



## **School of Social Sciences and Psychology Honours Guidelines 2018**



| <b>EMBEDDED HONOURS COURSE TITLE</b>   | <b>HONOURS CONTACT DETAILS</b>  |
|--|---|
| 1865 Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)<br>1860 Bachelor of Psychological Studies (Honours)<br>1500/1834 Bachelor of Psychology (Embedded Honours)<br>1504 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Psychology | Dr Nida Denson<br>Building 21 Room G.12, Bankstown<br>Campus<br>Phone: (02) 9772 6849<br>Email:<br><a href="mailto:n.denson@westernsydney.edu.au">n.denson@westernsydney.edu.au</a> |

## 2018 Honours Award Level Guidelines

The Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy describes the framework for all Honours courses, both end-on and embedded, at WSU:

<https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=156&version=10>

These School Honours Award Level Guidelines contain procedural information specific to Honours degrees in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology. Some guidelines are specific to the discipline of Psychology, whose Honours programs must comply with the Accreditation Standards of the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC).

### Application Process

Students applying for the 1865 Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) or 1500/1834 Bachelor of Psychology (Embedded Honours) need to complete an online application to the School of Social Sciences and Psychology:

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ssap/ssap/courses/honours\\_programs/apply\\_for\\_psych\\_honours](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ssap/ssap/courses/honours_programs/apply_for_psych_honours).

Students applying for 1860 Bachelor of Psychological Studies (Honours) need to apply via the Online Application Portal: <https://applyonline.uws.edu.au/connect/webconnect>.

This degree is not open to applicants who completed their accredited psychology degree at an institution other than Western Sydney University (WSU). Applicants must have satisfactorily completed all units (i.e., 240 credit points) of the first three years of the Bachelor of Psychology, an accredited three-year WSU undergraduate Psychology course, or the WSU Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies.

Entry to the fourth year of the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) is limited to students who apply for Honours and have achieved an Average Admission Mark of 70+ [65+ for versions 1500 and 1834] in Level 2 and 3, including credit or higher grade in the majority of the Level 2 and Level 3 psychology units. Students who have successfully completed the first three years, but who do not achieve this standard, or do not apply for a place in the Honours program, will graduate with the Bachelor of Psychological Studies.

Entry into the School's APAC-accredited Bachelor of Psychological Studies (Honours) is limited to students who have completed the following courses at Western Sydney University in the last 10 years.

- Bachelor of Psychological Studies
- Bachelor of Social Sciences (Psychology)
- Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies
- Bachelor of Arts with a Key Program in Psychology
- Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Laws with a Key Program in Psychology

In addition, students must have obtained an Average Admission Mark of 70+ in Level 2 and 3, including Credit or higher grade in the majority of Level 2 and 3 psychology units.

Entry into Honours is restricted by supervisory capacity. Limited places are available in this course and meeting the admission criteria does not guarantee entry. Eligible students are selected in order of merit based on their Average Admission Mark in Level 2 and 3 units. There is no provision for deferring an offer of a place.

The final date for applications to be submitted is October 31 for entry into Honours for the following year.

## Procedures for assessing applications

Consistent with Clause 20 of the *Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy* applications are considered by the relevant “School Honours Coordinator to determine eligibility against Honours policy admission criteria; the Dean of the Human Research Ethics Committee School then approves or declines admission and advises the Associate Director, Admission and Enrolment”.

Where the number of applicants exceeds the availability of supervised places, the relevant School Honours Coordinator ranks applicants on the basis of Admission Average Marks (AAMs) and the other admission criteria and offers are made on the basis of the ranking process recommended by the School Academic Committee (see Appendix A) and the number of supervised places available in a given year.

## Criteria for Application

The criteria for application to an end-on or embedded Honours Programme are as required by the *Honours in the Bachelors Award Policy*, Clause 21.

- a. Achievement of a threshold Admission Average Mark (AAM) equal to, or above, the minimum of 65; and
- b. *Statement of Intent* or School equivalent [**psychology applicants will rank their preferred topic areas/labs**]; and
- c. Appointment of a principal supervisor by the Dean of the School; and Demonstrated satisfactory academic writing skills appropriate to the discipline [**In Psychology this is demonstrated by an AAM equal to or above 65 in all Level 2 and 3 units, including Credit or higher grade in the majority of Psychology units**]

**All students intending to apply for admission to Honours should consult with the relevant School Honours Coordinator before submitting their applications.**

