

Bachelor of Education (Honours) Handbook

2022

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1: About the Honours Program

The Honours program in the School of Education is an intense and exciting research program. It enables students to: (i) extend the depth of their Education degree, (ii) enhance their career pathways, and (iii) develop a basis for gaining entry into the PhD program. High achieving Education students will be admitted to the Honours program. Upon successful completion, they will have an excellent chance of being admitted to a PhD program through the School of Education. Some Honours graduates may also be able to obtain scholarships for their PhD studies.

Honours students in the School of Education are regarded as emerging researchers and contribute significantly to the research culture in the School: <https://www.facebook.com/SCUEducationResearch/>. As an Honours student you are a member of our School of Education Higher Degree Research Society and you will receive emails from the HDR Society conveners.

Through completion of the Honours degree, students will:

- acquire an understanding of various research methods in the field of education;
- demonstrate content mastery in relation to a substantive issue or problem domain within the field of education; and
- demonstrate a capacity to design, frame, conduct and report a small-scale inquiry in the field of education.

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2: Key Information Sources

You may feel as apprehensive as you do excited about the prospect of completing a research thesis as part of your Honours program. That is normal! Members of academic staff in the School will provide you with the support required to proceed confidently. Initially, your supervisor will be your main support person. As you proceed with your investigation, others in the School will become progressively more involved to ensure that you are provided with a well-rounded and a stimulating introduction to educational research.

This handbook seeks to provide you with basic information about sources of support and other things you need to know to complete a research thesis and Honours program. It is very important right from the start that you are aware of the wide range of material, social, academic and administrative supports available to you on your request.

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Honours Course Administration

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Fax: +61 2 6659 3051

Email: chsharedservices@scu.edu.au

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Webpages

The following are some Web pages, which will be useful for additional information:

- School of Education: <http://scu.edu.au/education/>
- School of Education – Honours information page: <https://www.scu.edu.au/school-of-education/higher-degrees-research-and-honours/honours-information/>
- School of Education Research Website: <https://www.scu.edu.au/school-of-education/research/>
- Bachelor of Education (Honours) 2022 Course page <https://www.scu.edu.au/study-at-scu/courses/bachelor-of-education-honours-3507292/>

Noticeboards

- Information about research activities and seminars will be regularly disseminated. You will be informed about these activities by means of the School of Education Research Students Blackboard site &/or email invitations.

Facilities and Support Services

Honours students will have access to many great services and facilities through the School of Education. Supports provided by the University Library, and by the University at large, will also be available to you. Pamphlets on these support services are available through MySCU.

Language and literacy support staff are also available at each of the University's campuses and they can provide you with valuable support in developing skills with academic writing.

The Library also routinely conducts short courses on bibliographic techniques (including Endnote): <https://www.scu.edu.au/library/>

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3: Course Structure of the Honours Program

The Honours program is a one year, standalone program. It requires the completion of five Honours units. To receive the award of Honours, a student must successfully complete the units of study (25% of program) and develop an Honours thesis of 18,000+ words (or practice-based equivalent) (75% of program).

A supervisor will work with students in conceptualising and developing the Honours thesis as well as providing advice and guidance in other issues related to the Honours program. Further guidance is provided when you complete the units EDUC6001 Literature Review in Education: Known Unknowns, and EDUC6006 Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass. Honours students should maintain regular contact with their supervisor to ensure that work on the thesis component is completed at a consistent pace throughout the program. The structure of the Honours program is outlined in the table, below.

Structure of the Honours program

Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Point Value
EDUC6001	Literature Review in Education: Known Unknowns	12
EDUC4004	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 1) Part A	12
EDUC6006	Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass	12
EDUC4005	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 1) Part B	12
EDUC4006	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part A	12
EDUC4007	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part B	12
EDUC4008	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 1) Part A	12
EDUC4009	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part B	12

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Unit Offerings for 2022

<u>EDUC6001</u>	Literature Review in Education: Known Unknowns	Term 1
<u>EDUC4004</u>	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 1) Part A	Term 1
<u>EDUC6006</u>	Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass	Term 2
<u>EDUC4005</u>	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 1) Part B	Term 2
<u>EDUC4006</u>	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part A	Term 1, 3
<u>EDUC4007</u>	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part B	Term 1, 3
<u>EDUC4008</u>	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 3) Part A	Term 2, 4
<u>EDUC4009</u>	Education Honours Thesis (Stage 3) Part B	Term 2, 4

Scholarship Details for 2022

Students who either are enrolled in Honours for 2022, or intend to enrol in Honours may apply for an Honours Scholarship by the closing date of 24th January 2022. Please note, admission to Honours requires a minimum GPA of 5.5, and is application assessed.

