Southern Cross University
Faculty of Education

Bachelor of Education with Honours Handbook 2026
for Students and Supervisors

Faculty of Education

Contents

1: About the Bachelor of Education Honours Program

The Bachelor of Education (Honours) program in the Faculty of Education is an intense and exciting 1-year fulltime research program, that can also be taken over 2 years, part time. The program involves researching a key education issue of interest. It enables students to extend their research skills, enhance career opportunities in research, and pursue a pathway for direct entry into the PhD program.

If you are a high achieving Education graduate, with a GPA (Grade Point Average) of at least 5.5/7, you are eligible to apply for the Honours program. To apply you need to find a supervisor within the Faculty of Education and develop and submit a research proposal. Applications need to be submitted here by the end of January.

Through completion of the Honours degree, you will:
- acquire an understanding of ethics and various research methods in the field of education.
- demonstrate content mastery in relation to a substantive issue or problem within the field of education; and,
- demonstrate a capacity to design, frame, conduct and report a small-scale inquiry in the field of education.

As an Honours student in the Faculty of Education, you are regarded as an emerging researcher who can contribute significantly to the research culture of the Faculty. You are invited to join the Faculty's Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/SCUEducationResearch/ and one of the Faculty's research groups: SEAE, TeachLab, or the Early Years Research Lab. You will also be a member of our Faculty of Education Higher Degree Research (HDR) Society and receive emails from the conveners with information about social events, research training opportunities, conferences and much more.

You may feel as apprehensive as you are excited about the prospect of completing a research thesis as part of your Honours program. That is normal! Members of the academic staff in the Faculty of Education will provide you with the support required to proceed confidently. Your Honours supervisor will be your main support person. The Unit Assessor of the two course work units will also offer you support. The Honours coordinator will also support you with academic and research advice.

How do I choose a supervisor?

In selecting a supervisor, you should seek a supervisor who has research focus in your area of interest and with whom you will be able to develop a productive working relationship.

The Faculty of Education staff page (see https://www.scu.edu.au/education/our-people/ or Find a supervisor - Higher Degree Research - Southern Cross University (scu.edu.au)) has details of individual academics in the Faculty and their area/s of specialisation. We encourage you to browse these pages and to talk with potential supervisors regarding their availability. Only permanent members of academic staff with at least an equivalent degree of Honours can be a supervisor. Please check with the Honours Coordinator prior to contacting the staff member, to ensure the staff member you prefer fulfills this requirement. Any staff listed as Principal Supervisor or Co-supervisor is eligible to supervise an Education Honours student.

There may also be opportunities available to join existing Projects within the Faculty of Education and the SEAE (Sustainability, Environment, and the Arts in Education) Research Cluster, TeachLab, or Early Years Research Lab.

How do I know what topic to choose for a thesis?

You are not expected to enter your Honours study with a fully conceptualised question for research! However, you should have some idea of the area of focus you wish to investigate through your research. Identifying a topic and a particular research question is a process that evolves after you begin your studies.

The Faculty of Education has three research groups that an Honours student can be part of: Please visit https://www.scu.edu.au/education/research/ for more research concentration information.

Research Proposal

Alongside having a GPA of 5.5, the other requirement for entry is to submit a research proposal. Please seek out a suitable supervisor to assist you to develop your research proposal.

The research proposal is an outline of your proposed Honours project. It needs to highlight your research's potential, originality and/or significance. This proposal will be used to assess your suitability for the program.

The length of a proposal should be 2-3 pages.

- A cover page- Title of the project, applicant name, proposed supervisors;
- Introduction and overview of the research, including proposed research question/s (150-300 words);
- Review of current literature (300-500 words);
- Research design and methodology, including a brief timeline for completion of the thesis,

this will differ if you are part-time or full-time (300-500 words);

- Significance and expected outcomes of the study (100-200 words); and
- References in APA 7 referencing style.

A research proposal is not 'set in stone', this plan is likely to change once you start working on your project with your supervisor. Rather it is a guide to determine if the research proposal is feasible and to assess the standard of academic writing capabilities.

