



Handbook for Florida State University's Undergraduate Honors Thesis Program

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Introduction

This handbook provides information about the Honors in the Major (HITM) Program at Florida State University (FSU). After consulting this handbook, students and faculty should feel free to contact the faculty [honors liaison](#) in the student's major college, department, or program with additional questions.

Purpose of the Honors in the Major Project

Honors in the Major is a scholarly experience that allows students to incorporate knowledge and skills learned throughout their undergraduate career into a signature senior project. The program is intended to encourage talented juniors and seniors to undertake significant independent and original scholarship as part of the undergraduate experience in a framework similar to that of a thesis-based master's degree program.

Faculty mentorship is integral to the HITM experience. Students assemble and work with a faculty committee to select a topic, develop a prospectus, complete a written document based on their original scholarship or creative project, and defend their project orally before their committee. Working closely with faculty helps students develop professional relationships that foster their growth as researchers, practitioners, and future professionals.

Students who complete the HITM Program are recognized by the distinction of graduating "With Honors," which is designated on the transcript at the degree level. A student who completes an honors thesis project demonstrates high achievement in their major and positions themselves strongly for success in post-graduate opportunities like graduate school, professional school, fellowships, and careers.

Eligibility

Students do not need to be part of the University Honors Program to participate in the Honors in the Major Program. Students must submit a formal application to the Honors in the Major Program in the semester before they intend to formally begin their honors thesis project and register for honors thesis credit hours. An application to participate in the HITM Program must show that the student meets the minimum GPA and completed credit hour requirements. Additionally, a student must show that they have a proposed project topic and description relevant to their major(s), sufficient time prior to graduation to complete the project, a faculty thesis director, and the approval of the honors liaison and the chair, director, or area coordinator of the college, department, or program in which the student is majoring.

The HITM Program reserves the right to deny the application for a proposed thesis project whose academic field and research design are significantly beyond the scope of the applicant's major(s). Students may conduct interdisciplinary projects relevant to their major(s) with the approval of their faculty thesis director, honors liaison, and chair, director, or area coordinator of their chosen major.

Transfer Students: If they meet the eligibility criteria by the end of their first semester at FSU, transfer students may apply to the HITM Program during their first semester. This would permit them to begin a thesis project as early as their second semester at FSU.

Any student who meets the following HITM admission requirements may apply to participate in the program. Additional requirements are in place for specific majors, so students should consult their major's [honors liaison](#) for more details:

- Must be a current FSU student
- Must be accepted formally into their major at the time of application
- Must have at least a 3.200 GPA for both FSU and Cumulative GPAs at the end of the semester of application. Note: in keeping with FSU Registrar's policy, we do not round up to the third decimal place.
- Must have completed at least 60 college credits at the end of the semester of application
- Must have completed at least 12 graded FSU hours at the end of the semester of application
- Must have at least two semesters remaining until graduation

The Role of the Honors Liaison

The [honors liaison](#) is a faculty member who serves as the official contact between the Honors Program and their home department or program. Students must secure the signature of their major's honors liaison on the Honors in the Major application in order to proceed with their projects. However, the honors liaison is more than just a signatory on the Honors in the Major application. As such, the honors liaison meets with the student to discuss their intended project before they sign the application to ensure that the student has a sound plan. The liaison is also an important resource for students to consult about potential faculty directors, potential HITM project ideas, and procedure issues related to the HITM process, including reviewing with students departmental or program-specific requirements for the Honors in the Major Program, if applicable. However, the honors liaison is not responsible for pairing a student with a faculty director and is not responsible for assigning HITM projects to students. Other than this initial appointment with interested students, the honors liaison typically has no further direct involvement in a student's HITM experience, unless the liaison serves as a faculty director or committee member.

The honors liaison takes an active and enthusiastic interest in promoting the Honors in the Major Program to qualified majors. They can also assist students, staff, and faculty in their home department or program in understanding departmental or program-specific requirements for the Honors in the Major Program, if applicable. They work to promote the Honors in the Major Program to their faculty colleagues and help foster a departmental culture highly supportive of undergraduate research within the major. Departments, programs, or schools who wish to assign an honors liaison or make changes to their current honors liaison should send an email to HITM@fsu.edu

Students interested in the Honors in the Major Program should schedule an appointment with the honors liaison to discuss their project plan well in advance of requesting the liaison's signature. If necessary, students should contact the honors liaison during the course of the honors thesis project if significant challenges arise that cannot be resolved in consultation with the faculty director. For example, if a student's faculty director is consistently unavailable for check-in meetings or feedback, the student should reach out to the honors liaison for guidance and support. If an honors liaison is not identified on the Honors in the Major web page for a student's major department or

program, the department chair or program director functions as the honors liaison.

