

FACULTY OF ARTS

MANAGEMENT OF HONOURS PROGRAMS

1 Introduction

1.1 The Faculty will offer honours degrees in relevant areas. Currently, these are

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
- Bachelor of Music (Honours)
- Bachelor of Theatre Arts (Honours)
- Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours)

1.2 The Bachelor (Honours) degree is based on the completion of a full-time equivalent year of study following the completion of a three year Bachelor degree in one of the Faculty's majors, disciplines or areas of study.

1.3 The Honours degree serves two purposes:

- (i) the completion of a program of undergraduate study by providing an intensive study in one discipline area to enhance a student's preparation for professional life;
- (ii) the means of determining a student's potential for further study involving advanced scholarship and original research at the postgraduate level.

1.4 Faculty guidelines for the management of Honours degrees are essential, but some flexibility is necessary to allow Departments to deal with the particular requirements of different disciplines.

1.5 These guidelines are established within the parameters of University regulations relating to Honours degrees.

2 Program Design, Structure and Length of Study

2.1 An Honours programs should consist of eight units comprising a generic core, a discipline study, and a dissertation/project/exhibition of not less than three units.

2.2 The program shall normally be completed over one year of full-time study or two years of part-time study, although in special circumstances a third year of part-time study may be permitted by the Head of Department. The dissertation/project/exhibition should be completed over not more than two semesters.

3 Entry Requirements

3.1 General Requirements

To qualify for entry to the Honours program students will:

- (i) hold a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Mass Communication or Bachelor of International Studies or Bachelor of Music or Bachelor of Theatre Arts or Bachelor of Visual Arts degree of the University of Southern Queensland or other recognised university;
- (ii) have commenced their undergraduate studies not more than seven (7) years before the year of proposed entry to the Honours program.

3.2 Specific Requirements

To qualify for entry to the Honours program students should have obtained a pass in their Bachelor degree at one of the following levels:

- (i) credit level (g.p.a. = 4.6/7 or 65%) in the entire program of study and permission of the Head of Department; or
- (ii) a g.p.a. of 4.9/7 or 70% across all levels in the proposed major area of study; or
- (iii) a g.p.a. of 5.2/7 or 75% in the third level of the program (ie Major and Option/Electives) including an 'A' or better level pass in at least one course of the major; or
- (iv) grades of A or High Distinction in all courses in the third level of the Major.

3.3 Discretionary Admission

- (i) A candidate with equivalent qualifications or relevant work experience may be admitted to the Honours program by special permission of the Dean and the relevant Head of Department after consultation with staff in the discipline area.

4 Program Promotion

4.1 In October each year the Heads of Department offering Honours programs shall call a meeting of all interested/potential students to explain the requirements and expectations of the Honours program and to distribute appropriate information prepared by the Departmental Honours Committee.

4.2 The Head of Department shall promote the Honours program outside the University as part of normal program promotional activities.

5 Departmental Honours Committee

- 5.1 The Head of Department shall establish a Departmental Honours Committee of at least three (3) members one of whom shall be Chair.
- 5.2 The Departmental Honours Committee is responsible to the Head of Department for the co-ordination of the Department's Honours courses.
- 5.3 The Departmental Honours Committee will prepare and issue information to students relating to:
 - (i) staff expertise, selection of topic and supervisor;
 - (ii) resources
 - (iii) ethics and intellectual property
 - (iv) time constraints
 - (v) consultation with supervisor
 - (vi) length, format, bibliographic requirements of dissertation/project/exhibitions
 - (vii) assessment and marking criteria
- 5.4 The Departmental Honours Committee will monitor student workload and deadlines, moderate disputes and maintain appropriate standards of assessment.
- 5.5 The Departmental Honours Committee will meet with all course examiners and supervisors at least once each semester to ensure an equitable distribution of student workload/effort across all courses.
- 5.6 Disputes between Departmental Honours Committees where courses are shared jointly by Departments shall be resolved by the Dean in consultation with the relevant Heads of Departments.