## Calculation of the Admission Average Mark (AAM)

1. Following Clause 24 of the *Honours in the Bachelors Award Policy*, “The AAM will normally be calculated on the basis of all units from program commencement.” **In Psychology, the AAM is calculated on the basis of all Level 2 and 3 units.**
2. Following Clause 25, “In applications where advanced standing impedes the calculation of a whole-of-program AAM, results from a minimum of 80 Western Sydney University credit points chosen with the approval of the School Academic Committee, on the recommendation of the School Honours Coordinator, may be used”. **In Psychology, students must provide transcripts with marks where advanced standing contributes to the Level 2 and 3 AAM calculation. Where only a grade is available, the mid-point mark for that grade band will be used.**

## Statement of Intent or School equivalent

### Information for Psychology Applicants

For psychology applicants, there is no need for a Statement of Intent. Instead, applicants will rank their preference for labs / topic areas. Students may request a specific supervisor, and this will be taken into consideration when supervisors are allocated. However, there is no guarantee of allocation to any particular lab, topic area, or supervisor.

## Appointment of a Principal and or Co Supervisors

Appointment of supervisors will take place at the conclusion of the application phase, as

admission to the degree is subject to the availability of suitable supervisors and other resources. All Honours candidates must have a principal supervisor, and may have co-supervisors.

Principal supervisors should be qualified at the PhD or Masters (Honours) level, or have equivalence in professional standing, as well as having an established publishing and research track record. The minimum level of academic award required to supervise an Honours project is one at or above Honours level.

## **Ethics and/or Other Required Approvals**

All research carried out at WSU involving human participants must be in accordance with the [\*Research Code of Practice\*](#) that is guided by the following national guidelines:

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2007\)](#), and the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans \(2007\)](#).

Any Honours research that involves undertaking experiments, surveys, interviews, focus groups, or any other methodological approach involving human participants, requires ethics approval, the first step of which is submission to the appropriate Peer Review Committee. This Committee examines the research merit and integrity of applications to undertake Honours research (as well as all other unfunded research, excluding Higher Research Degree candidates). Your supervisor(s) can advise you about the submission of your ethics application. -

It is essential that you submit your application for ethics approval as a matter of **priority** at the earliest possible time during the Honours program, if not prior to the start of the official academic year. No experiment or fieldwork can be undertaken without the appropriate ethics approvals. WSU uses the Human Research Ethics Application (HREA). Guidance on completing this form can be obtained from [Guidance on applying for ethical review at WSU](#). In order to complete the application you will need to work closely with your supervisor (s), who will also be named on the HREA application submitted for your research.

In some instances students will conduct a study based on a model for which their supervisor has already received ethics approval. In most cases this will only require the submission of an amendment to the original at HREC level.

Ethics training associated with the completion of the HREA form is included as part of the *102528 Psychology Research Thesis* unit. In this unit students learn to draft an ethics application.

In addition, there are WSU workshops available to focus on research methods and completion of the HREA application. For further information about workshops relevant to Honours students please speak to your supervisor(s) or to the Psychology Honours Coordinator. It is highly recommended that you attend these workshops if possible.

Further information about ethics can be found at:

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/research\\_ethics\\_and\\_integrity](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/research_ethics_and_integrity)

## **Procedures for Dealing with Supervision issues**

As per Clause 30 of the *WSU Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy*: “Where a student is experiencing supervision problems, he/she will in the first instance approach their supervisor and/or co-supervisor, then if required the [relevant] School Honours Coordinator who will facilitate management of supervision issues. In cases where the [relevant] School Honours Coordinator is involved in supervision or supervision problems, the student may approach the relevant Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) for advice.”

## Honours Progression

Part G of the *WSU Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy*, which deals with progression can be found at: \_

<https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=156&version=10>

The normal period of candidature for students enrolled in an end-on Honours course is one year full-time, or its part-time equivalent. The timeframe for the examination process for Honours theses is restricted to ensure all School 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.

**The 2018 submission dates for Honours theses in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology are:**

- For psychology, **October 18**

## Procedure for Applying for an Extension of Submission Date

Extensions for submission of an Honours thesis are only granted under unforeseen, extenuating circumstances, and in compliance with the *WSU Special Consideration Policy*:

<https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=205&version=5>

Although students may apply for an extension for this purpose up to 3 working days before the original due date for submission of the thesis, the *Special Consideration Policy* Clause 36 states: "the application should be submitted as soon as the student is aware that he/she has extenuating circumstances that will affect studies for the session."

Please note the following clauses from the *WSU Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy* regarding applications for an extension to submit an Honours thesis:

(34) A student may apply for an extension of time for thesis submission up to three working days before the student's originally approved submission date. Extensions can only be granted in exceptional and compelling circumstances consistent with the provisions of the [Special Consideration Policy](#).

