

# College of Arts and Sciences



VALPARAISO  
UNIVERSITY®

*DEPARTMENTAL or PROGRAM*

## **HONORS WORK HANDBOOK**

DECEMBER GRADUATE CYCLE

Revised April 2022

COLLEGE OF ARTS and SCIENCES  
Departmental/Program  
Honors Work Handbook

Students who earn honors demonstrate an advanced level of academic achievement through an intensive research project. This experience allows them to undertake an exciting and sophisticated plan of research. The final paper and presentation provides evidence of independent thought and superior research. The specific standards for Honors Work vary by discipline. Your Honors Project mentor helps to clarify the norms within your research area.

Your personal goals for pursuing Honors Work will be varied. Most students consider Honors Work to be excellent preparation for graduate school and an additional way of making graduate school and scholarship applications more competitive. If you are interested in pursuing departmental Honors Work, consult your departmental guidelines for Honors Work if they are available.

Students whose major requires completion of a senior project or who are preparing a major independent study in Christ College may pursue Honors Work in lieu of the departmental senior project course after securing permission from the department chair or Dean of Christ College, respectively.

This handbook outlines and explains the requirements, standards, and deadlines for completing Honors Work in the College of Arts and Sciences. The format is chronological to help you prepare and complete your Honors project.

**Requirements for pursuing Honors Work (as stated in the University General Catalog):**

- Any student who is a degree candidate in the College of Arts and Sciences and whose major or program is administered by a department or an administrative committee within the College may pursue Honors Work.
- A student who has completed at least 80 credit hours, but has not yet entered upon the work of the last two semesters, and who has a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 and a grade point average in the major of 3.50 may apply through the major department or program committee for admission to Honors Work.

## **Honors Work Timeline for December Graduates**

### **Junior Year (year prior to graduation)**

#### **Summer or early Fall semester**

Meet with advisor/mentor and decide on topic

#### **First Monday in October**

Submit “Notice of Intent to Pursue Honors Work” to Dean’s office

#### **First Monday in November**

If required, make changes and resubmit “Notice of Intent” to Dean’s office

#### **Winter Break**

Work on research

Prepare “Honors Work Full Proposal”

#### **January, first Friday of Spring semester classes**

Submit “Honors Work Full Proposal” to the Dean’s office

Schedule Honors Work committee meeting with department (program) chair

#### **April/May, ten class days before the start of finals**

Submit preliminary draft to department or program chair

Schedule Honors Work committee meeting with department (program) chair

### **Senior Year (year of graduation)**

#### **Fall semester**

Schedule a public presentation of your Honors Work

Submit receipts for expenses to the Dean’s office

#### **November/December, fifteen class days before the start of finals**

Submit final report to department (program) chair

Schedule final examination time with department (program) chair

#### **December, before leaving campus**

Submit an electronic copy of your final project to scholar@valpo.edu for inclusion in ValpoScholar.

## Summer or Fall Semester – Junior Year (year prior to graduation)

As soon as possible, meet with your academic advisor and department chair to help clarify your plans, identify your area of interest, and identify an honors project mentor from your department who will ultimately supervise your Honors Work. A mentor must be a full-time VU faculty member within your department or program who will agree to serve as a project mentor.

Working with your honors project mentor, decide on a research topic, a topic which will be challenging, original, and appropriate to an existing departmental discipline, specialty, or interest. Some departments keep copies of Honors Work from former students, and the Dean of Arts and Sciences' Office has compiled a file of completed Honors Work for review. At no time will Honors Work be considered for work completed prior to the fall semester of the junior year.

Once you have decided to pursue Honors Work, complete the “*Notice of Intent To Pursue Honors Work*” form with your honors project mentor. Your department or program chair will name your honors committee, consisting of your honors project mentor, the department or program chair, and an additional member of the department or a faculty member knowledgeable about the project. Any exceptions to this committee structure must be approved by the Committee on Scholarship and Advising.

**On the first Monday of October, no later than 12:00 p.m.**, submit the completed intent form and the following four items to the Dean's Office.

