

## **HONOURS PROGRAM**

**BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (Honours)**

**BACHELOR OF MANAGEMENT (Honours)**

**BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (Honours)**

# **Information Guide**

**For 2012 Students**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

For students who have completed an undergraduate degree, the Honours program provides the opportunity for advanced study in Business, Commerce and Management. It is intended to develop your abilities to undertake research in selected topics and, where appropriate, apply the results. An Honours qualification is the standard requirement for entry into postgraduate research in Australian universities.

Students approaching Honours need to be aware that the program is qualitatively different from the earlier undergraduate years. The earlier emphasis tends to be on breadth and relevance, while Honours adds a concern for intellectual depth. The difference between the academic research in your thesis and the research you may have done as an undergraduate is that your thesis will involve empirical research: collecting data to investigate a research question developed from a gap in existing literature, with the aim of generalising from your findings to generate implications for theory and practice.

Honours study is very demanding. It involves a new approach to academic work, starting to address unresolved questions and issues, moving away from 'what' 'where' and 'when' towards 'how' and 'why'. You are expected to be highly proactive and self-directed, and to assess and address areas of weakness in your knowledge and understanding.

Notwithstanding this, every effort will be made to assist students who experience difficulty during the program. You are encouraged to approach your supervisor, School Honours Coordinator or Program Director for support as required.

The Honours program is available at the City West campus. It is normally taken on a full-time basis over one year. In exceptional circumstances, it may be taken part-time over a maximum period of two years.

# PROGRAM SCHEDULE

## Bachelor of Business/Management/Commerce (Honours)

### AIM

To provide graduates with opportunities for advanced study in various business and management discipline areas. This program is designed to develop graduates with the ability to undertake academic research and proceed to further academic work or a professional career in industry.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

High performance in an undergraduate degree in a business relevant discipline.

### CONTENT

The program consists of coursework (18 units) and research components (18 units) totalling 36 units.

Program Codes DHBS/DHCM/DHMG	Units	Code
<b>Study Period 2</b>		
Research Methods in Business H	4.5	BUSS 4022
Contemporary Issues in Business H	4.5	BUSS 4021
Directed Readings in Business H	4.5	BUSS 4024
Critical Literature Review for Business H	4.5	BUSS 4018
<b>Study Period 5</b>		
Business Honours Thesis H1	9.0	BUSS 4019
Business Honours Thesis H2	9.0	BUSS 4020

### NOTES

1. Students studying this program part-time will normally study the program as follows:

#### **Year 1 – Study Period 2**

BUSS 4022      Research Methods in Business H  
BUSS 4021      Contemporary Issues in Business H

#### **Year 1 – Study Period 5**

BUSS 4024      Directed Readings in Business H  
BUSS 4018      Critical Literature Review for Business H

#### **Year 2 – Study Period 2**

BUSS 4019      Business Honours Thesis H1

#### **Year 2 – Study Period 5**

BUSS 4020      Business Honours Thesis H2

2. This program is available in three areas:

- Business
- Commerce
- Management

Students may enrol in the appropriate option, depending on the School to which they belong. The program of study for each option is identical.

3. Students will have an *Incomplete* grade recorded against Business and Management Honours Thesis courses until assessment of the thesis is completed. Following examination the grade for each of the courses Business Honours Thesis H1 and H2 will be adjusted to reflect the mark awarded to the thesis as a whole.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Your supervisor should always be your first point-of-contact for academic guidance.

For any other questions about the program please contact the relevant School Honours Coordinator or Program Director, or the Research Coordinator for administrative enquiries.

### Course Coordinators

Course Code	Course Title	Name
BUSS 4022	Research Methods in Business H	Brianne Hastie
BUSS 4021	Contemporary Issues in Business H	School Honours Coordinator
BUSS 4024	Directed Readings in Business H	School Honours Coordinator
BUSS 4018	Critical Literature Review for Business H	School Honours Coordinator
BUSS 4019	Business Honours Thesis H1	Honours Program Director
BUSS 4020	Business Honours Thesis H2	Honours Program Director

### Academic Staff Contact Details

Role	Name	Email	Room	Phone
Program Director	Brianne Hastie	brianne.hastie@unisa.edu.au	DP2-37	8302 0289
Commerce Honours Coordinator	John Wilson	john.k.wilson@unisa.edu.au	WL3-57	8302 0207
Management Honours Coordinator	Jane Burdett	jane.burdett@unisa.edu.au	EM4-19	8302 0530
Marketing Honours Coordinator	Magdalena Nenycz-Thiel	magdalena.nenycz-thiel@unisa.edu.au	Y4-17	8302 9172
Course Coordinator BUSS4022	Brianne Hastie	brianne.hastie@unisa.edu.au	DP2-37	8302 0289

### Administrative Staff Contact Details

Role	Name	Email	Room	Phone
Research Coordinator	Sarah Surman	sarah.surman@unisa.edu.au	DP2-43	8302 0968
Administrative Officer	Michelle Trimboli	michelle.trimboli@unisa.edu.au	DP2-43	8302 0417

# COURSEWORK

Students must undertake four pieces of coursework:

## **Research Methods in Business H (BUSS 4022)**

This course is designed to develop students' knowledge and application of scholarly research methods and associated data analysis that is relevant to research in business and the wider social sciences. [Separate Course Information Book provided in class.]

## **Contemporary Issues in Business H (BUSS 4021)**

The aim of the course is to familiarise students with modern, intellectually demanding contemporary issues in their discipline area.

## **Directed Readings in Business H (BUSS 4024)**

The aim of the course is to acquaint students with a body of literature on a topic in their general area of interest and expertise, but which does not overlap in detail with their thesis work.

## **Critical Literature Review for Business H (BUSS 4018)**

The aim of the course is to develop the research capacity of students and to extend their specialist knowledge in an agreed area of business theory or practice.

In general, assessment in all courses seeks to promote students' understanding and critical engagement with the academic research process, and not designed primarily to assess knowledge of factual material.

# BUSS 4021 Contemporary Issues in Business H

## Prerequisite(s)/ Assumed knowledge

Enrolment in the DHMG or DHCM or DHBS Honours program.

## Course objectives

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

Course Objectives	Graduate Qualities being developed through the course						
	GQ1	GQ2	GQ3	GQ4	GQ5	GQ6	GQ7
Critically evaluate key points and arguments in their discipline area.		*	*	*		*	

## Course content

Contemporary issues, specific developments and debates in their discipline area.

## Teaching and learning arrangements

The following learning and teaching arrangements will be used in this course:

### RESEARCH SEMINARS

Students are normally required to attend eight to ten research seminars during the study period. These may be chosen from amongst any research seminars run within the Division or elsewhere in UniSA or other universities. Research seminars involve presentation of the findings of a complete project or program of research, or work-in-progress seminars by active researchers. They are not presentations meant for members of the general public or primarily for administrative purposes, or to discuss teaching.

The purpose of your attendance is to expose you to examples of current research work in a variety of areas relevant to the activities of the Division, and you are encouraged to attend any seminars that you find interesting and accessible, not just during the study period in which you undertake this course but throughout your Honours tenure.

OR

### LECTURE SERIES

Students may be required to attend a lecture series developed for their specific research discipline as agreed by the Honours Program Director.

## Unit value of course

4.5

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## ASSESSMENT

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### Assessment summary

Form of assessment	Length	Weighting	Due date*	Graduate Quality/Qualities being assessed
<b>Offering 1: Research Seminars</b>				
Reflective Journal	500 words	20%	Week 4	2, 3, 4, 6
Essay	1500 words	30%	Week 9	2, 3, 4, 6
Essay	3000 words	50%	Study break	2, 3, 4, 6
<b>Offering 2: Lecture Series</b>				
Class Contribution		20%		2, 3, 4, 6
Essay	1500 words	30%	Week 9	2, 3, 4, 6
Essay	3000 words	50%	Study break	2, 3, 4, 6

\*May be subject to change depending on individual circumstances.

### Assessment details

The assessment for the course will consist of three assignments. The first assessment task involves creating a plan for seminar attendance in consultation with the relevant School Honours Coordinator, including assessment due dates. The second assessment will provide a critical report on the content of a seminar, with some reference to additional literature. The major assignment should include in-depth analysis of the research issue, with reference to relevant literature.

All work should be referenced using a specific referencing style (e.g., Chicago, Harvard, APA), as most appropriate to the specific discipline area. All assignments must use the *Assignment cover sheet* (available from your Course homepage and in myUniSA).

Due dates for all assessments above are suggested, but may be negotiated with the relevant School Honours Coordinator, depending on the seminars available and of interest to the student.