Scholarship Details

The Faculty will award three scholarships to outstanding education students in the Bachelor of Education with Honours program yearly. If you are enrolled in Honours or intend to enrol in Honours, you may apply for an Honours Scholarship by the closing date, (see website for more details). There are up to three scholarships available, valued at $5,000 each. Applicants must nominate a referee to support the application for the Honours scholarship. Please visit https://www.scu.edu.au/scholarships/honours- scholarships/education-honours-scholarship/ for details around the scholarship offering including forms and the application process.

Conference funding and research funding is available for students, should you require it - please contact educationresearch@scu.edu.au for more information.

2: Course Structure of the Honours Program

The Honours program is a one-year (or 2 year part-time), standalone course and requires you to complete eight Honours units (see Table below). To receive the award of Bachelor of Education with Honours, a student must successfully complete the two coursework units of study (25% of program) and develop an Honours thesis of 18,000 – 20,000 words (75% of program).

Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Points	Offerings
EDUC6001	Literature Review in Education: Known Unknowns	12	Term 1
EDUC4004	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 1) Part A	12	Term 1
EDUC6006	Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass	12	Term 2
EDUC4005	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 1) Part B	12	Term 2
EDUC4006	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part A	12	Term 1, 3*
EDUC4007	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part B	12	Term 1, 3*
EDUC4008	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 3) Part A	12	Term 2, 4*
EDUC4009	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 3) Part B	12	Term 2, 4*

In addition to the coursework and thesis units, students will participate in a **Final Oral Presentation** prior to thesis submission. This presentation provides an opportunity to reflect on the research journey, literature search strategies, and the use of generative AI tools, if applicable. You will work closely with your supervisor to investigate a key research area of concern, to conceptualise and develop your Honours thesis, and receive advice and guidance on other issues of relevance to the Honours program. Further guidance is provided by the Unit Assessor in the units **EDUC6001 Literature Review in Education: Known Unknowns**, and **EDUC6006 Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass**. It is recommended that you maintain regular contact with your Honours supervisor to ensure that your work on the thesis component is completed at a consistent pace throughout the program.

3: Information to help you undertake your thesis

What Constitutes a Research Thesis?

The following guidelines recognise that a thesis should be set in a scholarly context and may be useful as you begin to think about the research you will undertake and the thesis you will write. Because the range of topics for thesis work is extremely diverse, it is difficult to provide a precise definition of what constitutes a thesis. While some theses may involve traditional research methods, or creative methods (such as arts-based research), others may involve a more practical orientation (such as action-based research).

Honours Thesis Guidelines

Your Honours thesis will include:
- A statement of the problem and related aims/research questions of the research;
- A description of the educational significance and rationale for the research;
- A review and discussion of the relevant literature;
- A theoretical framework;
- A description of the methodology and methods used for data collection and analysis;
- Presentation of results and analysis of data;
- Interpretation/representation and discussion of findings; and
- Limitations of the research, implications for education practice and recommendations for future research.

Presentation of the thesis should conform to the standard publications format of American Psychological Association [APA] Style Guide APA7th Referencing Style.

Ethics Approval

An important part of your Honours research journey is ensuring that the research you undertake is ethical. Please consult with your Supervisor and the Honours Coordinator early in your candidature about applying for ethics approval. SCU Ethics guidelines and procedures must be adhered to. Ethics and ethical principles extend to all spheres of human activity. They apply to our dealings with each other, with animals and the environment. Southern Cross University is committed to the ethical conduct of research and ensures that its researchers maintain the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research and teaching. Researchers should be guided by the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2025,, to determine the level of risk involved in their research.

Please review the information on SCU's 'Human Research Ethics Requirements': https://www.scu.edu.au/research/research-ethics/human-research-ethics/, and attend closely to the information about ethics approval in Module 2 of EDUC6006 Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass. Your supervisors will also guide you through this process.