(35) The principles and procedure of that policy should be followed in making the application, but the application must be submitted to the School Honours Coordinator. The School Honours coordinator will recommend to the Dean or Deputy Dean of the School whether or not the extension should be granted, and in making that recommendation he/she will consult with the primary supervisor and/or co-supervisor. The Dean or Deputy Dean of the School will advise the student and the School Academic Committee in writing of the decision.

(36) Where an extension has been granted and the work is not submitted by the census date for the following semester teaching period, the student will normally be required to re-enrol in a non-award 20 credit point unit. The student's enrolment in the unit will not consume additional Student Learning Entitlement, but will incur a tuition fee liability.

Honours students should note that extensions are not normally granted beyond the end of semester 2H in 2018, and cannot extend beyond the census date for the following semester (i.e., Autumn 2019), except in the most extreme of circumstances. Students and supervisors also need to be aware that regardless of circumstances, late submission may make a student ineligible for consideration for a postgraduate scholarship determined at the December meeting of the University Research Committee.

The Request for Extension application form can be found at:

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/118273/00205\\_0916\\_Request\\_for\\_Extension-Web.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/118273/00205_0916_Request_for_Extension-Web.pdf)

## **Lodgement of Thesis**

Honours theses are to be submitted to the relevant School Honours Coordinator before the submission date as follows:

- For psychology, electronic submission through Turnitin on vUWS.

## **Examination Procedures**

### **Appointment of Examiners**

Examiners should typically hold a research Masters, PhD or Professional Doctorate, or equivalence in terms of professional standing and research experience in the field relevant to the thesis. As per Clauses 37 to 39 of the WSU *Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy* two examiners are recommended by the School Academic Committee and approved by the Dean or Deputy Dean of the School

- For psychology, the two examiners are normally internal to the School (except where the specialised nature of the topic requires the appointment of an external examiner), and an independent moderator is used to assure the quality and consistency of the internal examination. The recommended examiners are determined by the Psychology Honours Coordinator in consultation with the Psychology Undergraduate Director of Academic Programs, and forwarded to the School Academic Committee (See Appendices B and C)

As per Clause 40, “Examiners will not be supervisors or co-supervisors; 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”. Ideally examiners should not know students, or should have had minimal contact with the student in terms of their recent degree or Honours program.

### **Materials Sent to Examiners**

Materials forwarded by Schools to examiners include:

- 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;
- specific information concerning the School’s expectations of the nature, structure, length and presentation requirements of the research component of an Honours degree;
- information concerning the School’s expectations of the examiner (e.g., time frame by which examination needs to be completed, typically 2 weeks; what materials need to be forwarded back to the School to complete the examination process, how the examiner can advise the School as to whether they do or do not give their permission for their name to be released to the student at the conclusion of the examination process);
- the criteria and standards by which the examiner is expected to evaluate the research component with a sheet that summarises the examiner’s score out of 100 (See Appendices F and G for psychology).

## **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, the following provision applies:

(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”, the School Honours Coordinator may take one or more of the following actions:

- a) invite the examiners to confer with each other and/or with the School Research and High Degrees Committee with a view to presenting a consolidated recommendation;
- b) appoint an experienced marker of bachelor (honours) theses as a third examiner who will act as an arbiter; following review of the thesis and the other examiners’ reports the arbiter determines the mark and grade on the basis of the published criteria and standards for the thesis; this is the final examination result for recommendation to the School Academic Committee.

In SSAP, the policy is to take action b and always appoint a third examiner when there is a discrepancy of 10 or more marks.

- When there is a difference in grade, the discrepancy is less than 10 marks and one marker recommends a fail, action b will be adopted.
- When there is a difference in grade, the discrepancy is less than 10 marks, and both grades are Pass grades, action a will be adopted.
- When the discrepancy is less than 10 marks within the same grade, the two marks will be averaged.

## **Appointment of Arbiters**

In the School, the procedures for the arbitration/third examiner processes vary according to the size and specialization of the program (see Arbitration Process below).

### **Arbiters in Large Programs**

Arbiters should be specialists in the thesis area, or be eminent, experienced academics with a strong background in supervising and examining Honours work.

### **Arbiters in Small Specialised Programs**

The arbiter is selected on the basis of her/his seniority (level C, D or E) and is not necessarily a specialist in the thesis area but should have a strong background in supervising and examining Honours work.

## **Arbitration Process and Outcomes**

Materials forwarded by Schools to examiners include:

- specific information concerning the School’s expectations of the nature, structure, length and presentation requirements of the research component of an Honours degree;
- information concerning the School’s expectations of the examiner (e.g., time frame by which examination needs to be completed),
- the criteria and standards by which the arbiter is expected to evaluate the research component with a sheet that summarises the examiner’s score out of 100 (See Appendices A and B for psychology).