Please visit <https://www.scu.edu.au/scholarships/honours-scholarships/education-honours-scholarship/> for details around the scholarship offering for 2022, including forms and application process.

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4: Information to help you undertake your thesis

What Constitutes a Research Thesis?

Because the range of topics for thesis work may be extremely diverse, it is difficult to provide a precise definition of what constitutes a thesis. While some theses may involve standard research methods, or creative methods (such as arts-based research), others may involve more practical orientation, e.g. the development of a curriculum or literature review.

A thesis is intended to be original work carried out by the student under the guidance of a supervisor. 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. 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.

Honours Thesis Guidelines

While it is difficult to be too precise about these guidelines, it needs to be recognised that a thesis should be set in a scholarly context. For example, if a curriculum is presented in a thesis report, it should also be accompanied by material that provides theoretical or practical background, and an assessment of its educational value. When a literature review is undertaken as a thesis, students should provide some evaluation or critical commentary.

Difficulties may occasionally arise in assessing the contribution of the student when the report describes a piece of work that might have involved a team, for example, in a school. Honours students and supervisors should bear in mind that the thesis should be formulated for the degree itself and where it involves work in an employment setting and/or involves other people, the nature of the thesis and the contribution of the student should be clearly identified.

The retrospective use of previously developed material is not legitimate unless the thesis presents some commentary on or development of that material.

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In general, the following thesis guidelines should apply:

- The nature of the problem the thesis addresses should be clearly stated.
- The educational importance should be described.
- A theoretical or practical rationale should be provided.
- The value or implications of the thesis should be discussed.
- The limitations and possible development of the work should be discussed.
- Presentation of the thesis should conform to a standard Publications Format (e.g. American Psychological Association [APA] Style Guide) APA7

Recognising that several research approaches are available, a thesis about empirical research would typically include:

- A statement of the problem and related aims of the research;
- A review of the relevant literature;
- The location of the research within the literature;
- A description of the methods used for data collection and analysis;
- Presentation of results;
- Analysis of data;
- Interpretation and discussion of findings; and
- Implications for education practice and further research.

Scope of Honours Thesis

The following topics and approaches might be considered suitable for an 18,000+ word (or equivalent practice-based) thesis:

- A discursive, critical or reflective extended essay that focuses on a relevant educational issue.
- An extended, critical literature review relating to a particular topic.
- A small-scale case study, classroom investigation, action research or curriculum materials thesis.
- A replication of an appropriate research study.
- A portfolio of work developed during the course of study and demonstrating the student's capacity to draw on and synthesise insights gained from the coursework units by applying them to a particular issue or topic.

Ethics Approval

SCU Ethics guidelines and procedures must be adhered to. Please review the information on SCU's 'Human Research Ethics Requirements: <https://www.scu.edu.au/research/research-ethics/human-research-ethics/> page, attend closely to the information about ethics approval in the Study Guide for EDUC6006 Research in Education: Through the Looking Glass (see 'Do I need ethics approval and how do I apply'), and consult carefully with your Supervisor and/or the Honours Coordinator early in your candidature.

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If you are carrying out research associated with schools, you must apply for ethics approval (from SCU and other bodies such as NSW DET's SERAP 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*.

Plagiarism, cheating and collusion

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, available from the SCU Policy [Library](https://www.scu.edu.au/staff/governance/policy/) (<https://www.scu.edu.au/staff/governance/policy/>)

In short the thesis submission must be a student's own work. This does not mean that students may not make use of the work of others. When quoting or paraphrasing material from other sources, those sources must however 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 student in his or her own words.

References & Guides

The APA referencing style is the one often called for in the field of Education. You should familiarise yourself with this style. The two websites below will help you to do this:

APA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at: <http://www.apastyle.org/faqs.html>

APA style guide for electronic references:

<https://www.friends.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/ElectronicReference.pdf>

SCU's library hosts a range of comprehensive resources to support you with referencing in APA 7th style, including video tutorials and quick-guide PDF's. 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>

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association : the official guide to APA style. (7th edition.). (2019). American Psychological Association.

