

COURSE TITLE (HONOURS)	HONOURS CONTACT DETAILS
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, (Honours)	Prof Phillipa Hay, MBBSHONS@westernsydney.edu.au

The Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy describes the framework for Embedded Honours, at Western Sydney University: <http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00156>

These School Honours Award Level Guidelines contain procedural information specific to Embedded Honours within the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery Degree in the School of Medicine.

APPLICATION PROCESS

An application to conduct research towards MBBS Honours can be submitted, to the School of Medicine Research and Higher Degree Committee, anytime between the completion of Unit 400861 (Foundations of Medicine 1) and before commencement of Unit 400811 (Integrated Clinical Rotations 2).

Students who are tracking towards an overall GPA of equal to or greater than 5.5 may apply for approval for a research project that will count towards an Honours award. If subsequently their GPA falls below 5.5 they will not be awarded Honours but their research activities will stand on their own merits.

Following approval of an Honours research project, students can start accumulating research activities towards their Research Portfolio.

The following is required:

- a. Submission of a research proposal (*Embedded Honours Research Proposal Pre-MBBS(Hons)* form available on vUWS.

This form requires a brief statement covering the following:

- Project Aims & Background
- Research Question and Hypothesis
- Method
- Timeline and Expected Outcomes
- Ethics Approval

The Research Proposal must be written in consultation with, and approved by, the proposed principal supervisor. The research can be conducted in a clinic or laboratory; it can be a clinical audit, epidemiological study or biomedical investigation. A literature review, in isolation, is not considered an appropriate body of research, unless it takes the form of a Systematic Review.

The principal supervisor should have either obtained the appropriate ethics clearances and, if necessary, Biosafety approval, or submitted the applications to the relevant committees before the form is submitted. The Research and Higher Degrees Committee may consider and advise on a proposal without HREC approval in place but the Pre-Approval will not be granted.

- b. Submission of a completed *Supervision Agreement*, available on vUWS.

Procedures for assessing applications

Admission to the School of Medicine Embedded Honours Program is dependent on the review and approval of the Research Proposal and nominated project supervisor(s) by the School of Medicine Research and Higher Degrees Committee, of which the Dean is a member.

Criteria for admission

Due to the GPA requirements for the Honours Award, Unit 401172 (Honours Project, Medicine) is restricted to students enrolled in 4641 MBBS or 4671 MBBS BA who have achieved an overall course GPA ≥ 5.5 (combining grades from 400861 Foundations of Medicine 1, 400862 Foundations of Medicine 2, 400810 Integrated Clinical Rotations 1, 400811 Integrated Clinical Rotations 2 and 400977 Integrated Clinical Rotations 3) in order for the student to have a realistic expectation of achieving an Honours School of Medicine Honours Award Level Guidelines 2019

Award ≥ Class II Division II. Students must be concurrently enrolled in Unit 400978 (Integrated Clinical Rotations 4) in Session 2H to be enrolled in this Unit. Prior to enrolment in the Unit, students must have satisfactorily completed a Research Portfolio.

Unit 401172 is the vehicle whereby a student submits their dissertation for examination.

Appointment of a principal and/or co-supervisors

- Embedded Honours students will have one principal supervisor and may have one or more co-supervisors where appropriate.
- An Embedded Honours student's principal supervisor will normally be qualified to Masters level, or equivalent, as well as having an established publishing and research track record.
- Supervisors will usually be from within the School of Medicine or its teaching hospitals, or from the School of Science and Health or School of Nursing and Midwifery.
- It is strongly recommended that MBBS Honours supervisors be academics or clinicians who are on the Western Sydney University Graduate Supervisor Register. This means that they have a research track record, including qualifications in research such as Masters and PhD, publications and grants.
- If a student intends to work with a supervisor who does not have a research track record, then a second or co-supervisor who is affiliated with the School of Medicine will be required.
- Supervisors may be external to Western Sydney University but they should either be endorsed by the equivalent research supervisor register of their university and/or have a demonstrable research track record.
- Students requiring ethics approval from Western Sydney University will also need an internal supervisor.
- The *Embedded Honours Research Proposal Pre-MBBS(Hons)* form sets out the information required about your proposed supervisor.