The arbiter reads a clean copy of the thesis determining an independent mark. After having determined an independent mark, the arbiter is given copies of the reports completed by examiners 1 and 2. After reading the reports, the arbiter reassesses all three marks determining a final mark for the thesis within the limits of the marks given by Examiners 1 and 2. The arbiter

then prepares the standard report on the quality of the thesis as well as a brief report explaining the decision in relation to the reports of examiners 1 and 2. The arbiter forwards the reports to the relevant Honours Coordinator who is responsible for submitting them to the School Academic Committee.

Arbiters should be specialists in the thesis area, or be eminent, experienced academics with a strong background in supervising and examining Honours work.

In Psychology, a random selection of 20% of the theses will go to an arbiter each year.

## **Processing Honours Award Levels**

The total score across the thesis and the course work components received by the candidate determines the level of award for Honours. Graded coursework units only have marks proportionally added then averaged, before addition with the thesis mark. The relevant Honours Coordinator completes the School's *Notification of Honours Grade and Level* summary sheet (Appendix D) providing a final mark out of 100 for each candidate, a detailed statement as to the calculation of the scores, and a breakdown of all award component scores. For Psychology, the overall Honours mark is calculated as follows: Thesis (37.5%), Research Methods (25%), Theory and Practice (12.5%), Advanced Topics (12.5%), and Counselling and Consultation (12.5%). **However, the award of Honours Class I in Psychology (1500, 1504, 1860, and 1865) requires a mark of 85-100% for the combined Research and Coursework components.**

| <b>Honours Class</b>    | <b>Final Honours Mark</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Class 1                 | ≥ 85                      |
| Second Class Division 1 | ≥ 75                      |
| Second Class Division 2 | ≥ 65                      |
| Third                   | ≥ 50                      |

The School Academic Committee undertakes the final endorsement of Honours.

## **Processing and finalizing Honours Marks and Level of Award**

The relevant Honours Coordinator considers examiner reports, marks, and other information as specified in the School Honours Award Level Guidelines and recommends the level of award to the School Academic Committee, which approves the Honours award outcome.

After each teaching session in which Honours awards are made, the School Academic Committee sends a written report to the Bachelor (Honours) Committee of Academic Senate, including a summary of the approved honours results, any significant variability, anomalies and trends, any extensions on thesis submission dates, and any recommendations about assessment policies and practices.



## Psychology Key Dates - Summary


|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| March     | Confirm student enrolment in relevant Autumn semester Honours units. (HECS census) |
| August    | Confirm student enrolment in relevant Spring semester Honours units. (HECS census) |
| September | Confirmation of examiners  |
| October   | Submission of Honours thesis   |
| November  | School Academic Committee meeting  |
| December  | University Research Committee meeting  |

| <b>Date</b>                          | <b>Requirements</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Late August</b>                   |  |
| <b>Early October</b>                 | <p>The candidate lodges three electronic copies on the unit vUWS site.</p> <p>The Psychology Honours Coordinator allocates each thesis to the most appropriate first examiner and second examiner from among that year's Psychology Honours supervisors (excluding the student's supervisor) and requests that the examination process be finalised within 2 weeks. The examination results need to be back no later than the end of October. Finally an external moderator with a broad understanding of the discipline is identified. The role of the external moderator is to review a random selection of theses (i.e., 20%) and the marks of the first and second examiner and submit a report to the Psychology Honours Coordinator.</p> |
| <b>Last week of October</b>          | <p>Examiners' reports received. Arbiter / or arbitration panel engaged to deal with results requiring third marker or arbitration.</p> <p>The Psychology Honours Coordinator prepares and submits <i>Notification of Honours Grade and Level</i> summary sheet (Appendix D) to the School Academic Committee (SAC).</p>  |
| <b>End of first week of November</b> | <p>The SAC meets to determine the level of Honours to be awarded and reports results.</p> <p>The School's Research and Higher Degree Committee meets to rank scholarship applications.</p>   |
| <b>Second week of November</b>       | Final grades lodged with the Registrar's Office.   |

# Appendix A: Honours Applications Summary Form

Example of form as generated from SharePoint List

School of Social Sciences and Psychology




## Honours Applications Summary

For ratings of Statement of Intent, and Applicant Quality: 1=Excellent, 2=Very good, 3=Satisfactory, 4=Marginally satisfactory, 5=Poor.