**All assessment must be submitted prior to the start of the examination period for the Study Period in which the course is taken (however, exemptions may be granted for presentations).** For 2012, this is **15<sup>th</sup> June** for Study Period 2, or **9<sup>th</sup> November** for Study Period 5.

The School Honours Coordinator is available for discussion and clarification as necessary.

Please also refer to **Important Academic Information** on page 27.

# BUSS 4024 Directed Readings in Business H

## Prerequisite(s)/ Assumed knowledge

Enrolment in the DHMG or DHCM or DHBS Honours program.

## Course objectives

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

Course Objectives	Graduate Qualities being developed through the course						
	GQ1	GQ2	GQ3	GQ4	GQ5	GQ6	GQ7
Analyse critical issues in an area outside of their thesis topic.		*	*	*		*	
Carry out a literature search in a narrowly defined aspect of one of the disciplines of the School.		*	*	*		*	
Write an appropriately structured and argued academic report on the results of an investigation.		*	*	*		*	
Demonstrate a sound knowledge of an advanced area of study.		*	*	*		*	

## Course content

Advanced study and investigation in an area of particular interest to the student within disciplines to be found in the Division of Business.

## Teaching and learning arrangements

This course is taught through directed study, and involves one-on-one interaction with the student's Honours **supervisor or nominated academic staff member**. By around the **second week** of study period, the staff member and student will have agreed on the following:

- (1) A general theme for the reading, which will have some overall unity.
- (2) A program of **six or seven meetings, averaging two to three hours**, to occur over the course of the study period at mutually agreeable times (the function of the meetings is to allow informed discussion and exchange between the student and the staff member, about the items read and the ideas they contain).
- (3) A list of materials to be read for at least the first half of the course, understanding that decision on later items may be affected by discussion of the earlier items.
- (4) Two dates, by which a more detailed agreement will have been reached between the staff member and the student on the assignments and assignment topics.

## Unit value of course

4.5

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## ASSESSMENT

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### Assessment summary

Form of assessment	Length	Weighting	Due date*	Graduate Quality/Qualities being assessed
Scoping of project	500 words	10%	Week 3	2, 3, 4, 6
Essay	2000 words	35%	Week 7	2, 3, 4, 6
Essay	3000 words	55%	Study break	2, 3, 4, 6

\*May be subject to change depending on individual circumstances.

### Assessment details

The assessment for the course will consist of three assignments. The exact content will be negotiated between the student and topic supervisor (thesis supervisor or nominee). These will most likely take the form of two essay topics, requiring in depth engagement with academic literature (both empirical research and theory) in an area of interest to both supervisor and student.

The first assessment will involve outlining assignment topics and due dates. Dates above are a guide only. Different dates may be agreed for different students, since there will be variation in the availability of different staff members over the study period.

Once agreement has been reached on those points, it will be recorded and a copy provided to the School Honours Coordinator. The assignments will be submitted to the topic supervisor who will mark them and keep the School Honours Coordinator informed of the grades and progress.

All work should be referenced using a specific referencing style (e.g., Chicago, Harvard, APA), as most appropriate to the specific discipline area. All assignments must use the *Assignment cover sheet* (available from your Course homepage and in myUniSA).

**All assessment must be submitted prior to the start of the examination period for the Study Period in which the course is taken (however, exemptions may be granted for presentations).** For 2012, this is **15<sup>th</sup> June** for Study Period 2, or **9<sup>th</sup> November** for Study Period 5.

The School Honours Coordinator is available for discussion and clarification as necessary.

Please also refer to **Important Academic Information** on page 27.

## BUSS 4018 Critical Literature Review for Business H

### Prerequisite(s)/ Assumed knowledge

Enrolment in the DHMG or DHCM or DHBS Honours program.

### Course objectives

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

Course Objectives	Graduate Qualities being developed through the course						
	GQ1	GQ2	GQ3	GQ4	GQ5	GQ6	GQ7
Demonstrate the ability to define a research topic.			*	*		*	
Critically evaluate and synthesize existing research in their thesis area.			*			*	
Develop the literature review chapter for their dissertation.		*	*	*		*	

### Course content

Advanced study and investigation in the area of research for the Honours thesis.

### Teaching and learning arrangements

This course is taught through directed study, and involves one-on-one interaction with the student's Honours **supervisor**.

### Unit value of course

4.5

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## ASSESSMENT

### Assessment summary

Form of assessment	Length	Weighting	Due date	Graduate Quality/Qualities being assessed
Draft structure of Literature Review	500 words	15%	Week 6*	3, 4, 6
Draft of Literature Review	5000 words	35%	Week 12*	3, 6
Presentation	20 minute presentation + 10 minutes Q&A	50%	TBA	2, 3, 4, 6

\*May be subject to change depending on individual circumstances.

### Assessment details

The assessment for the course will consist of three assignments. The first two assessments will be written, while the third will be a presentation of the literature review content. This will provide the opportunity for the student to receive feedback from other academic staff members on their research.

Dates above are a guide only. Different dates may be agreed for different students, since there will be variation in the availability of different staff members over the study period. Generally, all students from the same School will present their work during the same session. This will be coordinated by the School Honours Coordinator.

The first two assignments will be submitted to the supervisor, who will mark them and keep the School Honours Coordinator informed of the grades and progress. The presentation will be assessed by a panel including the School Honours Coordinator and at least one other academic staff member.

All work should be referenced using a specific referencing style (e.g., Chicago, Harvard, APA), as most appropriate to the specific discipline area. All assignments must use the *Assignment cover sheet* (available from your Course homepage and in myUniSA).

## Oral presentation – Assessment criteria

Name of Student:

Date:

Topic of Presentation

### **CONTENT – Structure / Ideas**

	<i>Poor ----- → Excellent</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>		
Introduced the topic clearly		
Establish relevance and importance		
<b>BODY OF PRESENTATION</b>		
Evidence of critical thinking		
Main idea /thesis was communicated clearly		
Backed up ideas with examples where necessary		
Ideas well linked / sequenced.		
<b>VISUAL AIDS</b>		
Clear / well prepared		
Relevant to presentation		
<b>CONCLUSION</b>		
Strong concise summary		
Ideas drawn together		

### **LANGUAGE & DELIVERY**

	<i>Excellent ----- → Poor</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>LANGUAGE</b>		
Used language and terminology appropriate to discipline		
Explained specialist vocabulary where necessary		
<b>DELIVERY</b>		
Spoken not read		
Spoken at appropriate volume and speed		
Spoken fluently		
<b>BODY LANGUAGE</b>		
Made eye contact with audience		
Used appropriate expressions and gestures		
Appropriate dress code for discipline		
<b>QUESTION TIME</b>		
Questions well answered		
<b>OTHER</b>		

### **OVERALL GRADE OF PRESENTATION:**

*Note: all components are not weighted equally.*

Adapted from work of: Shem Macdonald, La Trobe University © 2007

## Oral presentation – Assessment criteria

### *Global assessment*

The following descriptions provide a global assessment of a student's performance:

- **High Distinction** (HD - 85-100% marks): Very exceptional; brilliant quality.
- **Distinction** (D - 75-84% marks): Excellent quality; complete in every way; demonstrates real understanding and shows great insight.
- **Credit** (C - 65-74% marks): Very good indeed; very thorough and demonstrates initiative and clear thought; shows some of the qualities of a D grade but lacks total completeness or shows no "insightfulness".
- **Pass Level 1** (P1 - 55-64% marks): Good; all essential points covered plus some of the minor ones; accurately written and well presented in clear, logical manner.
- **Pass Level 2** (P2 - 50-54% marks): Just satisfactory; all essential points covered and correct structure used; reasonably thorough and adequately presented with good spelling and grammar.
- **Fail Level 1** (F1 - 40-49% marks): Unsatisfactory to poor; some essential points not covered or expression of them unconvincing; adequate content but poorly stated or presented (with poor spelling and grammar); evidence of lack of understanding of the course.
- **Fail Level 2** (F2 - below 40% marks): Very poor; missing essential points; clear lack of understanding or thought.

Adapted from work of: Shem Macdonald, La Trobe University © 2007

**All assessment must be submitted prior to the start of the examination period for the Study Period in which the course is taken (however, exemptions may be granted for presentations).** For 2012, this is **15<sup>th</sup> June** for Study Period 2, or **9<sup>th</sup> November** for Study Period 5.

The School Honours Coordinator is available for discussion and clarification as necessary.

Please also refer to **Important Academic Information** on page 27.

