



**Southern Cross  
University**

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# Program handbook 2026

**Bachelor of Health & Human Sciences (Honours)**

For students and supervisors

[scu.edu.au/healthscience](http://scu.edu.au/healthscience)



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# Welcome to the Honours Program

Welcome to the Health and Human Sciences Honours programme. My name is Associate Professor Kellie Toohey, and I'm delighted to be your course coordinator. Alongside your dedicated supervisors, I am here to support and guide you throughout your research journey, ensuring you reach your learning aspirations and make the most of this exciting opportunity. This Honours programme blends engaging coursework designed to enhance your research skills with an independent research project, all under the guidance of our expert academic staff. You'll gain hands-on experience in sourcing, evaluating, and synthesising scientific evidence, designing robust research methodologies, and interpreting a range of data types within the context of contemporary knowledge. We look forward to supporting you as you embark on this rewarding academic adventure.

An Honours degree is highly regarded in both academic and professional circles, reflecting your commitment and achievement. Many of our previous students have been awarded the Southern Cross University medal and have gone on to secure scholarships for further research degrees, including PhDs. Others have successfully transitioned into their chosen professions, taking up roles as nurses, midwives, biomedical laboratory technicians, sports scientists, and exercise physiologists. This programme opens the door to a range of exciting opportunities and career pathways, preparing you for success whether you pursue further study or enter the workforce.

The current handbook serves as your comprehensive guide to the Health and Human Sciences Honours programme, providing all the crucial details you'll need. Within its pages, you'll discover an overview of the units you'll undertake, assessment requirements, and expert advice to help you excel throughout your studies. I strongly encourage you to explore its contents thoroughly, paying particular attention to the sections on thesis preparation and requirements.

All the best with your studies,



**Associate Professor Kellie Toohey**

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# Program overview

<b>Bachelor of Health and Human Sciences (Honours) – BHlthHumSc(Hons)</b>	
Level of Award:	Undergraduate Honours Degree
Academic Organisational Unit:	Faculty of Health
Course Mode:	Online
Total Units:	8 equivalent units
Duration:	1 year full-time; 2 years part-time

## Admission requirements

Applicants for admission to the program shall normally have satisfied the requirements prescribed in [Rule 2](#) of the University's *Rules Relating to Awards* and shall hold an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 7 Health Science Bachelor Degree or equivalent with a credit average (Grade Point Average of 5).

English language proficiency requirements apply to international applicants and other applicants whose previous study was undertaken in a language other than English. The minimum English language requirements for such applicants for entry to this course are as follows:

Category	Score
Overall	6.0
Listening	minimum 5.5
Reading	minimum 5.5
Speaking	minimum 5.5
Writing	minimum 5.5

Admission to the program is also subject to the availability of appropriate supervision (see Selecting an Honours Supervisor on page 10 of this document) and a suitable project.

## Schedule of units

The schedule of units for the Bachelor of Health and Human Sciences (Honours) is as follows:

- HLTH4001 – Literature Review
- HLTH4002 – Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project I\*
- HLTH4005 – Research Design
- STAT4004 – Data Analysis
- HLTH4003 – Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project II\*
- HLTH4006 – Research Communication

\* *Double-weighted unit*

To be eligible for the award of Bachelor of Health and Human Sciences (Honours), a candidate shall successfully complete the equivalent of eight (8) units (96 credit points), comprising all units listed in the Schedule of Units. This degree may be awarded with the following classes:

1. First Class
2. Second Class (Division 1)
3. Second Class (Division 2)
4. Third Class

Students are required to satisfy requirements for the coursework units and Honours Class will be determined from the grades in the thesis units.

# Study patterns

The tables below summarise the study patterns across the two streams of the program. It should be noted that the execution of the research project itself may not follow a term structure. Further information about each unit is provided on the university website pages linked in the tables.

## Standard stream full-time

Unit name	Unit code	Credit points
<b>Term 1</b>		
Literature Review	HLTH4001	12
<b>Dual Term 2</b>		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project I	HLTH4002	24
<b>Term 2</b>		
Research Design	HLTH4005	12
<b>Term 3</b>		
Data Analysis	STAT4004	12
<b>Tri Term 2</b>		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project II	HLTH4003	24
<b>Term 4</b>		
Research Communication	HLTH4006	12

## Standard stream part-time

Unit name	Unit code	Credit points
<b>Year One Term 1</b>		
Literature Review	HLTH4001	12
<b>Year One Term 2</b>		
Research Design	HLTH4005	12
<b>Year One Term 3</b>		
Data Analysis	STAT4004	12
<b>Year One Term 4</b>		
Research Communication	HLTH4006	12
<b>Year Two Dual Term 1</b>		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project I	HLTH4002	24
<b>Year Two Dual Term 2</b>		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project II	HLTH4003	24

# Assessments

Assessment tasks across the program are scaffolded to assist in designing the research project, producing the final thesis and effectively communicating the research.

Offered	Unit	Assessment type	Contribution to unit grade	Term & week due
Term 1	HLTH4001 Literature Review	Participation (blackboard and weekly supervisor meetings)	SR	Weekly
Dual Term 2	HLTH4002 Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project I	Research proposal presentation	100%	DT2, W13
		Participation (blackboard and weekly supervisor meetings)	SR	Weekly
Term 2	HLTH4005 Research Design	Project Update Presentation	SR	T2, W6
		Participation (blackboard and weekly supervisor meetings)	SR	Weekly
Term 3	STAT4004 Data Analysis	Participation (blackboard and weekly supervisor meetings)	SR	Weekly
Tri Term 2	HLTH4003 Health and Human Sciences Thesis Project II	Presentation*	40%	TT2, W14
		Other (Thesis)*	60%	TT2, W18
Term 4	HLTH4006 Research Communication	Participation (blackboard and weekly supervisor meetings)	SR	Weekly

\*Note: SR = Satisfies requirements. The Final Honours Grade is comprised of the results from the presentation (40%) and thesis (60%) as submitted for HLTH4003.

