



Departmental Honors: Overview for Department Chairs and Faculty

Many students choose to complete their Honors experience with an Upper-Division Departmental Honors Project. This option makes possible the generative opportunity of completing a sustained original research or creative project under the mentoring of a faculty member whose expertise and interests align well with the student's. **The content of and methodology for the Departmental Honors Project are “owned” and directed by the discipline departments, and the procedures each develops will, in turn, be consistent with that field’s core principles and practices for carrying out research or creative projects in the discipline.** In that context, faculty mentors (i.e., Supervising Professors) and committee members should be attentive to requirements for projects involving human/live animal subjects, following TCU’s IRB/IACUC guidelines and, if needed, undergoing IRB/IACUC review.

The John V. Roach Honors College facilitates some aspects of the Departmental Honors Project so as to track the progress of Honors students, as a group, through completion of Upper-Division Honors; to liaison with Colleges and Schools regarding public presentations of their work; and to monitor such procedural points as would apply across all disciplines, such as basic formatting expectations for theses. By facilitating the sharing of promising practices across departmental units, the Honors College aims to support the growth of undergraduate research university-wide. Within departmentally-prepared documents, students would typically find specific directions for that discipline’s approaches for research and/or creative projects, timelines specific to the department’s support system for theses; and advice on such steps as forming appropriate committees (which would typically include one reader who is housed outside the department in which the student is doing the Departmental Honors Project). Consistent with the goals outlined above, the Honors College provides documents and resources intended to assist students and their faculty committees. These resources are available to you on the Honors College website.

Outlined below are expectations for a Departmental Honors Project Supervising Professor (i.e., the lead mentor faculty member on a project committee) and for department chairs in the unit where the student is engaging in project work:

Department chairs:

1. sign off on Departmental Honors Project Registration form for all the theses being completed in the department, ensuring that the committee composition adheres to departmental norms/guidelines (and, it is recommended, hold a copy of the form for department record-keeping);
2. keep open communication with the Honors College, including identifying ways that Honors can support faculty and students doing project work;
3. ensure that the department’s own guidelines for content, method, and process (including any approval steps) are communicated within the unit and are consistent with expectations typical of the discipline or cross-disciplinary field(s) in which the student is doing research or carrying out a creative project;
4. emphasize the importance of securing IRB/IACUC approval for projects involving human/live animal subjects;
5. help celebrate the achievements of students completing theses in their majors.

Departmental Honors Project Supervising Professors in discipline departments:

1. assist the student in development of a topic, formation of a committee, as well as planning of an appropriate methodology and specific timeline, while mentoring the process overall;
2. facilitate student’s filing of the Departmental Honors Project Registration form (approval sheet to the Honors College for the student’s program records) by reviewing information on the form and signing it; [Note: Timely completion and submission of the form is the student’s responsibility.]
3. ensure that IRB/IACUC approval is secured for projects involving human/live animal subjects; [Note: While from a teaching/learning perspective, IRB/IACUC processing should be the student’s responsibility, TCU’s current IRB/IACUC procedures require the faculty member to be a very active participant in the application. Also, Supervising Professors need to be aware that some departments and colleges have additional review procedures.]
4. support student progress toward these deadlines that are ultimately the student’s responsibility:
 - a. submitting availability information for presenting his/her project publicly;
 - b. giving a public presentation of the his/her project core content;
 - c. submitting the close-to-final document to the Honors College for format check;
5. through the online Departmental Honors Project submission system, provide the electronic sign-off, certifying that a student has successfully completed the project, thereby affirming that the student has completed this requirement for being named as a Paul and Judy Andrews Honors Scholar for completion of Departmental Honors.



Departmental Honors Project Deadlines 2017-2018

December 2017 Graduates:

Wednesday, March 15, 2017	Deadline for student to submit registration form to the Honors College office
Wednesday, October 18, 2017 (recommended deadline*)	Student submits draft to committee members
Wednesday, November 8, 2017 (recommended deadline*)	Committee members return draft with comments to student
Monday, December 11, 2017 @ <u>Noon</u>	Student must submit Departmental Honors Project to the Honors College via online submission system

May 2018 Graduates:

Wednesday, October 18, 2017	Deadline for student to submit registration form to the Honors College office
Wednesday, March 7, 2018 (recommended deadline*)	Student submits draft to committee members
Monday, April 2, 2018 (recommended deadline*)	Committee members return draft with comments to student
Monday, May 7, 2018 @ <u>Noon</u>	Student must submit Departmental Honors Project to the Honors College via online submission system

***Note:** Individual academic departments and Departmental Honors Project committees may decide to adjust the due dates that are listed as “recommended” above. Students should consult their supervising professors and academic departments to confirm the “recommended” deadlines or department-set alternative dates.