# HONOURS THESIS

## BUSS 4019 Business Honours Thesis H1

## BUSS 4020 Business Honours Thesis H2

The Honours thesis comprises fifty percent of the Honours program. It aims to develop the research capacity of students and to extend their specialist knowledge in some area of business, commerce or management theory and research practice. Its content and form will depend on the topic area selected. The length will normally be between 13,000 words and 18,000 words (excluding appendices and reference list). Pay careful attention to the assessment criteria summarised in **Appendix I**.

The depth of work required for the thesis means that you will need extensive background in the relevant discipline area. Normally this means that the thesis topic will be in the discipline in which you have completed your undergraduate degree program.

The basic requirement for the thesis is to show how a phenomenon or issue can be understood or explained, a problem solved, a research question answered, or an idea developed, with sound argument and empirical evidence to support assertions.

The difference between the academic research in your thesis and the research you may have done as an undergraduate is that your thesis will involve empirical research: collecting data to investigate a research question developed from a gap in existing literature with the aim of generalising from your findings to generate implications for theory and practice.

In summary then, your research should:

- **Add to understanding** of a particular phenomenon;
- **Be relevant** to your academic discipline;
- Be motivated by some **new** perspective, insight or corroboration of evidence;
- **Contribute** theoretically, methodologically and/or practically to a body of knowledge in your discipline.

### Choice of topic

The most important issue in choosing a topic or area for research is the interest of the researcher. If you do not care about the topic, then you are unlikely to feel motivated to tackle this when the 'going gets tough'. It is also important that the issue is of interest to the wider discipline – if it is not, you need to consider whether the topic or discipline is right for you.

The topic may be a practical problem you have knowledge of and want to address or a phenomenon you want to understand or explain. Issues could be drawn from your everyday work or social life, or from topics you have examined in classes. Looking at the courses you enjoyed most as an undergraduate can also provide an insight into what might be a suitable area for you to research.

A given topic can be investigated in multiple different ways. The specific research question you develop will also depend on your interests and skills, and those of your supervisor.

## Research Question

The choice of a worthwhile research question of manageable scope is the next critical issue. Asking the appropriate question is the most difficult part of any research project, and many research students find that they flounder for a time before they settle on a particular research question.

The aim is to provide an answer to a research question that **extends what is already known** in your discipline, so once you have an issue or problem in mind, you should start reading existing research on this topic. Your supervisor can also help to direct you to appropriate readings as starting points.

You can extend knowledge in your discipline by identifying a specific gap in the existing literature and designing a study to address this gap. Your study does not need to 'make a significant contribution to knowledge' like a PhD. However, it should be **worthwhile**: modest, but theoretically or practically significant. Simply answering a question because it has not yet been asked or answered does not mean it is worthwhile doing.

Your research could involve:

- Tests of full or partial theoretical models, including competing models;
- Continuing or extending previous research using new techniques or settings;
- Examining the effects of an intervention;
- Investigating how people perceive, talk about or represent an issue or topic;
- Theoretical ideas, or suggestions, that other authors have not fully worked out or clearly analysed;
- Attempting to solve a real world problem that lends itself to research and analysis.

The 'future research' sections of existing empirical research articles or the propositions of theoretical articles or research books are also good places to obtain ideas for your research.

Research projects will typically have more than one potential outcome. With a good design, even if the outcomes are not consistent with what you expected, you will still have a successful thesis.

# Supervision arrangements

## Choosing your supervisor

You are encouraged to talk to a number of potential supervisors prior to the start of the program. A potential supervisor can be identified from the Register of Honours supervisors on the Honours program website (<http://www.unisa.edu.au/businesshonours/academics/register.asp>). You may also want to approach staff members from courses that you particularly enjoyed as an undergraduate. Looking at the home pages of staff members on the university website will also give you an idea about their recent research interests and publications.

Based on the application interview and student preferences, the Program Director and relevant School Honours Coordinator, in conjunction with the HDR Coordinator, will arrange appropriate supervision. This will take into consideration the interests of both student and supervisor and the supervisor's availability given existing commitments. You have a joint responsibility with your supervisor for the effectiveness of the supervision process, along with oversight from the School Honours Coordinator and Program Director. You are advised to consult with your supervisor and other staff members in deciding upon a research project. It can be valuable to try out ideas with different staff members who may be able to refer you to relevant material or suggest further lines of thought. It may also be worthwhile becoming acquainted with other research projects that are currently in progress, as it may be possible to find a topic that will fit in with an existing project.

Arrangements for supervision should be finalised as soon as possible and certainly no later than the **second week of the program**. Bear in mind that particular staff members may not be available because of other commitments.

## Working with your supervisor

Ideally, you and your supervisor will get along well together, both intellectually and personally. You should have a discussion with your supervisor about your expectations, and their expectations, regarding your relationship. Remember that your supervisor will work **with** you to develop and conduct your research and prepare your thesis – they do not do these things **for** you. Below are some of the expectations you may have of each other.

### Expectations of supervisor

- Meets with you regularly (usually weekly or fortnightly) one-on-one to offer comments, questions and advice to you about your work.
- Assists you to refine your research topic through discussion and by directing you to relevant theoretical and empirical resources (journal articles, books, etc.).
- Prepares by reading and providing detailed, constructive feedback on any relevant materials you have supplied within a reasonable timeframe before the meeting.
- Provides detailed, constructive feedback on written work within a reasonable timeframe – such as your research proposal, ethics application and other approvals, and draft summaries, sections and chapters.
- Assists you to integrate and respond to feedback from others on these various documents.
- Where relevant, recommends consultation with other staff members who have special expertise in particular areas.
- Ensures that the scope of the project is appropriate and able to be successfully completed within the Honours timeframe.
- Provides ongoing support in monitoring progress to ensure timely completion of the project, including research process and writing of thesis.
- Reports on the independence of your work at time of submission.

- Nominates an appropriate external examiner for your thesis.

### Expectations of student

- Meets regularly (usually weekly or fortnightly) one-on-one to report progress and receive comments, questions and advice from your supervisor.
- Responds to your supervisor's advice through accessing suggested resources and individuals, and making changes to improve your research and thesis presentation.
- Prepares for meetings by thinking carefully about appropriate issues to raise and points to have clarified or commented on.
- Where necessary, provides advance notice of issues to be raised or material to be discussed, to allow your supervisor to prepare also.
- Writes research proposals, ethics applications, draft summaries, sections and chapters and provides these to your supervisor sufficiently far in advance to allow them to provide constructive feedback.
- Provides a complete draft of the thesis approximately **one month before the due date**. This is not a deadline which will be enforced, but failing to meet it may endanger your ability to meet the final deadline.
- Is open to receiving feedback from others about your work.
- Where relevant, suggests other staff who it may be appropriate to consult.
- Makes regular contact with your supervisor to allow accurate monitoring of progress to ensure timely completion of the project, including research process and writing of the thesis.
- Endeavours to produce independent work, in line with the University's policies on academic research.

Your supervisor is asked to report on the independence of your research work. This does not imply that you have to do everything in isolation. A successful student is one who can effectively use available resources as appropriate and necessary. 'Resources' include any knowledge or skills that others may have. But there are different ways of using staff. It is one thing for students to come to staff for help in exploring ideas the students already have; another to expect staff to be a source of ideas.

As mentioned above, it is possible that your project may be arrived at and conducted in the context of a continuing research project, where you work closely with your supervisor on some aspect of their own research, while still making your own independent contribution. In that case, the thesis is evaluated only by reference to your own work. If necessary, it must be indicated in the thesis what is and is not your own work. In any situation, the incorporation without acknowledgment of any work not done by the author is regarded as serious misconduct.

The University **Policy on Honours Degrees** can be found in **Appendix III** and at:

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/academic/A42.asp>

The **Code of Good Practice for research in Honours degrees or degrees with Honours**, can be found in **Appendix IV** and at: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/codes/goodprac/research.asp>

## Research proposal

Your participation in BUSS 4022 Research Methods in Business H will acquaint you with a variety of empirical research methods. Your thesis will most likely involve an empirical element – data collected from primary and/or secondary sources in order to answer a research question.

You will submit a **Research Proposal** of 3000 words as the major assessment piece for Research Methods. This will be the proposal for the research project for your thesis. You should work with your supervisor in developing it.

It is vital for you to prepare a time schedule and discuss this with your supervisor for confirmation. We all tend to underestimate the time required to document research and for other research procedures, such as ethics approval. It is important to be realistic. The best estimates are usually made by breaking down the activities into small tasks and combining these estimates, e.g. by using a Gantt chart.

## Ethics approval

Once the proposal has been finalised, you must ensure that your proposed research meets the University's ethical requirements. It is essential for you to be aware of the possible ethical implications of your research. This University procedure not only ensures that research undertaken toward the Honours thesis is conducted according to the *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* but also aims to instill an ongoing awareness of ethical obligations when conducting any future research. Not all projects will require ethics approval; however, it is important that you speak with your supervisor to check.

