

## Information for Thesis Mentors and Committee Members

Thank you for agreeing to chair the honors thesis committee for this honors student. Your role as their primary mentor in their thesis project is critical. Honors students are talented, inquisitive, and creative and benefit enormously from the experience of creating a senior thesis. Since there are so many major and minor disciplines represented among our students, there is no one template for initiating, completing, or evaluating a thesis project. However, there are some guidelines we share with all thesis mentors that you may find helpful.

In the vast majority of cases committee chairs have had the experience of completing a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, and are generally familiar with the senior thesis process. You are the subject matter expert for the student's project. This often entails helping the student frame the project, develop the project methodology, and advise on project implementation and completion. Typically, each thesis project will have two additional committee members who play a supportive role to the student. They should be encouraged to make suggestions to the student while recognizing that the final decisions regarding a project rest with you and the student. The committee chair is typically a WMU faculty member, tenured or not, often including emeriti faculty, or approved part-time faculty members

The Honors College has established several learning outcomes for each thesis project. We expect the project to be innovative and creative; the final product to be coherently written, designed, and otherwise professional in its presentation; and that the quality of the work achieves a level consistent with the expectations and professional standards for the project's subject area and discipline. The evaluation of these outcomes rests with you and fellow committee members. The Honors College maintains a library of previously completed projects available to students and faculty members for their reference and review.

We suggest that an honors thesis project be one that can be completed within a semester and be equivalent in scope to a typical independent study course. With your concurrence, the student should identify the ideal format for presentation of the product of their research and creative activity. Depending on the specific nature of the project, this may include a paper, recital, or graphical design. The role of the Lee Honors College is to provide support where possible, but we do not make any determinations about project content and process itself. We trust the expertise of the committee chair and members to make the decisions necessary to shape and complete the project. In some cases projects will require approval of the HSIRB. As you know, this may take several weeks to receive so it is important that the student plan for this. If there are any questions as to whether the project requires HSIRB approval, please their office at 387-8293.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and initiate completion of the necessary project-related forms. This includes the thesis declaration form and the thesis defense form which you and committee members will review and sign. The student will present to all committee members an evaluation form which serves as a means for you to assess the quality of the student's thesis. On occasion, a student may elect to receive academic credit for the thesis project. In this instance you will be asked by the student to approve and sign an HNRS 4990 Thesis form that the student will then bring to the Lee Honors College at the start of the semester. To receive academic credit for the course, the student must receive a grade for the project at the end of the semester.

Should you or your students have any questions regarding the senior thesis project please contact Nicholas Andreadis, Associate Dean of the Lee Honors College ([nicholas.andreadis@wmich.edu](mailto:nicholas.andreadis@wmich.edu)).