| Applicant Name  | UWS ID | AAM (Must be >65) | Rating: Statement | Rating: Applicant | Proposed Supervisor | School Recommendation | Reject Reason  | SAC Recommendation |
|---|--------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------|
| <b>Count = 2</b>  |        |                   |                   |                   |                     |                       |  |                    |
| <b>Year: 2013 (2)</b>   |        |                   |                   |                   |                     |                       |  |                    |
| <b>Count = 2</b>  |        |                   |                   |                   |                     |                       |  |                    |
| <b>Course: 1500 Bachelor of Psychology - Embedded Honours (2)</b> |        |                   |                   |                   |                     |                       |  |                    |
| <b>Count = 2</b>  |        |                   |                   |                   |                     |                       |  |                    |
| Another Applicant   |        | 67.5              | 4                 | 5                 |                     | Reject                | Shows little evidence of aptitude for independent research | Reject             |
| Test Student  |        | 86.5              | 3                 | 2                 | Dr. John Jones      | Accept                |  | Accept             |

# Appendix B: Recommendation for Honours Examiners

Example of form, data for which is generated from SharePoint Lists

|  |   |                             |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| School of Social Sciences and Psychology   |  |                             |
| <b>Honours Applications Summary</b>  |   |                             |
| <p><b>Guidelines:</b> Examiners typically hold a research Masters, PhD or Professional Doctorate, or equivalence in terms of professional standing and research experience in the field relevant to the thesis. Two examiners are recommended by the School Honours Coordinator and forwarded to the School Academic Committee. In keeping with the UWS Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy, Schools will either appoint two external examiners, or one external and one internal, or two internal to UWS with a mandatory independent moderation process to assure quality and consistency of the internal examination.</p> |   |                             |
| <b>1. Student and Thesis Details</b>   |   |                             |
| Student  |   |                             |
| Student ID   |   |                             |
| Course   |   |                             |
| Supervisor   |   |                             |
| Thesis Title   |   |                             |
| Examiner 1   |   |                             |
| Examiner 2   |   |                             |
| <b>2. Proposed First Examiner</b>  |   |                             |
| Name   |   |                             |
| Qualification  |   |                             |
| Position   |   |                             |
| Telephone  |   |                             |
| Fax  |   |                             |
| Email  |   |                             |
| Time-frame   | Yes, agreed to examine in time-frame available                                      |                             |
| Conflict   | No Conflict of Interest   |                             |
| Expertise  |   |                             |
| <b>3. Proposed Second Examiner</b>   |   |                             |
| Name   |   |                             |
| Qualification  |   |                             |
| Position   |   |                             |
| Telephone  |   |                             |
| Fax  |   |                             |
| Email  |   |                             |
| Time-frame   | Yes, agreed to examine in time-frame available                                      |                             |
| Conflict   | No Conflict of Interest   |                             |
| Expertise  |   |                             |
| <b>4. Certification</b>  |   |                             |
| I acknowledge that the nominated examiners have not participated in the research and development of the submitted thesis.  |   |                             |
| Supervisor Signature:  | Date:   |                             |
| <b>5. Approval of Examiners</b>  |   |                             |
| The School Academic Committee recommends that:   |   |                             |
| Examiner 1 is approved   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>  | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Examiner 2 is approved   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>  | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Signed:  | Date:   |                             |
| Dean (or nominee):   |   |                             |

## Appendix C: Summary of Quality Assurance Processes for Appointment of Honours Examiners

Example of form as generated from SharePoint List, where:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Status             | Internal or External  |
| Qualifications     | Highest academic qualification  |
| Examiner Rationale | Rationale if School has been unable to appoint an internal and external examiner or if an examiner has been approved that does not hold either an Honours 1st Class, M (Hons), Professional Doctorate, or PhD qualification in the substantive area |

School of Social Sciences and Psychology

### Summary of Quality Assurance Processes for the Appointment of Honours Examiners

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**Register of Students**

| Student  | Student ID | Ex1 Status | Ex1 Qualifications | Ex2 Status | Ex2 Qualifications | Ex3 Status | Ex3 Qualifications | Examiner Rationale |
|--|------------|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <p>Year: <b>2012</b> (38)</p> <p>Course: 1500 Bachelor of Psychology - Embedded Honours (27)</p> |            |            |                    |            |                    |            |                    |                    |

## Appendix D: Notification of Honours Grade and Level

Example of form as generated from SharePoint List

School of Social Sciences and Psychology

### Notification of Honours Grade and Level

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**Register of Students**

| Student  | Student ID | Unit 100983 | Unit 101420 | Unit 100981 | Coursework | Examiner Status | Mark 1 | Mark 2 | Mark 3 | Thesis Final | Final Mark | Honours Grade | Comments |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------------|------------|---------------|----------|
| <p>Year: <b>2012</b> (38)</p> <p>Course: 1500 Bachelor of Psychology - Embedded Honours (27)</p> |            |             |             |             |            |                 |        |        |        |              |            |               |          |

## **Appendix F: Criteria and Standards for Marking a Quantitative, Qualitative, or Mixed Methods Thesis at Fourth Year (Including Honours) Level**

### **102528 Psychology Research Thesis**

A research report or thesis is an integrated work that must ultimately be judged for its *overall* coherence, technical competence, conceptual depth, originality, professionalism, and academic writing sophistication. It is also a capstone piece of work in the fourth year of an accredited psychology degree, and, as such, serves to demonstrate the overall standard of professional knowledge and skill that has been attained by the student, and the student's capacity to perform *academically* as an emerging psychological scientist, or scientist-practitioner.