It is recommended that you complete low risk research projects in close guidance from your supervisor. Where higher risk methodologies are being proposed (i.e., research involving children), the supervisor must already have full ethics approval (from SCU and the ethics approval of any

external authorities) and there should be a viable embedded Honours project within this. Where the supervisor does not already have an existing project with full ethics approval, high risk ethics applications should be avoided, unless there is an exceptional case, which would need to be submitted by the Honours supervisor (with their support) to the Honours Course Coordinator, Director of HDR and Associate Dean Research for consideration.

If you are conducting research associated with schools, you must apply for ethics approval from both SCU and other bodies such as NSW DET's SERAP, Education QLD, and/or the Catholic Education Office if the project warrants it. If such approval is required, be aware that no data collection can commence until ethics approval is granted. This is usually not feasible in the short time frame of Honours. **Consider your timelines carefully when developing your research proposal, as an Honours project needs to be completed in a short period of time.**

Expectations of a Student

- Be familiar with the Honours Handbook information;
- Maintain regular and effective contact with your supervisor(s) during the course of the thesis. Students should be meeting regularly (a guide is 30 minutes a week or an hour a fortnight);
- Take responsibility for the progress of your thesis, communicate any issues or problems you are having to your supervisor and seek assistance in overcoming problems earlier rather than later;
- You are also advised to seek advice from the Honours Coordinator sooner rather than later should problems not be able to be resolved to your satisfaction; and,
- Present an in-progress presentation that involves a 15-minute power point presentation + 15- minute roundtable discussion during your candidature.
- Present a **Final Oral Presentation** prior to thesis submission, summarising the research process, literature review strategies, and any use of GenAI tools. This presentation supports transparency and academic integrity.

Expectations of a Thesis Supervisor

Your thesis supervisor has the following responsibilities:
- Be familiar with the Honours Handbook information;
- Assist you in the formulation of a thesis topic, research aim/questions;
- Consult with you and monitor and oversee the progress of your thesis. Supervisors should be meeting with their students regularly (weekly/fortnightly);
- Ensure that you have ethics approval for the project prior to commencement of data collection;
- Advise you regarding correct professional and ethical procedures in fieldwork, case studies, and in the proper use of data about people and institutions;
- Advise you on the final preparation of thesis, e. g., reading drafts in progress and suggesting appropriate improvements;
- Nominate two appropriate thesis examiners to the Honours Coordinator; and
- Inform the Honours Coordinator of student progress and any serious breakdown of

communications that may occur.

Expectations of the Honours Coordinator
- Provide academic and research support advice to you;
- Facilitate the Honours in-progress presentation and roundtable;
- Liaise with supervisors;
- Send out theses for examination and facilitate the examination process; and
- Complete final assessment grading processes and determine Honours level.

Presentation and Structure of the Thesis

The following are requirements when presenting your thesis:
- The thesis must be word-processed, double spaced and A4 format;
- The left-hand margins of all pages should be no less than 4 cm and no more than 5 cm, while the right-hand margin should be 2 cm;
- The thesis should be carefully proofread before you submit. Careful attention must be given to expression, spelling, grammar, citation details and correct presentation of references;
- Diagrams, figures and/or tables should be inserted in an appropriate place in the text of the thesis and according to the style guide. Only very lengthy tables (more than three pages long) should be placed in an appendix rather than in the text;
- All pages except the title page and the declaration page should be numbered; and
- Use APA 7th referencing style About APA 7th - APA 7th Referencing Guide - LibGuides at Southern Cross University (scu.edu.au).
- All Honours theses must include a clear and specific acknowledgement of any use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools. This includes, but is not limited to, assistance with writing, editing, literature searching, data analysis, or idea generation.
  - If GenAI tools were used, the acknowledgement should describe the nature and extent of their use.
  - If GenAI tools were not used, a statement confirming this must be included to ensure transparency.
  - Where significant modifications were made using GenAI, candidates may be asked to provide original versions to their supervisor or include them as an appendix.
- Ensure your submission is within the word limit of 18,000 to 20,000 words, excluding references and appendices. The layout of the thesis and selection of the title is your responsibility and should be guided by discussions with your supervisor. Be sure to follow the recommended guidelines for formatting in APA 7th style.

