesis showing satisfactory knowledge, but badly organised or presented.
≤ 49	Thesis does not meet the minimum requirements for award of Honours.

**School of Science and Health
Arbiter Honours Thesis Assessment 2012**



Instructions

As a third examiner, you are requested to arbitrate the previous two examinations of this Honours thesis. The Honours policy in the School of Science and Health specifies when a third examiner is required, and how the assessment of the arbiter is used to decide the final Honours mark.

Where there is a discrepancy of 10 or more marks between examiners or a difference in the examiner-recommended "grade", a third examiner will be used as an arbiter. As an arbiter, you are asked to first read the thesis to reach an independent assessment of the work. Next, read the examiners' reports and assess the conclusions that they have reached, and the arguments that they have used to justify these conclusions. You then prepare a standard report on the quality of the thesis for the School Honours Committee/Research and Higher Degrees Committee. This report will be de-identified and tabled at the examination meeting

Report

Your report should summarise the strengths and weaknesses of this thesis. Please include a list of corrections rather than state that these have been made by you to the thesis.

Please email the assessment sheet and report to Tae McKnight (t.mcknight@uws.edu.au) within a week of receiving this thesis.

The examination of an Honours thesis must be an independent and confidential process and must not be discussed with other staff, including other examiners, the student's supervisors or of course the student. Your assessment sheet and report must remain confidential and should only be provided to the School Honours coordinator.

Thank you for your time and effort in marking this thesis.

School of Science and Health



Honours Thesis Assessment Sheet (Arbiter)

Student: _____

Project Title: _____

Examiner's Name: _____

Criteria	Mark / 100
Abstract and Introduction (including Literature Review)	
Grasp of problem	
Description of techniques	
Quality, analysis and presentation of results	
Discussion of results	
Conclusions and suggestions for further work	
Significance of the research	
Clarity of expression	
Final Mark (average of above)	

Signature..... Date.....

A large rectangular area with a dotted border, intended for students to provide additional information or answers. The area is currently blank.

Please feel free to attach extra pages if required.

School of Science and Health Honours Award Level Guide

The final mark for Honours is calculated from the assessable components of the Honours Course. These degrees have slightly different weightings for the Research Training, Coursework and Significant

The School Research and Higher Degrees Committee will meet to consider the recommendations from each School for grading of Honours students before endorsement of the final grades by the School Academic Committee. The final overall grade allocated to each student is dependent on the overall performance in all Honours units:

Honours Level	Final Honours Mark
Class 1	≥ 85
Second Class Division 1	≥ 75
Second Class Division 2	≥ 65
Third	≥ 50

Components of Honours Degrees in the School of Science and Health and Calculation of Honours Levels

Course code	Course title	End-on or embedded course	Significant research component (SRC)	Research training component (RTC)	Coursework component	Calculation of Honours level
3610.1	Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours)	End-on	300412 Science, Technology and Environment Honours Project, 60cp	300747 Advanced Topics and Research Skills, 20 cp	NIL	75% SRC + 25% RTC
3611.1	Bachelor of Science (Honours)	End-on	300412 Science, Technology and Environment Honours Project, 60cp	300747 Advanced Topics and Research Skills, 20 cp	NIL	75% SRC + 25% RTC
4657	Bachelor of Health Science (Honours)	End-On	<p>60 credit point thesis required</p> <p>Option 1 – Full time 400898 - Honours Thesis in Health Science A 20 credit points + 400899 - Honours Thesis in Health Science B 40 credit points</p> <p>Option 2 – Part-time or mid-year intake 400898 - Honours Thesis in Health Science A 20 credit points + 400900 – Honours Thesis in Health Science C 20 credit points + 400901 - Honours Thesis in Health Science D 20 credit points</p>	400872 Honours Research Design and Methodology 20 credit points	NIL	SRC 75% RTC 25%