POLICY MEMO
SUBJECT: HONORS THESIS GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS
DATE: 1 FEBRUARY 2012

Honors Thesis Rationale

All University of Oklahoma Honors students must complete an Honors Thesis in order to fulfill the requirements for graduation with Honors. The Thesis must demonstrate your (1) understanding of the tools (methods, theories and models) of a discipline and the ability to use these tools, (2) ability to develop an informed, well-reasoned and creative response to a question or problem, and (3) ability to effectively communicate the results of a project, in writing and/or creative media depending on the academic discipline in which the Thesis falls. The Honors Thesis also gives you the opportunity to build on the knowledge you’ve acquired and do an in-depth exploration of an issue or question that interests you.

Successful completion of the Thesis demonstrates that you are prepared to learn and work on your own. But you will have help—a faculty member will supervise the project from its inception to its completion. You should ask someone who has knowledge and expertise in your area of interest to serve in this capacity. Usually this will be someone with whom you are already familiar, whose knowledge you respect, and with whom you get along. It is usually a professor from your major as well, although this need not be the case.

A good research project requires self-discipline because it lacks the structure of a standard course. So that you and your faculty advisor will encounter as little confusion and misunderstanding as possible, the two of you should agree on important procedural matters before you begin work.

With that in mind, you need to draw up the specifics of the contract governing your work, the 3980 Application, available in the Honors College main office. When you have the contract completed and signed, you should bring a copy of it to the Honors College. (Note that while most Theses are the product of the 3960/3980 sequence, this need not be the case. You may submit another project as your Thesis, but you will still have to complete the 3960/3980 sequence to graduate with Honors. Please see the Honors College for details.)

Standards for Fulfillment of the Requirement

• Sufficient and appropriate research to produce a written thesis. The finished project should show the student’s familiarity with research methods and tools in his or her specific discipline.
• The topic should be sufficiently complex to justify honors credit and sufficiently narrow to be covered adequately.
• The student should demonstrate an understanding of the issues involved in the topic and of appropriate ways to investigate that topic. The thesis should also show that the student understands the appropriate way of writing a scholarly essay in the particular discipline in which he or she has chosen to work.
The thesis should be long enough to adequately develop the topic and to justify three hours of honors credit.

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