In particular, all staff and students who wish to undertake a research project involving humans (including direct collection of data, accessing data from databases and/or collection of human tissues/samples etc) must apply for ethics approval from the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee using the Online Human Research Ethics Application and Review System (online ethics system). The online ethics system is available at <https://www.applications.unisa.edu.au/RMENet/HOM001N.aspx>

## Step-by-step application process

The online ethics system allows researchers to complete and submit human ethics applications electronically.

1. Applicants navigate their way through the application by answering a number of questions.
2. Questions appear based on the answers to previous questions.
3. Once the Application is completed, the Applicant submits the application for review.
4. Upon submission, the Ethics System assesses the risk associated with the project (based on the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, legislation, relevant codes and guidelines and University compliance requirements).
5. The Ethics System forwards the completed application to the required committee group for review.
6. The Committee Review Group reviews the application online and enters their decision.
7. The Ethics System notifies the applicant of the review outcome via email. The research activity must not commence until ethics approval is finalised.

The online ethics system is a dynamic system which enables applicants to communicate with the Ethics and Compliance Officer, the Principal Supervisor (for student applicants) and the Committee Review Group. The online ethics system records details of all human research ethics applications and the outcome of the review. Selected data is recorded in ResearchMaster for administrative and auditing purposes.

A Student User Guide is available at:

[http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/ethics/docs/2010UserGuide\\_StudentApplicantRole.pdf](http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/ethics/docs/2010UserGuide_StudentApplicantRole.pdf).

Entering information in an online Ethics Application can take 2-4 hours depending on the complexity of the research. Please work with your supervisor if you have any queries on how to answer questions in the application.

Once Ethics Approval has been granted, data collection may begin.

## System-related queries

If you are unable to log into the system, please email [research.information@unisa.edu.au](mailto:research.information@unisa.edu.au). You will be informed via email once you have access to the system. For all other system faults, please contact the [Compliance Officer](mailto:compliance.officer@unisa.edu.au) (<http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/contact.asp#ethics>).

## Writing up your research: The thesis

You should be writing up your work as you go, rather than attempting to write the whole thesis in the final months. We often underestimate how long it will take to write the research up (and to conduct the research), so it is important to get as much as you can on paper as soon as possible.

One important aspect to bear in mind is that you must be able to **justify the use of chosen methods against alternatives**. You must be able to defend aspects of the approach, such as the data collection method, sampling technique or analytical approach, even though these methods may have been suggested by a supervisor or another adviser. You are not merely completing this one project but demonstrating an ability to go on to other research, and that includes an understanding of different methods and approaches and what determines their suitability. **This stresses the view of a thesis as research training and professional development, rather than simply an end in itself. A purpose for doing the thesis is to become skilled at research procedures and methods.**

Most reports of research, whether journal articles, conference papers or theses, follow a basic structure, which is outlined below. Note, however, that the exact nature of this may differ depending on the requirements of your discipline and the nature of your research project. For instance, Method and Results sections are usual in positivist projects using quantitative data, while Analytical Approach, Data and Analysis sections may be substituted in constructivist projects with qualitative data. **Your supervisor can provide more advice** on standard approaches in your discipline and what is appropriate for your specific project. You should also look at existing literature in top quality journals in your field.

It is important to remember that your thesis is **an argument**. You are making claims for a particular understanding of a given phenomenon and you will use empirical evidence to support your claims.

**All elements of the thesis should be connected and clearly linked:** the introduction highlights the issue/problem and why it is important, the critical literature review demonstrates gaps in the existing literature that your research addresses, your theoretical/conceptual model is developed from the empirical and theoretical literature you review, your hypotheses/propositions come from the model, your method is designed to test those hypotheses/propositions, the results are evidence of this testing, and the Discussion relates your results back to the literature gaps you identified at the start, to address the problem/issues identified in the Introduction.

### General Structure

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Method
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

#### Abstract

- A brief description of your research project and key argument.
- Aim to gain reader's interest in the research.
- Should cover each section – usually about one sentence from each.
- What is the problem, why is it important?
- Who was involved in the research and what did they do?
- What were the results?
- What are the implications?

Typically this is 150-220 words depending on discipline conventions. Your thesis abstract should be 500 words.

### Introduction

- Starts with an introduction to the research project:
  - **What is the contribution of your research? Why does this matter?**
  - Research question.
- What is the issue/problem the research is designed to address?
- Starts general, gets more specific – funnel system.
- Includes critical literature review:
  - Organised under relevant headings.
  - Cover literature on similar issue/s.
  - Cover literature using similar approaches.
  - Cover studies most similar to your own.
  - **Clearly identifies gaps in existing literature that your study is designed to address** – this is what makes it critical and sets stage for your contribution.
- Includes details of theoretical/conceptual model:
  - **How is phenomenon of interest to be examined/understood in your research?**
  - Should be clearly developed from preceding literature review.
  - Will contain key constructs/variables to be measured in your research.
- Usually ends with aims and research hypotheses/propositions:
  - Hypotheses and propositions should be clearly developed from theoretical/conceptual model, and therefore, clearly linked to the literature review.
  - Hypotheses should be clear, directional statements about likely expected outcomes that can be tested.

### Method (or Data)

- **Participants:**
  - Who/ what? How sampled? Incentives? Response rate?
  - Representative of population?
- **Measures/Instruments:**
  - How were constructs/variables measured?
  - How was reliability and validity established (where relevant)?
- **Procedure:**
  - Provide enough detail to allow replication of your study by others.
- May not use this structure specifically but information about each part should be included.

### Results (or Analysis)

- When using qualitative data, and especially constructivist work, Analysis section will be integrated with Discussion.
- **Present results of analyses in a systematic way.**
- Interpret results:
  - Don't just give statistical values, or lists of quotes.
  - Explain what these mean in terms of constructs examined, hypotheses and propositions – connect to previous material.
- Qualitative data should not just be described, needs to be analysed.

## Discussion

- Mirror of Introduction
  - Starts specific – describes whether data supported hypotheses/propositions, then becomes more general, finishing off with the ‘big picture’ in Conclusion.
- With qualitative data, or with multiple studies, may be “General Discussion”.
- Consider findings in light of previous literature.
- Explore and explain unexpected findings.
- Provide and discuss implications of your findings for theory/knowledge, method and practice.
- Limitations – what were the aspects of the study that may make us uncertain about the generalisability of the findings?
- Future research options
  - Often these are linked to limitations but also involve expanding research to new samples or contexts.

## Conclusion

- Do not just summarise findings – actually **make a conclusion about the meaning of your research**.
- Go beyond what has been discussed so far – focus on the big picture.

## General writing tips

- Use a scholarly writing style:
  - Do not use slang or colloquialisms.
  - If using acronyms: define.
  - Define all key concepts.
- SPELL and GRAMMAR CHECK!
- Leave sufficient time for your supervisor to read a full draft.
- Leave time for editing – re-read your work, and if possible, get others to read it too. Even if non-experts, they can identify grammar errors or poorly worded sentences.
- Choose an appropriate referencing style and use it consistently within text and reference list.
- Each paragraph should make one main idea/claim:
  - Opening sentence should be that idea.
  - Additional sentences should expand on or provide support for that idea.
- Similarly, each section should follow this pattern.
- **You are making an argument:**
  - Outline this at start of Introduction.
  - Return to it explicitly throughout.

## Referencing

As soon as work commences, students are faced with the task of coding and filing information. Irrespective of the method of filing used, it is essential to adopt a **standard bibliographic and referencing style**. You should use the style most common in your discipline, which your supervisor will be able to advise on. Putting all references in a standard format will ensure that all reference information is obtained, and that it will not be necessary to rearrange component parts of references when drafts are written. Assistance is available in obtaining and using up-to-date bibliographic software (see the Library website <http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/learn/manreferences.aspx>). For help using the Library, refer to the following site: <http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/help/>.