The criteria are in the form of anchors with required criteria for a first class thesis or equivalent on the left, and criteria that would be apparent in a failed work on the right. Each section is judged according to the standards on the next page, with no further indication on the criteria pages, given it is not possible to cover the many possible ways to depart from first class or equivalent criteria. Examiners may indicate particular weaknesses on the criteria pages when examining the thesis.

**Standards by Which a Research Report or Thesis is Evaluated**

| HD or Honours Class 1   |   | D or Honours Class 2-1  |   | C or Honours Class 2-2  |   | P or Honours Class 3  | Fail/ Honours Not Awarded  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Band 1a 95%+  | Band 1b 85% – 94%   | Band 1 80% – 84%  | Band 2 75% -79%   | Band 1 70% - 74%  | Band 2 65%- 74%   | 50% - 64%   | 0% - 49%   |
| <p>The criteria are met at the highest level of technical accuracy, conceptual depth, critical and creative thinking, and/or originality that can be expected for an Honours level thesis.</p> <p>Clarity, precision, sophistication, and excellent structural and logical development, and presentation (including adherence to APA style) characterise the written work.</p> <p>Perfection is not expected (not even possible), however, any weaknesses are atypical and so minor as not to detract from the overall quality.</p> | <p>The work has similar characteristics to 1a, but with minor weaknesses in some aspects.</p> <p>It rarely achieves the level of excellence, polish, and/or originality that typifies 1a.</p> | <p>The criteria are met at a level that is conceptually and technically competent, but not outstanding.</p> <p>Logical continuity is evident most of the time. Conceptual and critical depth, creative thinking, and/or originality are often evident, but not as consistently as for HD/Class 1.</p> <p>The work is well structured and clearly written, with a high standard of presentation. (including APA style)</p> <p>There may be some minor weaknesses. Any more serious weakness is offset by competence otherwise.</p> | <p>The criteria are met at a level that is technically competent, perhaps with some conceptual limitations, but none that are significant.</p> <p>Logical continuity is evident more often than not, but may lack elegance at times. There is at least the odd instance of conceptual and critical depth, creative thinking, and/or originality.</p> <p>The work is mostly well structured and clearly written, with a high standard of presentation. (including APA style).</p> <p>There may be a number of minor weaknesses. Any more serious weakness is offset by competence otherwise.</p> | <p>The thesis demonstrates basic competence in meeting most of the criteria, but generally lacks, conceptual and critical depth, creative thinking, and/or originality, or high-level technical skill.</p> <p>The writing may tend to be more naive (less scholarly); and/or may not always be well structured, clear, or exhibit logical continuity.</p> <p>There may be a number of errors, some more serious, but none so serious as to entirely undermine the overall integrity of the research or its interpretation.</p> <p>Presentation and APA style may be wanting at times.</p> | <p>The thesis demonstrates basic competence in meeting most of the criteria, although there are clear inadequacies in the handling of one or more aspects.</p> <p>Conceptual and scholarly sophistication is not apparent. Technical skill may be deficient in places; originality is absent.</p> <p>There may be critical misconceptions, inconsistencies, omissions, or failings in one or more areas. The work should retain a degree of overall integrity.</p> <p>Writing, structure, presentation, and/or APA style may be unsophisticated, with various errors.</p> | <p>The thesis demonstrates only a basic grasp of the criteria, with little if any evidence of proficiency, and many inadequacies.</p> <p>While the various sections are basically intact, they contain a number of misconceptions, inconsistencies, omissions, or unrecognized deficiencies.</p> <p>Writing, structure, presentation, and APA style will be at minimum standards throughout, or highly variable, making the thesis generally difficult for the marker to read and understand.</p> | <p>The work cannot be considered as a serious attempt to complete the basic requirements of an Honours standard thesis.</p> <p>Deficiencies are general and many, and neither the thesis nor the research upon which it reports have credibility.</p> <p>Structure, presentation and use of APA style may be unacceptable.</p> <p>Any evidence of plagiarism will result in a fail grade for the thesis.</p> |

