



PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2021

Bachelor of Health & Human
Sciences (Honours)

For students and supervisors

scu.edu.au/healthscience

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**Southern Cross
University**

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Welcome to the Honours Program

Welcome to the Bachelor Health and Human Sciences (Honours) Program. This program is a separate year of study following the successful completion of an undergraduate degree in a health science such as nursing, midwifery, allied health or biomedical sciences. The program includes online coursework in project planning, ethical research conduct and research methods and an independent research project in a field-of-interest. An honours research project requires substantial independent work and represents a departure from your previous undergraduate work into higher levels of learning.

The program offers an opportunity to develop research and project management skills and produce scholarly work with the support and supervision of suitably experienced academic staff. The part-time option and online delivery offer the flexibility to undertake the program while beginning or continuing a clinical or industry career.

Successful completion of an Honours Program is a great achievement that is regarded highly in the research, academic and professional community and can provide students with a gateway into research, academic and postgraduate opportunities. The work produced by students has the potential to contribute original knowledge to their discipline, be published in peer-reviewed journals and be presented at academic conferences. Within the School of Health and Human Sciences, there have been many Honours students who have successfully completed the degree with several of these graduates being awarded the SCU University medal.

This handbook outlines the entry requirements, structure and assessments in the program. It includes key dates for 2021, available resources and the roles and responsibilities of students and supervisors. The appendices contain guidelines for the examination of theses. If you require any assistance or clarification on anything in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator.

Warm regards,



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Program overview

Bachelor of Health and Human Sciences (Honours) – BHLthHumSc(Hons)

Level of Award:	Undergraduate Honours Degree
Academic Organisational Unit:	School of Health and Human Sciences
Course Mode:	Online, Lismore
Total Units:	8 equivalent units
Duration:	1 year

Admission requirements

Applicants for admission to the program shall normally have satisfied the requirements prescribed in the [Rule 5](#) 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 may also apply.

The entry pathways into the Clinical Specialty Stream is via advanced standing for previous Graduate Certificate or equivalent recognised programs of study. This stream is undertaken in the part-time mode over two sessions.

Admission to the program is also subject to availability of appropriate supervision (see Selecting an Honours Supervisor on page 6 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 – Advanced Topics in Health Science Research

STAT4001 – Applied Research & Evaluation Methods for Health Sciences

HLTH4002 – Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage I of II)*

HLTH4004 – Honours Thesis: Professional Skills Seminar*

HLTH4003 – Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage II of II)*

* *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.

The Honours course comprises:

1. Advanced theory and research training
2. A research seminar presentation
3. A research project leading to a thesis paper.

Where a candidate has been found by the School Board to be deficient in an area, they may be required to undertake units of study which address any deficiency, and which do not count towards the class of Honours awarded.

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 session structure. Further information about each unit is provided in the university website pages linked in the tables.

Standard stream full-time

Unit name	Unit code	Credit points
Session 1		
Advanced Topics in Health Science Research	HLTH4001	12
Applied Research and Evaluation Methods for Health Sciences	STAT4001	12
Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage I of II)	HLTH4002	24
Session 2		
Honours Thesis: Professional Skills Seminar	HLTH4004	24
Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage II of II)	HLTH4003	24

Standard stream part-time

Unit name	Unit code	Credit points
Year One Session 1		
Advanced Topics in Health Science Research	HLTH4001	12
Applied Research and Evaluation Methods for Health Sciences	STAT4001	12
Year One Session 2		
Honours Thesis: Professional Skills Seminar	HLTH4004	24
Year Two Session 1		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage I of II)	HLTH4002	24
Year Two Session 2		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage II of II)	HLTH4003	24

Clinical specialty stream part-time mode only

Unit name	Unit code	Credit points
Session 1		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage I of II)	HLTH4002	24
Session 2		
Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage II of II)	HLTH4003	24

Assessments

Assessment tasks across the program are scaffolded to assist in designing the research project, production of the final thesis and effective communication of the research. Students and supervisors are also required to submit progress reports at the completion of each session.

