



*Framingham State University Commonwealth
Honors Program*

Honors Thesis/Project Guidelines

Updated Spring 2024



Introduction

To fulfill the requirements for the Framingham State University Commonwealth Honors Program students must complete a one-semester honors thesis. This project is discipline-specific and allows students to pursue a focused topic of special interest to them grounded in research, scholarship, and/or the creative arts.

The honors project has the potential to be an exciting and rewarding academic activity for upper-level students. In the process of planning and carrying out this project, the goal is for students to hone valuable skills in their discipline and also to provide a foundation for their next career step, be it employment or graduate school. But most of all, the goal is for students to enjoy the process of inquiry, learning, discovery, and creativity.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What do I write about?

The Honors Thesis may be on any subject of interest to you. It can be in your major, interdisciplinary, or even outside of your major. Your intellectual interests should guide your choice of topic. Often times students discover their topic in upper-level classes in their major. Others will pursue a topic that has been a life-long interest. Still others will develop a topic out of conversations with professors. As you take advanced course work, pay attention to which issues catch your interest. Ask yourself about which courses, professors, or topics were captivating to you during your college years. You might even consider keeping a journal or brainstorming a list of ideas. As you review these notes you will probably find that they fall into two or three main categories. Start to focus on these areas.

Who will be my thesis supervisor?

Any tenure-line professor at FSU can serve as your thesis supervisor. Often times, this means a professor in your major, but it can also be a professor outside of your major with whom you have developed a relationship during your time at FSU. The thesis supervisor should be someone you feel comfortable partnering with for the length of this project. The professor will essentially oversee your independent study.

What is the role of the thesis supervisor?

The tenure-line faculty member who supervises an honors thesis assists the student in making a semester-long schedule for the project at the beginning of the semester. Ideally, this process will involve regularly scheduled meetings. The professor then oversees the research and writing process. The student is responsible for the research, but the supervisor should offer guidance toward useful resources and questions/themes. The supervisor will help with issues of clarity, documentation, organization, and style, and is the sole grader of the project. The supervisor will establish deadlines. Final grades are traditionally due seventy-two hours after the last final exam day of the semester. A deadline should be established so that the project can be graded with this deadline in mind.

How do I register for the thesis?

You will fill out the registration form either before or during the add/drop period at the beginning of the semester in which you plan to do the thesis. This form requires a brief description of your project and the signatures of your thesis supervisor, the Chair of your major department, and lastly, the Faculty Director of the Honors Program.

The thesis registration form can be found **here**.

What is the recommended length of the thesis?

The length of the thesis is discipline-specific, but should represent a full semester's worth of work, and should be roughly the same length as a major scholarly article in your field. In artistic disciplines where the production of original art work is the primary goal of the capstone, the written component of the project likely will be comparatively shorter than, for example, a humanities or social science thesis. Faculty advisors will clearly communicate to thesis writers specific project, department, and discipline expectations.

How is the thesis evaluated?

The thesis supervisor is the sole person responsible for grading the work. The supervisor will submit the grade to the Registrar as a professor would for any other class.

Must I publicly present the results of my thesis?

Yes, honors students must present their work publicly. Many students present at the Massachusetts Undergraduate Research Conference at UMass Amherst which is run each April. However, there are also many opportunities at FSU to present your research in departments for example, and these public presentations are perfectly acceptable.

What do I do upon completion of the thesis?

After your thesis has been accepted by your supervisor and after you have made all final edits, you must also complete the Honors Project Completion Form, which can be found **here**. The form is for honors program records.

What are important steps to consider in completing the actual thesis project?

The thesis project is a scholarly effort and should reflect a high degree of sophistication. The thesis should be well-written in terms of development, style, grammar, and mechanics. Students should follow their academic department's recommendations in producing such a work, but typically speaking, a thesis involves:

1. Reviewing the pertinent literature.
2. Determining an area of inquiry that would extend knowledge of the topic (as determined by the literature review).
3. Conducting original research or analysis following an outline or other plan for approaching the topic.
4. Drawing conclusions that relate one's original work to existing literature and recommending areas for future study.

A quality thesis project will be developed using a "writing as process" approach:

1. Brainstorm
2. Draft
3. Review (peer or faculty)
4. Revise (based on faculty feedback)
5. Revise based on any insights gained from making a presentation
6. Edit for clarity, style, and grace (consult style manual of academic discipline, dictionaries, handbooks for writers, etc.)
7. Publish - The Honors Program administrative assistant will distribute copies to the library archives and Honors House

Honors Thesis Checklist

_____ Brainstorm possible thesis topics.

_____ Identify a thesis supervisor from your major (or other relevant) department. This should be done the semester before beginning the thesis.

_____ Meet with your thesis supervisor to discuss the project and obtain the professor's agreement to work with you.

_____ Fill out the thesis registration form available here: <https://www.framingham.edu/academics/honors-program/honors-program-forms/index>. This must be done before the end of the add/drop period of the semester in which the honors thesis will be completed.

_____ Meet with your thesis supervisor on a regular basis. It is recommended that you set up a schedule of how many hours per week you will work on the project.

_____ Public Presentation. Students must present at either the Massachusetts Undergraduate Research Conference in the spring or at an alternate on/off-campus event approved by the Director of the Honors Program.

_____ Once the thesis has been accepted by the supervisor and all final edits have been made, students must complete the Honors Project Completion Form (<https://www.framingham.edu/academics/honors-program/honors-program-forms/index>), and include a copy of the thesis. This is for Honors Program records.