## Presentation and Formatting

1. Theses should be typed with **one-and-a-half line spacing on single-sided A4 paper**. Three hardbound or soft cover heat/thermal bound copies should be submitted. Binding method should ensure that sheets cannot be removed or added without evidence of tampering; hence, spiral or comb binding will not be accepted. Each copy should begin with a title page setting out your name, the title of the thesis and the date of submission.
2. A *Statement of Authorship* signed by you should also be included in the opening pages. The Statement of Authorship reads as follows and is signed by the author:  
*I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any University and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.*
3. References must be listed and cited correctly. Important functional material (e.g., experimental instructions, details of statistical analyses) should be included in appendices.
4. **Three hardbound or heat/thermal bound copies of the thesis shall be lodged with the Division Research Office.**
5. **An electronic copy of the thesis, in PDF format, should be emailed to the Research Coordinator.**
6. A copy of the *Statement of Authenticity* signed by your supervisor should be submitted with the thesis (see <http://www.unisa.edu.au/businesshonours/docs/supstatementexaminationHonours.doc>).
7. The School may reimburse expenses in the copying and binding of the three copies. Please contact your School Office for details of this. Further details of requirements are available from the program website or the Research Coordinator.  
For the printing and binding of your thesis, we recommend the following services:
  - Document Services - a University based service who can assist with both the printing and binding of your thesis - <http://www.unisa.edu.au/printing/>.
  - William Harley and Son Bookbinders - this company does not print, they only bind and can usually offer a 24 hour service - <http://www.wharley.com.au/>.

### Additional sections

As well as those listed above in *General Structure*, your thesis will usually contain the following sections:

#### **Title page:**

- Including a title that summarises the whole research project, and the name of the author and supervisor.
- Statement that:  
*Research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of [Business OR Commerce OR Management] (Honours) program at the University of South Australia.*  
and the month and year that the report was submitted.

#### **Statement of authorship (see above)**

#### **Table of Contents, lists of Tables, Figures and Appendices:**

1. Contents: major section headings within each chapter and their page numbers.
2. Followed by separate lists of Tables, Figures and Appendices (as relevant).
3. List each Table/Figure/Appendix number, title and page number.

### **Acknowledgements**

Although inclusion of acknowledgements is not necessary, many students choose to dedicate a page to acknowledge people who have supported them during the completion of their research project. If you received financial support from the University to complete your degree, this should be acknowledged here.

### **Appendices**

- Additional, supporting information relevant to your research project but not essential enough to be included in the main body of the text should be placed here in separate Appendices.
- E.g., copies of instructions to participants, questionnaires, letters sent to participants, consent forms, additional but non-essential statistical analyses, such as screening tests.

## **Submission**

The due date for the submission of the Honours thesis is the **first Monday of the University Examination Period at the end of the study period when the thesis is to be completed.**

<b>Program start</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Due date</b>
<b>SP2 2012</b>	Full-time	12 <sup>th</sup> November, 2012.
<b>SP2 2012</b>	Part-time	18 <sup>th</sup> November, 2013.
<b>SP5 2012</b>	Part-time	23 <sup>rd</sup> June, 2014.
<b>SP5 2011</b>	Part-time	24 <sup>th</sup> June, 2013.

Completed theses should be lodged with the Division Research Office by 3:00pm on the due date. Theses received after the due date will normally receive a progressive mark penalty at the rate of 5% of the mark each day. As noted above, students are advised to make a complete draft version available to your supervisor no later than **one month before the due date**, to allow time for him/her to read and comment on the draft and for you to do any necessary rewriting. **One month** before the thesis submission an abstract of up to 500 words should be sent to the Program Director to assist in organising the examiners.

## **Thesis assessment**

Each student's Honours thesis is assessed by two examiners, at least one of whom is a staff member of another university. **Appendix I** contains the guidelines provided to examiners. Pay careful attention to these, as they provide useful benchmarks for students and supervisors in determining the appropriate framework and content of the thesis.

The weight attached to different criteria may vary from case-to-case as appropriate. For example, some items may primarily be relevant to projects using quantitative compared to qualitative data, or differ between disciplines.

**The examiners can only assess your thesis based on what you have included in the document.** They cannot assess it based on what you might have meant, or what is in your head. You will need to clearly articulate all relevant information to communicate your argument in a concise manner within the word limit, complying with discipline conventions.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

The Honours Assessment Panel is convened to determine final grades. This panel includes no fewer than three staff members and at least one staff member from each School in which any student is doing a thesis. The panel comprises: (1) the Program Director; and (2) School Honours Coordinators or enough additional academics so that for each student being examined there are a minimum number of two independent persons (not members of the student's School).

The Panel receives reports in regards to all students who are presenting themselves for the degree:

- (a) From course coordinators in courses taken by the students;
- (b) From all thesis examiners (see **Appendix I** for thesis assessment criteria); and
- (c) Supervisor's comments on the examiners' reports.

On the basis of those reports, the Panel recommends one of the following overall results for each student:

- (a) First Class Honours (80% and above);
- (b) Second Class Honours, Division A (70-79%);
- (c) Second Class Honours, Division B (60-69%);
- (d) Third Class Honours (50-59%); or
- (e) Fail (49% or less).

The Assessment Framework provides the criteria for recommendations in regards to grades based on the standards accepted by the University (see **Appendix II**).

Weight will be given to each student's pieces of work along the following lines:

BUSS 4019/4020	Business Honours Thesis H1 & H2	50.0%
BUSS 4021	Contemporary Issues in Business H	12.5%
BUSS 4022	Research Methods in Business H	12.5%
BUSS 4024	Directed Readings in Business H	12.5%
BUSS 4018	Critical Literature Review for Business H	12.5%

**Note, however, that the overall mark will not necessarily be a simple arithmetic determination. In arriving at an overall grade the Panel may take account of all relevant issues, including such factors as late submission of work, the need for moderation of marks in particular pieces of coursework, reasons given by thesis examiners for the marks they decide on, comments by supervisors, and so on. The panel is not bound to attach equal weight to each piece of coursework.**

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

Bear in mind the following four points about resources, capabilities, interest and style.

Firstly, Honours research is constrained by the time and the resources available. Think seriously before attempting projects that require much cooperation from respondent organisations or groups. The ideal empirical topic combines an original idea and readily available or reasonably accessible data.

There are a number of expenses associated with carrying out research and preparing a thesis. Some of those are ameliorated by the Schools' provision of computer facilities to Honours students. Other assistance may be made available to students to assist with photocopying and possibly in some other areas. However, a research topic should be chosen with an eye to minimising costs.

Secondly, the topic should match your capabilities. A student who has low numerical ability and/or inclination, should hesitate before choosing a topic involving complex statistical analyses, even though it might otherwise be a good topic. Likewise, a student with strong mathematical abilities and very little interest or experience in interpreting behavioural phenomena should choose a topic which makes use of existing expertise.

Thirdly, the topic should match your interests. **The importance of personal interest in a topic cannot be stressed enough.** To complete your research requires a great deal of effort and commitment. If you are not driven by a personal desire to 'find out' you will struggle to complete your research project, and likely find the experience onerous.

Finally, in regards to writing style, **the logic of your argument needs to be apparent to a relatively uninformed reader.** It is easy to carry information in your own mind that makes it clear to you what the structure of your argument is or what you mean by a particular phrase, but which leaves this quite obscure to other readers. Be sure that you put yourself in the position of likely readers. What will be assessed is what is written, not your unexpressed thoughts.

## PUBLISHING FROM YOUR THESIS

The University of South Australia encourages Honours students to publish from their theses. Although it has no impact on the examination process, a strong aspect of academic research is the willingness to communicate your work with the academic, professional, and general communities. This builds a more comprehensive knowledge base that others may draw on when conducting their own research, and also helps you build a professional profile and become familiar with an academic career. After all the work preparing the thesis, the satisfaction of recognition by a journal is really the icing on the cake.

Students considering publishing from their final thesis should endeavour to submit soon after examination. Advice should be sought from your supervisor regarding article submission.

In preparing a thesis for publication:

- The Division and School should appear on the front page as your professional address. (If employment has been relevant to the publication, an additional address may be listed also.)
- You should be the first-named author.
- Your supervisor may appear as a minor author where s/he has had the opportunity to review and make meaningful comment on the publication, and this meets the terms of the journal's author statement.

# IMPORTANT ACADEMIC INFORMATION

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ALL ASSESSMENT

All students must adhere to the University of South Australia's policies about assessment:

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/manual/default.asp>.

In particular, students should be aware of **academic integrity issues**. The University and the Division take instances of academic misconduct very seriously, including plagiarism (using the work of other without acknowledgement) and misrepresentation of research data and/or process.