1. A prospectus of your Honors Work. Briefly describe your proposed research topic or area of interest. In the case of students accepted to an off-campus summer research experience with an as-yet-unknown topic of research, briefly describe the advertised research experience.
2. A class schedule for the Spring and Fall of your senior year. It will include no more than **12 credits each semester** in addition to the 3-credit courses Honors 497 (Spring) and Honors 498 (Fall), bringing the total credits to no more than **15 each semester**.
3. A project timeline. This timeline should include projected research, readings, or scheduled interviews, and a proposal and draft writing schedule for the coming year.
4. A current transcript. The DataVU version of your transcript is acceptable.
5. A preliminary bibliography. This bibliography should reflect research on your topic.

The Committee on Scholarship and Advising will read your proposal and meet in order to prepare a summary page of comments and suggestions. A member of the Committee on Scholarship and Advising will meet with you and your honors project mentor in order to discuss the summary contents before the end of the semester. This member of the Committee on Scholarship and Advising, who is not in your major department, will likely continue as a member of your honors committee. By the first Monday in November, you must complete and turn in to the Dean's office any modifications to your application, if suggested or required by the Committee on Scholarship and Advising.

Once all modifications are completed and initial approval of the project is granted, you will be enrolled by the Dean's Office in the Spring semester in course Honors 497.

## Spring Semester Before Graduation

**On the first Friday of spring classes, no later than 12:00 pm**, complete and submit the “*Honors Work Full Proposal*” form and the following items:

1. A full Honors Work proposal. Describe and define your research topic, state clearly your thesis statement or research goal, place your research goal in a historical context with past research in the area, briefly outline your proposed methodology to achieve your results.
2. A project timeline for your Honors Work project. This timeline should include a proposal and draft writing schedule, and general dates for milestones, such as submission of a draft report at the end of the spring semester, spring and fall meetings with your honors committee, public presentation of your research, and submission of the final paper at the end of the fall semester.
3. A complete bibliography.
4. Anticipated Expense form. Expenses exceeding those that might be incurred during a typical class enrollment may be partially reimbursed.

The “*Honors Proposal Project Checklist*” (see below) may help you to prepare your proposal and bibliography. The Committee on Scholarship and Advising uses similar criteria when considering your proposal.

The Committee on Scholarship and Advising will review your Honors Project Proposal by the end of the second week of classes. They will notify your department program chair of their recommendations and decision on whether to accept your proposal. Your department or program chair may call a brief meeting of your honors committee in order to review your plans and progress. You may then proceed with your planned work during the semester.

If the Committee on Scholarship and Advising does not accept your Honors Project Proposal, your enrollment in Honors 497 will be dropped. You may, with approval from your department, change Honors 497 to an independent study.

**Ten class days** before the beginning of the final examination period of the Spring semester, present a preliminary draft of your project to your department or program chair. With prior approval, you may substitute for the completed draft a status report demonstrating substantial progress. In the case of a status report, you should describe the work accomplished during the semester and the plans for continued work during the summer and fall semester.

Your honors committee will read the material submitted, and your department or program chair will call you and your honors committee together to discuss your progress to date. Subsequently, the committee will agree on a grade for the work completed, and the department or program chair will communicate the grade to you. If a grade of ‘A’ or ‘A-’ is given to you for the work undertaken in the Spring semester, and the honors committee affirms the likelihood that you will be able to conclude an exceptional piece of scholarship by the end of the following semester, you will be admitted to *Candidacy for Honors*. This grade will be turned in to the Registrar by the department chair.

Once admitted to *Candidacy for Honors*, you will be registered by the Dean’s Office for the fall semester in course Honors 498; you will have registered for no more than 12 credits during Advance Registration, thus having **no more than 15 credits** for the final semester of your senior year.

If the project has not progressed as has been expected, you will not be admitted to *Candidacy for Honors*; however, you will be given a grade for Independent Study by your department chair.