Unit	Assessment type	Contribution to unit grade	Session & Week due
HLTH4001 Advanced Topics in Health Science Research	Critical Review	Ungraded	S1, W6
	Literature Review	Ungraded	S1, W13
STAT4001 Applied Research and Evaluation Methods	Timeline	Ungraded	S1, W3
	Critical Conversations	Ungraded	S1, W1–13
HLTH4002 Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage I of II)	Presentation	40%	S1, W6
	Satisfactory progress report from supervisory team	Ungraded	S1, W15
	Research proposal*	60%	S1, W15
HLTH4004 Honours Thesis: Professional Skills Seminar	Presentation	Ungraded	S2, W6
	Online writing circles	Ungraded	S2, W1–13
	Written assessment	Ungraded	S2, W12
HLTH4003 Health and Human Sciences Thesis (Stage II of II)	Presentation*	20%	S2, W15
	Thesis*	80%	S2, W18

*Note: The Final Honours Grade is comprised of the results from the research proposal (10%) submitted for HLTH4002, the oral presentation (10%) and thesis (80%) as submitted for HLTH4003.

Key dates 2021

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Remarks
Application for admission	It is recommended that applications are submitted by January 2021		All applicants must submit a Supervision Agreement Form and a Provisional Research Proposal during the admission process
Orientation session	Students – orientation week of Session 1 Supervisor – prior to Session 1		
Commencement	Week 1 Session 1, 2021		The SCU teaching calendar can be found here
Progress reports	At the completion of the first session of study	At the completion of the first, second and third sessions of study	
Oral presentation seminar	Typically Week 15 of Session 2. The date of the seminar is subject to availability of examiners and will be communicated as early as possible.	Typically Week 15 of Session 2 of the second year of study. The date of the seminar is subject to availability of examiners and will be communicated as early as possible.	An electronic copy of the report abstract and presentation must be made available to the Honours Course Coordinator at least one week prior to the day of presentation. Failure to do this will result in a penalty of 5% of the presentation mark.
Submission of final written thesis	First week of November, 2021	First week of November, 2022	The report will be sent to two examiners. Examination is expected to take a minimum of four weeks from the submission. Thesis examination guidelines and forms are available in the Appendices of this document.
Final grade	Final grade will be submitted by the Course Coordinator to the University upon receipt of assessment grades.		

Selecting an Honours Supervisor

The selection of a supervisor is one of the most important and 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 school with a research higher degree (or equivalent research or professional experience). The School of Health and Human Sciences has a broad and 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, talking to other staff members and other honours/postgraduate students is helpful practice before making the decision.

The supervisor should be experienced in the area in which the student plans to 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. We strongly encourage 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, prior to undertaking any project that requires such specialist data collection supervision has been organised and 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, it is important that both sides have confidence in each other and that they are able to have a strong professional relationship.

If you require further assistance, please contact the Course Coordinator for further guidance and referral to appropriate supervisors for your research.

Responsibilities of the Honours Course Coordinator

Under the Head of School, 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 as below.

- a) Monitoring the Honours program to ensure consistency with relevant University policies.
- b) Assisting in answering enquiries of the prospective candidates, and assisting students in selecting areas of study and suitable supervisors.
- c) Reviewing completed admission applications and supporting offers to students in regards to completing the Honours program.
- d) Reporting significant concerns and issues in regard to the Honours program to the School Board Meeting, and/or the Head of School.
- e) The provision of a Handbook for the Honours program.
- f) Arranging an orientation program for students and supervisors at commencement of the program.
- g) Assisting in resolving problems or issues which may arise for supervisors and students.
- h) Arranging the honours presentation session/symposium.
- i) Contacting the examiners of the theses and coordinating the process of theses assessment and presentation in accordance with TEQSA and making grade recommendations.
- j) Monitoring the Honours program to ensure continuous quality improvement.
- k) Keeping a record of the School'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.

Responsibilities of Honours students

Honours students should assume responsibility for the following:

- a) Becoming familiar with University and School policies and guidelines including those related to 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 come to an agreement 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 at the completion of each session of study. The intention of these reports is 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 about which students may need to be well informed 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) Receive direction, advice and critique from supervisors, unit assessors and examiners in good faith.
- g) Abide by the University rules relating to plagiarism, academic integrity and research responsible conduct.
- h) Accept responsibility for the content and presentation of the thesis. With the guidance of the supervisor, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the thesis submitted is polished in its presentation and reflects the level of independent intellectual achievement expected at Honours level in the discipline

Responsibilities of Honours Supervisors

Honours supervisors should assume responsibility for the following:

- a) Assisting honours students to select a topic and develop a research proposal for the purpose of admission to the program. It should be feasible, scientifically sound, be supportable by the school 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 be filled in by both the supervisor and student during the admissions process. This will 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 normally provided by supervisors and the degree of independence normally expected of students should be discussed openly with students early in the year. Over-dependence on the supervisor can be avoided if students appreciate their responsibilities at this early stage.