Please refer to: <http://resource.unisa.edu.au/course/view.php?id=1572&topic=1>

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Students with disabilities may be entitled to a variation or modification to standard assessment arrangements. Information for students with disabilities is available at:

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/disabilityservices/default.asp>

## VARIATIONS TO ASSESSMENT TASKS

Students may request a variation to assessment methods, tasks and timelines based on medical, compassionate or religious observance grounds, or community services. Such variations must be requested within the first two weeks of the course (or equivalent for accelerated or intensive teaching). Alternative arrangements due to unexpected circumstances should be discussed with the Course Coordinator, School Honours Coordinator or Program Director as soon as possible. More information about variation to assessment may be found by consulting the relevant policy:

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/manual/default.asp>

## RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

The Learning and Teaching Unit (LTU) offers advice and workshops for Postgraduate Research Students that Honours students may find useful for their academic and professional development. In particular, advice on methods and how to approach a thesis will assist in the design of the data collection and how to plan the stages of thesis preparation. Students are advised to visit this site upon commencement of the program:

LTU: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/ltu/students/default.asp>

RESA: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/researchsupport/online/default.asp>

## ACADEMIC READING, WRITING AND REFERENCING

Useful learning guides on academic, reading, writing and organising your time are available from the Learning Connection website: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/learningadvice/>

## HONOURS POLICY DETAILS

For the most up-to-date detail regarding Honours degrees at the University of South Australia please refer to

**Appendix III** or: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/academic/A42.asp>

For the *Code of Good Conduct in Honours Research* refer to **Appendix IV** or:

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/codes/goodprac/research.asp>

## THE LIBRARY

The library offers a range of services specifically for research students at

<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/research/>. Honours students may find this site particularly useful as it details research tools and practices used by postgraduate research students. There is also information on access and training for the Endnote bibliographical software, which students will find useful.

# APPENDIX I



University of South Australia

## Guidelines for Honours Thesis Examiners

### DIVISION OF BUSINESS

The Honours thesis constitutes half of the student's full time year of work. That Honours year constitutes something like an apprenticeship for aspiring researchers. In their briefing papers, students have been advised of the basic requirements of an Honours thesis as follows:

- To show how a phenomenon or issue can be understood or explained, a problem solved, research questions answered, or an idea developed.
- A sound argument with relevant supporting evidence should be presented to support assertions made. Essentially a thesis is a reasoned argument supporting statements made by the student on some significant issues or problem; and
- Comprehensive coverage of relevant literature, a convincing account, with good structure, and evidence of independent enquiry or thought, reasonable judgment, and sound presentation.

It may be worthwhile to compare what is expected with what is expected from a Master's or PhD thesis. Firstly, in terms of quantity of work, significantly less is expected from the Honours thesis than for a (research) Master's thesis. At this university a (research) Master's thesis is expected to make 'a contribution to knowledge and/or the application of knowledge', and PhD thesis is expected to make 'a significant original contribution to knowledge and/or the application of knowledge'. Neither is expected of an Honours thesis, even though some degree of novelty or flair is expected. The length of the thesis will normally be between 13,000 words and 18,000 words. The criteria for assessment and the assessment framework attached provide more information about grading.

#### Criteria for Assessment

The University of South Australia Honours Programs Policy No: A-42.10 lays out the following criteria for assessment of honours thesis-

An honours thesis will be assessed on the following criteria:

- The student's ability to articulate the nature and scope of the research study in accordance with the stated objectives of the research component
- The extent to which the honours thesis achieves the stated objectives of the research component
- The student's ability to demonstrate sufficiently the extent to which the field of study has been addressed within the literature
- The extent to which the student develops a consistent and coherent argument relevant to the field of study;
- The student's capacity to demonstrate an analysis in applying the approach used in conducting the research where appropriate and
- The quality of the presentation of the honours thesis, including where appropriate:
  - clarity of expression
  - the relevance and accuracy of citations, references, etc and
  - the accuracy and appropriateness of presentation of results.
- The student's adherence to high standards of academic integrity and honesty as provided for in the University's Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual which can be found at-  
<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/manual/2006/S9AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

## Assessment Framework

Coursework GPA	Thesis Grade	Standard of work	Honours grade
6 or higher	Distinction (D) or High Distinction (HD)	Work of exceptional quality showing clear understanding of subject matter and appreciation of issues; well formulated; arguments sustained; figures and diagrams where relevant; appropriate literature referenced; strong evidence of creative ability and originality; high level of intellectual work.	First Class Honours (H1)
5 or higher	Credit (C)	Work of high quality showing strong grasp of subject matter and appreciation of dominant issues though not necessarily of the finer points; arguments clearly developed; relevant literature referenced; evidence of creative ability and solid intellectual work.	Second Class Honours 2A (H2A)
4.5 or higher	At least P1	Work of solid quality showing competent understanding of subject matter and appreciation of main issues though possibly with some lapses and inadequacies and with clearly identifiable deficiencies in logic, presentation or originality; some evidence of creative ability; well prepared and presented.	Second Class Honours 2B (H2B)
4 or higher	Pass level 2 (P2)	Adequate report, reasonable quality but showing a minimal understanding of the research area with major deficiencies in content or experimental rigour; little evidence of creative ability or original thought. Sufficient to merit only a bare pass mark.	Third Class Honours (H3)
< 4			Fail (F)

Honours Thesis by .....

### **Examiner's Specific Comments**

We would be grateful for any brief comment you may wish to make under each of the headings below (some of them will be more relevant in some cases than in others, depending on the nature and topic of the thesis). Please feel free either to provide legible handwritten comments on this form or to provide separate typed comments under the same headings.

1. Overall research topic (significance, suitability)

---

2. Consistent and coherent argument

---

3. Critical analysis and integration of the literature

---

4. Theoretical context (clarity, documentation)

---

5. Research design and method

---

6. Data analysis (appropriateness, presentation, explanation)

---

7. Integration of analysis with existing theoretical and empirical literature

---

8. Theoretical and practical implications

---

9. General presentation (grammar, style, format, etc.)

---

10. Other

---

**Overall Mark out of 100:**

Please indicate which factors from 1 to 10 have been most significant for you in arriving at your overall assessment and mark.

Examiner

Date

## APPENDIX II

### Assessment Framework

Discretion to be used in assessing final grade, when there is a significant disparity between the grade of the coursework component of the program and the thesis.

Honours Grade and Notation	Notional Mark	Standard of work	Grade Point Average
<b>Honours degrees and degrees with honours</b>			
First Class Honours (H1)	80 – 100%	Work of exceptional quality showing clear understanding of subject matter and appreciation of issues; well formulated; arguments sustained; figures and diagrams where relevant; appropriate literature referenced; strong evidence of creative ability and originality; high level of intellectual work.	≥ 6.5 - 7
Second Class Honours 2A (H2A)	70 -79%	Work of high quality showing strong grasp of subject matter and appreciation of dominant issues though not necessarily of the finer points; arguments clearly developed; relevant literature referenced; evidence of creative ability and solid intellectual work.	5.5 – 6.49
Second Class Honours 2B (H2B)	60 – 69%	Work of solid quality showing competent understanding of subject matter and appreciation of main issues though possibly with some lapses and inadequacies and with clearly identifiable deficiencies in logic, presentation or originality; some evidence of creative ability; well prepared and presented.	4.75 – 5.49
<b>Honours Degrees only</b>			
Third Class Honours (H3)	50 -59%	Adequate report, reasonable quality but showing a minimal understanding of the research area with major deficiencies in content or experimental rigour; little evidence of creative ability or original thought. Sufficient to merit only a bare pass mark.	4 – 4.75
Fail (F)	< 50%		< 4

# APPENDIX III

## Honours Policy

### *Definitions*

The University of South Australia offers two models of honours programs as described below:

#### **Honours Degree**

The honours degree is a separate, stand-alone one-year program of advanced studies for students who demonstrate a high level of achievement on completion of their pass degree program.

#### **Degrees with Honours**

Degrees with honours are programs of four or more years in duration which include a minimum of one year of advanced studies for students who demonstrate a high level of achievement in the initial years of the program. Students who fail to meet the necessary grade point average for the honours stream continue with the pass degree.

#### **Honours degree programs**

Generic term used to refer to both types of program.

### *Policy*

#### **1. Program Structure**

**1.1** The undergraduate awards of the University will include honours degrees and degrees with honours.

**1.2** All honours degrees and degrees with honours must include a research component leading to the production of an assessable outcome. The research component will be known as the 'honours research project'.

**1.3** The honours research project will be a minimum of 12 of the 36 units in an honours degree and 9 of the 36 units in the final year of a degree with honours.

**1.4** The honours research project will normally be a maximum of 1000 words per unit value up to a maximum of 18,000 words and may take the form of:

- a. a thesis, or
- b. one or more refereed (or equivalent) publications of equivalent merit to a thesis, or
- c. one or more artefacts and supporting exegesis.

**1.5** The honours research project will provide students with the opportunity to understand and apply the research process and will:

- a. have clearly defined objectives that reflect national standards of good practice in the provision of an honours award
- b. be achievable within the time available
- c. be consistent with the University's policy and guidelines on ethics, and
- d. be supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure.