## Selecting an Honours Supervisor

The selection of a supervisor is one of the most fundamental aspects to success in the Honours year and an agreed principal supervisor is required for entry into the program. Admission to the program is subject to the availability of appropriate supervision.

The principal supervisor must be a permanent research-active member of the Faculty with a research higher degree (or equivalent research or professional experience). The Faculty of Health has a diverse range of potential Honours supervisors. The [Honours webpage](#) contains information about those who have expressed interest in supervising and/or co-supervising within this program, which is a good starting point for finding supervisors. Consulting with the Course Coordinator and talking to other staff members and other honours/postgraduate students is also helpful.

The supervisor should be experienced in the student's area of study. This should include the content area and methodology of the proposed research. Co-supervisors may be brought on to ensure the student has adequate support to complete their project. This may be for support in a particular content area, research methodology or industry partner support. The Course Coordinator strongly encourages the addition of a co-supervisor and interdisciplinary supervision.

Additionally, some data collection procedures require particular expertise and supervision, e.g. stress tests. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that supervision has been organised before undertaking any project that requires such specialist data collection and that such an agreement is in writing.

It has been shown that the success of an Honours student is closely correlated to the success of the supervisory relationship. Accordingly, in addition to the supervisory team having knowledge of the research area and the student's intended research methodology, both sides must have confidence in each other and have a strong professional relationship.

Please get in touch with the Course Coordinator for further guidance and referral to appropriate supervisors for your research if you require further assistance.

## Responsibilities of the Honours Course Coordinator

Under the Dean, the Bachelor of Health and Human Sciences (Honours) is administered by the Honours Course Coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for the general orderly conduct of the Honours program and the maintenance of the highest academic standards. Specific responsibilities of the Honours Program Coordinator are listed below.

- a) Monitoring the Honours program to ensure consistency with relevant University policies.
- b) Assisting in answering the prospective candidates' inquiries and assisting students in selecting areas of study and suitable supervisors.
- c) Reviewing completed admission applications and supporting offers to students regarding completing the Honours program.
- d) Reporting significant concerns and issues about the Honours program to the Faculty Board Meeting and/or the Dean.
- e) The provision of a Handbook for the Honours program.
- f) Arranging an orientation program for students and supervisors at the commencement of the program.
- g) Assisting in resolving problems or issues that may arise for supervisors and students.
- h) Arranging the honours presentation session/symposium.
- i) Contacting the examiners of the theses, coordinating the process of theses assessment and presentation per TEQSA, and making grade recommendations.
- j) Monitoring the Honours program to ensure continuous quality improvement.
- k) Keeping a record of the Faculty's Honours program, including updating the University rules for the Honours program, the Honours Handbook, students' record and topics of theses, a copy of each thesis, and the assessment records.

# Student responsibilities

Honours students should assume responsibility for the following:

- a) Becoming familiar with University and Faculty policies and guidelines, including academic integrity. Students themselves must ensure that they are aware of University requirements. The handbook, orientation and induction, policy library, learning sites and unit information guides are avenues for doing so.
- b) Entering into a formal Supervision Agreement with their academic supervisor(s) at the outset of their honours program. Students must agree with their supervisor(s) regarding the supervision arrangements, including contact arrangements, timelines and feedback arrangements, roles and responsibilities, at a minimum. The Supervision Agreement Form must be submitted with the application to the program and may be revised if necessary.
- c) Meeting the agreed commitments with supervisor(s) and discussing any perceived breaches of the Supervision Agreement. Students are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their supervisors.
- d) Initiating and submitting progress reports after each term of study. These reports intend to highlight any issues related to the student's progression of the honours program.
- e) Adhering to discipline-specific and ethical practices in the conduct of research. Areas that students may need to be well-informed about include:
  - the requirements and procedures of the relevant Ethics Committees of the University
  - concern for the rights of individuals participating in a research project or being affected by it
  - concern for the good name of the University in undertaking the research project
  - philosophical or moral issues pertaining to the application of scientific method or other methods (for example, participant observation, unobtrusive measures)
  - the etiquette of appraisal and disapprobation in the field
  - techniques for integrating existing research into the thesis and for avoiding plagiarism
  - laboratory rules, biohazards safety rules, and other environmental concerns, especially for those that require using laboratories and dealing with human biological specimens.
- f) Receiving direction, advice and critique from supervisors, unit assessors and examiners in good faith.
- g) Abiding by the University rules relating to plagiarism, academic integrity and research-responsible conduct.
- h) Ensuring that the thesis is of a high standard and reflects the level of independent intellectual achievement of an Honours-level degree.