- c) Establishing timelines. Special mention is made of the expectations around timelines, which are very important to 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 experience of the supervisor to ensure their expectations are realistic and to build expectations around how set-backs may be handled.
- d) Engaging with supervisor meetings and meeting commitments to students as agreed in the Supervisor Agreement Form. Supervisors should ensure they invest an appropriate amount of time, interest and commitment to support the student during the program.
- e) Providing feedback. As per the [SCU Honours Courses Development and Administration Policy](#) ‘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, as well as the research proposal and 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 of them is the supervisor. Once identified, examiners need to be approached as early as possible to ensure their availability and their willingness to provide reports by set deadlines. Ideally, examiners should be identified and contacted at least by the time the student begins the final session 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 Head of School.
- h) Providing assistance in completing the ethical approval processes.
- 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. Per the above mentioned policy, ‘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 school.
- l) Communicate to the Course Coordinator or Head of School should there be any issues with supervision arrangements or student progress.

Tips for a successful supervisor/student relationship

The student and supervisor relationship is key for an enjoyable and successful honours experience for both parties. The honours year is traditionally considered to be a bridge between being able to read knowledge and being able to produce 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. On application to the program, students must complete and submit a Supervision Agreement Form. Both the student and the supervisor should be able to 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, 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 ways in which 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 are 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 to be able to be completed within the time frame, one which can be supported by the School resources and intellectual expertise, and one which is sufficiently interesting to the student to enable 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 extensive research proposal as an assessment item in HLTH4002. Supervisors should consult with each other to establish shared guidelines on 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 School

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
- editorial assistance with key sections of the proposal as they are being written
- extensive assistance 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. Students are required to submit their project timeline for the unit STAT4001 early in the year. It is a requirement of submission that the supervisor views this assessment task before submission as part of the unit. This ensures that student and supervisors are on the same page regarding the timing of major events and when things should be occurring throughout the year. 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, and so they build into the timelines some leeway to allow flexibility in the rate of progress students make.

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

Timelines should include check-points at which progress is reviewed. These check-points can provide early warning of difficulties and allow supervisors to be proactive in addressing them. The progress report to be initiated by the student at the completion of each session of study 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 so that discussions can be used for intellectual advancement. Once the project is under way, meetings are most commonly used for reviewing work completed and for planning the next steps.

An agenda might look like:

- report on tasks to be completed by each party prior to 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; and
- 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 should 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. Certain 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 in a collegial manner and who seem to highly value their students' achievements. The important constant should be a mutual respect which is the basis for a positive intellectual rapport. Small but important ways of showing mutual respect are by keeping appointments, being on time for them and having promised work ready as agreed; and 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). The intention of these reports is 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 useful to do an early sighting of student writing (even a sample taken from work written before the student has commenced honours). This gives supervisor and student the opportunity 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, but 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 is able to set limits on the amount of assistance to be made available, especially in the final stages before submission of the final thesis, and it will permit the student to strike a balance between 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 the student to organise their reference materials effectively and to paraphrase and summarise simply and conceptually. These skills are important 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 in part as a basis for supervisory meetings.

Students should be encouraged to read completed honours theses. 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 explicates subtle disciplinary norms. Links to previous theses and tips will also be given in the coursework sites.

Supervisors should also be aware that students will also be receiving feedback on their assessment items by their peers, unit assessors and other staff involved in the program in the grading process. This includes the research proposal, literature review and a draft of the research paper. This is done in the spirit of drawing on the expertise in the school 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 a number of ways. As it is the student's first experience of such a document, it is preferable that the supervisor guides 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 the work. However, it is always helpful to know what could be improved, especially for the preparation for publications from the materials.

Some students may be encouraged to publish their first papers as a result of examiners' reports which are extremely favourable. 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 which 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 School or University, or to problems of cultural isolation. Supervisors can assist by developing a sufficiently positive rapport with the student to be able to know when the student is facing practical or emotional difficulties. Supervisors may also be able to 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 a particular set of concerns relating to the pressures of outside work and raising families.