### **Guidelines for the Evaluation of Progress After the Spring Semester:**

1. Students will have produced a substantial written paper that conforms to the styles and standards of their discipline. This paper should be well written and indicate a high degree of sophistication in both thought and expression.
2. All students will have formulated a clear thesis statement and/or exhibit a strong sense of their project's continuing direction. Science students will have both their instrumentation in place and their experiments planned and ready; in some cases, empirical data collection may have already begun and preliminary statistical analysis considered. In most cases, the committee will look for some evidence that the student has already sketched the broad outlines of the final paper and its constituent parts (argument, sub-sections, major elements that need to be addressed during the second semester).
3. Students should have mastered the secondary literature relating to their topic of study. In the paper submitted at this stage, students will demonstrate that they are aware of all major works pertaining to their subject and its larger context, and will be able to show how their work fits into that existing corpus. This means that students will be able to identify all the various interpretations or theories that surround their subject of investigation. Students in the humanities should be aware that this likely means consulting at least 25-30 sources; students in the sciences may find that 5-10 sources are closer to the norm.
4. Students should have identified and located all material that will still need to be consulted, focusing especially on the primary sources, texts or data sets that provide the specialized insights required for the second semester's work. This information should be clearly conveyed to the adviser and the committee.
5. Students will have interacted responsibly with their adviser and will have followed up on any suggestions made for the project's advancement or improvement. The Committee on Scholarship and Advising may request a letter from the adviser that would document both the student's receptivity to direction that has been provided and his or her commitment to the project.

## **Summer Prior to Graduation**

During the summer, you should continue to work on completion of your Honors Project and respond to any feedback that your committee provided on your preliminary draft. Carry out the following Honors Work related activities, as appropriate:

1. Review related literature, research, and background information.
2. Interview subjects or persons in support of your research.
3. Correspond with persons on information relevant to your research.
4. Complete research experiences which have been planned as part of your project.
5. Enroll in summer course work which will support and increase your knowledge of your project and/or reduce the number of credit hours required during your senior year.
6. Keep in contact with your honors project mentor.
7. Prepare an expense sheet based on the results of your summer activities. Save any receipts for expenses.

## Fall Semester –Year of Graduation

You will complete the Honors Project begun in the previous semester, addressing suggestions made by your honors committee.

**Fifteen class days** before the start of final exams, you will present an electronic copy of the completed project report to the chair of the major department or program. The cover sheet of the completed project must include the following information: complete title, all authors, your advisor, the semester and year in which the work is completed, and the course number (i.e. Psychology 498). A sample cover sheet is included at the end of this handbook.

The department chair will schedule you with the project committee for an oral examination. The committee will assess the knowledge of material covered in the independent Honors Project and any other closely related matters deemed appropriate by the committee. Your department chair will notify you no less than **four days beforehand** of the related matters to be included in the examination.

If, in the opinion of the committee, your work and resulting examination are worthy of Honors, the chair of the department or program will recommend to the Dean that you be awarded 3 credit hours with a grade of 'A' or 'A-' for the course numbered 498 and be graduated ***“with Honors in (the major field).”*** This grade will be turned in by the department chair to the Registrar. Students who graduate with Departmental Honors will have their name listed in a special section of the Commencement Program and will be introduced during Commencement due to the completion of their Honors Work.

On successful completion of your Honors Work, submit an electronic copy of your final project to scholar@valpo.edu for inclusion in ValpoScholar.

If your work is not deemed worthy of Honors, your honors committee will recommend to the Dean's Office that you receive three credit hours of Independent Study with a grade determined by your honors committee.

### Criteria Used for the Final Evaluation of the Project:

1. Students will have produced a clear, concise, tightly-argued paper that provides evidence of independent thought and superior research. Although the length and format of this final paper will vary by department, all students who earn honors are required to demonstrate that they have achieved an advanced level of performance.
2. The paper will be error-free and structured according to the standards of the student's discipline. All citations will be provided with careful attention to detail and accuracy.
3. The final draft of the project will demonstrate clear evidence of continued work and improvement during the second semester. Humanities students' projects will showcase their work with primary sources or documents and will be able to move seamlessly between their own narrow topic and its larger context in their discussions; by the end of the project, it is likely that 40-50 sources will have been consulted. Science students will have carried out their experiments as planned and will have conducted appropriate analysis of their findings. They will demonstrate an understanding of the way in which the results contribute to the knowledge base surrounding their topic and will be able to speculate about the direction of further study in the area. Mastery of concepts and germane scientific terms will be accomplished.
4. Students will have heeded critiques made by their advisers and by the representative of the Committee on Scholarship and Advising, and will have made every effort to follow up on suggestions for improvement. If, after careful consideration, the student concludes that a particular suggestion or lead was not useful or relevant, the student will be able to defend that choice. The



Committee on Scholarship and Advising may request a letter that confirms that the student has interacted responsibly with his or her adviser throughout the process.