If the proper presentation of the thesis requires some major departure from the recommendations (e.g., an arts-based or creative work, variation in page size from A4, a need to present large section of hand-written symbols or foreign language script, special types of large diagrams or maps), you should discuss this with your supervisor. An example of the basic structure of a thesis is included in the next pages.

Plagiarism, cheating, and collusion

A thesis is intended to be your original work carried out by you under supervision. Any work included in the presentation of a thesis that is not original or that was carried out prior to the formal commencement of the thesis must be clearly reported and identified as background material and be correctly referenced. When you submit your thesis, your supervisor provides a written statement certifying to the best of their knowledge the extent to which you have carried out the work. You shall not submit for examination any work that has previously been accepted for any other degree or diploma.

The University regards most seriously any acts of dishonesty in assessment such as plagiarism, collusion, re-submission of previously marked work in different units, examination misconduct and theft of other students' work. SCU's statements on plagiarism are contained in the Academic Misconduct Guidelines, published in the SCU Policy Library (https://www.scu.edu.au/staff/governance/policy/) accessible by students and is also available upon request. Please also see this SCU academic integrity and module link https://www.scu.edu.au/learning-zone/academic-integrity-and-turnitin/

In short, the thesis submission must be your own work. This does not mean that you may not make use of the work of others. When quoting or paraphrasing material from other sources, however, those sources must be acknowledged in full. For example, it may be useful to seek the help of a Unit Assessor or Tutor in preparing the piece of work, or to enlist the help of fellow students in sorting out ideas, but the final product must be written by the you in your own words. Students can also seek assistance from the Learning Zone.

You are required to state unambiguously the sources of your information and the extent to which the work of others has been used. In support of your thesis, you may also submit any relevant publication(s) of which you are the sole or joint author. However, you may not present as the thesis any work which has been presented for any other degree at SCU or another university, unless this work has been published and is merely in support of the thesis.

Use of Generative AI and Academic Integrity

All submitted work must reflect the candidate's original thinking and writing. The use of generative AI tools must be transparent and appropriately acknowledged within the thesis. Undeclared or misleading use of GenAI may constitute academic misconduct. Supervisors may request evidence of authorship or clarification of GenAI involvement to ensure integrity is maintained.

Title Page Layout of Thesis

Page One

Outdoor Classrooms: Exploring the Implementation of Science Lessons in the School Grounds.

Cara Smith

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Honours in Education
Southern Cross University
October 2024

Page Two

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any educational institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Any use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools in the preparation of this thesis has been transparently acknowledged, including the nature and extent of their contribution. Where no GenAI tools were used, this is also stated explicitly.

Signed:

Date:

The research for this thesis received the approval of the Southern Cross University Research Ethics Committee.
(Ethics approval reference:).

Page Three and onwards. Please note that this is a guide only – speak to your supervisor for their advice.

Table of Contents	Lists all major divisions and subdivisions marked by numbers and indicates pages.	The titles and subtitles of sections should appear in a style and size consistent with their position in the hierarchy (see style manuals for help in selecting your system).
Lists of Tables/ Figures/ Illustrations / Appendices	Lists all of these and the pages on which they appear.	A separate section is used for each of these categories. (It is often useful to number such items using the chapter number first e.g., Fig 1.1; Fig 2.1; Fig 2.2; etc.)
GenAi Declaration	Provides a statement about the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools in the thesis.	Students must specify whether GenAI tools were used. If used, they must describe the nature and extent of the contribution (e.g., editing, summarising, idea generation, literature searching). If not used, a clear statement confirming no GenAI involvement must be included.
Acknowledgments	To thank anyone whose support has been important for your work	The supervisor generally receives the first vote of thanks. Participants should also be acknowledged. This section is the least bound by convention. You may speak in the first person and as informally as you wish.
Abstract	Orients readers, providing them with an outline of the context, aims, and focus, underpinning theory/research, methods and with a statement of major findings of the thesis.	Maximum of 300 words. Includes context, aims/focus, focus of literature review, methods of research and analysis, findings, and final statement of application/implication for research context.