# Supervisors responsibilities

Honours supervisors should assume responsibility for the following:

- a) Assisting Honours students to select a topic and develop a research proposal for admission to the program. It should be feasible, scientifically sound, be supportable by the Faculty and fit with discipline expectations of an honours thesis.
- b) Establishing and communicating expectations of students from the outset of the program. A *Supervision Agreement Form* must include contact arrangements, timelines and feedback arrangements, roles and responsibilities, at a minimum. Roles and responsibilities in the development of the proposal, ethics approval processes and the learning of any special skills involved in, for example, data collection processes, should also be discussed. Expectations about the degree of guidance supervisors provide and the degree of independence expected of students should be discussed openly with students early in the year. Supervisors can avoid over-dependence if students appreciate their responsibilities early.
- c) Establishing timelines. Special mention is made of the expectations around timelines, which are very important to the on-time completion of a project in a compressed timeline. It is the responsibility of the student to devise a timeline of their research project; however, they rely on the supervisor's experience to ensure their expectations are realistic and build expectations around how to handle setbacks.

- d) Engaging with supervisor meetings (weekly) and meeting commitments to students as agreed in the *Supervisor Agreement Form*. Supervisors should invest an appropriate amount of time, interest and commitment to support the student during the program.
- e) Providing feedback, Supervisors must provide regular and systematic feedback to students on all elements of their performance in the Honours course as it proceeds. This should include feedback on written work, the research proposal and the conduct of the research.
- f) Selecting examiners. The University assigns responsibility to the Honours Course Coordinator for the appointment of Honours examiners. The supervisor's specialist knowledge of the project area and their membership of particular scholarly networks ensure that they are uniquely placed to recommend the examiners required. Two examiners should be appointed, with at least one from outside the University; neither is the supervisor. Once identified, examiners need to be approached as early as possible to ensure their availability and willingness to provide reports by set deadlines. Ideally, examiners should be identified and contacted at least when the student begins the final term of their honours program.

The examination of honours theses and classification of award is required to be undertaken in a manner that is free from bias. Potential conflicts of interest resulting from professional or personal relationships between examiners and a student and their supervisors must be disclosed. The Australian Council of Graduate Research sets out guidelines for Conflicts of Interest in the examination of Higher Degree Programs. These can be found [here](#). This document can be referenced to determine potential conflicts of interest for Honours research.

- g) Receiving examiners' reports. Examiners' reports should be discussed with the student. Where a student fails, there may well be recriminations about the quality of the supervision. Issues and concerns of this nature should be addressed immediately, using outside assistance from sources, including the Dean.
- h) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that ethical approval has been sought and confirmed prior to students commencing their research projects.
  - i) Assisting with publishing the work, where applicable.
  - j) Maintaining professional skills as a supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to attend any supervisor workshops conducted for Research Higher Degree supervisors. Supervisors must familiarise themselves with and adhere to relevant national codes concerning research practice and SCU policies concerning research conduct.
- k) Mentorship of co-supervisors, where applicable. Principal supervisors working with less experienced co-supervisors may take on a mentorship role to build capacity for honours research supervision within the Faculty.
- l) Communicate to the Course Coordinator or Dean should there be any issues with supervision arrangements or student progress.

## Successful supervisor/student relationship tips

The student and supervisor relationship is key for both parties' enjoyable and successful honours experience. The Honours year is traditionally considered to be a bridge between reading knowledge and producing knowledge and therefore requires a high level of independence on the part of the student. At the same time, as novice researchers, students require the guidance of experienced academics to ensure a high standard of research and that policies and processes are followed. Each set of circumstances is unique, but the following are some general rules for students and supervisors to help navigate this important relationship.

### Setting expectations early

Expectations of the roles of student and supervisor need to be set early. The supervisor needs to engage with the incoming student in mapping out their mutual expectations of supervision. Students must complete and submit a *Supervision Agreement Form* on application to the program. Both the student and the supervisor should expect each other to meet commitments negotiated at the outset of the supervisory relationship. Where a timeline or schedule of deadlines and responsibilities has been agreed upon, both parties are protected later should difficulties arise.

This Supervision Agreement is the starting point for setting what the student and the supervisor expect from one another during the honours program. It covers aspects of:

- communication and contact
- responsibility for contact
- feedback turn-around timelines
- intellectual property and authorship.

In preliminary meetings at the beginning of the supervisory relationship, the supervisor and student should ideally make arrangements about essential matters, including:

- intended nature, frequency and duration of meetings
- responsibilities the supervisor and the student have in preparing for these meetings (for example, written work to be submitted by the student and previous written work returned before the meeting by the supervisor, responsibility for making and sending around a meeting summary)
- specific ethical and safety matters associated with the project
- timeline of the project
- further training that the student should do to meet specific research skills
- roles and responsibilities regarding the ethics application (this will vary project to project)
- roles and responsibilities regarding the other project work and types of guidance to be provided
- deadlines for drafts of written work/practice presentations.

An opportunity should be made to discuss any concerns the honours student may have about their existing skills and capacity for honours-level work, and advice should be given about how the student can address any of these needs.

## Developing the provisional proposal

Prospective students are required to submit a one-page provisional research proposal with their application to the program. The honours program requires that the student complete an original research project that results in a literature review and a journal manuscript that is integrated into a thesis. Where students are studying full-time, the timeframe from commencement to submission of the thesis requires that the research project is reasonably well-developed from commencement.

For the supervisor, the task becomes one of developing consensus with the student about what constitutes an appropriate topic, that is:

- One that is sufficiently focused and can be completed within the time frame.
- One that the Faculty resources and intellectual expertise can support.
- One that is sufficiently interesting to the student, enabling prolonged engagement and commitment to the topic until its completion.

The topic must also fit well with broader disciplinary expectations of an honours project and be likely to satisfy examiners within the field.

