

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



What is the Campuswide Honors Collegium?

The Campuswide Honors Collegium (CHC) is a highly selective honors academic 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, CHC students are required to complete honors core courses, conduct 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 CHC students to complete the honors research/thesis project component?

CHC students must complete at least two quarters of research under the guidance of a UCI tenured or tenure-track faculty mentor. 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 that can be conducted independently or as part of a research group, such as in a laboratory setting. The student should learn to think independently and creatively to carry out the exploration of their hypothesis/proposal. The thesis should demonstrate the student’s command of the research techniques, conceptual frameworks, and intellectual skills appropriate to the field(s) in which the topic falls. Significant individual effort may involve laboratory research, library research, creative activity, or field research. The CHC 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 CHC 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 CHC Thesis Approval Form (provided by the student and available on the CHC website). Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to CHC 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. CHC students are strongly encouraged to participate in the upper-division honors program in their school/major in addition to the CHC. CHC students may submit a thesis written for a school/major-specific honors program (as long as they have also completed at least two quarters of related research) to the CHC as their final, approved honors thesis.

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 CHC thesis projects. However, the thesis may expand upon research or ideas initiated as a part of a class.

Important links:

CHC Website: honors.uci.edu

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

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