|   |  |                               |   |
|---|--|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Thesis Title</b>   |  |                               |   |
| <b>Student Name</b>   |  | <b>Student ID:</b>            |   |
| <b>Examiner</b>   |  | <b>Date examined:</b>         |   |
| <i>Using the categories below, and based on evaluations on the following pages, which are made available to the student, I award this Thesis/Project a Grade of</i> |  | <i>With a numeric mark of</i> | % |

| <b>HONOURS GRADE</b>                  | <b>GRADUATE DIPLOMA</b> | <b>MARK RANGE</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>First Class Honours</b>            | <b>High Distinction</b> |                   |
| 1+                                    | HD+                     | 95-100            |
| 1                                     | HD                      | 85-94             |
| <b>Second Class Honours (Level 1)</b> | <b>Distinction</b>      |                   |
| 2-1+                                  | D+                      | 80-84             |
| 2-1                                   | D                       | 75-79             |
| <b>Second Class Honours (Level 2)</b> | <b>Credit</b>           |                   |
| 2-2+                                  | C+                      | 70-74             |
| 2-2                                   | C                       | 65-69             |
| <b>Third Class Honours</b>            | <b>Pass</b>             |                   |
| 3                                     | P                       | 50-64             |
| <b>Honours Not Awarded</b>            | <b>Fail</b>             |                   |
| F                                     | F                       | 0-49              |

## Criteria for Evaluating a Research Report or Thesis (According to the Standards on Page 2)

**Student Name**

**Student ID:**

|  | Passing Criteria  |   | Failing Criteria  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Title page and Abstract (5 points)</b></p> <p>HD = 4.5+<br/>D = 4<br/>C = 3.5<br/>P = 2.5-3<br/>F = 0-2</p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the journal appropriate for the paper? (topic aligned)</li> <li>Does the title capture the focus/outcome of the study?</li> <li>Is the study aim clearly stated within the broader field of inquiry?</li> <li>Are there sufficient details on the study's methodology?</li> <li>Are the key findings included?</li> <li>Are implications and/or recommendations stated?</li> <li>Is the abstract within the journal's word count and articulate?</li> </ul>   | <p>HD <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>    D <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>    C <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>    P <input type="checkbox"/>    F <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No title page</li> <li>Generally lacking key elements</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Introduction (20 points)</b></p> <p>HD = 17+<br/>D = 15-16.5<br/>C = 13-14.5<br/>P = 10-12.5<br/>F = 0-9.5</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the aim clearly stated?</li> <li>Are key variables/factors/experiences identified and defined?</li> <li>Is current and comprehensive literature (including key seminal works) reviewed?</li> <li>Is the literature review critical and synthesized?</li> <li>Is the literature review considered from a relevant/nominated theoretical perspective?</li> <li>Are the research questions and corresponding hypotheses (where relevant) included and rationalized?</li> <li>Is there any indication of the research design and how it permits the inferences needed to examine the hypotheses or provide answers to the research question?</li> <li>Is the psychology relevance and/or application clearly stated?</li> </ul> | <p>HD <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>    D <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>    C <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>    P <input type="checkbox"/>    F <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim is unclear</li> <li>Vague, generalised indication of research area, if any at all; token, if any, indication of why it deserves further research attention.</li> <li>Introduction is not coherent, and may also include some/all of: omission of key theoretical perspectives; major omission of relevant empirical work; inclusion of irrelevant/peripheral literature; lack of logical continuity or direction; descriptive list of studies with little/no critical review; or poor understanding of the literature.</li> <li>Research question(s) and hypothesis(es) are not coherent, and/or have no defensible rationale derived from previous argumentation.</li> <li>Very poor, or absent integration of research question(s) into proposed research design.</li> <li>Unrealistic or unanswerable research question(s) within the scope of the proposed design</li> </ul> |