Students are also required to submit a more comprehensive research proposal as an assessment item in HLTH4002. Supervisors should consult with each other to establish shared guidelines on the minimum and maximum levels of support to be offered to students in relation to the development of the research proposal. A minimum level of support for the research proposal might include:

- providing the format for a research proposal and taking the student through each of its sections
- discussing with the student the overall content of the proposal (topic, rationale, literature search, methodology, outcomes) within the framework of the topic, including direction on where to find appropriate or requisite resources
- reading through the initial draft and commenting on it
- reading through the final draft before submission to the Faculty.

A maximum level of support for the research proposal might include all of the above and:

- providing examples of other research proposals from previous students
- coaching on research skills in areas of weakness
- editing key sections of the proposal as they are being written
- assisting with locating resources.

## Establishing and reviewing the project timeline

A project timeline should be established as early as possible. The honours year passes quickly, and supervisors must recognise the importance of scheduling a work timetable or program with the student. Experienced supervisors are aware of the importance of setting and keeping to timelines. At the same time, they appreciate that a realistic attitude towards setbacks and delays is necessary. So, they build into the timelines some leeway to allow flexibility in the rate of progress students make. Students should ensure they regularly communicate with their supervisor regarding their project timeline and milestones to check their project is on track.

It is important to note that the project work does not necessarily follow a term structure, and in-term coursework requirements should also be considered when devising the timeline.

Timelines should include checkpoints at which progress is reviewed. These checkpoints can provide early warning of difficulties and allow supervisors to address them proactively. The progress report to be initiated by the student after each study term is an opportunity to revise timelines and discuss progression, including any perceived breaches of the *Supervision Agreement Form*.

## Communication arrangements

As described above, expectations for contact are set out in the *Supervision Agreement Form* and expectations around meetings should be established from the outset.

A clear agenda for each supervisory meeting is desirable to use discussions for intellectual advancement. Once the project is underway, meetings are most commonly used to review work completed and plan the next steps.

An agenda might look like this:

- report on tasks to be completed by each party before the meeting (these might include sections to be drafted, comments on reading to be completed, report on results generated and on their interpretation)
- main tasks for this meeting
- follow-up tasks to be completed by the next meeting
- date for the next meeting.

During the meeting, the supervisor and/or student should record what has been agreed and planned in relation to each of these points and check back on these notes as a basis for the next meeting.

Supervisors learn from experience what sort of meeting schedule best suits them, their students, and the type of project being undertaken. Specific stages of the project and writing demand more frequent meetings (for example, when putting together the research proposal or finalising the thesis for submission). In Honours programs, supervisors cannot afford to permit gaps in the time between meetings to interfere with the attainment of deadlines.

Students need to see supervisors as scholars who are respectful of the time and effort they are putting into their honours program. Students commonly report that they highly value supervisors who treat them collegially and seem to value their students' achievements. The important constant should be mutual respect, which is the basis for a positive intellectual rapport. Small but meaningful ways of showing mutual respect are by keeping appointments, being on time for them and having promised work ready as agreed. When meetings take place, full attention should be given without the distractions of telephone calls and unscheduled visitors.

## Reviewing progress

Students and Supervisors are required to submit to the honours Course Coordinator up to three completed progress reports over the course of the program, depending on whether the student is part-time or full-time (see key dates). These reports intend to highlight any issues related to the progression of the honours program.

It is recommended that this form is completed by both the student and supervisor together as part of a discussion that includes:

- a review of the project timeline with appropriate revisions
- anticipating any future barriers to on-time completion of the honours project and thesis
- satisfaction of both student and supervisor with the amount of contact, communication and feedback with reference to the Supervision Agreement Form.

## Giving and receiving feedback and guidance

Writing should commence right at the very start of the honours program. Supervisors employ different strategies to assist students with writing. Some supervisors find it helpful to do an early sighting of student writing (even a sample taken from work written before the student has commenced honours). This allows the supervisor and student to take up appropriate strategies if necessary (such as early referral to student writing support).

Some advocate going through submitted material only twice – reading and editing of material once only as it is submitted by section or chapter, culminating in a final reading of the completed thesis. Other supervisors prefer to recycle sections back to students for amendment and development and then, once these are revised, to comment again on the draft. This ongoing cycle of re-reading sections, returning and discussing them, is labour-intensive for supervisors. Still, it is a valuable learning cycle for the student who must assimilate a range of subtle writing conventions relating to writing in the discipline. Whichever process is employed, there should be negotiation with the student at the beginning of the honours program. This will ensure that the supervisor can set limits on the amount of assistance available, especially in the final stages before submission of the final thesis. It will permit the student to balance guidance with appropriate writing and independence in developing a personal style.

Some supervisors insist that their students keep a log of their readings. This practice encourages students to organise and summarise their reference materials effectively. These skills are essential for later research, and they enable the student to develop an effective system for acknowledgment and citation when writing up the final thesis. The usefulness of a reading log can be enhanced by students using the log to reflect and respond to their reading. They can note down their own thoughts in colloquial and informal language to the points made in items of reference (for example, "This is just what I need for that chapter", or, "X is off his tree if you listen to Y"). These comments can also be used as a basis for supervisory meetings.

Students should be encouraged to read completed honours theses. A close reading of successful theses gives novice students the chance to see how other students have approached research topics, especially in terms of how the literature review has been set out and how the argument has been developed, sustained and taken to conclusion. Even where the exemplary thesis is not closely related to the student's topic, the practice of modelling is valuable because it illustrates subtle disciplinary norms. Links to previous theses and tips will also be given on the coursework sites.

