

Faculty Frequently Asked Questions about the Campuswide Honors Program Research/Thesis Project

What is the Campuswide Honors Program?

The Campuswide Honors Program (CHP) is a highly selective honors program committed to providing undergraduates with a personal, challenging, and rewarding educational experience with the rigor and opportunities of a dynamic research university and the personal attention of a selective liberal arts college. To this end, CHP students are required to complete honors core courses and research and write an undergraduate honors thesis under the mentorship of a member of the faculty.

Many students cite their research/thesis project as one of their proudest accomplishments at UCI.

What is required for CHP students to complete the research/thesis project component of the honors program?

CHP students must complete at least two quarters of research under the guidance of a tenured or tenure-track faculty mentor within their major. In rare cases, students may elect to do a research thesis in an area outside of their major. Some students (for example, in the arts) might elect to do creative work for their honors thesis project.

Many students devote three or more quarters to their research project in order to develop the understanding and depth needed to complete a worthwhile project. More often than not, students will complete their honors research during their senior year.

Students write up their research experience in a publication-quality paper. Students who elect to do a creative project must submit written documentation of their creative process and summarize their final work. They should also include videos, CDs, DVDs, photographs, etc., which document the final project. Honors theses must be completed at UCI.



What constitutes an “honors-caliber thesis”?

Honors projects are a student’s original research, which can be conducted independently, or as part of a research group, as in a laboratory setting. The student should learn to think independently and creatively to carry out the exploration of his/her hypothesis/proposal. The thesis should demonstrate the student’s command of the research techniques, conceptual frameworks, and intellectual skills appropriate to the field or fields in which the topic falls. Significant individual effort may involve laboratory research, library research, creative activity, or field research. The CHP does not impose a page minimum/maximum on the thesis, or any other requirement, though many honors theses are 25-65 pages double-spaced using a standard format.

What are my responsibilities?

The CHP research/thesis component enables faculty to work closely with students in a mentorship relationship. Students benefit from the experience and knowledge of highly respected faculty, who can give students an eye-opening perspective on their field. Some students may feel they need two faculty advisors (from different departments/schools), and in certain cases, this might be appropriate.

Faculty and students should work together to schedule regular meetings and deadlines, determine research resources, and set explicit requirements and expectations. Faculty are also responsible for verifying that the student has successfully completed the honors thesis by signing the CHP Thesis Approval Form (provided by the student and available on the CHP website). Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to CHP and/or school/major-specific thesis requirements and deadlines.

What if the student wants to participate, or is already participating, in a school/major-specific honors program?

Most school/major-specific honors programs require a research experience and completion of an honors thesis/project/report prior to graduation. CHP students are strongly encouraged to participate in the upper-division honors program in their school/major in addition to the CHP. CHP students may submit an honors thesis written as part of a school/major-specific honors program to the CHP their final, approved thesis, as long as the student has also completed at least two quarters of related research.

What if the student wants to complete his/her thesis as part of a class requirement?

Students may choose (and/or need) to enroll in independent study classes with their thesis advisor (for example, 199 independent study courses). Essays, assignments, group projects, etc. completed in the normal course of earning credit for a typical upper-division class are not usually acceptable CHP thesis projects. However, the thesis may expand upon research or ideas initiated as a part of a class.

Important links

CHP Website: honors.uci.edu

CHP Research/Thesis Handbook: honors.uci.edu/resources/handbooks/research-thesis-handbook

The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Website: www.urop.uci.edu