Introduction	Provides background information and rationale for the research, so that the reader is persuaded that it will be useful/interesting. It usually also serves as a frame within which the reader reads the rest of the thesis.	Provides background information related to the need for the research. Builds an argument for the research and presents aims. May present theoretical starting point. For a thesis, it usually includes methodology. Gives an outline of subsequent chapters.
Literature Review	Shows the reader/examiner that you are familiar with issues and debates in the field. You need to explain these and discuss the main ideas and background of the topic. Shows the reader that there is an area in this field to which you can contribute (thus, the review must be critically analytical). The research aims and question(s) for the study should be also provided.	These sections are where you cite the most and where your use of verb tense becomes most important in conveying subtle meanings. Beware of unwarranted repetition or overusing quotes. This is also where plagiarism should be checked.
Theoretical Framework	A theoretical framework presents and critically discusses a particular ontology, epistemology and theory/ies through which to examine a particular phenomenon.	You must remember to discuss theory, which is *directly relevant* to your research. Often theory is a separate chapter. Also keep in mind that a literature review may be the main source of data, and fulfil the aims of the thesis, in which case it may incorporate a different thesis structure.

Methodology	Presents a rationale for the methods of research and analysis. Describes the methods of research and analysis. Reveals the boundaries of the research. Shows you are a researcher who takes account of how research may affect participants.	This is a review of the methods used in other research and clearly describes the methods used for your study. It may include illustrations (e.g., a timeline depicting stages/steps in the research). It also describes steps taken to ensure ethical research practices.
Results	Presents the data and findings, ordered/ analysed and clearly presented.	Past tense is a feature here (usually). Data in tables should be carefully laid out, checked, and discussed.
Discussion	Discusses findings and results that clearly address the research aims and questions of the study.	Makes synthesised links between aims/ research questions, and findings (and the research literature).
Conclusion	Draws all arguments and findings together. Leaves the reader with a strong sense that the work set out to be completed is worthwhile.	Summarises major findings. Presents limitations. Presents implications. Suggests implication, application, and directions for future research.
References	Shows the reader which Research literature/texts/materials/ sources you have referred to in your thesis	Should include only works of use to the study. Use APA 7th referencing style.
Appendices	Provides a place for important information, which, if placed in the main text, would distract the reader from the flow of the argument.	Begin each appendix on a new page with the word appendix in the top centre. Use an identifying capital letter (e.g., Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) if you have more than one appendix.
Glossary/Index	Helps reader where the context or content of the research may be unfamiliar	A list of key terms/topics if needed.

Writing the Thesis

Follow the writing conventions you have been advised to follow.

Conventions are the rules you need to follow in writing regarding citations, APA 7th referencing, bibliographies, style (e.g., language free of gender bias), page layout, punctuation, spelling, figures and tables, and the presentation of graphics. In the Faculty of Education, the Author/Date/Page system of in-text referencing is in general use, with a few exceptions. The computer program called *Endnote* will greatly assist with consistent use of conventions, once it is set up correctly (SCU Library regularly runs Endnote tutorials). Consider using styles in Microsoft word; these may help you to maintain a consistent use of conventions throughout your thesis.

Look at other theses in the field.
These are available for your perusal: Honours Theses link and Theses - Southern Cross University (scu.edu.au)

Look at an exemplar of an Education Honours thesis (only via SCU login):
https://scu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=61SCU_INST:61SCU&collectionId=8148936560002368 to look at the main features of their:
- Organization;
- Language use;
- Use of subsections and styles for the hierarchy of headings/ subheadings;
- Page numbering and font style.

It will help you in the final stages if you have decided early on the conventions, the font and the use and style of subheadings and headings and use them consistently.

Remember that writing is a thinking process.

When we write, we often change or considerably develop what we think. Writing is not just translating into words the images of our thoughts; it is not as simple as that. In writing, we may transform our thoughts, redefine them or, with effort, give shape to our ideas. Thus, it is important to give ourselves time to write. Many students find it helpful to begin writing early in the process of doing their research. With the time constraints, an early start is imperative. Remember, what you write is not necessarily what you will submit for the final draft (though in some parts it may be).