Supervisors should also be aware that students will receive feedback on their assessment items (research proposal, literature review, and research paper draft) from their peers, unit assessors and other staff involved in the program in the grading process. This is done in the spirit of drawing on the expertise in the Faculty and involving students and their work in an authentic peer-review process. Suggestions made during this process are ultimately the student's decision whether to implement or not. Supervisors are encouraged to guide their students through this feedback.

When it comes time to read the examiner's reports for the thesis, these can be handled in several ways. As it is the student's first experience of such a document, the supervisor should guide the student through the reports, particularly if they contain any negative comments or suggestions for improvement. Honours students are not required to revise their work in response to the examiners' report and resubmit it. However, it is always helpful to know what could be improved, especially for preparing publications from the materials.

Some students may be encouraged to publish their first papers as a result of examiners' extremely favourable reports. In these cases, supervisors may be required to provide specialist advice about publishing in the discipline. In settings where research is predominantly collective, the supervisor may work closely with the student and possibly co-author a publication.

## Professional conduct for supervisors

Many students face external pressures that place stresses and strains on their capacity to make progress. These may relate to income concerns, outside work pressures, and family or relationship issues. Sometimes they may also relate to the student's social networks in the Faculty or University or to problems of cultural isolation. Supervisors can assist by developing a sufficiently positive rapport with the student to know when the student is facing practical or emotional difficulties. Supervisors may also assist in practical ways by referring students to the range of support available to them within the University. Mature age and part-time students often have particular concerns relating to the pressures of outside work and raising families.

With the increasing enrollment of students from different cultural backgrounds, including those from overseas, supervisors need to take account of the possible impact of cultural difference on student progress, especially on writing style. Students from some cultures may see the supervisor's role as a font of wisdom rather than a facilitator of higher learning, which may result in the student assuming an overly dependent and compliant role.

It is the responsibility of each supervisor to maintain and build on their professional skills and monitor their performance. In this regard, it is critically important for supervisors to enhance their own experience by learning from the best practices of their peers. It is also vital that supervisors are active contributors to the discipline's knowledge base and scholarly networks. Both of these measures will contribute a great deal to the quality of the student experience of honours study and successful outcomes of supervision.

Students are a logical first point in seeking evaluation information about the quality of both the honours year program and the performance of individual supervisors. The Centre for Teaching and Learning can advise on appropriate ways to obtain this kind of information and interpret the information obtained.

## Professional conduct for students

Students should appreciate that supervisors have many other commitments, and their time is precious. Supervisors are not editors, though some may take on that role more than others; students should ensure that all material provided has been carefully written and grammatically correct. Students should regularly provide samples of their work and discuss any concerns with their supervisors. They cannot steer the student if they don't know what they are doing. Students should work independently, be self-directed, adhere to self-imposed timelines, demonstrate intellectual maturity, and have time management skills. The student's ultimate responsibility for the standard and progress of work resides. The expectation is that students are developing more independence during an Honours year, requiring less structured academic guidance.

Please be aware that you can apply for a leave of absence of up to 12 months after completing one unit if you find that you require a break from study. The Course Coordinator will review this application. It would be best to discuss with your supervisors and the Course Coordinator before application.

## Dispute resolution and grievance procedure

If students have difficulty or issues that require assistance to resolve, they should always seek assistance from their supervisor(s) in the first instance. If a matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, reference should then be made to the Course Coordinator then to the Dean. Other mechanisms exist for formal appeals.

## Thesis requirements

The final product of the Honours study is a thesis. In this program, the thesis is constructed from two papers:

Paper 1: Literature review (typically ~5000 words)

Paper 2: Research manuscript (typically 3000–6000 words), NB: this can be original research or a systematic review with or without meta-analysis

These limits are exclusive of words in abstracts, tables, graphs, bibliographies and appendices. These papers should be framed to maximise the candidate's original contribution and be suited for publication.

The Faculty has no unified rules at present about the components and format of Honours thesis and has no intention to produce one. This is mainly due to the diversity of research areas and encouragement of freedom of expression of academic ideas.

The supervisor(s) should bear the duty to ensure the student has appropriate training in academic writing and produces a thesis of the highest possible quality. The judgement of the achievements and quality of the study will be based solely on the materials presented in the thesis. Internal and external experts will examine the written work of the thesis in the field of study.

Students are to present the two papers in a coherent thesis for examination. By definition, a thesis is a coherent argument or piece of work. Additional brief framing or linking chapters may be required between the literature review and research report to fill in any "gaps" and to ensure the thesis provides a coherent argument. The final form of these framing chapters will depend on the nature of the thesis.

Examples of these can be found in the library collection and on the BlackBoard learning sites for units in this program.

Below is a list of suggested components for the thesis. There is expected variability in the final design of the thesis dependent on the nature of the project, and candidates are to be guided by their supervisor.