Ethics and/or other required approvals

Ethics approval is formal approval of the proposed research study by a Human Research Ethics Panel, Animal Care and Ethics Committee, and/or Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committee, as dictated by the scope and nature of the study. Approval may be sought from hospital/institution based committees but, in most circumstances, must be also approved by the respective Western Sydney University committees prior to a student undertaking research. Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research can be accessed via the Western Sydney University Office of Research Services.

No research can be undertaken without the appropriate ethics approvals. Therefore, due to the relatively short life of the project, it is highly recommended that students undertake a project which already has ethics approval in place.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUPERVISION ISSUES

Principal and co-supervisors, as well as students, are required to review and sign the *Supervision Agreement*. This agreement outlines both the student and supervisor responsibilities.

Where a student is experiencing supervision problems, he/she will, in the first instance, approach their supervisor and/or co-supervisor. If required the MBBS Embedded Honours Coordinator can be contacted at MBBSHONS@westernsydney.edu.au and she will facilitate management of supervision issues. In cases where the MBBS Embedded Honours Coordinator is involved in supervision or supervision problems, the student may approach the relevant Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) for advice.

HONOURS PROGRESSION

Section 3, Part G of the Western Sydney University Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy, which deals with progression can be found at: <http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00156#p7>

The School of Medicine offers an Honours degree as part of their primary MBBS degree structure. The Embedded Honours program consists of 200 hours of research conducted concurrently with their MBBS course work.

Upon submission of the Research Portfolio, the principal supervisor will be required to warrant that the student has made satisfactory progress, according to requirements set out in the Unit Outline and Learning Guide.

Procedure for applying for an extension of submission date

The **Request for Extension** form and information regarding eligibility can be found at:

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/118273/00205_0916_Request_for_Extension-Web.pdf

Extensions can only be granted in exceptional and compelling circumstances, as outlined in the form. All requests for extension must be submitted to the School Embedded Honours Coordinator at MBBSHONS@westernsydney.edu.au.

An application for an extension does not automatically mean that an extension will be approved.

Information about **Special Consideration** can be found at:

http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/services_and_facilities/disability_service/academic_integration_plans/applying_for_special_consideration

The full Special Consideration policy can be viewed at:

<http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00205>

The University has specific criteria, requirements (e.g. supporting documentation) and set deadlines for applying for extension of time or special consideration and students are strongly encouraged to read the relevant sections of the Assessment and Examinations policies. Refer <http://www.uws.edu.au/policies>

LODGEMENT OF THESIS

The due date for submission of the Honours dissertation is Friday 6 September 2019.

The student will submit their dissertation electronically through Turnitin and will also email a copy to their principal supervisor. The submission must be accompanied by a *Dissertation Lodgment form* wherein the principal supervisor certifies that the dissertation is in a form suitable for examination.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Appointment of Examiners

The requirements for examination of Embedded Honours dissertations are:

- a) Two examiners are required for examination of the candidate's dissertation.
- b) The principal supervisor will be invited to recommend two examiners and a reserve examiner who will act as arbiter if necessary. Supervisor nomination of examiners is a recommendation only, and the nominated examiners may not necessarily be accepted by the School of Medicine Academic Committee. The School Academic Committee will recommend examiners for the significant research component to the Dean or Deputy Dean of the School for approval.
- c) The principal supervisor may also recommend that a specific examiner is not selected, but will need to provide justification for this request.

