

## **Child and Family Development**

### **Honors Thesis Guidelines**

The purpose of the Honors Project is to provide students the opportunity to work directly with faculty on research, and to gain direct experience with research design, data collection, analysis, and write up of findings.

#### **Coursework Preparation**

Honors students are encouraged to take a research methods class and a statistics class. Students are strongly advised to take courses related to their interests prior to beginning the project. This will help the student to develop a research question.

#### **Honors Project Course Enrollment**

Honors students must enroll in 7400:499 (3 credits) the semester the student intends to complete the project requirements. At the discretion of the faculty supervisor, an Incomplete grade may be assigned if the student has made good progress but does not complete the project that semester.

#### **Faculty Sponsor**

The faculty sponsor has primary responsibility for directing the Honors Thesis. The faculty sponsor must clearly explain his/her expectations to the student, and work with the student to develop a timeline for completion. Sponsors are usually Child and Family Development full-time faculty. In some cases, students may select a sponsor from another department if the faculty and student have closely related research interests. The student must obtain permission from the Child and Family Development Honor's Advisor before selecting a faculty sponsor outside of the Child and Family Development program.

#### **Readers**

The readers will provide feedback and select changes for the final thesis report. The student will select two readers from the Child and Family full-time faculty. If the sponsor is a Child and Family Development faculty member, the student may, with the sponsor's approval, select one reader from outside the department; the outside reader must be a full-time faculty member in a program related to Child and Family Development.

#### **Concept Paper**

Students are required to work with their sponsors to develop a concept paper (see attached document) so that they are clear about the feasibility and requirements of the project. This is a necessary step in order to develop a timeline for completion.

## **Timeline**

In their junior year, students should seek out a faculty sponsor. The student and faculty sponsor should work together to decide on a research project in the Spring semester. After the project is decided upon, the sponsor and student must fill out the honors project form (<http://www.uakron.edu/honors/students/honors-research-project.dot>). Contacting potential sponsors as early as possible is necessary in order to ensure the success of the project.

A final draft of your thesis must be provided to your faculty sponsor and readers at least three weeks before semester grades are due. Readers and faculty sponsors may ask for additional revisions, which must be completed before the end of the term.

It is recommended that faculty and students create a timeline “contract” to make expectations clear, and to help the students stay on schedule for completion of the project.

## **CITI Certification and IRB Approval**

Students conducting research with human subjects must complete the CITI certification (<http://www.uakron.edu/dotAsset/ec2fc490-5f3f-4ba9-8dab-0034178c9bab.pdf>). After doing so, the student must apply for and receive approval or exemption from the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) policy prior to initiating the research project (<https://www.uakron.edu/research/ora/compliance/irb/>).

## **Funding**

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for funds from the Honors College to help defray any costs associated with their projects (<http://www.edu/honors/students/honors-research-project-funds.dot>).

## **Final Thesis Report**

The final thesis report will follow APA Guidelines, and include a statement of the problem, literature review, methods section, results, discussion, and reference section. Details regarding methods and analysis will be worked out in consultation with the faculty sponsor. Although the length will vary, a typical thesis will be approximately 30 pages total, not including the reference section.

## Honors Thesis Proposal Concept Paper

Answer all of these questions as clearly and in as much detail as possible. This will help you to develop a timeline and write up the report of your findings.

1. What is the topic of the study?
2. Why is this topic important to study?
  - a. What needs/gap(s) in the literature is this study addressing?
  - b. Have others tried to solve the problem/address the issue? If not, why not?
  - c. Who else is conducting research in this area? How do the approaches differ? Which approach (both theoretical and methodological) is preferable, and why?
3. What are your research questions?
4. How is this research to be conducted?
  - a. Who is involved? (Will anyone help you to connect you with research participants or help with any other part of the study such as transcription?)
  - b. What will occur?
  - c. When will the study occur, and for how long?
  - d. Where is it taking place?
  - e. Why is it being done in this setting?
    - i. What methods will be used?
      1. Participant selection and recruitment
      2. Methods (open-ended survey, open-ended interview, etc.—include whether surveys or interviews are self-administered or administered by the researcher)
      3. How will the data be analyzed?
    - ii. What results can be expected? What are your hypotheses?
    - iii. Are there any particular difficulties or issues that can be anticipated?
5. Defend your methods—why did you choose the methods you described in #4.
6. What resources will be needed? (This part will be especially useful if you have the opportunity to apply for grant funding.)
7. Include a list of references you used in your answers.
8. Update your thesis timeline, giving time for all steps above to be completed and allowing for the unanticipated.