5. Students are expected to make some sort of appropriate public presentation of their research. Appropriate forms of public presentation may include departmental seminars open to the general public, or papers or posters presented at academic conferences. If in the opinion of the project mentor, sufficient progress has been made during the Spring Semester, the project can be presented at the *Valparaiso University Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression* held late in the Spring Semester.

The committee has a limited budget for reimbursing students of any expenses incurred during their research. Expenses exceeding those that might be incurred during a typical class enrollment may be reimbursed. Receipts for expenses may be submitted during the spring semester to the Dean's office. The amount reimbursed to each student depends on the number of students enrolled in Honors Work and can vary from year to year.

Again, we congratulate you on your tremendous accomplishment and look forward to working with you this year. Our goal is to support you through a challenging and stimulating academic experience. You are welcome to seek our assistance at any point during the year. Good luck and enjoy your project!

**The Committee on Scholarship and Advising**

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO PURSUE HONORS WORK**  
**(Due 12:00 p.m. on the first Monday of October, Year prior to graduation)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT or PROGRAM MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE of HONORS PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this page as a cover sheet for the following:

1. Project Prospectus (100 words or less).
2. Summer Timeline.
3. Projected Class Schedule for Fall and Spring of Senior Year.
4. Current Transcript.
5. Bibliography for the project.

Honors Project Mentor (print) : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Project Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Department/Program Chair (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Program Chair Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Additional Department Member (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Department Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Academic Advisor (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Scholarship and Advising Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signed **after** the Committee on Scholarship and Advising approves the honors project.)

Dean, Arts and Sciences: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## HONORS WORK FULL PROPOSAL

**(Due 12:00 pm on the first Friday of Classes, Spring Semester prior to graduation)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT or PROGRAM MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE of HONORS PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Use this page as a cover sheet for the following:

1. Project Description (500 words or less). Fully describe your project and methodologies. If the project has been modified from the prospectus, describe reasons for the change.
2. Project Timeline.
3. Bibliography for the project.
4. Anticipated expenses (form included, see below).

Honors Project mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: This cover form must be routed to your project mentor for signature. However, we encourage you to submit the proposal itself (project description, bibliography, and expenses, see below) electronically in Word or PDF format to the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office.

**Anticipated Expenses  
For Completing an Honors Project  
(Submit with Honors Work Full Proposal)**

Please complete the following with your Honors Project mentor.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Project mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Considerations:

Photocopying –

Interlibrary Loan

# of copies \_\_\_\_\_ cost per copy \_\_\_\_\_

Original Documents

# of copies \_\_\_\_\_ cost per copy \_\_\_\_\_

Amount needed for duplication of final project

# of pages \_\_\_\_\_ x 4 copies \_\_\_\_\_

SUBTOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

Books, Supplies, Lab Costs (please list with costs of each)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SUBTOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

Travel/Conferences (please attach list with specific expenses)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SUBTOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you sought additional funding sources for project funding?

If yes, please indicate source and amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: By submitting this request to the Committee on Scholarship and Advising, there is no guarantee that you will receive as reimbursement any or all of the expenses incurred by your Honors Research. If your proposal is accepted, you will be asked to submit a revised budget no later than the end of the first week of classes, fall semester of your graduation. Funds are disbursed when a project has been approved to continue for the fall semester, and generally do not exceed \$125 per project. Honors candidates are encouraged to work with their mentors to identify and seek additional sources of funding, either internal or external.**

## Honors Proposal Project Checklist

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

### Checklist of guidelines

### How well was the guideline satisfied?

(0-poor through 10-excellent)

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Is the topic clearly defined?   | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 2. Is the research goal stated? (i.e., I will explore....I will demonstrate....I will show....I will prove....or a statement in this same vein.) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 3. Is the proposed research goal placed in the context of prior work in the field?   | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 4. Does the preliminary bibliography show that the work is original?   | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 5. Is the research goal justified? (May have been answered by 3 & 4.)  | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 6. Is the methodology for achieving the research goal outlined?  | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 7. Is the timeline complete and realistic?   | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 8. Is the proposal well written? (Grammar, spelling, etc.)   | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

### Overall Score

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

TITLE OF PROJECT

by

Student Name

Honors Work in Department/Program  
For Dept-498  
Advised by Advisor Name

College of Arts and Sciences  
Valparaiso University

Semester Year