Components	Contents
Consent & Authorship	<p>You must provide the following statement with your thesis:</p> <p>'I hereby give Southern Cross University permission to own this copy of my thesis on a permanent catalogue, make referenced extracts available for public educational and promotional purposes and make copies of this project in the University's Library and university website as required. I confirm I have retained a second copy of this project for my personal use.'</p> <p>I also assure that all material contained in this project are my original authorship and ideas, except where the work of others has been acknowledged or referenced.'</p>
The title page	<p>The full title of the thesis, the student's name, the statement <i>'This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Health and Human Sciences (Honours)'</i>, the name of the Faculty and institution, month and year of presentation.</p>
Declaration	<p>The author should insert and sign a statement similar to below on a separate page:</p> <p><i>'I certify that the substance of this thesis has not been already submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or degrees. I certify that to the best of my knowledge, any help received in preparing this work and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.'</i></p>
Acknowledgments	<p>Thank anyone you would like to acknowledge for their assistance in preparation of your thesis.</p>
Table of contents	<p>In some theses, lists of tables, figures and abbreviations are also included.</p>
Abstract	<p>Short (usually 1 to 2 pages) summary of the thesis as a whole.</p>
Introductory framing statement/chapter	<p>You may want to include here statements about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The research problem or focus of inquiry</li> <li>– The theoretical framework or methodology used</li> <li>– The structure of the thesis and how each chapter contributes, hypotheses, theories or research questions</li> <li>– Definitions of key terms</li> <li>– Anything else that will help the reader to contextualise the work.</li> </ul> <p>Discuss which elements are appropriate with your supervisor if you are unsure.</p>
Paper 1 – Literature review	<p>This chapter is a review of the literature on the research topic presented as a stand-alone paper. The typology of literature review should be discussed between the student and supervisor and be consistent with expectations of the discipline. It may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The theory and research literature specific to the topic.</li> <li>– Research in cognate areas relevant to the topic.</li> <li>– Critique of the validity of appropriate theory and research literature.</li> <li>– The limitations and gaps in the literature and guidance for future research.</li> </ul> <p>A draft of this chapter is submitted for the unit HLTH4001. Feedback from examiners may be incorporated into the final version as part of the thesis.</p>

Components	Contents
Linking statement/chapter	As your literature is a stand-alone paper, it is usually necessary to include a statement or short chapter clearly linking the literature review findings to the study performed in the scholarly/final report. For example, outlining how the study addresses gaps or limitations within the literature.
Paper 2 – Research paper	This chapter is a stand-alone research paper written for the project undertaken and prepared to the specifications of a particular discipline-based journal. The chapter may include:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Relatively brief introduction/background outlining the rationale for the research.</li> <li>– General method and design of the research.</li> <li>– Research population or sample.</li> <li>– Specific procedures, data collection or instrumentation.</li> <li>– Data analysis.</li> <li>– Presentations of the research findings.</li> <li>– Significance and implications of the findings.</li> </ul>
Concluding framing chapter	The final format of this chapter will reflect the content of the preceding chapters. It may include:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conclusions and alternative explanations for the findings.</li> <li>– Impact of the study in terms of what was learned.</li> <li>– Strength, weaknesses, and limitations of the study.</li> <li>– Implications for professional practice or decision making, scholarly understanding or the field, and/or future studies.</li> <li>– Recommendations for future research, changes in professional practice, and/or changes or modifications in accepted theoretical constructs.</li> </ul>
References cited	References for each paper may be provided in each chapter or as a consolidated list at the end.

## Basic format

- Margins are to be 2.5 cm from top, bottom, and right sides and 3.5 cm from the left. The extra space on the left is to allow for binding.
- Double-spaced.
- Acceptable typeface is Calibri or Times New Roman and in 12-point size.
- Justification only on left side of paper.
- Roman Numeral Page numbers begin on the title page and continue until the Introduction.
- Arabic Page numbers begin on the Introduction page.
- Paragraphs are to be separated from the previous paragraph by either spacing the whole paragraph or indenting the first word five to seven spaces at the beginning.

## Submission of the thesis

The submission of the thesis is online only. A Turnitin submission link will be available in the relevant unit. Following examination, high-achieving theses may be submitted to the Library and included in the library collection.

## Presentation of the thesis

The candidate is required to give an oral presentation based on the thesis to the Faculty in a research symposium. Please note that a copy of the Abstract of the thesis and presentation must be made available to the Course Coordinator one week before the presentation. Failure to do this will result in a 5% penalty for the presentation. The candidate is given 20 minutes for the presentation, followed by 10 minutes for answering questions.

# Ethical approval and rules for accessing research facilities and resources

Approval from the relevant ethics committee must be obtained before commencing research for projects involving humans or animals. The academic supervisors are required to ensure that ethics approval has been sought, prior to the commencement of the research. Approval must be obtained regardless of whether you are using questionnaires, searching through previous gathered records, whether the protocol involves non-invasive procedures or collecting data directly, e.g. blood samples.

The Honours candidate should be aware that all the experimental procedures to be applied on human subjects require approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University before they can be carried out. These procedures include laboratory or field testings and survey questionnaires or interviews. The students and supervisors must confirm that the appropriate ethics approvals have been sought prior to the commencement of the research. No testing may commence until Ethical Approval is gained.

Many research projects require using laboratory space and equipment, and a proper level of supervision is required. There are some policies in regard to laboratory booking, storage of specimens and supervision of exercise testing. The students should consult with their supervisors and responsible staff members for guidance and if there is any doubt in these procedures.

## University Support Services

The University provides a number of supports for Honours supervisors and Honours students in addition to those provided from within Faculties.

### a) Personal counselling

Professional counsellors are available to both Honours supervisors and Honours students. The contact details for Counselling Service are available at <https://www.scu.edu.au/current-students/services-and-support/counselling/>.

### b) Student Learning Zone

The Student Learning Zone offers an extensive range of learning support services, resources and programs to support all award coursework studies. Please see <https://www.scu.edu.au/current-students/learning-zone/>.

### c) Library

The Library provides a full range of Library and audiovisual services, books, journals, CD-ROM databases, online information retrieval, access to the Internet. The Library can obtain books held in other libraries by inter-library loan. Each Faculty has a contact librarian. For information and to contact the libraries, please see <https://www.scu.edu.au/library/>.