**1.6** Honours degrees and degrees with honours must include provision for training in research methods and ethics. This may or may not be in the form of a separate course.

**1.7** All courses included in honours degrees and degrees with honours must be graded.

**1.8** A full-time candidate in an honours degree or degree with honours will normally complete the program in one academic year.

**1.9** A part-time candidate in an honours degree or degree with honours will normally complete the program in a maximum of two academic years.

## **2. Admission**

### **2.1 Honours degree**

- a. Candidates for admission to honours degrees will normally have a grade point average of 5 or above (credit level average) in an undergraduate program relevant to the intended field of honours.

### **2.2 Honours year of degrees with honours**

- a. Candidates for admission to the honours year of degrees with honours will normally have a grade point average of 5 or above (credit level average), be identified no later than the end of the penultimate year of the program, and be invited to enrol in the honours stream prior to the start of the final year of the program.
- b. Where a student is transferring from another university into the final year of a degree with honours, admission will be in accordance with clause 2.2.a above.

**2.3** Where a student has transferred from another university but has completed at least 18 units of the relevant pass degree at the University of South Australia, eligibility for entry to the honours degree or the honours year of a degree with honours will be calculated using the GPA of the UniSA courses only, and will not include courses for which credit has been granted.

**2.4** Where a student has completed additional courses that would not be required for the award of a relevant single degree (either because they are enrolled in a double degree program, or are enrolled in more than one program), these courses will not be included in calculating a GPA to determine eligibility for:

- a. entry to the relevant honours degree or degree with honours stream, or
- b. awarding of the relevant degree with honours.

**2.5** Where, in relation to clause 2.4, there is some discretion required in determining which courses should be included in meeting the requirements for the award of a single degree, the courses that would yield the highest possible GPA will be selected for the purposes of the calculation.

## **3. Supervision and the appointment of supervisors**

**3.1** Divisions / schools will appoint Honours Program Directors to monitor the supervision of students in the research component of their honours degree or the honours stream of degrees with honours, as outlined in the [Code of Good Practice: Research in honours degree programs](#).

**3.2** A principal supervisor and/or an associate supervisor where required, will be appointed for each student in an honours degree program.

**3.3** The principal supervisor and the associate supervisor must have completed a research degree, or have completed a Masters degree with a research component, or have completed a Bachelor (Honours) degree and gained additional research experience.

**3.4** The principal supervisor must have relevant knowledge, expertise and interest in the student's research topic, access to adequate resources, and sufficient time to provide proper supervision, taking account of their total workload, including the supervision of other students.

**3.5** The principal supervisor should be appointed as soon as a student commences enrolment in an honours degree program, to assist with the development of an appropriate research proposal.

**3.6** Involvement in supervision by qualified non-academics (eg from industry) is encouraged. Where appropriate, these external contributors may be appointed as associate supervisors. Whatever the supervisory arrangements, the location of principal responsibility for supervision must be made clear and be monitored by the Honours Program Director.

**3.7** If the principal supervisor is to be absent for four weeks or more, the school will appoint an associate supervisor before the start of the absence and following consultation with the student.

**3.8** The administration of honours degree programs will be in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

#### **4. Qualifying requirements**

**4.1** To qualify for an honours degree program a student must meet the requirements as outlined in *Appendix A: Assessment Framework*.

**4.2** A student in an honours degree program may not be granted supplementary assessment in any coursework component of the program that has been failed, or may not repeat or take studies-in-lieu of any coursework component of the program that has been failed, except with the permission of the relevant division board.

**4.3** Conceded and terminating passes are not available in honours degrees, or the honours component of a degree with honours.

**4.4** A student may request that their honours research project be re-examined on evidence that:

- a. the examiner substantially misinterpreted the work, or
- b. the assessment requirements specified in accordance with University assessment procedures were not adhered to.

### **Procedures**

#### **5. Teaching and Supervision**

**5.1** In accordance with the requirements outlined in the University's *Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*, students in an honours degree or the honours stream of a degree with honours must be informed in writing of the assessment requirements no later than one week prior to the commencement of honours studies. This must include the weighting of the coursework and research components in the program.

**5.2** Students who are required to present research seminar(s) will have this assessed as part of the relevant component of the honours program.

**5.3** Supervision of students within the research component will be conducted in accordance with the *Code of Good Practice: Research in honours degree programs*.

## **6. Academic Progress**

**6.1** The review and assessment of academic progress is the responsibility of the Honours Program Director in conjunction with the principal supervisor, in accordance with Code of Good Practice: Research in honours programs.

**6.2** If the student is not making satisfactory progress, the Honours Program Director and the principal supervisor will consult with the student at the earliest possible opportunity to determine the most appropriate intervention.

**6.3** Unsatisfactory progress in honours degree programs will be managed in accordance with the University's *Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*.

## **7. Academic Misconduct**

**7.1** Academic Misconduct in honours degree programs will be managed in accordance with the University's *Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*.

## **8. Leave of Absence**

**8.1** Leave of absence in honours degree programs will be managed in accordance with University policy [A-48 Enrolment](#).

## **9. Examination of an honours research project**

The following arrangements apply to all honours degree programs.

### **9.1 Mode of examination**

**9.1.1** The school / division will either:

- a. appoint two examiners for all honours research projects, at least one of whom must be external to the University.

or

- b. appoint two internal examiners, and arrange for a representative selection of honours research projects in the program to be externally moderated at the time of examination, in order to validate the standard of internal assessment.

### **9.2 Appointment of examiners**

**9.2.1** To ensure that the assessment process is free from any conflict of interest, the Honours Program Director, in conjunction with the Head of School or nominee, will nominate the examiners for the honours research project.

**9.2.2** All examiners must have appropriate qualifications and experience to examine an honours research project.

**9.2.3** Neither the principal nor any associate supervisor may be an examiner.

**9.2.4** The Honours Program Director will forward to the examiner(s) a letter outlining the:

- a. stated objectives of the honours research project
- b. criteria for assessment
- c. Assessment Framework (see Appendix A of this policy)
- d. return date and contact person for any matters which may need clarification.

### **9.3 Criteria for assessment**

An honours research project will be assessed on the following criteria:

**9.3.1** the student's ability to articulate the nature and scope of the research in accordance with the stated objectives of the honours research project

**9.3.2** the extent to which the honours research project achieves the stated objectives

**9.3.3** the student's ability to demonstrate a critical appreciation of the literature relevant to the honours research project

**9.3.4** the extent to which the student has developed a consistent and coherent argument relevant to the field of study

**9.3.5** the student's capacity to demonstrate critical analysis in applying research approaches and, where appropriate, interpreting results

**9.3.6** the quality of the presentation of the honours research project, including where appropriate:

- a. clarity of expression
- b. the relevance and accuracy of citations, references etc, and
- c. the accuracy and appropriateness of the presentation of results

**9.3.7** the quality of artefacts, if any, including:

- a. the conceptual understanding of the relevant field
- b. the ideas and/or imagination demonstrated
- c. the technical competence
- d. the resolution of the artefacts
- e. the complexity and difficulty demonstrated

**9.3.8** the student's adherence to high standards of academic integrity and honesty as outlined in the *University's Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*.

### **9.4 Examiners' reports**

- a. Examiners are expected to return their reports within four weeks of receiving the honours research project for examination.
- b. The principal supervisor will be given the opportunity to comment on the examiners' reports.
- c. The examiners' reports will be provided to the student in order to foster the learning experience.

## **9.5 Specified amendments**

- a. In the case of specified amendments, the Honours Program Director will receive the revised honours research project with a statement from the principal supervisor confirming that all revisions and corrections have been made satisfactorily.

## **9.6 Resolving discrepancy**

- a. Where there is a discrepancy of more than one grade between two examiners' recommendations, the Head of School or nominee will appoint a third examiner whose mark will stand, regardless of whether it is higher or lower. No further re-examination will be allowed.
- b. The third examiner may be from within the University or external to the University, and must have expertise in the area of assessment.
- c. The third examiner will not be provided with details of the student's original assessment.

## **10. Determination of final grade**

**10.1** The relevant school/division will determine the final grade of honours, taking into account the examiners' reports for the research component and the student's performance in the coursework component.

**10.2** The final grade will be determined using the standard University Grade Point Average formula (see the *Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*) to combine the honours research project and honours coursework grades.

**10.3** In determining the final grade, divisions should refer to *Appendix A: Assessment Framework*.

## **11. Request for re-examination of an honours research project**

**11.1** If the Head of School or nominee allows a request for an honours research project to be re-examined in accordance with clause 4.4 above, another examiner, external to the University, will be appointed. This examiner will not have access to the original examiners' reports and will submit a report under the same conditions as the original examiners.