6 Supervision of Dissertation/Project/Exhibition

- 6.1 The Head of Department shall appoint a supervisor for each Honours candidate.
- 6.2 Staff who plan to be absent on approved leave during the candidature shall not be appointed or accept appointment as a supervisor unless satisfactory provision can be made at the time of appointment for a suitable replacement.
- 6.3 Where appropriate, a second or associate supervisor may be appointed by the Head of Department.
- 6.4 Where two or more supervisors are jointly responsible for a candidate, the supervisors will maintain close liaison regarding the student's progress.

- 6.5 The supervisor(s) must ensure that each candidate will have the benefit of full and effective supervision throughout the candidature. This will normally mean regular weekly contact at designated times.

7 Assessment

7.1 Candidates will be informed by the Chair of the Departmental Honours Committee of the assessment procedures for the grading of all assignments, the examination of the dissertation/project/exhibition, and the awarding of the various classes of Honours.

7.2 Coursework courses will be graded by the examiner of the course in consultation with the moderator in two ways:

- (i) by awarding a mark on a 100 point scale
- (ii) by awarding a letter grade according to the University grading system

7.3 Dissertation Examiners

(i) The dissertation/project/exhibition will be assessed by one qualified academic staff member from the University of Southern Queensland who is not the candidate's supervisor and one qualified person who is external to the University of Southern Queensland and not the candidate's supervisor. A third examiner may be invited to assess the dissertation where the two appointed examiners do not agree.

(ii) Each examiner will present a mark on a 100 point scale to the Chair of the Departmental Honours Committee.

(iii) Each external examiner shall also indicate which class of Honours in their view should be accorded to the dissertation/project/exhibition.

8 Awarding Classes of Honours

8.1 The award of BA , BMus, BThA or BVA with Honours shall be as follows:

- (i) First Class
- (ii) Second Class Division One
- (iii) Second Class Division Two
- (iv) Third Class
- (v) Fail

8.2 Awards in the first three classes shall normally be in accord with grade point averages established by the ARC for the determination of scholarships. On 4 March 1994 Faculty Board determined that the level of Honours award be based on a GPA within a 7 point scale:

6.3 = the cut-off for First Class

5.6 = the cut-off for Second Class Division One

4.9 = the cut-off for Second Class Division Two

- 8.3 The final assessment of the candidates will be carried out by an Assessment Committee comprising the Head of Department as Chair, the Departmental Honours Committee, all candidates' supervisors, all course examiners of the major discipline courses and any other persons the Committee may invite to participate. The Assessment Committee will take into account all course percentile and letter grades and the views of external examiners in 7.3 (iii) above. In the case of dispute, examiners of other courses taken by the candidate may be asked to report to the Committee. The Assessment Committee will recommend to the Head of Department the class of Honours to be awarded to the candidate.
- 8.4 Students must pass all course work courses and the dissertation/project /exhibition in order to earn an Honours award.

9 Failure of Course

- 9.1 Students who fail a single course work course may either:
- (i) repeat the course (once only) at the next time of offering; or
 - (ii) study another appropriate course determined by the Head of Department
- 9.2 Students who fail the dissertation/project/exhibition may be allowed to repeat the dissertation/project/exhibition but will be eligible only for the lower grade of Honours.
- 9.3 Students who do not complete the program within the maximum time allowable will be deemed to have failed the program and not be eligible for any other class of Honours.

10 Intellectual Property

- 10.1 The dissertation/project/exhibition component of the Honours program shall be governed by the University Policy on Intellectual Property.
- 10.2 The Departmental Honours Committee should ensure that each candidate has access to this policy.

11 Thesis Preparation and Binding

11.1 Thesis Preparation

Guidelines for the preparation of research theses for Masters and PhD degrees are given in Clause 4.5 of the University Calendar. These could be taken as a guide for Departments to develop similar guidelines for Honours theses.

11.2 Library Specifications for Binding

Following are the library requirements for Honours theses (extracted from 'Draft Policy on Library Deposit', March 1991).