It is also important to remember that different people experience writing differently and the processes they prefer are also different. Chandler (1994) categorises writers as: Architects (those

who consciously pre-plan and organise); Watercolour artists (who try to write a final draft on the first attempt); Bricklayers (who revise at sentence and paragraph level as they proceed), and Oil painters (who pre-plan little but rework text repeatedly). Which category/ies do you think you fall in? It is useful to know how you prefer to go about writing academic pieces, but you may find it useful to try out other ways with a thesis, since this is probably a considerably longer piece of work than any you have undertaken before.

Writing assistance.

The following publications provide guidance on the presentation of theses. They are categorised according to the kind of help they provide. Advice should be sought from your supervisor as to which publication is the most relevant to a given discipline area. You should be able to access these books and others online through the SCU library.

SCU's library hosts a range of comprehensive resources to support you with referencing in APA 7th style, including video tutorials and quick-guide PDFs. These are stored together in a Libguide called 'APA 7th Referencing Guide'. This is accessed from the following link (once you are logged in to SCU) http://libguides.scu.edu.au/apa

Enrolment FAQs

Where should I go for advice during my Honours candidature?

Initially you would discuss matters with your supervisor directly. If your supervisor cannot help you, seek advice from the [Honours Coordinator](#) or Honours Course Administration ([Client Services](#)).

Can I make changes to my Honours Units?

All students are required to complete the two core units EDUC6001 Literature Review in Education: Known Unknowns, and EDUC6006 Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass (12 pointseach) and the six Thesis units (12 points each).

For Education Honours the Census dates (i.e., last day to discontinue a unit without incurring financial or academic penalty), are the same as for all other courses. Refer to https://www.scu.edu.au/current-students/student-administration/key-dates--teaching-calendar/, to determine the Census date for each Term.

Can I discontinue Honours?

Students wishing to discontinue their thesis should discuss the matter with their Honours supervisor and Honours Coordinator.

What happens if I fail a coursework unit?

If you fail a coursework unit, you will be required to repeat the unit or a suitable substitute.

What happens if I fail the thesis component?

If you fail the thesis component, you will be deemed to have failed the entire program and will be ineligible to pass the Honours degree.

How do I apply for a thesis extension?

For an extension you must apply at least four weeks prior to the submission date (via the Special Consideration process). Extensions are only granted under exceptional circumstances. and usually only for a short amount of time can usually be granted. The submission date of the thesis cannot be extended for those students planning to apply to undertake a PhD (and be considered for a scholarship) in mid/end year scholarship rounds.

Extensions can only be granted by the Faculty of Education Honours Coordinator.

4: Thesis Submission and Examination
Thesis submission

Thesis submission due	Submission date
End of Term when you are enrolled in EDUC4009 Education Honours Thesis (Stage 3) Part B	Week 6

To meet the Faculty of Education requirements a thesis must be submitted using the following procedure:

1. **Final Oral Presentation**
   Prior to submission, students must complete a **Final Oral Presentation**. This presentation provides an opportunity to articulate the research journey, literature search strategies, and any use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools. Supervisors will use this presentation to confirm research integrity and authorship. Completion of this presentation is a prerequisite for thesis submission. Supervisors will organise this in conversation with the Course Coordinator.
2. **GenAI Declaration**
   Students must include a GenAI declaration in their thesis. This should specify whether GenAI tools were used, and if so, describe the nature and extent of their contribution (e.g., editing, summarising, literature searching). If GenAI tools were not used, a statement confirming this must be included.
3. **Thesis Submission Form**
   Student to electronically submit the 'Thesis Submission Form', which must be completed and signed by the supervisor. To submit it, go to the Blackboard site for EDUC4009 Education Honours Thesis (Stage 3) Part B, select the 'Thesis submission' tab from the site menu, and then the link for 'Thesis Submission Form'.
4. **Faculty of Education Library Release Authorisation Form**
   Student to electronically submit the completed, signed 'Faculty of Education Library Release Authorisation Form'. To submit, go to the Blackboard site for EDUC4009, select the 'Thesis submission' tab from the main menu, and then the link for 'Faculty of Education Library Release Form'.
5. **Final Thesis Submission**
   Student to electronically submit the final version of their thesis. To submit, go to the Blackboard site for EDUC4009, select the 'Thesis submission' tab from the main menu, and then the link for 'Submit Education Honours Thesis Here'.

