



College of Science

2008 Honours - Guidelines

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1. Concept of the Honours Degree

The award of an Honours degree attests to

- (a) greater depth and greater breadth of knowledge;
- (b) development of an independent approach to and ability in research and in scientific communication;
- (c) a superior academic ability, as judged by performance in second and third-year courses and in the Honours Year.

2. Entry to Honours Year

2.1. To safeguard 1(c), the minimum requirement for admission to an Honours course is as follows:

- (a) the successful completion of at least 48 credit points of later-year Science units relevant to the proposed field of Honours study, of which at least 24 credit points must be for Group C units;
- (b) the attainment of an average of 6 for the 48 credit points, where HD=10, D=8, CR=6, P=4;
- (c) on the recommendation of the Head of Department/School concerned, in the light of availability of resources and appropriate supervision.

2.2. There is no time limit between completion of the pass degree and commencement of the Honours year. However a gap of more than three years requires the approval of the Delegate Authority on advice from academic area, who will take into account the relevance of work experience in the gap years to successful completion of Honours.

2.3. If a Department/School has entry requirements additional to those set out in 2.1, due publicity of these requirements must be given in the University Handbook.

3. Classifying Honours Performance

The class of Honours awarded is based on the performance in the Honours year (with the exception of concurrent Honours in Forestry - see item 9).

4. Student Information

An information document must be made available by Departments/Schools to prospective Honours students in their third year outlining aspects of the Honours program (copy to Dean). These might include information on entry requirements, admission procedures, the role of the Honours Convener (Chair of Examiners), student rights, availability of equipment and support, availability of mid-year courses, length of program, details of program components, weightings and the need for students to consult with the Department/School on structure and assessment.

5. Procedure

5.1. In accordance with the Rules of the University, a Chair of Examiners and at least one other examiner will be appointed by the Head of the Department/School for each calendar year.

5.2. The Head of Department/School will appoint an Honours Convener to be responsible for the co-ordination of the Honours program.

5.3. The name of the Honours Convener for the following year must be reported to the College in November each year.

5.4. There is an Honours School that consists of the Honours Conveners and a Chair appointed by the Dean.

5.5. Students seeking admission to the Honours program should be requested to approach, first, the Honours Convener for advice on entry requirements and supervision and, second, any prospective supervisor(s), before submitting an application.

5.6. Students should be advised of their right to approach the Honours Convener where difficulties arise, for instance, supervision.

6. Program Duration

6.1. The precise duration of full-time Honours candidature is set by the Honours School and will not exceed a period of eleven months. Specified requirements should be strictly observed.

6.2. Extension of time to submit beyond two weeks after the College of Science completion date will be subject to the approval of the Dean or Deputy Dean and should be granted only when there are factors clearly beyond the control of a student

6.3. Suspension of Honours candidature will be subject to the approval of the Dean or Deputy Dean.

7. Outside Supervision

Thesis supervision may be provided by a person outside the Department/School provided that this supervisor is substantially involved in the Honours program of the particular Department/School and is responsible to the Head of the Department/School for the supervision of the student.

8. Part-time Candidature

Part-time candidature is subject to the approval of the Delegate Authority on the recommendation of the Department/School concerned; confirmation will be required that the workload and the time allocated to complete the work are comparable to the requirements for full-time students.

9. Forestry

9.1. Both concurrent and final (fifth) year Honours are available in the course for the degree of Bachelor of Science (Forestry).

9.2. For concurrent Honours

(a) students must have completed all first-year units; maintained at least a Credit average in Group B and C units; demonstrated superior achievement (Distinction, High Distinction) in units relevant to the topic area in which they propose to undertake Honours; and are in the fourth year of the BSc(Forestry) degree;

(b) the grade of Honours awarded is based on performance in the Honours thesis.

(c) students must maintain a minimum overall average of 6 (on the scale defined previously) for the other courses taken concurrently to be awarded 1st or 2A Honours.

9.3. For final year Forestry Honours, the minimum entry requirement is at least four grades of Distinction and eight grades of Credit in relevant Group B and C units with a minimum overall average of 6 on the scale defined previously.

10. Admission of Graduates of other Universities

Graduates of other universities may be accepted for admission to Honours candidature provided that the undergraduate program and performance in that program are of a standard comparable to that applying in the relevant Department/School.

11. Combined Honours

Honours in Science may be pursued in two programs under the following conditions:

(a) enrolment in each combined Honours course will depend on:

- both Departments/Schools accepting the candidate, the proposed course and assessment procedures;

and

- the student satisfying the College's minimum requirements for admission to Honours;

(b) a combined course will be integrated and will be shared approximately equally by the two Departments/Schools involved. The combined course will not be awarded for work done predominantly in one department and supplemented by work done in another department;

(c) there should be at least one supervisor for each Department/School, one of whom must be appointed as coordinator of the integrated course. The other Department/School must supply a chair of examiners.

12. Minimum Requirements for Assessment

- There should be at least two examiners, the examining panel, for every thesis
- The examining panel should not include a supervisor (except in cases where the Dean has approved the inclusion of a supervisor as failure to do so could affect the expertise of the assessment)
- At least one examiner should not be a specialist in the topic of the thesis
- Students must have had written descriptors of the marking criteria that will be used to assess their thesis
- There must be a clear and objective link between the written descriptors and the grades assigned
- Examiners must use the College grade descriptors in providing a mark
- The examining panel will construct a brief written report on each thesis
- The examining panel will attempt to arrive at a consensus grade recommendation for the thesis
- Supervisors will be duly consulted by the examining panel or the examiners. The final recommendation on a grade by the panel should be made without the supervisor present (except in cases where the Dean has approved the inclusion of a supervisor as failure to do so could affect the expertise of the assessment)
- Final marks for an overall Honours grade and the components are arrived at in a meeting with all examiners present
- Special consideration of individual student circumstances is undertaken and documented according to University and College policy (<http://online.anu.edu.au/cabs/rules/ExamsRules.pdf> and <http://cos.anu.edu.au/StaffDirectory/RulesPolicies/Policies/>)
- There should be some feedback to the student on the progress of the thesis by the mid point of their project.