

## **Guidelines and Requirements**

### to Graduate with Honors at the University of Colorado at Boulder

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#### **The Honors Thesis**

An Honors thesis is written to demonstrate scholarship, originality, and thoroughness in a particular topic or field of study. Typically the thesis involves concentrated work over a five or six-month period and reports original research or creative work. Seniors intending to graduate in the spring should start making plans and discussing those plans with their primary advisor by the beginning of the fall term prior to graduation. Likewise, fall graduates should begin their work in the spring prior to the semester they graduate.

#### **General Considerations in Pursuing Honors**

- Students may elect to pursue Departmental Honors, General Honors, or both.
- Students pursuing double majors or double degrees must complete the honors process and defend their thesis at the time their first major and first degree is awarded.
- All students pursuing honors must submit an application for graduation with honors to the Honors Program Office, Norlin M400M (please refer to the list of deadlines). The application calls for a prospectus of the thesis topic, timeline of the project, a preliminary bibliography, and requires the signature of the candidate's thesis advisor.
- The Honors Council decides who will graduate with Honors as well as the level of Honors awarded. The Honors Council consists of faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences. The award and level of Honors is determined by the quality of the thesis, an oral examination, and the candidate's academic record. Honors designations (*Cum Laude*, *Magna cum Laude*, and *Summa cum Laude*) are recognized by a certificate, an Honors medal, are noted in the graduation program, and are indicated as Honors on the diploma.
- Honors candidates are urged to look into the possibilities for participation in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). Under this program a student and a faculty member may submit a proposal for partial funding of a research project. The UROP office is located in LIBR S430, phone 303-492-2596.

#### **Who is qualified to do an Honors Thesis?**

The Honors Program requires that a student wishing to graduate with Honors have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 for Departmental Honors and a 3.5 for General Honors. There is some variation among departments but no department has a requirement below 3.3. Some departments also have specific course requirements. If you are uncertain about your department's requirements, including GPA, check with your department's Honors Council representative. Students who have already earned a bachelor's degree from CU or any other institution are not eligible. This includes students who have graduated in one major and are finishing a second major.

#### **The Honors Council has adopted the following policies governing theses:**

- A thesis CANNOT be written in a minor unless approval is provided in writing by both the major and minor departments.

- Students graduating with a distributed studies degree may pursue general honors or they may select an appropriate topic in one of their participating departments, contingent on departmental approval. The honors designation would be attached to the distributed studies degree.
- Students wishing to graduate with Honors in a double major may not submit the same thesis for both degrees.

## Guidelines for Departmental Honors

The Departmental Honors thesis is designed to demonstrate the candidate's ability to conduct original creative research within boundaries of the major discipline

- Since departmental requirements vary you will need to consult with the Honors Program Council representative in the appropriate department. A list of Honors Council representatives is available in the Honors Program Office.
- Candidates for Departmental Honors must deliver the following to the Honors Program office located in Norlin M400M by the announced deadlines:
  - A copy of the thesis. **The copy may be stapled, clipped or in a manila folder.**
  - An approved **final bound copy** of the senior thesis is due in the Honors Program Office. This copy can include any changes or additions that arise out of the defense, however, the changes will not be considered in your honors designation. Absolutely NO spiral bound theses; the thesis must be velo bound (the UMC Copy Center does this).
  - The **title page** must include the thesis title, student name, date, thesis advisor and committee members. If a running title is used in the thesis, it must not exceed 50 characters, including spaces.
- Oral Defense of Thesis: Candidates for Departmental Honors must complete an oral examination of their thesis work. The oral examination committee must consist of the following: your primary advisor from among regular faculty members, a member of the Honors Council, and a faculty member from outside your major department. One committee member may satisfy more than one requirement and you may have more than three members as long as they meet the above criteria. It is the candidate's responsibility to schedule the examination and to see that the committee is constituted correctly.

To insure sufficient guidance it is essential that the student keep the committee members informed of the progress of the thesis. The advisor should also be constantly consulted as the thesis develops. Students who do not work closely with their primary advisor often have difficulties in achieving Honors.

## Guidelines for General Honors

General Honor's research is designed to demonstrate the candidate's ability to either conduct research of a broad interdisciplinary nature or to allow the candidate to conduct cross-disciplinary research beyond the bounds of the major. Students graduating with bachelor's degree outside the College of Arts and Sciences may write a General Honors thesis in their discipline.

- The General Honors prospectus (included in the application to graduate with Honors) must include a discussion of how the chosen research will fulfill one or the other of the above criteria. Each proposal for General Honor's research must be reviewed and approved by a General Honors faculty member on the Honors Council. The proposal must be submitted to the Honors Office by the announced deadline.

- Candidates for General Honors must have a 3.5 cumulative GPA at the time they apply for graduation with Honors.
- Completion of at least 12 hours of General Honors courses with a grade of A or B. This course work must include one of each of the following: Humanities, Social Science, Natural Science, and a Senior Seminar course. The Honors Program determines which courses fulfill these areas. Consult the course schedule published by the Honors Program.
- Students may receive course credit for their General Honors Thesis work by taking HONR 4909.
- Candidates for General Honors must deliver the following to the Honors Program office located in Norlin M400M by the announced deadlines:
  - A copy of the thesis. **The copy may be stapled, clipped or in a manila folder.**
  - An approved **final bound copy** of the senior thesis is due in the Honors Program Office. This copy can include any changes or additions that arise out of the defense, however, the changes will not be considered in your honors designation. Absolutely NO spiral bound theses; the thesis must be velo bound (the UMC Copy Center does this).
  - The **title page** must include the thesis title, student name, date, thesis advisor and committee members. If a running title is used in the thesis, it must not exceed 50 characters, including spaces.
- Oral Defense of Thesis: Candidates for General Honors must complete an oral examination of their thesis work. The oral examination committee must consist of the following: your primary advisor from among regular faculty members, a member of the Honors Council who is listed under General Honors, and a third faculty member of your choice. One committee member may satisfy more than one requirement and you may have more than three members as long as they meet the above criteria. It is the candidate's responsibility to schedule the examination and to see that the committee is constituted correctly.

To insure sufficient guidance it is essential that the student keep the committee members informed of the progress of the thesis. The advisor should also be constantly consulted as the thesis develops. Students who do not work closely with their primary advisor often have difficulties in achieving Honors.

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