NOTE: Each of the two forms mentioned above are available for download from the Blackboard site for EDUC4009 (select the 'Thesis submission' tab from the main menu).

Examination of thesis

Selection of examiners.

The selection of two examiners is the responsibility of the supervisor. At least one examiner should be external to the University. This should be organised by the supervisor about four to six weeks before the thesis is due to be submitted. The supervisor should not discuss with you the names of

the proposed examiners as examiners need to be anonymous to the student. The supervisor should not contact the examiners during the examination period.

Examination process.

Once you have submitted the thesis, the date of submission is entered into the University student database and the examination process commences. Theses are sent out to the named examiners by the Honours Course Coordinator together with an 'Examiners' Summative Evaluation' form and the 'Faculty of Education Honours Thesis Marking Guidelines' (see Section 6 in this Handbook)

Time taken to examine the thesis.

Each examiner is asked to complete their examination of your thesis within four weeks of receiving it, but for many reasons, this is not always possible. If examiners' reports conflict, this invariably causes delays while decisions are made about adjudication and possible additional examination. While such delays can cause understandable anxiety for students, it is important to recognise that the university is committed to ensuring that careful procedures are used which uphold standards of scholarship and are at the same time fair to students. Please note you may contact Client Services during that time to seek advice, but you are not permitted to contact the examiners.

Thesis examination and grading.

Examiners will be required to grade the thesis using the guidelines provided by the Faculty of Education. If the two examiners return a significant deviation in grades a third examiner will be appointed to examine the thesis. The Honours Course Coordinator then adjudicates and determines the final grade for the thesis.

Result notification.

All students will be notified in writing of the outcome of the examination process and their final, overall result as soon as it has been determined.

Minor corrections.

If minor corrections are recommended by the examiners, these are usually to be completed to the supervisor's satisfaction. You will normally be given up to three months (or by graduation, whichever is the earlier) to complete these minor corrections and return the amended thesis to your supervisor.

6: Honours Thesis Marking Guidelines for Examiners and Determining an Overall Result

Preamble

The guidelines that follow are not intended as an exact prescription for Honours theses marking as disciplines and modes of inquiry will vary in their precise expectations for the way in which research is undertaken and reported. The main aim of this document is to encourage examiners to be explicit about the criteria by which students' work is evaluated.

It is also important to note that these guidelines apply only to the research thesis, and that the overall result may be different to the thesis grade, as marks achieved in the coursework units also contribute to the final overall result. A student may obtain an H1 in the thesis but an H2A overall, or vice versa.

The thesis grade descriptors below, make no reference to the publishability of the research thesis. The Honours thesis is a training ground for learning and demonstrating mastery of research skills, and it should be possible for a student to get a high mark for an outstanding command of methodology and its application to the content area of the thesis, even if the topic has been already researched in the literature. Thus, the kind of originality we would look for would be in terms of new insights into a possibly well-established area rather than a genuinely original research study.

Examiners' Reports

Examiners' reports are the means by which the examiner's assessment of the thesis is communicated to the student. Substantive comments should not be written on the thesis itself but provided as a separate report (spelling and typographical errors, and minor grammatical mistakes, may be noted on the thesis). Grammatical errors which require more than this should be documented in the separate Examiner's report. Feedback comments like "your grasp of prose is inadequate" are unhelpful; telling the student that they persistently match singular nouns with plural verbs (and even giving page numbers) is helpful. Reports should be consistent with the grade given. Examiners should, of course, be careful about the general tone of comments. For most students, the Honours year represents a considerable leap in our standards and expectations, and some have more difficulty rising to these than others therefore constructive feedback by examiners is encouraged and please let students know in your feedback when they have done something well.