With increasing enrolments 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 and especially on writing style. Students from some cultures may see the role of the supervisor as being a font of wisdom rather than a facilitator of higher learning, and this 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 to monitor their own 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 knowledge base and scholarly networks of the discipline. Both of these measures will contribute a great deal to the quality of the student experience of honours study, as well as to 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 Teaching and Learning Unit is in a position to give advice on appropriate ways of obtaining this kind of information and on interpreting the information obtained.

Professional conduct for students

Students should appreciate that supervisors have many other commitments and their time is very valuable. Supervisors are not editors, though some may take on that role more than others; students should make sure that all material provided have been carefully written and is 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 ultimate responsibility for the standard and progress of work resides with the student. The expectation is that during an honours year, students are developing more independence, requiring less structured academic guidance.

Please be aware that after completing one unit you can apply for a leave of absence of up to 12 months should you find that you require a break from study. This application will be reviewed by the course coordinator. You should discuss with your supervisors and the course coordinator prior to application.

Dispute resolution and grievance procedure

In the event that students have a difficulty or issue that requires 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 Honours Program Coordinator, then to the Head of School. 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: Final report (typically 3000–6000 words)

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 School has no unified rules at present in regard to 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 to his/her capacity. The judgement of the achievements and quality of the study will be based solely on the materials presented in the thesis. The written work of the thesis will be examined by internal and external experts in the field of study.

For examination students are to present the two papers in a coherent thesis. 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 theses 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 web site 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	The full title of the thesis, the name of the student, 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 school and institution, month and year of presentation.
Declaration	The author should insert and sign a statement similar to below on a separate page: ' <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> '
Acknowledgments	Thank anyone you would like to acknowledge for their assistance in preparation of your thesis.
Table of contents	In some theses, lists of tables, figures and abbreviations are also included.
Abstract	Short (usually 1 to 2 pages) summary of the thesis as a whole.
Introductory framing statement/chapter	<p>You may want to include here statements about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The research problem or focus of inquiry – The theoretical framework or methodology used – The structure of the thesis and how each chapter contributes, hypotheses, theories or research questions – Definitions of key terms – Anything else that will help the reader to contextualise the work. <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"> – The theory and research literature specific to the topic. – Research in cognate areas relevant to the topic. – Critique of the validity of appropriate theory and research literature. – The limitations and gaps in the literature and guidance for future research. <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>
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.

Components	Contents
Paper 2 – Research paper	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relatively brief introduction/background outlining the rationale for the research. – General method and design of the research. – Research population or sample. – Specific procedures, data collection or instrumentation. – Data analysis. – Presentations of the research findings. – Significance and implications of the findings.
Concluding framing chapter	<p>The final format of this chapter will reflect the content of the preceding chapters. It may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conclusions and alternative explanations for the findings. – Impact of the study in terms of what was learned. – Strength, weaknesses, and limitations of the study. – Implications for professional practice or decision making, scholarly understanding or the field, and/or future studies. – Recommendations for future research, changes in professional practice, and/or changes or modifications in accepted theoretical constructs.
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 2.5cm from top, bottom, and right sides and 3.5cm 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

From 2020 onwards, 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 School 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 prior to 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. The rubric for this presentation is provided in Appendix B.

Ethical approval and rules for accessing research facilities and resources

Approval from the relevant ethics committee must be obtained prior to commencing research for projects involving humans or animals. 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. Please refer to the SCU Division of Research website: <https://www.scu.edu.au/research/research-ethics/> for an ethics application. The Ethics Committees meet throughout the year and application submission dates and meeting dates are also listed at this site.

Given a thesis is commonly completed over two sessions (full time Standard Stream or part-time Clinical Stream) supervisors and students should aim wherever possible to construct a thesis project to meet the negligible and low risk research criteria. These applications receive expedited approval. Should your project not meet the criteria for negligible or low risk, it is very important that you, in conjunction with your supervisor, submit an ethics application as soon as possible as there is at least 1 month between submission and when you are notified of the application outcome. Also, there are often special conditions that must be dealt with that also take time. If you are doing research at another site such as a hospital then ethical approval must also be obtained from the relevant Ethics Committee.

The Honours candidate should be aware of all the experimental procedures to be applied on human subjects require an approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University before they can be carried out. These procedures include not only laboratory or field testings, but also survey questionnaires or interviews. The students and supervisors should submit the application to the Committee at the earliest possible time since the Committee only meets certain times each session. 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 Schools.