Honors in the Major for Double Majors and Dual Degrees

Typically, students who are studying for a double major or a dual degree will choose one major in which to pursue Honors in the Major. The Honors Program recognizes that some double-major or dual-degree students may be interested in completing two projects, one for each major.

A double-major or dual-degree student should first consider the risks of increased time to degree completion and of excess credit if they were to complete two separate projects. To do so, they should check with Graduation Planning and Service, whose URL is <http://gps.fsu.edu/>. They should also consider other ways that might more greatly support their post-graduation plans than completing the HITM Program twice. Options include taking graduate courses; pursuing a certificate, special program, or internship; or completing a Directed Individual Study with their faculty director to develop one honors thesis project into a publication.

If a double-major or dual-degree student still wants to complete two projects, the honors policy and process are different for each. Please note that two projects cannot be completed concurrently. One honors thesis project must be complete in its entirety in accordance with HITM Program policies before a second honors thesis project can officially begin.

- a. **Double Majors:** Double-major students at FSU complete the standard 120 degree hours while studying two majors, for which they receive one bachelor's degree. Honors in the Major recognition is noted on transcripts at the degree level. As such, Honors in the Major recognition will appear only once on the transcript for a double-major student, even if two honors thesis projects are completed.

Double-major students who wish to complete two honors thesis projects, one for each major, must email a one-page justification to HITM@fsu.edu for the Director of Honors to review. If approved, the student will need to meet with the Associate Director of Honors in the Major to discuss their justification and to review their plans for completing two separate honors thesis projects.

- b. **Dual Degrees:** Dual-degree students at FSU complete 150 degree hours while studying two majors, for which they receive two bachelor's degrees. Honors in the Major recognition is noted on transcripts at the degree level. As such, dual-degree students may complete two honors thesis projects without special permission from the Honors Program.

Types of Honors in the Major Projects

The Honors in the Major project must focus on a research problem, theoretical issue, new creative work, professional challenge, or innovative area of application (e.g., design or technological innovation). All students who participate in the HITM Program must conduct research that is appropriate to their field of study and vetted by their faculty supervisory committee. Generally speaking, undergraduate research can be grouped into three types:

1. Analytical

- An analytical project is a research experience, often written in the form of a thesis, around a question or problem statement that can address a gap in academic knowledge based on the current peer-reviewed academic literature.

2. Creative

- A creative project is research grounded in artistic inquiry and informed by the works of relevant practitioners, and that explores a political, cultural, economic, and/or social issue.

3. Applied/Experiential

- An applied or experiential project is action based research driven by an investigation of the state of academic, professional, and/or technical knowledge represented by current peer-reviewed academic literature, professional practice, and/or technical application.

The common thread among these options is that the project requires analysis of an issue relevant to the field and that provides students with guided experience in the design and execution of a scholarly project that reflects professional practices in their chosen field of study. Colleges, departments, and programs determine what types of projects are acceptable for their respective majors. If unsure how to proceed with a project idea, students should speak with their major's [honors liaison](#) and with a faculty mentor from their college, department, or program.

Co-authorship and Team-Based Honors in the Major Project Research

Students may produce an honors thesis project that is the result of team-based or collaborative research, as in a lab setting. Many student research assistants who already work in labs of FSU faculty members use their position as an opportunity to complete an honors thesis project, which is often informed by their collaborative work in the lab. In consultation with the lab project's Principal Investigator, who serves as the faculty thesis director, students often formulate original projects that align with the research program of the lab but that represent the student's unique and independent work on the larger project.

That is, every HITM student is expected to be the sole author of their specific honors thesis project. Students may not co-author their project with faculty, graduate students, or other undergraduates. They should not list anyone else on their project title page as co-author. In addition, HITM students working in the same lab may not submit the same exact project as their final honors thesis project and will defend their own thesis orally in the presence of their supervisory committee.

Honors in the Major Requirements: Written Portion and Oral Defense

All Honors in the Major thesis projects will consist of two components: (1) a written research paper or a creative or applied project accompanied by a written analytical reflection; and (2) an oral defense before a faculty supervisory committee.

1. Written Portion

Generally speaking, the written portion of all honors thesis projects will cite relevant peer-reviewed literature to demonstrate the student's engagement with academic conversations in their field as relevant to their project and to frame their project's contribution or intervention. The written portion for all honors thesis projects has two stages: the prospectus and the final written product.

a) Prospectus

Students completing analytical or applied/experiential projects will produce a 10-page prospectus during their first semester of HITM that will then be developed into a written research paper by the end of the second semester. In analytical or applied/experiential projects, the prospectus typically includes:

- a statement of the research problem being addressed;
- background of the theoretical issue and past scholarship;
- discussion of the intended methodology in tackling the research problem;
- a preliminary bibliography

See the Research Prospectus Outline in this handbook (Appendix C) for more information.