**11.2** If the Head of School or nominee determines that the request does not meet the grounds for re-examination, the student may appeal to the divisional Pro Vice Chancellor. If the divisional Pro Vice Chancellor allows the appeal, an examiner will be appointed on the same terms as in clause 11.1 above.

## **12. Appealing the final honours grade**

**12.1** If the divisional Pro-Vice-Chancellor determines that the request for a re-examination does not meet the grounds for appeal, the student may lodge a formal appeal against their final honours grade with the Director: Student and Academic Services in accordance with the appeal procedures specified in the University's *Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*.

## **13. Lodgement of the honours research project**

**13.1** A bound copy of the honours research project, amended as necessary after review, will be lodged with the Honours Program Director, become the property of the University, and held within the relevant school. The bound copy must include an appropriate record of artefacts (eg photographs, video recording). Where the work cannot be easily replicated the Honours Program Director will advise on the appropriate medium for a record of the work to be lodged.

# APPENDIX IV

## Code of Good Conduct in Honours Research

### **1. Introduction**

The Code of Good Practice: Research in honours degree programs outlines the responsibilities of staff and students during the research component of an honours degree or degree with honours. The code covers both types of program except where otherwise stipulated. The code should be read in conjunction with policy A-42: *Honours Degree Programs*.

### **2. Responsibilities**

The responsibility to ensure the effective management of research undertaken within honours degree programs is shared by:

- a. Academic Board
- b. Divisions (through Division Boards)
- c. Schools (through the Head of School or nominee)
- d. Honours Program Directors
- e. Principal Supervisors
- f. Students
- g. The Director: Student and Academic Services, who is responsible for reviewing and promulgating this code.

#### **2.1 Responsibilities of Academic Board**

Academic Board is responsible for establishing a framework for managing honours degree programs. As a sub-committee of Academic Board, the Academic Policy and Program Review Committee (APPRC) will ensure that all honours degree programs have:

- a. clearly-defined duties and responsibilities for the Honours Program Director (see clause 2.3 below)
- b. clearly specified entry requirements that conform to national standards for entry into an honours degree program
- c. clearly identified objectives for the research component
- d. provisions which enable students to acquire the methodological skills necessary to complete the research within the allocated time
- e. clearly specified qualifications and training which is required of supervisors, and the support available to them
- f. an external moderation process to validate the standard of internal assessment.

## **2.2 Responsibilities of divisions and schools**

It is the responsibility of the division board and schools within the division to ensure that:

- a. the requirements of this code and other relevant policies and procedures are adhered to
- b. the research component of an honours degree program:
  - i. has clearly identified objectives,
  - ii. is appropriate in scope and character for the degree, and
  - iii. is feasible in terms of the time, facilities, equipment, source material and support staff available for the expected duration of the research
- c. Honours Program Director(s) are appointed to coordinate and monitor the progress and welfare of students in all aspects of the program
- d. adequate resources are provided to assist the Honours Program Directors in performing their duties, and proper recognition is given to the workload these duties entail
- e. opportunities exist for interaction and the development of beneficial intellectual relationships between academic staff and students, and between students
- f. all students are invited to participate in division or school activities such as seminars and conferences as appropriate.
- g. all students are made aware of the University policy *A-42: Honours Degree Programs* and the University's *Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*
- h. appropriate supervision is provided and maintained throughout the research
- i. supervisors participate in supervision training activities provided by the University or division as appropriate,
- j. appropriate procedures are established to manage and monitor the examination of an honours research project, in accordance with policy *A-42: Honours Degree Programs*
- k. appropriate procedures are in place to evaluate the quality of honours degree programs in accordance with policy *A-35A Quality Assurance and Improvement: Programs, Courses and Teaching Arrangements*
- l. a database is established for reporting information about publications and conference presentations which result from the research conducted by the student and the supervisor during the program.

## **2.3 Responsibilities of the Honours Program Director**

The Honours Program Director is responsible to the Head of School (or nominee) for overseeing all matters related to the honours degree program.

The responsibilities of an Honours Program Director are to:

- a. welcome new students and introduce them to members of staff as appropriate

- b. provide students with a comprehensive induction booklet, which may be supplemented with an induction session. The induction booklet should include:
  - i. all relevant guidelines for the research component of the program, including a copy of policy *A-42: Honours Degree Programs* and this code
  - ii. information about the library, Learning and Teaching Unit and other support services
  - iii. guidance on locating University policies, procedures, guidelines, and relevant forms such as for ethical and safety approvals
  - iv. information about school procedures for photocopying, telephone, fax, mail, purchasing, access to laboratory space and equipment etc
  - v. information about access to computing facilities
- c. advise students on the choice of honours research project, and selection of an appropriate principal supervisor
- d. ensure that each student presents a detailed research proposal for review by academic staff involved in the program. The research proposal should clearly outline the scope and character of the proposed research in relation to the stated aims of the honours research component
- e. in consultation with the principal supervisor, ensure that each student undertakes an honours research project which falls within the allocated time and the proportion that the research component comprises within the program
- f. monitor the progress of students enrolled in the program in conjunction with the principal supervisor
- g. facilitate the resolution of conflicts between students and supervisors or other members of staff which have not been resolved at the local level
- h. in consultation with the principal supervisor, ensure adequate and appropriate external and/or industry representation at honours seminars and presentations
- i. ensure that the necessary administrative arrangements for examination occur in a timely and efficient manner
- j. seek comments from the principal supervisor before determining the final grade to be awarded
- k. recommend the final grade to the relevant school board, in accordance with policy *A-42: Honours Degree Programs*.
- l. ensure that any grievances that arise are dealt with in accordance with the University policy *C-17: Student Grievances Resolution*

## **2.4 Responsibilities of the principal supervisor**

Principal supervisors should contribute to their discipline by actively engaging in current research and scholarship, and integrating their knowledge and understanding into their supervision practices. A fundamental characteristic of good supervision is that academic staff constantly reflect on their approaches to supervision.

The responsibilities of the principal supervisor are to:

- a. discuss mutual expectations and obligations with the student at the commencement of candidature. This should include such matters as:
  - i. the mode and frequency of communication

- ii. any special needs of the student
- iii. the role of the associate supervisor(s)

(Where possible, associate supervisors should be included in these discussions).

- b. establish and maintain regular contact with the student. This may involve requiring the student to prepare written work on a pre-arranged, regular and agreed basis.
- c. ensure that the student is made aware of, and given instruction in:
  - i. requirements for conducting ethical research
  - ii. securing intellectual property arrangements
  - iii. procedures for the location and storage of original data
  - iv. safety procedures appropriate to their field of study
- d. discuss with the student as soon as practicable:
  - i. the assessment requirements where a student will be required to undertake other assessable activities directly related to the preparation of the honours research project
  - ii. the nature of the examination process and the method of selecting potential examiners
- e. assist the student to develop a detailed research proposal, giving due consideration to the student's research interests and ability
- f. ensure that any ethics and safety approvals are obtained and intellectual property arrangements secured before the research starts
- g. provide guidance to the student on presentations and/or publications arising from the research
- h. reach agreement with the student regarding the expectations in relation to authorship of any publication, presentation or research output that derives from the student's research efforts, taking into account the requirements of University policy *RES-12: Authorship*
- i. participate in the review of the student's work and report on progress to the Honours Program Director.

### **2.5 Responsibilities of the associate supervisor**

It is the responsibility of the associate supervisor to:

- a. where appropriate, provide special expertise in support of the student's honours research project
- b. maintain regular communication with the student
- c. fill the role of the principal supervisor during brief absences.

### **2.6 Responsibilities of the student**

It is the responsibility of the student to:

- a. play an informed part in planning the research so as to remain within the time allocated to the research component of the program
- b. establish agreed methods of working and meeting with their supervisor(s)
- c. discuss their needs and expectations with their supervisor(s) throughout their program

- d. discuss any difficulties and problems being experienced with their supervisor(s) in a timely manner, and share responsibility in seeking solutions
- e. maintain the progress of work in accordance with the stages and timelines agreed with their supervisor(s)
- f. participate in reviews of progress
- g. participate in scholarly opportunities offered by the division or school, which may include attendance at, and presentation to, research seminars
- h. be familiar and comply with all requirements relating to ethical conduct, intellectual property, authorship, and the location and storage of data
- i. adopt safe working practices at all times
- j. abide by the University's policies for leave of absence, re-enrolment, extensions etc
- k. accept responsibility for preparing an honours research project for examination
- l. after examination of the honours research project, make any amendments required in a timely fashion
- m. at all times adhere to high standards of academic integrity and honesty as described in the University's *Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual*.