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Expectations of a Thesis Supervisor

A thesis supervisor has the following responsibilities:

- To assist a student in the formulation of the thesis topic;
- To consult with the student and monitor the progress of his/her thesis;
- Where relevant, to advise students regarding correct professional and ethical procedures in clinical work, fieldwork and case studies, and in the proper use of data about people and institutions;
- To advise on the final preparation of thesis, e.g. reading drafts in progress and suggesting appropriate improvements;
- To nominate two appropriate examiners for each thesis to the Honours Course Coordinator;
- To inform the Honours Coordinator of any serious breakdown of communications with a student.

Expectations of the Student

Students are expected to:

- Maintain regular and effective contact with their supervisor(s) during the course of the thesis;
- To take responsibility for the progress of the thesis, communicating problems they are having to their supervisor and seeking assistance in overcoming problems earlier rather than later;
- Should problems not be able to be resolved to the satisfaction of either the student or the supervisor, then further advice should be sought from the Honours Coordinator.

Preparation of the Thesis

Responsibility for the layout of the thesis and selection of the title rests with you and should be guided by discussion with your supervisor.

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.

If the proper presentation of the thesis requires some major departure from the recommendations (e.g. variation in page size from A4, a need to present large sections of hand-written symbols or foreign language script, special types of large diagrams or

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maps) you should discuss this with your supervisor. A statement from your supervisor should support this request and then be considered by the Honours coordinator.

Presentation and Structure of the Thesis

The following are requirements when presenting your thesis:

- The thesis must be word-processed, double spaced and printed on A4 paper on one side of the paper only.
- 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 proof read before you submit it. 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. 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.

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The thesis report should incorporate the following pages and statements:

A title page, giving the title in full, names and qualifications of the student and the statement indicating the degree you are submitting the thesis for. The wording and layout of the submission statement is shown in the sample below.

<p style="text-align: center;">Outdoor Classrooms: Exploring the Implementation of Science Lessons in the School Grounds.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cara Smith</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Honours in Education Southern Cross University October 2022</p>

A table of contents plus separate lists of tables, figures and appendices.

A signed declaration about the work and material in the thesis (see below).

<p>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.</p> <p>Signed: Date:</p>

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A signed statement about the approval from the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee (see below).

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

An acknowledgment of any assistance given or work carried out by another person or organisation. This includes editing services if you have paid a professional editor. You should state the extent of assistance given.

- An abstract of about 300 words, summarising the aims, methods and findings of the research.
- The main text or body of the work.
- Appendices
- References and/or Bibliography
- Glossary of terms and acronyms (if necessary).
- Assistance with formatting and referencing in the final document may be arranged with the library.

Functions of the Components of the Thesis

The sections of the thesis outlined above are explained a little more in the following table, which refers to the functions that each component performs. Although these components appear approximately in the order in which they are presented in a conventional thesis, they may appear in a slightly different order (especially the section of the body of the thesis). You are very likely to compose them in a completely different order. The introduction is often written late, and the abstract should be written last. You may also wish to give the chapters titles that are more descriptive of their contents 'Spoken discourse and culture' rather than 'Literature Review'). This table should be treated as a guide to the development of your Thesis.

COMPONENT	FUNCTION	CHARACTERISTICS
Cover page	Identifies topic, writer, institution, degree & date (month and year)	Includes title, student's name, and qualifications, degree aimed at, faculty, university, month and year presented.

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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.)
Declaration	Constitutes the writer's confirmation that the work is his/her own.	States that the material presented has not been used for any other award, and that all sources are acknowledged.
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.

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<p>Introduction (may be given a more descriptive name)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
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<p>Literature Review & Theoretical Framework</p>	<p>Shows the reader/examiner that you are familiar with issues and debates in the field. You need to explain these and discuss the main players' ideas. Shows the reader that there is an area in this field to which you can contribute (thus, the review must be critically analytical).</p>	<p>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. This is where plagiarism becomes an issue. You must remember to discuss theory, which is <i>directly relevant</i> to your research. Often this section is a separate Chapter.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Methodology</p>	<p>Presents a rationale for the methods of research and analysis. Describes the methods of research and analysis. Reveals the boundaries of the research (this may occur instead in the introduction). Shows you are a serious researcher who takes account of how research may affect subjects.</p>	<p>This is a review of the literature written about methods, and of methods used in other research. It may include illustrations (e.g. a timeline depicting stages/steps in the research). Describes steps taken to ensure ethical research practices</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>Presents the data and findings, ordered/analysed in ways justified earlier (methodology).</p>	<p>Past tense is a feature here (usually). Data in tables should be carefully set out, checked and discussed.</p>
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Discusses findings, drawing out main achievements and explaining results.</p>	<p>Makes links between aims and findings (and the literature)</p>

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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 directions for future research. Ends on a strong note.
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.
References	Shows the reader which texts/materials you have referred to in your thesis	May be annotated. Should include only works of use to the study.
Glossary/Index	Helps reader where the context or content of the research may be unfamiliar	A list of key terms/topics

Writing the Thesis

Your first point of reference for this process is always your supervisor. However, you will gain some general information by reading the following words of advice on writing about your research.