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) Academic Skills

The Academic Skills offers advice and assistance to staff and students regarding ways of improving the quality of student learning. Programs of possible interest to Honours supervisors and their students are those in the areas of academic reading, writing and research skills. The contact details of the Academic Skills are available at <https://www.scu.edu.au/learning-zone/academic-skills-in-the-curriculum/>

c) Library

The Library provides a full range of library and audiovisual services, books, journals, CD-ROM databases, on-line information retrieval, access to the Internet. The Library is able to obtain books held in other libraries by inter-library loan. Each School has a contact librarian. For information and to contact the libraries please see <http://scu.edu.au/library/index.php/6>

d) Technical Support

Technical support offers assistance with a range of issues including e-mail and network problems. Contact details for technical support are at <https://www.scu.edu.au/technology-services/students--staff-services/>

e) Student Access & Inclusion

The University has a policy on academic support for students with disabilities, which is available through the SCU website. The contact details for the Student Equity and Disability Unit are available at <http://scu.edu.au/students/index.php/35>

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>
Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is succinct – sparks interest – includes all elements – is consistent with study 					
Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – describes central phenomenon and key concepts – synthesises prev. literature – is relevant to the study – is cohesive 					
Rationale & Significance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – both flow logically from the background and previous literature – are clear and comprehensive 					
Aims, questions, hypotheses (as required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – flow logically from the background and rationale – are clear and comprehensive 					
Methodology & study design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is congruent with the aims of the study – is clear and comprehensively described 					
Sampling & recruitment strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – are appropriate for the methodology – addresses potential introduction of bias – are ethically appropriate – are clear and comprehensively described 					
Data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – instruments and procedures are clearly and comprehensively described – are congruent with the study design and aims – addresses potential introduction of bias 					
Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is congruent with the methodology and data collection – is clearly, correctly and comprehensively described 					
Budget & timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – are comprehensive and succinct – are formatted to be clear to the reader 					
Ethical Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – are explored comprehensively, including strategies to mitigate risk 					
Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – grammar and spelling – academic writing style – assertions are qualified – appropriately referenced 					

Appendix B – Guidelines for the Grading of the Oral Presentation

Student name: **Date of presentation:**

Thesis title:

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The Oral Presentation forms 10% of the final honours grade and 20% of the unit HLTH4003. The examiners of the oral presentation are expected to assess the following aspects in relation to the presentation (a total of 100 marks). All comments will be de-identified, collated and given to the student:

MASTERY OF THE SUBJECT – CONTENT AND SCIENTIFIC MERIT (60 marks)

This is the major focus of the presentation. It requires students to demonstrate their understanding of their research, their ability to inform others about it. Students are advised to keep the introduction/background/literature review and methods relatively brief to spend more time on the findings and discussion/application to practice etc.

It should contain:

- Introduction:
 - Background and importance of the research
 - The research question(s) – this may be in the form of aims, objectives, hypotheses, questions (and sub-questions) as appropriate
- Methods:
 - Study design
 - Recruitment/sampling
 - Data collection procedures
 - Methods of analysis
- Findings/Results:
 - Main findings/results – students are advised to select the most important on which to focus.
- Discussion/Application to Practice:
 - What the findings mean
 - How the findings of the study add to the body of knowledge
 - Limitations of the study
 - Clinical or other applications of results
 - Students should be able to adequately interpret the results, critically discuss the results in reference to the literature, and draw justifiable conclusions from the findings
- Conclusion:
 - A clear “take-home” message
 - Future research recommended (if any)
- Students should be able to answer questions about any specifics of their research. Consider whether the student has demonstrated a proper level of knowledge in relation to the area studied, and handled the questions raised from the audience at a satisfactory level.

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

Comments _____

PRESENTATION/DELIVERY (20 marks)

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

- Speaks clearly and at an understandable pace (not too fast or too slow), addressing 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, gestures, moving around, etc.)
- Well-rehearsed delivery – can be read/scripted if desired
- Keeps within time limits
- Presentation is well organised and has a logical flow
- Presentation is engaging/interesting

	F (<30)	P (30–38)	Cr (39–44)	D (45–51)	D (52–60)
--	---------	-----------	------------	-----------	-----------

Mark _____

Comments _____

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS (20 marks)

Consider the following:

- Visual aids are well prepared, informative, effective and not distracting.
- PowerPoint slides (if used) use: Clear fonts that are an appropriate size/colour and easy for the audience to read, Backgrounds that do not distract from the information presented – clear contrasts o Transitions, animations, etc. that do not detract from the content being presented
- Any graphs, figures, charts, pictures are clear and understandable.