The examiner's report should be about one page in length. Keep in mind that the student has spent most of the year on this project and deserves more than a mere sentence or two of your reflection on their thesis. Examiners' reports should be signed rather than be anonymous. It should be possible for students to seek further constructive feedback on their thesis if required.

Thesis Grade Descriptors

H1 (85-100) (HD)
- Outstanding command of expression and logical argument in a skillfully structured manuscript.
- Superior evaluation and integration of existing literature.
- Evidence of significant insight and original thought in dealing with the critical issues.
- Sophisticated understanding of research methods, with evidence of careful attention to critical design issues in the execution of the project.
- Thoughtful and appropriate choice of theoretical frameworks and/or data analysis, and outstanding presentation and reports of results/conclusion/arguments.
- Clear and coherent interpretation of the thesis data and/or the results of other studies.
- Comprehensive understanding of the importance of the result in the context of the theoretical framework.
- An Upper H1 (93-100) student has strengths in all of the above areas. A Lower H1 (85-92) student displays many of the above strengths but is less well-balanced in overall quality.

Overall: An H1 student (upper or lower) is obviously capable of undertaking postgraduate research and warrants strong scholarship support.

H2A (75-84) (D)
- The manuscript is well-written, logically argued and generally well-structured.
- The evaluation and integration of the existing literature is very sound without being outstanding.
- Reasonable insight and some evidence of original thought in dealing with the critical issues (theoretical framework).
- Evidence of a solid understanding of research methods.
- Adequate design of the research project, although possibly containing minor but retrievable errors.
- Choice of data analysis that is appropriate for the design (although less well justified than might be expected of H1 standard) and clear presentation of results.
- Generally sound but pedestrian interpretation of results and their importance to theoretical context.

Overall: An H2A student is capable of undertaking postgraduate research.
H2B (65-74) (C)
- Generally, competently written, although some problems exist in the organisation of the text and the way it is expressed.
- Provides adequate coverage of the literature, although it tends to be more descriptive than evaluative, and arguments are often disjointed.
- Occasional evidence of insights into the issues underlying the thesis, but little evidence of original thinking.

- Basic but somewhat limited understanding of the research methods.
- The design of the research project is generally adequate but is marred by errors and oversights.
- Serviceable choice of data analysis, although other approaches may have been more appropriate
- The presentation of results lacks some clarity.
- Interpretation of results or other studies is adequate but limited.

Overall: An H2B student may be capable of undertaking postgraduate research but would require close supervision.

H3 (50-64) (P)
- The work is not well written and shows serious flaws in the structuring of arguments.
- Coverage of the necessary literature is weak, with insufficient information provided to support the arguments made, or conclusions drawn, within the thesis or essay.
- Little evidence of insight and ideas tend to be highly derivative.
- Knowledge of research methods is deficient.
- Significant flaws exist in the design of the research project making it difficult for the research to meet its aims.
- Data analysis techniques are arbitrary or inappropriate.
- The results are not clearly presented.
- Interpretations are superficial, demonstrating a weak understanding of the results and their relevance to the theoretical framework.

Overall: Although a student's undergraduate performance merited eligibility for Honours, the student showed considerable difficulty in mastering the higher-order skills required at Honours level and would not be able to undertake postgraduate research.

3.5   Fail (< 50)
- The work shows a serious inability to structure and present a logical argument
- Coverage of the necessary literature is inadequate, with little information provided relevant to the claims made, or conclusions drawn, within the thesis
- Serious misunderstanding of key concepts and issues
- Knowledge of research methods is lacking
- Serious flaws exist in the design of the research project making it difficult or impossible for the research to meet its aims
- Data analysis techniques are inappropriate and the results are presented inadequately
- An inability to show how the results of the research project relate to the theoretical framework and/or serious misinterpretations of results.

Determining an Overall Result

The overall result (class of Honours awarded) is based on the average of the coursework unit results received (25%) and Honours thesis grade received (75%). Please note that the thesis is the primary determinant of the class of Honours awarded. The classes of Honours awarded (the overall result) have the same grading criteria as the Honours thesis (First-Class, Second-Class A, B, etc.).

7: Staff Contact Details

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