Follow the writing conventions you have been advised to follow.

Conventions are the rules you need to follow in writing regarding citations, bibliographies, style (e.g., language free of gender bias), page setup, punctuation, spelling, figures and tables, and the presentation of graphics. In the School 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). Programs such as *Word for Windows* include templates for dissertations (and other kinds of writing); these may help you to maintain a consistent use of conventions throughout your thesis.

You should discuss conventions with your supervisor at the beginning stages. If you need any help understanding how the conventions work, you may consult with the [Academic Skills](#) team:

<https://www.scu.edu.au/staff/teaching-and->

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[learning/academic-skills/](#). Please see section of *Presentation and Structure of the Thesis* in this manual for the writing conventions you are expected to adhere to.

Look at other theses in the field.

Hundreds of theses are available for your perusal via the SCU library. The School of Education also has copies of all SoE theses. Look at ones in your field to get ideas about the main features of there:

- Organisation
- Language use
- Use of subsections and styles for the hierarchy of headings/ subheadings
- Page numbering and font.

It will help you a great deal 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 great pain and 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 on writers, an early start is imperative. Remember, what you write is not necessarily what you will print in the final draft (though in some parts it may be). It is not necessary, in fact, it is often impossible to do all the thinking and then 'write it up'.

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 and do little revision); Watercolour artists (who try to write a final draft on the first attempt – little revision); Bricklayers (who revise at sentence and paragraph level as they proceed), and Oil painters (who pre-plan little but rework text repeatedly). Into (or in between) which category/ies do you think you fall? It is useful to know how you prefer to go about writing academic pieces, but you may actually 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.

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The structure of your thesis.

The structure of your thesis will depend very much on many different factors: the discipline(s) within which you are working; the purposes of your research; your own and your supervisor's preferences, and the research methods you use. Nevertheless, the wide variety of thesis structures all serve similar functions.

You are very likely to **compose** the various sections of your thesis in a completely different order from that in which they will appear in your final copy. The introduction is often written late, or rewritten substantially, and the abstract is most likely to be written last. The literature review chapters may be worked on continually: there are no rules!!!

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 the supervisor as to which publication is the most relevant to a given discipline area. You should be able to access these books and others 'on line' through the SCU library.

Construction of the thesis

Boudah, D. J. (2019). *Conducting educational research: Guide to completing a thesis, dissertation, or action research project*. California, USA: SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

Evans, D., Gruba, P. & Zobel, J. (2014) *How to write a better thesis*, 3rd ed. Switzerland: Springer.

Murray, R. (2011). *How to write a thesis*, 3rd ed. Berkshire, England: Open University Press

Educational Research

Hammond, M. & Wellington, J. (2020). *Education research: The basics*. Oxfordshire, England: Routledge.

Style and conventions

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, (2020) 7th ed. APA, Washington.

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5: Thesis Submission and Examination

Thesis submission

Thesis submission due	Submission date
End of Session when you are enrolled in EDUC4009 Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part B	Week 6

In order to meet the School of Education requirements a thesis must be submitted using the following procedure:

1. Student to electronically submit the 'Thesis Submission Form', which must be first completed and signed by the supervisor. To submit, go to the Blackboard site for EDUC4009 Education Honours Thesis (Stage 2) Part B, select the 'Thesis submission' tab from the site menu, and then the link for 'Thesis Submission Form'.
2. Student to electronically submit the completed, signed 'School 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 'School of Education Library Release Form'.
3. 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 examiners is the responsibility of the supervisor; however supervisors should discuss the selection with the student and come to mutual agreement. At least one should be external to the University. About four to six weeks before the thesis is due to be submitted the supervisor should inform the student of, or discuss with the student the names of the proposed examiners. Students have the right to object if they have firm reasons against the appointment of proposed examiners. Students are requested not to contact their examiners during the examination period.

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Examination process.

Once you have submitted the thesis, your date of submission is entered into the University student database and the examination process commences. Theses are sent out to the named examiners together with an 'Examiners' Summative Evaluation' form and the 'School of Education Honours Thesis Marking Guidelines' (see Section 7 in this Handbook).