Students engaged in interpretive or original creative work in majors such as Creative Writing, Dance, Film, Music, Studio Art, and Theatre will produce a three-page prospectus that provides a clear description of the project's nature, purpose, relevant contexts for understanding the significance of the work, and projected timeline.

b) Final Written Product

The final written product of the honors thesis project involves the creation of new knowledge or insights rather than merely a summary or synthesis of known facts or past work in the chosen area of study. It is more in-depth and demanding than a typical upper-division undergraduate paper.

The final written product for analytical or applied/experiential projects will be the written research paper that has been developed from the prospectus. Appendix C of this handbook provides page length and works cited averages for 33 different major areas at FSU, drawn from the 1400+ HITM projects completed at FSU between 2009 and 2020. These averages help give dimension to the idea that the honors thesis project is not just a long paper, but instead a sustained, in-depth, original academic work that serves as the culmination of one's undergraduate education.

The final written product for a creative project should be a written analytical reflection that is a minimum length of 10 pages of text plus documentation (works cited, appendices, images, etc.) Please note that this written reflection is in addition to the creative work itself, even if the creative work is a written project (a screenplay, a short novel, poetry, etc.) Students must submit this written analytical reflection to the [Research Repository](#) upon the completion of the oral defense.

A written analytical reflection for a creative project will thoughtfully reflect on, but is not limited to, two or more of the following:

- historical, cultural, stylistic, analytic, or interpretive perspectives on roles or works

- performed;
- a chronology of the conception and evolution of the project;
- a description of the intention and significance of the project, tools and methods used and why chosen;
- an analysis of how the project compares to other works in its genre

Examples of the written analytical reflection for a creative project can be found on the Honors in the Major's [“Creative Project” web page](#).

The final written product is what the student will submit to the [Research Repository](#) upon completing the HITM Program. Students should recognize from the outset that their project will be submitted to the Research Repository after their oral defense. This means their project will be searchable by the public, although students have the option to limit who can access and read their project.

i. Language of the Honors in the Major Project

Consistent with policy in the *Graduate Student Handbook*, the typical language of the honors thesis project is English. Under special circumstances, the faculty director, supervisory committee, and honors liaison may approve writing the body of the project in a language other than English if doing so is essential for scholarly reasons. Lack of sufficient English competency is not an acceptable justification for using an alternative language. All committee members must be completely proficient in the alternative language. If a student is unable to recruit completely proficient committee members, they will have to write the honors thesis project in English. If the faculty director deems it appropriate for the project to be written in a language other than English, the faculty director should email a rationale and notification of committee and departmental approval to HITM@fsu.edu for review and approval by the Director of Honors.

All non-English-language honors thesis projects must have the front matter and main section headings in English. This would include the content of the title page, committee page, acknowledgments, and abstract. All main section headings, including chapter and appendix headings, must be in English, but chapter/appendix titles may be in the chosen language. In addition, projects in languages other than English should additionally include a brief precis in English for reference in the Research Repository.

The oral defense must be conducted in English.

2. Oral Defense

Students are also required to defend their project in front of their faculty supervisory committee by the next to last Monday of their defense semester. Typically, the defense will take place in a classroom or conference room, or in cases of creative projects, in theaters, art galleries, or other performance venues. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the location is reserved and available during the time of the defense.

All committee members and the student must attend the entire defense in real time. While defenses can be held remotely under extenuating circumstances (medical or other emergencies, if committee members or the student are out of town for professionally related reasons, etc.), the Honors Program prefers that the defense be held in person. This is so that

the student can have the full experience of receiving collaborative feedback from the committee and developing important professional communication skills essential for success in most professions. If an in-person defense is not possible, students may work with their faculty director and committee members to schedule a virtual defense in real time that can be completed using Zoom or other distance technology. Students do not need permission from the Honors Program to complete a virtual defense if one is deemed necessary.

If extenuating circumstances prevent the participation of a committee member, then it may be necessary to arrange for an additional appropriately qualified colleague to attend the defense. Students should consult with their faculty director in such instances, and should notify the Honors Program of such emergency alternative arrangements for the oral defense by sending an email to HITM@fsu.edu.

In most cases, the student will make an oral presentation of 15 to 20 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer session of 30 to 40 minutes. The oral defense must be conducted in English.

Electronic Signature Options for Honors in the Major Forms

Signatures on forms can be physical or electronic. Students should submit a single HITM form with all required signatures through the [HITM online portal](#) as a PDF. If submitting a single form is not possible, students should combine multiple pages into a single PDF file.

Please note that completed e-signed HITM forms should be “printed” as a PDF document before uploading to the HITM online portal. Doing so will ensure that all signatures are present and legible once uploaded to the portal.