### d) Technical Support

Technical support offers assistance with various issues, including e-mail and network problems. Contact details for technical support are at [TS Service Desk Help Centre](#).

### e) Student Access & Inclusion

The University has a policy on academic support for students with disabilities, available through the SCU website. The contact details for the Student Equity and Inclusion Unit are available at <https://www.scu.edu.au/engage/student-equity-and-inclusion/>.

## Scholarships

Honours scholarships are often available. See the [Honours Scholarships webpage](#) for details.



# Appendix A – Rubric for the Grading of the Research Proposal

Criteria (10 marks each)	High Distinction <i>To a consistent and high level</i>	Distinction <i>Mostly consistently and mostly at a high level</i>	Credit <i>Generally more than acceptable</i>	Pass <i>Generally acceptable</i>	Fail <i>Not acceptable</i>
<b>Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– is succinct</li> <li>– sparks interest</li> <li>– includes all elements</li> <li>– is consistent with study</li> </ul>				
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– describes central phenomenon and key concepts</li> <li>– synthesises prev. literature</li> <li>– is relevant to the study</li> <li>– is cohesive</li> </ul>				
<b>Rationale &amp; Significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– both flow logically from the background and previous literature</li> <li>– are clear and comprehensive</li> </ul>				
<b>Aims, questions, hypotheses (as required)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– flow logically from the background and rationale</li> <li>– are clear and comprehensive</li> </ul>				
<b>Methodology &amp; study design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– is congruent with the aims of the study</li> <li>– is clear and comprehensively described</li> </ul>				
<b>Sampling &amp; recruitment strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– are appropriate for the methodology</li> <li>– addresses potential introduction of bias</li> <li>– are ethically appropriate</li> <li>– are clear and comprehensively described</li> </ul>				
<b>Data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– instruments and procedures are clearly and comprehensively described</li> <li>– are congruent with the study design and aims</li> <li>– addresses potential introduction of bias</li> </ul>				
<b>Data analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– is congruent with the methodology and data collection</li> <li>– is clearly, correctly and comprehensively described</li> </ul>				
<b>Budget &amp; timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– are comprehensive and succinct</li> <li>– are formatted to be clear to the reader</li> </ul>				
<b>Ethical Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– are explored comprehensively, including strategies to mitigate risk</li> </ul>				
<b>Presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– grammar and spelling</li> <li>– academic writing style</li> <li>– assertions are qualified</li> <li>– appropriately referenced</li> </ul>				

# Appendix B – Guidelines for the Grading of the Oral Presentation

**Student name:** ..... **Date of presentation:** .....

**Thesis title:** .....  
.....  
.....

The presentation forms 40% of the final honours grade. The examiners of the presentation should assess the student's topic knowledge and presenting skills. There are two examiners for each presentation. The course coordinator will resolve any grades with a discrepancy of more than 10%.

## Topic Mastery (Content and Scientific Merit)

The presentation's primary focus is on the student's ability to demonstrate their understanding of the research and inform others about it. Students should keep their introduction (background/literature review) brief and spend more time on the results, discussion, and practical implications. The presentation should contain:

- Introduction:
  - Background
  - Importance of the research
  - The research question(s) – can be in the form of aims, objectives, and hypotheses
- Methods:
  - Study design
  - Recruitment/sampling
  - Data collection procedures
  - Methods of analysis
- Findings/Results:
  - Main findings/results – students should focus on those that are most important
- Discussion and practical implications:
  - What the findings mean
  - How the findings of the study add to the body of knowledge
  - Limitations of the study
  - Clinical or practical implications of the results
- Conclusion:
  - A clear “take-home” message
  - Future research recommended (if any)

Consider whether the student has demonstrated a proper level of knowledge about their study area and handled the questions that the audience raises to a satisfactory level.

	F (<30)	P (30–38)	Cr (39–44)	D (45–51)	HD (52–60)
Mark					
Comments	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

## Presentation/Delivery

The research should communicate the research in a clear, logical and engaging manner. Consider the following aspects of presentation and delivery:

- Speaks clearly at an understandable pace
- Addresses the audience at an appropriate level
- Delivery is poised, controlled, and smooth
- Maintains good eye contact with the audience and is appropriately animated (e.g., body language and gestures)
- Well-rehearsed delivery
- Keeps within the time limits
- The presentation is well organised and has a logical flow
- The presentation is engaging and interesting

	F (<10)	P (10–12)	Cr (13–14)	D (15–16)	HD (17–20)
Mark					
Comments	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

## Audio-Visual Aids

Consider the following aspects of audio-visual aids:

- Visual aids are well prepared, informative, effective, and not distracting
- PowerPoint slides use clear fonts that are an appropriate size/colour and are easy for the audience to read
- PowerPoint backgrounds are not distracting
- PowerPoint transitions and animations are appropriate and do not detract from the content
- Any graph, figures, charts, pictures are clear and understandable

	F (<10)	P (11–12)	Cr (13–14)	D (15–16)	HD (17–20)
Mark					
Comments	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

Would you please forward your completed examiner's report to the course coordinator (kellie.toohey@scu.edu.au)?

Name of the Examiner: .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

# **Appendix C – Guidelines for examination of Honours Thesis & Examiner Report Form**

## **General advice to examiners**

Examiners should note that the assessment from two examiners represents 60% of the total grade for the Honours program. Southern Cross University expects each examiner to be independent. The final honours grade also considers performance in a research proposal and project presentation. If you have any questions regarding the process or the thesis, please contact the honours course coordinator.

The thesis is based on seven to eight months of full-time research work by a fourth-year University student. The Honours year is a student's first experience with independent research. Students should produce a thesis with a literature review and response paper (including appropriate linking chapters). Examiners should apply the evidence of competence and assessment criteria in the context described above. The thesis is usually between 8,000 and 15,000 words (exclusive of tables, figures, reference lists, and appendices) but may vary depending on the nature of the study.

A candidate who has reached the required proficiency will be awarded, on the recommendation of the Faculty, the following Class of Honours:

- First Class Honours
- Second Class Honours, Division 1
- Second Class Honours, Division 2
- Third Class Honours
- Fail

In addition to the Thesis Examiner's Report Form, Southern Cross University expects the examiners to make more detailed comments on a separate sheet. Please note that after submission for assessment, Southern Cross University does not require the student to revise the original work based on the examiners' feedback or resubmit the thesis for the final grade.

## **Time Deadlines**

A timely return of examiners comments and grade is appreciated. If you are unable to complete the Thesis examination by .....please contact me.

## **Thesis Performance Definitions**

Honours thesis is more criteria-based in nature. The following may assist examiners in allocating a grade.

**First Class Honours, (85–100%, excellent):**

- The student investigates a topic with a moderate to a high degree of difficulty very well;
- The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the literature;
- The design and ideas are original;
- The student critically analyses information and data;
- The student develops interpretive models (if necessary) and draws appropriate conclusions;
- The student displays refined academic writing skills;
- The student shows significant development in the topic area; and
- The thesis could be publishable with some minor revisions.

**Second Class Honours, Division 1, (75–84%, a high level of competence):**

- The student investigates a topic with a moderate to a high degree of difficulty well, or a topic with a high level of difficulty adequately;
- The student demonstrates a sound understanding of the literature;
- The student sometimes critically analyses the information and data;
- The student uses appropriate methods;
- The student delivers well written and sound conclusions;
- The research is related to a broader theoretical framework; and
- The thesis may be publishable in the literature after appropriate revision.

**Second Class Honours, Division 2, (65–74%, a level of competence):**

- The student adequately investigates a topic with some degree of difficulty, or a topic with a high level of difficulty superficially;
- The thesis may be primarily descriptive;
- The thesis is likely to feature a more thorough literature review;
- The student includes some analytical components; and
- The thesis shows an understanding of the broader implications of the work.

**Third Class Honours, (50–64%, acceptable):**

- The student superficially investigates a topic with a limited degree of difficulty;
- The project is primarily descriptive, but the student shows some comprehension of the overall nature of the problem;
- The thesis may contain significant errors and little analytical work; and
- The thesis may contain an adequate literature review, expression and presentation.

**Fail, (0–49%, unacceptable):**

- The student superficially investigates a topic with a low degree of difficulty;
- The thesis may be entirely descriptive;
- The thesis may contain major errors and incorrect conclusions;
- The student shows little or no comprehension of the overall problem;
- The thesis contains an inadequate literature review;
- There is limited research effort;
- There is little, no or flawed analytical work; and
- The student poorly presents the thesis.

## Examiners' Reports

Southern Cross University expects a concise report (about one page or so) from each examiner. Since the student is not required to revise and resubmit the thesis for the final grade, it would depend upon the examiners' desire and time to provide more detailed comments, especially regarding grammar and punctuation errors (you may also annotate the thesis copy and return it). Southern Cross University invites examiners to indicate whether and to what extent they wish to remain anonymous. If the examiner does not request the preservation of anonymity, Southern Cross University will not preserve anonymity.

The thesis should show evidence of competence in research and scholarship, judged in the following areas:

- A clearly identified focus in the form of one or more of research question(s) / hypothesis(es) / objective(s);
- Appropriate coverage of literature that is relevant to the focus of the thesis;
- A theoretical, conceptual or other frameworks/structure, which provides a context for the focus of the thesis;
- A set of methods and procedures that will allow appropriate investigation;
- An appropriate level of analysis and discussion of the findings of the investigation;
- Clear presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendations (where appropriate);
- A scholarly approach to discussion, analysis and critique of issues dealt with in the thesis; and
- A well-presented and organised thesis structure.

# Honours Thesis Examiner Report Form

## Assessment Criteria for Health and Human Sciences Honours Thesis

Candidate name: .....

Title of the Thesis: .....

.....

.....

### Assessment criteria

The Thesis has the following characteristics:

1. A clearly identified focus in the form of one or more of research question(s) / hypothesis(es) / objective(s);
2. Appropriate coverage of literature that is relevant to the focus of the thesis;
3. A theoretical, conceptual or other frameworks/structure, which provides a context for the focus of the thesis;
4. A set of methods and procedures that will allow appropriate investigation;
5. An appropriate level of analysis and discussion of the findings of the investigation;
6. Clear presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendations (where appropriate);
7. A scholarly approach to discussion, analysis and critique of issues dealt with in the thesis; and
8. A well-presented and organised thesis structure.

### Evaluation criteria

The Thesis exhibits the above characteristics:

Please tick

Consistent and high level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mostly consistent and high level	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than acceptable level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally acceptable level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unacceptable level	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Numerical value of this Thesis in accordance with the criteria ..... /100**

**Assessor's comments: Please attach comments in a separate document**

**Assessor's statement** (Please strike out the words which do not apply)

I am/am not willing to have my identity made available to the candidate.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name: .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