Time taken to examine the thesis.

Examiners are 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 subsequent additional examining. 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 Honours Course Administration 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 School of Education. If the two examiners return a significant deviation in grades a third examiner will be appointed to adjudicate and determine a 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 finalised.

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.

Final binding.

Once your thesis has been examined and an overall grade has been determined, you will be notified of the results in writing. Subsequently, you are requested to provide at least one thesis copy, bound in permanent binding, for the School of Education. The permanent binding is recommended to be stiff board covered with cloth. Your surname, title of the thesis and year of submission should be printed on the spine of the thesis. A printery will be able to permanently bind your thesis.

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6: FAQs for Honours Program

How do I choose a supervisor?

In selecting a supervisor you should consider relevance to the topic that you wish to research as well as choosing a supervisor with whom you will be able to develop a productive working relationship.

The School of Education staff page, see <https://www.scu.edu.au/school-of-education/research/researcher-profiles/> about individual academics in the School and their area of specialisation. We encourage you to browse these pages and to talk with potential supervisors about their availability. Only permanent members of staff are able to 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/or TeachLab.

Faculty of Education Research Clusters

Please visit <https://www.scu.edu.au/education/research/> for more research cluster information

Sustainability, Environment and the Arts in Education (SEAE)



The Sustainability, Environment, the Arts and Education (SEAE) Research Cluster is globally recognised for enacting profound change in/through transdisciplinary environmental and Arts education research that disrupts and generates new ways of being and becoming, which provokes

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dynamic responses to critical local-global calamities.

The cluster is a pre-eminent transdisciplinary concentration of creative researchers engaging in transformational research in environmental and Arts education ‘that matters’.

TeachLab



The TeachLab research agenda is “Teaching Improvement”. This agenda is focused on research projects investigating school leadership, teacher education and effective teaching practices. The TeachLab research agenda, coupled with its mission to enable the education field to undertake evidence-based change, represents a major shift in how teachers are prepared, how they can best teach and how teaching improvement is undertaken.

TeachLab specialises in conducting applied research with partners comprising schools, education systems and teaching professional associations. These research partnerships are built on teachers and leaders acting as researchers, mutual benefit research projects and embedded problem-solving.

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.

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.

Can I make changes to my Honours Units?

All students are required to complete the two core units EDU00751 Critical Literature Review, and EDU93001 Research Methods in Education (12 points each) and the three Thesis units (24 points each).

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For Education Honours the Census dates, i.e. last day to discontinue a unit without incurring fees or fail grades on an academic transcript, 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 Census date for each session.

Can I discontinue Honours?

Students may discontinue Honours. Students wishing to discontinue their thesis should discuss the matter with their supervisor and/or 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 take out the Honours degree.

How do I apply for a thesis extension?

Extensions can only be granted by the School of Education Honours Coordinator/s. You must apply at least four weeks prior to the submission date (via the Special Consideration process). It is important to note that extensions are only granted under exceptional circumstances. Even with exceptional circumstances, only 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.

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7: Honours Thesis Marking Guidelines & 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 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 (however spelling and typographical errors, and minor grammatical mistakes, can be noted on the thesis). Grammatical errors which require more than this should be documented in the separate Examiner's report. Comments like "your grasp of prose is inadequate" are unhelpful; telling the student that he/she persistently matches 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. What may be intended as constructive criticism or light-hearted irony may come across to the student as soul-destroying. 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. That doesn't mean they haven't given it their best effort and we should recognise their intentions, even though they are being assessed in terms of the consequences.

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Remember also the power of positive reinforcement: tell them 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 anonymous. It should be possible for students to seek further constructive feedback on their thesis.

Thesis Grade Descriptors

(Some of these descriptors will be more useful than others in arriving at a grade for particular theses.)

3.1 H1 (85-100) (HD)

- Outstanding command of expression and logical argument in a skilfully 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.

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3.2 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. 3.3 H2B (65-74) (C)

- Generally competently written, although some problems exist in the organisation of the text and the way it is expressed
- Provides an 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 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.

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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
- Serious 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 poorly 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; serious misinterpretations of results

Overall: Think carefully before awarding this grade. It casts doubt on the student's admission in the first place.

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Determining an Overall Result

The overall result, i.e. 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 (i.e. the overall result) have the same grading criteria as the Honours thesis (First Class, Second Class A, B etc.)