|  | Passing Criteria  |  |   |   |                            | Failing Criteria           |  |
|--|---|--|---|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Methods (20 points)</b></p> <p>HD = 17+<br/>D = 15-16.5<br/>C = 13-14.5<br/>P = 10-12.5<br/>F = 0-9.5</p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are participants, procedure, measures, and study design clearly presented with sufficient level of details?</li> <li>Are those subsections clearly delineated (i.e., content of each under correct subsection)?</li> <li>Are measures/tools detailed enough to ascertain their use and scoring?</li> </ul>   | HD <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | D <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | C <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The research design is not described, is not appropriate for the research, has significant missing elements, is clearly not understood, and/or is not coherent.</li> <li>Important aspects of the participants, materials, procedure, and data analyses are absent, incomplete, uninterpretable, or not appropriate.</li> <li>The reporting may be rambling, disjointed, and/or incoherent.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Results (25 points)</b></p> <p>HD = 21.5-25<br/>D = 19-21<br/>C = 16.5-18.5<br/>P = 12.5-16<br/>F = 0-12</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the results presented in alignment with the research questions/ hypotheses? Is sufficient information on data management and descriptive data included?</li> <li>Are results presented clearly and according to APA requirements?</li> <li>Are tables appropriately titled and abbreviations and terms explained?</li> <li>Are the results clearly presented in terms of significant/non-significant findings (e.g., <i>p</i>-values, effect sizes) (quantitative)</li> <li>Are the results clearly presented and findings analysed and supported with illustrations in relation to substantive themes and key findings (qualitative)</li> </ul> | HD <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | D <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | C <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | P <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any evidence of cheating, falsifying of data, or deliberate misrepresentation of the results will result in a fail grade for the entire thesis.</li> <li>A capacity to analyse research data is fundamentally lacking, through evidence such as: use of inappropriate analyses; conducting the analyses incorrectly; inaccurate interpretation of analyses; inaccurate reporting of results, ignorance or misunderstanding of the relevant assumption, failure to provide appropriate supporting data or to use them correctly; rambling, disorganised and/or incoherent write up of results; and data presented is idiosyncratic, deductively produced, and/or lade with value judgments.</li> </ul> |

|   | Passing Criteria   |   | Failing Criteria  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Discussion (25 points)</b></p> <p>HD = 21.5-25<br/>D = 19-21<br/>C = 16.5-18.5<br/>P = 12.5-16<br/>F = 0-12</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the discussion organized in line with the study's aims/research questions?</li> <li>• Does the discussion open with a clear statement supporting/not-supporting the hypotheses/research questions?</li> <li>• Are the findings critically integrated with the existing literature?</li> <li>• Is the significance and/or novelty of the study clearly stated?</li> <li>• Is the relevance of the study to psychology application clearly stated?</li> <li>• Are strengths and limitations comprehensively presented?</li> <li>• Are future directions/recommendations provided, particularly in relation to psychology implications/applications of this research study?</li> <li>• Are future directions/recommendations aligned with the study's findings and broader literature?</li> <li>• Is there a conclusion providing a reasoned and justifiable commentary on the importance of the findings – tightly reasoned, self-contained, and not over-stated?</li> </ul> | <p>HD <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>      D <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>      C <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>      P <input type="checkbox"/>      F <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening statement is absent, uninterpretable or completely erroneous.</li> <li>• No integration of the findings with existing literature.</li> <li>• Wild and unjustified speculation may be present, with interpretations that go beyond what the data and findings allow.</li> <li>• Suggestions for future research may be irrelevant, unjustified, or unrealistic.</li> <li>• No concluding paragraph.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Reference &amp; Appendices (5 points)</b></p> <p>HD = 4.5+<br/>D = 4<br/>C = 3.5<br/>P = 2.5-3<br/>F = 0-2</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are references presented according to the APA's current referencing style?</li> <li>• Is the referencing style consistently applied?</li> <li>• Are the references complete both in text and in the reference list (no missing details)?</li> <li>• Does this section include: ethics clearance letter, journal manuscript preparation guidelines, surveys/qualitative research questions, key statistical analyses output and/or qualitative data?</li> </ul>  | <p>HD <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>      D <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>      C <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>      P <input type="checkbox"/>      F <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference list and/or in-text referencing departs seriously from APA referencing conventions; there may be a significant lack of correspondence between in-text referencing citations and entries in reference list; reference list may contain entries that could not have been read by the student.</li> <li>• Required appendices are missing; inappropriate or unnecessary appendices (e.g., raw data) are included; statistical output may be dumped in its entirety rather than edited.</li> </ul> |

**Coherence and academic quality of the work as a whole, and in view of the relative importance of its strengths and weaknesses:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>The overall impact of the thesis as a whole, through integration of the level of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conceptual depth, critical capacity, intellectual sophistication</li><li>• Original and independent thinking and interpretation</li><li>• Sophistication of writing and logical construction</li><li>• Technical competence and mastery</li></ul>  |  |
| <p>Comments on any other considerations to be taken into account in awarding the final grade. These may include the overall level of complexity of the project, the resources available to the student (e.g., capacity to access a highly relevant sample of sufficient size); amount of time and effort required to conduct the project; level of supervisor assistance/support; or limitations affecting the quality of the data as might arise in the context of group projects. (<b>Note:</b> Students must always demonstrate appropriate awareness of the implications of any limitations, particularly for the interpretation of the results.)</p> |  |

## Appendix H: 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

**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.

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

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 WSU 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.