	F (<30)	P (30–38)	Cr (39–44)	D (45–51)	D (52–60)
--	---------	-----------	------------	-----------	-----------

Mark _____

Comments _____

The assessment should be obtained from multiple School members, and submitted to the Honours Program Coordinator for collation.

Name of the Examiner: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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

School of Health and Human Sciences
Southern Cross University

General advice to examiners

Examiners should note that the assessment from two examiners represents 80% (40% each) of the total grade for the Honours thesis. Each examiner is expected to be independent of each other and the supervisor. If you have any questions regarding the process or the thesis please contact the honours course coordinator.

In terms of quality and effort, the thesis is based on seven to eight months full-time work of research by a fourth year University student, and is his/her first experience in independent research, the research method, problem analysis/solving and thesis writing.

The length of the thesis should be normally around 10,000–15,000 words (exclusive of words in tables, graphs, bibliographies and appendices), but may vary according to the nature of the study.

The final grade for the Honours thesis is calculated by the marks given by the two thesis examiners. A candidate who has reached the required proficiency will be awarded, on the recommendation of the School, 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 Examiner's Report Form, the examiners are expected to make more detailed comments on a separate sheet. Please note that after submission for assessment, the student is NEITHER required to revise the original work based on feedback from the examiners, NOR to 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.

Definition of performance of grades of Thesis

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

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

- The topic may have a moderate to high degree of difficulty and is very well investigated
- A high level of understanding of literature evident;
- Originality of design and ideas evident;
- Critical analysis of information and data undertaken;
- Development of interpretive models undertaken and appropriate conclusions drawn;
- High level of writing skills displayed;
- Significant development in understanding in the subject area; and/or
- Thesis should be publishable (after abbreviation and modification) in the relevant literature.

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

- The topic may entail a moderate to high level of difficulty and is well investigated, or a high degree of difficulty but is only adequately investigated;
- Sound literature review displaying that relevant literature has been assimilated
- More critical analysis of information and data collected;
- Use of appropriate methods in analytical component;
- Well written and sound conclusions;
- Related to broader theoretical framework; and/or
- May be publishable in the literature after appropriate revision.

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

- The topic may entail some degree of difficulty and is adequately investigated, or a higher degree of difficulty but is only superficially investigated;
- May be largely descriptive;
- Likely to feature a more thorough literature review;
- Perhaps based substantially on the review of literature;
- Some analytical component; and/or
- Shows understanding of wider implications of the work.

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

- The topic may entail a limited degree of difficulty and is superficially investigated;
- Project largely descriptive but shows some comprehension of the overall nature of the problem;
- May contain significant errors and little analytical work;
- And/or may be typified by just adequate literature review, expression and presentation.

Fail, (0–49%, unacceptable):

- The topic may entail a low degree of difficulty and is only superficially investigated, or may be entirely descriptive in nature;
- May contain major errors and incorrect conclusions;
- Shows little or no comprehension of the overall problem;
- Inadequate literature review;
- Limited research effort apparent;
- Little, no or flawed analytical work; and/or
- Poor expression and presentation.

Examiners' reports

Each examiner should submit an independent report. A suggested format for the report is attached below. A concise report (about one page or so) is expected 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 in regard to grammar and punctuation errors (you may also annotate the thesis copy and return it).

Examiners are invited to indicate whether, and to what extent, they wish to remain anonymous with respect to the supervisor and to the candidate. If preservation of anonymity is not clearly requested by the examiner, anonymity will not normally be preserved.

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).
- an appropriate coverage of literature which is relevant to the focus of the thesis.
- a theoretical, conceptual or other framework/structure which provides a context for the focus of the thesis.
- a set of methods and procedures which 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.
- 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 research question(s)/hypothesis(es)/objective(s).
2. an appropriate coverage of literature which is relevant to the focus of the thesis.
3. a theoretical, conceptual or other framework/structure which provides a context for the focus of the thesis.
4. a set of methods and procedures which 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.
8. a well-presented and organised thesis structure.

Evaluation criteria

The Thesis exhibits the above characteristics:

Please tick

To a consistent and high level (Hons I)

Mostly consistent and mostly at a high level (Hons 2A)

Generally more than acceptable (Hons 2B)

Generally acceptable (Hons 3)

Not acceptable Fail

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.

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Name:

Signature: Date: