

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA
STUDENT & SUPERVISOR GUIDELINES FOR BHS_c HONOURS PROGRAM**

These guidelines provide a framework to students and supervisors for the successful completion of the undergraduate honours program in the School of Health Sciences. Each student can work under the direction and mentorship of one supervisor or two co-supervisors. These guidelines address the following.

1. Purpose of the Honours program
2. Identifying a research project
3. General structure of thesis document
4. Recommended benchmarks and evaluation components
5. Responsibilities and expectations of honours students
6. Responsibilities and expectations of supervisors and co-supervisors

1. Purpose of the Honours Program

The purpose of the honours program is to provide students with insight into how to form rigorous research questions/hypothesis, critically review current literature in a specific field/topic/subdiscipline, collect and analyze data, and formally present their findings in both written and oral forms (i.e., respectively, in the forms of a written thesis and one or more presentations). The development of the honours thesis requires a continual engagement between student and supervisor(s) during the research and writing process.

The honours experience provides students with an understanding of what postgraduate education or a career in research involves. A thesis also serves as a solid grounding in a discipline that could be developed further at the Master's or Doctoral level, or provides students with a set of critical thinking and problem solving skills of increasing importance in health-related professions.

2. Identifying a Research Project

This is primarily the responsibility of the supervisor(s) but should be completed in collaboration with the student. Supervisor(s) should not simply assign a project to the student.

- Topic is viable, i.e., sufficiently related to supervisor's area of expertise, relevant to health sciences, and within the scope of what can be accomplished in ~8 months
- Project is feasible in practical terms (money, resources, and infrastructure) and in the available time frame
- Project and topic can be adapted to meet changes due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. experimental pitfalls, ethics-related delays, and so on)
- Research must be original; or a robust design for testing the replicability of existing data

3. General Structure of Thesis Document (e.g., length, format, etc.)

- Typically, an undergraduate Honours thesis will be written in a standard academic format (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion), where the Introduction includes an extensive review of the relevant literature.

- In general, it is recommended that the formatting guidelines for the thesis should mirror those for Master's theses at UNBC (see form "GR 300: Formatting Guidelines for Theses/Dissertations/Projects," found on the Graduate Programs website).
- Student and supervisor will select reference and formatting style collaboratively.
- The minimum acceptable length for the main text of the written thesis is 30 pages, double-spaced (assumes 12-point Times New Roman font).
 - This excludes title page, table(s) of contents, reference list(s), data tables/figures, and appendices such as survey forms.

4. Recommended Benchmarks and Evaluation Components

- The student and (co-)supervisor(s) will discuss and establish the evaluation format and timeline of the project collaboratively before or during the first week of the fall semester. The evaluation and timeline will be included in the HHSC 490 course syllabus and will be considered a contract between student and supervisor for the duration of the course.
 - During the preparation of the HHSC 490 course syllabus, the student and the supervisor(s) will discuss the selection of a suitable second reader. This person will participate in the evaluation of the final written thesis, and will be invited to provide feedback as part of all other formal evaluation components. An agreement from a second reader must be secured by the halfway mark of the fall semester, once the project details have been finalized.
- Students will be evaluated based on a variety of criteria (at least three components, to be discussed and agreed upon by the student and the supervisor), perhaps including but not limited to the following; and ensuring that, at a minimum, one of these components will be assessed and graded during the fall semester in order to provide the student with formative feedback.
 1. Research proposal (first semester)
 2. Progress report/presentation (end of first semester—e.g., literature review and methods)
 3. Planning and experimental work (e.g., ethics application, study and/or instrument design, protocol development or refinement, data collection and analysis)
 4. Contributions at regular meetings
 5. Final written thesis
 6. Final presentation
- It is not acceptable for supervisor to assign a final grade for HHSC 490-6 based exclusively on an assessment of the written thesis.
- The grade for the final written thesis must be assigned based upon a consensus evaluation by the (co-)supervisor(s) and a second reader from outside the project.
 - If consensus cannot be reached, an average grade may be assigned.
 - In exceptional circumstances, the Honours Program Coordinator and/or the Chair of the School may intervene to mediate the assignment of an appropriate final grade.
- No single component of the final grade for HHSC 490-6 may be assigned a value of more than 40%.
 - A minimum grade requirement to pass the Honours Thesis is a B.
 - Note: Per the UNBC Undergraduate Calendar, if a student does not achieve a B in HHSC 490 they may still graduate with a BHSc degree, but without the Honours designation.

5. Responsibilities and Expectations of Honours Students

- Work collaboratively with the supervisor or co-supervisors to identify a research project (see section 2, above), evaluation criteria (see section 4, above), and a second reader (see first sub-bullet under section 4, above).
- Attend safety training sessions and abide by all relevant safety regulations. For more information see UNBC webpages pertaining to Biohazard Safety (<https://www.unbc.ca/research/research-ethics-safety-biohazardous-materials>) and Laboratory and Field Safety (<https://www.unbc.ca/safety/field-safety>).
- Complete training in ethics relevant to the project, such as
 - Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS version 2) tutorial: Course on Research Ethics (CORE) (see information provided at <https://www.unbc.ca/research/research-ethics-safety-human-participants>), or
 - training in ethical handling of laboratory animals (see information provided at <https://www.unbc.ca/research/research-ethics-safety-animal-subjects>).
- Be available for meetings both one-on-one and in group or lab settings.
- Provide progress reports and submit work on time, based on timelines and deadlines established in collaboration with the supervisor.
- Treat supervisor(s), collaborating faculty members, fellow research students, and research participants (humans or animals) with respect and dignity.
- Complete a written thesis and present data at a session organized by the program.

6. Responsibilities and Expectations of Supervisors or Co-Supervisors

- Work collaboratively with the student to select a research project (see section 2, above), evaluation criteria (see section 4, above), and a second reader (see first sub-bullet under section 4, above).
- Ensure relevant safety- and ethics-related training has been completed (see second and third main bullets under Expectations for Students, above).
- Work collaboratively with the student to establish both evaluation deadlines and a timeline for research progression.
- Submit HHSC 490 course syllabus to the BHSc Program Assistant by no later than one week after the start of Fall semester classes.
- Meet with student regularly to answer questions and provide both encouragement and constructive feedback.
 - Supervisors are expected to provide regular, formative feedback to the student at least as often as the formal deadlines set out in the syllabus, and preferably more often. In addition to the formal feedback provided at the end of the course, supervisors are *required* to provide summative written feedback at the middle of each semester and formal, formative written feedback at the end of the fall semester.
- Provide mentorship in dissemination—both writing and presentation.
- Discuss authorship, if any part of the thesis may have potential to be published as a whole or in part as a journal article.

Note: If you have any specific questions or if you require clarification regarding this document or the BHSc Honours program as a whole, it is your responsibility to ask the Honours program coordinator or the Chair of the School. In addition, we welcome any suggestions you may have on how the guidelines may be improved.