Options for securing electronic signatures on HITM forms include:

- [DocuSign](#) – An e-signature platform free to use for FSU students, faculty, and staff.
- [Electronic signatures on PDF](#) – All HITM forms have been formatted for electronic signatures. If your faculty director and committee members are able to sign a PDF electronically, you may circulate the same PDF file to each individual. If you opt for this, you must secure all signatures on one form. Do not submit three different PDF files, each with one signature.

Smartphones have scanning capabilities if you or a committee member need to scan a signature to include on a PDF. Android phone users can use the [Google Drive](#) app, which comes pre-installed on Android phones, to scan their signature to create a signature file. Apple iPhone users can use the [Notes](#) app, which comes pre-installed on iPhones, to scan their signature to create a signature file. Directions for using an app to scan a signature are provided via each app’s respective hyperlink above.

Honors in the Major Thesis Accessibility

The student is responsible for creating a thesis document that is accessible to screen readers. [The Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Rule on Web Content Accessibility](#) requires screen reader accessibility for all student works uploaded to Florida State University’s [Research Repository](#). The

student as the author has a legal responsibility to make a good faith effort to create an accessible thesis document.

To support students, the Honors in the Major Program has partnered with the Office of Digital Learning to provide a 45-minute digital accessibility virtual training that students are required to attend at the start of their Prospectus semester. At the start of the semester, students will be provided information about how to register for a training session. Students who fail to attend a digital accessibility training session during their Prospectus semester may be administratively withdrawn from the Honors in the Major Program.

In addition to the accessibility training, the following tools are available to assist students in creating accessible Word documents:

- Word document template with required thesis front matter, located in HITM Canvas org site
- LinkedIn Learning video: [Make your document accessible](#)
- Microsoft Support text resource: [Make your Word document accessible to people with disabilities](#)

Honors in the Major Program Timeline and Deadlines

Throughout the HITM experience, students will need to submit signed forms to the Honors Program, each of which corresponds to a different stage in the HITM approval process. Signed HITM forms should be submitted through the [HITM online portal](#). Students can begin their HITM experience in the fall, spring, or summer semesters. Remember that registration for honors thesis credit hours is required for each semester of HITM.

1. **Application Semester:** Students should use the semester before the start of the HITM project to prepare and submit their HITM application. The Application Semester should therefore be at least three semesters before the student plans to graduate.

The first step in beginning the HITM application is finding a faculty director from the student's major. Most often, the faculty director is a tenured, tenure-track, or specialized faculty member at FSU. Visiting faculty members and post-doctorate researchers are also eligible to serve as a faculty director, so long as they will be at FSU for the duration of the student's project. In all instances, potential faculty directors must have a terminal degree in the field of study (a Ph.D. for most academic programs) or have graduate faculty status. Graduate students are not eligible to serve as a faculty director. See page 16 of this handbook for additional information about eligibility criteria for the faculty director and supervisory committee.

A student should consider inviting as their thesis director a faculty member they have enjoyed working with in some capacity, whether through courses, mentoring, or collaboration on projects. More information about how to approach and talk with potential faculty directors can be found in Appendix A of this handbook. If a student is unsure about their options, they can reach out to the [honors liaison](#) in their major for guidance.

After a faculty member has agreed to direct the project, the student should select a working title for their proposed project. Although this title may be changed, it should give a clear idea of what the student's proposed research topic and scope will be about. The student should consult with the faculty director, who can share valuable insights on broadening or narrowing the scope of the proposed research

The student will also need to discuss their project timeline with the faculty director, depending on the timeline chosen for the project (two semesters minimum or three semesters maximum). These semesters must be consecutive, with the exception of the summer semester if the student chooses not to register for honors thesis credit hours. The student may take up to nine credit hours of HITM project work, and/or may extend their honors thesis project over three semesters, if necessary. In addition, some departments have additional requirements students must meet, and students should consult with their departmental academic advisor for clarification about these departmental requirements.

Once a faculty director has been recruited, a working title has been developed, and a timeline has been identified, the student must complete and submit the [HITM application](#). The application must be approved and signed by the faculty director, the honors liaison for the student's major, and the department chair or area coordinator. Once these signatures have been obtained, the student must submit the application through the [HITM online portal](#).

Students who wish to begin their HITM project must submit a signed copy of the [HITM Application](#) through the [HITM Online Portal](#) by the 13th Friday of the semester prior to their planned first semester.

2. **Prospectus Semester:** Students in their first semester of the honors thesis project have two tasks to complete in the initial days of the semester: signing up for the Canvas org site for the HITM Program and registering for a Word accessibility training. At the beginning of the semester, students will be emailed an invitation to sign up for the HITM Canvas org site. This site offers tools and resources to support the honors thesis experience from start to finish. Within the Canvas org site is a module dedicated to thesis accessibility, which includes the registration link for Word accessibility trainings. **Students must register for and complete one of the trainings offered during their Prospectus Semester to remain in good standing in the HITM Program.**

For the rest of the semester, students will focus on two concurrent tasks: recruiting two to three committee members and writing their prospectus. With the guidance of the faculty director, the student will need to locate and recruit at least one faculty committee member from their major and one faculty committee member outside of the department which houses the student's major. A fourth committee member from any department at FSU is optional. Graduate students are not eligible to serve as committee members. See page 17 of this handbook for additional information about the makeup of the supervisory committee.

By the seventh week of the Prospectus Semester, the faculty director and all members of the supervisory committee will have to approve the student's prospectus. **The student and thesis director should discuss how much time should be provided for committee members to review drafts. Two weeks/ten business days is standard and strongly encouraged.** The prospectus serves as a research proposal, giving the committee background information about the project and similar research, outlining the methods, and discussing the expectations for the project's outcomes. Specific requirements for a prospectus are discipline-specific, and students should contact their faculty director to discuss expectations about format, length, and content.

For analytical or applied/experiential projects, the prospectus should be a minimum 10 pages of text, plus documentation (works cited, appendices, images, etc.). The creative project prospectus should be a minimum of three pages of text, plus documentation (works cited, appendices, images, etc.)

The purpose of the prospectus is to define the scope of a student's honors thesis project and to clarify the steps they will take in researching, writing, creating, and/or implementing the work. A strong prospectus typically includes some, if not all, the following elements:

- A description of the honors thesis project's nature and purpose, the issue(s) to be addressed, and their significance to the student's field
- If part of a team-based research setting like that of a lab, how the honors thesis project is the student's own and distinct from the research project(s) of the faculty PI, even if the projects overlap and/or complement each other
- A critical review of related work in the student's field, to provide background information and demonstrate the need for the honors thesis project
- The proposed research methods, along with an explanation of why the chosen approach is appropriate for the proposed honors thesis project
- A preliminary bibliography

Students should merge their signed [Prospectus Approval Form](#) and their approved prospectus into a single PDF file, then submit this PDF file through the [HITM Online Portal](#) by the Friday of the 7th week of classes.

3. **Defense Semester:** Typically, students complete the honors thesis project in two semesters, but have the option to complete in three semesters. Students in their second or third semester complete their honors thesis project by way of a formal defense in front of their supervisory committee during their final semester of project work. Following the defense, the final project must be approved by all members of the faculty committee.

Within the first four weeks of the Defense Semester, students must collaborate with their faculty director to schedule the day and time of their defense and get it approved by the supervisory committee. **The student and thesis director should discuss how much time should be provided for committee members to review drafts. Two weeks/ten business days is standard and strongly encouraged.**

All committee members and the student must attend the entire defense in real time. While defenses can be held remotely under extenuating circumstances (medical or other emergencies, if committee members or the student are out of town for professionally related reasons, etc.), the Honors Program strongly prefers that defense be held in person. This is so that student can receive the full experience of receiving collaborative feedback from the committee and developing important professional communication skills essential for success in most professions. If in-person defenses are not possible, students may work with their faculty director and committee members to schedule a virtual defense in real time that can be completed using Zoom or other distance technology. Students do not need permission from the Honors Program to complete a virtual defense if one is deemed necessary.

If extenuating circumstances prevent the participation of a committee member, then it may be necessary to arrange for an additional appropriately qualified colleague to attend the defense. Students should consult with their faculty director in such instances, and should notify the Honors Program of such emergency alternative arrangements for the oral defense by sending an email to HITM@fsu.edu.

Students with creative HITM projects that require special space reservations, technical considerations, or coordination of performers may want to consider the Defense Announcement early for logistical reasons. Once the defense is scheduled, the student will complete the [Defense Announcement Form](#) and submit it via the [HITM online portal](#) by no later than 4:30 pm Eastern the day of the posted deadline.

All students should use the HITM thesis template, linked to in the HITM Canvas org site. The template will be used in the accessibility training session and will position students to have a properly formatted front matter and a Word document optimized for accessibility. Students should complete thesis template front matter as found and not make changes to spacing, font, or text arrangement in the front matter. Also, all students should use their training and resources provided to ensure that their final thesis is accessible to screen readers. Students should not use AI to check their final written product for accessibility, as such technology is unreliable and error-prone.

Once the student has successfully defended their HITM project, they must obtain their committee members' electronic signatures on the [Defense Certificate Form](#) and submit it via the [HITM online portal](#) by no later than 4:30 pm Eastern the day of the posted deadline.

The [Defense Announcement](#) deadline is the Friday of the 4th week of classes.
The [Defense Certificate](#) deadline is the 14th Monday of the semester.
Both documents will be submitted through the [HITM Online Portal](#) by their respective deadlines.

Students must submit their finished project as a Word document to the [Research Repository](#) after their oral defense. At the same time, students must also consult with their thesis director about the permissions laid out in the [Thesis Access Form](#), which must be completed and signed by both student and thesis director before submission to the portal by the posted deadline.

4. **Submission to the Archive:** All undergraduate HITM projects published at FSU can be accessed from [Research Repository](#). Students must submit their final project to the archive as a Word document by the posted deadline in order to officially earn Honors in the Major recognition on their transcript.
 - **Exception Request:** Sometimes, there may be important reasons why the submission of the HITM project to a public database like the Research Repository may not be appropriate, even if a student has the option to request an embargo. One example could be that making the HITM project available to the public on the Research Repository may compromise the privacy and safety of the student or their research subjects, even if they have been anonymized. If a student believes they have legitimate reasons for not submitting their HITM project to

Research Repository, they should first consult with their faculty director. If the director agrees with the student's concerns, the student should email a brief rationale to HITM@fsu.edu with their faculty director CC'd on the email. The Director of the Honors Program will review the rationale, and a decision will be communicated to the student and their faculty director via email within three to five business days.

5. **Graduation:** All HITM requirements must be met, including departmentally specific requirements (if any) and the oral defense, before graduation from FSU and conferral of the bachelor's degree.

The Honors Program hosts a graduation medallion ceremony in the fall, spring, and summer semesters. This ceremony is scheduled each semester before the colleges' commencement ceremonies. HITM students have the option to participate in the Honors Program medallion ceremony and to receive an Honors in the Major medallion. This medallion may also be worn at their college commencement ceremony. Regardless of their participation in the Honors Program medallion ceremony, HITM students will have "With Honors" written by their major in their college commencement program and on their final official transcript.

HITM students who choose to participate in the Honors Program graduation medallion ceremony should complete a University Honors Program Graduation Application, found in the ["Graduation Requirements" section of the Honors Program web site.](#)

Honors in the Major Credit Hours

Students accepted to the HITM Program must register for a 4000-level HITM course offered by their major department or program for each semester of HITM project work. Honors in the Major requires students to register between a minimum total of six honors thesis credit hours and a maximum total of nine honors thesis credit hours over the course of two to three semesters. To count toward program requirements, these credit hours should be taken for an A – F grade only. For these credit hours to count toward HITM Program requirements, students must earn a final grade of "B-" or better in them.

Typically, a student will register for three honors thesis credit hours per semester over two semesters. However, students have the option of completing between six to nine honors thesis credit hours total in any combination over the duration of two to three semesters, as allowed by their department. For example, some students may complete a three-semester HITM project and take two honors thesis credit hours per semester, for a total of six completed credit hours by the end of their project.

After submitting their application in the HITM online portal, the application will be reviewed and students will be notified whether they meet program criteria or not. Once they receive an acceptance email, students should contact their major academic advisor or departmental coordinator to start the registration process as early as possible. If the student's college, department, or program requests confirmation that they have been accepted into the HITM Program, the student can provide a copy of the acceptance email they receive. The drop/add period ends the fourth business day of the semester at 11:59 pm Eastern, so all credit hours must be added to the schedule by this deadline. Note that late registration fees apply to 4000-level HITM courses.

Students registering for honors thesis credit hours in subsequent semesters do not need additional approval from the Honors in the Major Program to do so, and should contact their major academic advisor or departmental coordinator for assistance. Students should consult with their academic advisor or honors liaison about department-specific requirements for Honors in the Major (if any) that are in addition to the minimum six HITM credit hours/two semester requirement.

Honors in the Major credit hours are reserved solely for undergraduate students in the Honors in the Major Program and are offered by the major department or program. One to six honors thesis credit hours per semester may be taken, with a maximum limit of nine credit hours. Honors thesis credit hours have the title “Honors in the Major Research” but will vary by course prefix and course number, depending on the major.

Incomplete Grades and the Honors in the Major Credit Hours Grade Requirement

Incomplete grades for the 4000-level HITM course should not be assigned by the faculty director unless pre-approved by the HITM Program. Faculty directors considering an incomplete grade as an option should send an email to HITM@fsu.edu requesting guidance.

Incomplete grades will be considered only for truly extenuating circumstances (a death in the immediate family, chronic unexpected health issues, housing instability, etc.). Faculty directors should contact HITM@fsu.edu if a HITM student has disengaged or stopped communicating so that additional student support options can be considered.

To successfully complete the HITM Program, students must earn a “B-“ or better in their HITM credit hours while maintaining minimum 3.200 FSU and Cumulative GPAs (not rounded to the third decimal place). Students who are also in the University Honors Program must earn a “B-“ or better in their HITM credit hours in order to be able to apply these hours toward their Honors Program medallion requirements.

Withdrawing from the Honors in the Major Program

A student who wishes to withdraw from the HITM Program should first meet with their faculty director to discuss their concerns and their options. Sometimes extending an HITM project into a third semester, modifying the research plan, requesting an extension on a deadline, or trying a new time management strategy can create a pathway to project completion. Exploring such options is highly encouraged, given the amount of work students put into the HITM project.

If after consulting with their faculty director a student still wishes to withdraw from the HITM Program, they should email their withdrawal request to HITM@fsu.edu with their faculty director CC'd. A brief rationale should be included with the request. The request will be honored upon receipt, and the HITM plan will be removed from the student's academic record. Please note that withdrawing from the HITM Program may impact a student's ability to satisfy requirements for the University Honors Program (if applicable), or for the university's Liberal Studies Program.

Students who withdraw from the HITM Program are strongly encouraged to drop their HITM credit hours for the semester in order to avoid a failing final grade. Prior to the seventh week deadline, upper division students can drop a course on their own without dean's permission.

After the seventh week deadline, students must contact their academic dean's office to request permission to drop.

Deadline Extension Request and Program Removal Appeals Process

Students admitted to the HITM Program are expected to meet paperwork deadlines and project milestones, as well as maintain minimum 3.200 FSU and Cumulative GPAs (not rounded to the third decimal place). Students should proactively plan with the faculty director on a schedule for meeting necessary deadlines and milestones each semester. If extenuating circumstances prevent adherence to deadlines or milestones, both the student should send an email with their faculty director CC'd to HITM@fsu.edu at least three business days before the deadline with an explanation and a request for an extension. Ten business days, or two weeks, is the maximum extension that can be requested. Extension requests will not be considered if they do not come with the faculty director CC'd. The Director of Honors will evaluate requests in consultation with the Associate Director of Honors in the Major and make a decision. Decisions regarding extension requests will be communicated to the student and faculty director within three business days of receipt. Extension requests made after a missed deadline or milestone will not be considered.

Missed deadlines or milestones and/or dipping below a 3.200 FSU or Cumulative GPA (not rounded to the third decimal place) will result in removal from the HITM Program. Students have the right to appeal their removal from the HITM Program by completing the [HITM Appeal Form](#) stating the details of their situation, the reason for reconsideration, and their detailed plan for resuming project work and completing the HITM Program within the allowed timeframe, should the appeal be granted. Once the [HITM Appeal Form](#) is submitted, no additional edits are allowed. Appeals must be submitted within two weeks (including holidays and weekends) from the missed deadline. In consultation with the Associate Director of Honors in the Major, the Director of Honors will evaluate the appeal, and the final decision will be communicated to the student by email within two weeks of receipt of the appeals request. Please note that each student has only one opportunity to submit an appeal. If an appeal is granted and a student is subsequently removed from the HITM Program due to failure to meet requirements, no additional appeals are possible, and removal from the program is final.

Students whose administrative withdrawal from the HITM Program is final are strongly encouraged to drop their HITM credit hours for the semester in order to avoid a failing final grade. Prior to the seventh week deadline, upper division students can drop a course on their own without dean's permission. After the seventh week deadline, students must contact their academic dean's office to request permission to drop.

Human Subject Research and the Institutional Review Board

Honors in the Major projects that involve individuals as study subjects (human research) generally require advance review to ensure that subjects are adequately protected against research risks. Depending upon research parameters, reviews are performed by the Office for Human Subjects Protection (OHSP) and/or the FSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). These reviews are required by law and are aimed at helping researchers assure appropriate protection to the human subjects under study in a given project. If a study will involve interaction or intervention with individuals for research purposes, or involve collection of identifiable private information, the study must submit an application for OHSP or IRB review.

Depending upon study parameters and OHSP review, some projects may be exempted by OHSP from further IRB review. Other activities, such as scholarly and journalistic activities such as oral history, journalism, biography literary criticism, legal research, and historical scholarship projects, may not be defined as research subject to further OHSP or IRB review, provided certain conditions are satisfied. Research involving human subjects may not begin until these reviews are completed and OHSP or IRB approves the study.

Because OHSP and IRB reviews require time, students should submit a complete application **at least one month** before they plan to start data collection, to allow for enough time for the review's completion. Any questions about FSU's OHSP and IRB resources and requirements can be directed to the OHSP at humansubjects@fsu.edu or (850) 644-7900.

So how does a student know if their proposed research requires OHSP and/or IRB review? At least one semester before beginning the HITM project, students should use the following resources and talk with their faculty director to help determine next steps.