- d) The identity of the examiners will not be revealed to the student or supervisor(s) under any circumstances.
- e) Examiners may be external or internal to Western Sydney University.
- f) Examiners must normally hold a qualification at or above Honours and have a record of research or scholarly attainment in a relevant field. The qualifications and experience of the examiners will be scrutinised by the School of Medicine Academic Committee.
- g) The School of Medicine will ensure that new staff either have experience in supervising and examining Honours dissertations at a previous University, or receive professional development and appropriate mentoring to undertake such roles prior to being appointed as an examiner. This is of particular importance when staff are appointed from overseas and may not be familiar with Australian Honours programs.
- h) The examiners must not have worked with the Honours candidate on any aspect of their project work.
- i) Examiners should undertake the dissertation 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 will be made clear to examiners as part of the request to them to mark the dissertation.

Materials Sent to Examiners

The School of Medicine Embedded Honours Coordinator will ensure that each examiner is sent all relevant information and instructions pertaining to the marking of the dissertation. It will be the responsibility of the Embedded Honours Coordinator to ensure that the examiner's reports are received in a timely manner.

The Use of a Third Examiner (Arbiter)

As per the *Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy*, Part I clause (41), 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 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 Higher 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.

Appointment of Arbiters

Upon receipt of the examiner's report the School of Medicine Embedded Honours Coordinator will check to ensure its completeness and conformity with instructions. The Coordinator will ascertain if a third examiner is required, to act as arbiter, under the conditions specified in the Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy.

Arbitration Process and Outcomes

Where an arbiter is required he/she will receive the following:

- An assessment sheet and marking guidelines
- De-identified examiner reports and marking sheets for both original examiners
- Advice that the dissertation is the culmination of 200 hours of research.

- Advice that their arbiter's mark will be the final examination result

Following the Award of Grade, where an arbiter is required the student will receive de-identified reports by all three examiners.

PROCESSING HONOURS AWARD LEVELS

Once all examiners' assessments have been received, the School of Medicine Embedded Honours Coordinator will forward the marks to the School of Medicine Academic Committee for consideration.

Once all Honours Awards have been approved by the School of Medicine Academic Committee, **and** the student has been advised of their Honours Award by the Graduation Team, Student Experience Office, the Embedded Honours Coordinator will release the dissertation grade and de-identified copies of the examiners' reports to the student and the supervisor.

Calculation of Honours Level

As outlined in the Senate-approved documentation, calculation of Honours Award level (Class of Honours) will be based on the results of Honours research and the overall course GPA achieved as follows:

- The award of **Honours Class I** for the MBBS (Honours) requires achieving a mark for this Unit between 65-100 and a GPA of 6.0 or greater on completion of the MBBS degree
- The award of **Honours Class II Division I** for the MBBS (Honours) requires achieving a mark for this Unit between 65-100 and a GPA of 5.8 or greater on completion of the MBBS degree.
- The award of **Honours Class II Division II** for the MBBS (Honours) requires achieving a mark for this Unit between 65-100 and a course GPA of 5.5 or greater on completion of the MBBS degree.
- **Honours Class III will not be awarded.** For grades $\geq 50\%$ and $< 65\%$ the student will graduate with MBBS, providing they satisfy all other criteria and they will have a Satisfactory (S) grade for the Unit.

A Dissertation grade of < 50 and/or failure to satisfactorily complete the Seminar Presentation will result in a Grade of Unsatisfactory (U) for the Unit.

KEY DATES SUMMARY

	ASSESSMENT ITEM	DUE DATE	WEIGHTING	ULO's	FEEDBACK	
					MODE	DATE
1	Honours Dissertation	6 September 2019	100%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Written, de-identified Examiners grades	Following release of Honours grades by the Graduation Team, Student Experience Office (usually first week in December)
2	Seminar Presentation	Prior to 17 May 2019	Threshold*	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Verbally by research supervisor	Usually within two weeks of presentation
3	Research Portfolio	3 June 2019	Threshold*	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Written, by Unit Coordinator	No later than 1 July 2019