- 11.2.1 The thesis is to be typed or printed on A4 paper, and must be sewn and bound with cloth on stiff covers. (A spring-type or screw-type and loose leaf binder are unacceptable. Stapling and plastic or 'perfect' binding without sewing are also unacceptable.)
- 11.2.2 Colours for binding and lettering are mid-blue (code 2004) cloth, with gold lettering.
- 11.2.3 Pages of the document must be numbered.
- 11.2.4 During binding the edges should be trimmed.
- 11.2.5 The name of the candidate, qualification, and year of award should be given on the spine of the volume in lettering of suitable size, reading from bottom to top. The lettering will begin no lower than 6 cm from the bottom of the spine.
- 11.2.6 The front cover of the volume should show the full title of the thesis or dissertation, candidate's name, qualification and year of award.
- 11.2.7 When published papers are submitted they should normally be bound near the back of the thesis as an index. In the case of published papers of unusual size it may be desirable to bind them in a separate volume. If they have been bound by the publisher it is desirable to keep them in a special case made and lettered to simulate a bound volume of the thesis.

FOURTH YEAR HONOURS PROGRAMS

Guidelines for Good Practice

(from AVCC/ARC)

Purposes and Organisation

- 1 Departments should formulate and explicitly state the objectives of their Honours Program. The content of the program should clearly reflect the objectives.
- 2 Departments should identify the particular purposes and character which distinguish their Honours Program from other undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs.

- 3 Where feasible, collaboration across institutions should be encouraged so that the range of specialist courses and the pool of students for them can be increased.

Responsibilities and Expectations

- 4 Honours Programs should contain a mix of advanced theory, research training, and a research project. No overall guidelines are appropriate, but each discipline should establish appropriate upper and lower boundaries for the proportion allocated to the thesis, perhaps within the range 30 - 60%.
- 5 The academic staff involved in supervising honours candidates should be active researchers. Where appropriate, co-supervision by qualified non-academics, for example from industry, should be encouraged.
- 6 Departments should ensure that the expectations and responsibilities of project supervisors and students are clearly understood by both parties.
- 7 Departments should prepare a handbook setting out the aims, nature and benefits of the Honours Program, together with details of staff interests, the role of supervisors, facilities available, course requirements and assessment procedures, thesis requirements (including word limit) and assessment criteria, weightings of the various components, submission dates, and guidelines for such activities as laboratory or field work. In particular, departments should develop explicit criteria for the assessment of theses, including definitions of performance at the various grades of honours.
- 8 A systematic information and advice program should be provided to potential students early in their undergraduate program. As well as individual advice and encouragement, documents should be provided which set out entry requirements, expectations, the structure of the program and facilities. In particular, admission criteria should be carefully spelt out.
- 9 Departments should provide a formal organisational and administrative structure for the Honours program involving either a co-ordinator or an Honours Program Committee charged with such matters as
 - (a) scrutinising thesis proposals
 - (b) making recommendations on program proposals
 - (c) monitoring the structure and coherence of the Honours program offerings
 - (d) monitoring the effectiveness of the supervision provided
 - (e) monitoring assessment procedures
- 10 Programs should include components involving the development of both written and oral communication skills. As a follow-on, students should be required to provide a seminar on their thesis or to engage in an oral defence of their work.

- 11 Departments should work to ensure comparability across institutions by exchange of information and staff, and where appropriate involvement of professional associations. All departments should consider subjecting their program to regular external review or appointing an external assessor to provide on-going monitoring of the conduct and standards of Honours Programs.
- 12 Departments should regularly evaluate their Honours Program in terms of success in achieving its objectives, the comparability of its standards, and its equity across students.

Assessment

- 13 Departments should provide regular and systematic feedback to students on all elements of their performance in the honours year as it proceeds.
- 14 The Supervisor's role as an examiner should be delineated, and policy on the number of examiners and the use of external examiners clearly specified.
- 15 Examiners should provide written reports, which include a short statement of the reasons for the grade of honours awarded to the thesis. The reports should also contain a section to be provided to students.
- 16 Departments should maintain written records of the criteria used for grading the honours performance to facilitate comparability from year to year. Written records of the considerations entered into in reaching final grades for students should be maintained. Records on student work should go beyond the data on scores awarded to detailed comments on students' performance in both thesis and other submitted work.