1. **Student-led Research Resources**: The OHSP has compiled a comprehensive page of resources specifically for undergraduate students directing their own research projects involving human subjects.
2. **Human Research Worksheet**: The OHSP uses a worksheet for individuals to help determine whether an activity is considered Human Research. Students should consult the worksheet as a guide and discuss it with their faculty director. The worksheet can be located in RAMP, FSU's research application management system. To access RAMP, go into the MyFSU portal. In RAMP, under the IRB tab, click on Library. Within the Library click on Worksheets, the HRP-310-Worksheet-Human Research Determination document. After reviewing the worksheet to get a sense of whether and how your activity may involve human research, submit an Official Request for Determination of Not Human Research to OHSP (see directions on the form). For other information, check out OHSP's Investigator Manual.
3. **CITI Training**: The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Human Subjects Research (HSR) training provides key instruction for protecting human subjects in proposed research. Certification is good for three years, and students who might continue their engagement with human subject research should complete this training.
4. **"Protocol Development Workshop" webinar**: if a student in consultation with their faculty director has determined that yes, their proposed research will require OHSP and/or IRB review, they should review this Protocol Writing Workshop to better understand what is expected in their application.

Responsibilities of the Honors in the Major Student

The HITM student is ultimately responsible for conceptualizing and developing their project and for completing the project within the prescribed two-to-three semester schedule.

Responsibilities of the student include, but are not limited to, the following:

- speaking with their major's honors liaison and networking with faculty within their major to locate a faculty director.
- choosing their topic or subject matter based upon their major and interests and ideally based upon their identification of a gap in academic, professional, or artistic knowledge.
- attending during their Prospectus semester a digital accessibility training session offered by the Office of Digital Learning, and utilizing the skills, knowledge, and resources gained to create a final thesis Word document that is screen reader accessible.
- identifying and recruiting two or three faculty committee members, one of whom must have a home academic department or program different from that of the student's relevant major department or program.
- independently constructing a research or project design appropriate for their major and their topic, with support of their faculty director. If part of a team-based research setting like that of a lab, the student is responsible for identifying how their HITM project is their own and sufficiently distinct from the research project(s) of their faculty PI.
- If applicable, the student is responsible for taking steps necessary to secure OHSP or IRB approvals for data collection, for selecting proper instruments if appropriate, and for conducting the data collection itself.
- analyzing the data or assessing the outcomes. If appropriate, the student may need to work with their faculty director or relevant resources to learn how to use analytical tools or software.
- interpreting the data and identifying findings, conclusions, and recommended next steps.
- securing signatures on Honors in the Major paperwork and submitting signed paperwork by the deadlines each semester.
- registering for the appropriate 4000-level HITM course each semester they are in the HITM Program.
- scheduling the oral defense, including scheduling a space for the event and finding a time that works for all committee members.
- submitting their final HITM written product to the [Research Repository](#) by the posted deadline in the semester in which they defend their project.

Responsibilities of the Faculty Director and Supervisory Committee

Honors in the Major project work is carried out by the student over a period of two or three semesters in collaboration with a directing professor (the HITM committee chair, also known as the faculty director) and members of the student's supervisory committee. In addition to the director, the committee must include at least one other faculty member from within the student's relevant major department or program, and a third faculty member from outside of the relevant major department or program. One other faculty member from any department or area may also serve.

Most often, the faculty director and committee members are tenured, tenure-track, or specialized faculty members at FSU. Post-doctorate researchers are also eligible to serve, so long as they will be at FSU for the duration of the student's HITM project. In all instances, faculty directors

and committee members must have a terminal degree in the field of study (a Ph.D. for most academic programs) or have graduate faculty status. Graduate students are not eligible to serve as a faculty director or committee member.

If the student wishes to request an exception to the criteria above, they should submit a written request with a rationale and a CV of the candidate to HITM@fsu.edu. The Director of Honors will review the candidate's CV and, if their professional expertise and experience is deemed central to the student's project work, they may serve as either a committee member or as co-director with one other committee member who is either in a tenured or tenure-earning position, who has graduate faculty status, or who has a terminal degree in a relevant field.

In units where there are no tenured or tenure-track faculty, the committee may be comprised entirely of specialized faculty so long as the committee chair meets the standards above (terminal degree or graduate faculty status) and, whenever possible, at least one of the other two required members is in a tenure-track or tenured position. Consistent with policy in the *Graduate Student Handbook*, each committee member's CV should ideally show evidence of research-based scholarship and/or creative work resulting in peer-reviewed publications or equivalent work.

A scholar who is not an employee of FSU may serve as a member of the supervisory committee only if they are classified as a "visiting scholar" or have a courtesy faculty appointment at FSU. This potential committee member would join as the fourth optional committee member, meaning in this instance that the committee must also consist of three FSU faculty members. If a student wishes to include such a fourth committee member, they must first secure the approval of the Director of Honors by emailing HITM@fsu.edu. Scholars without these FSU affiliation classifications may not serve on the committee, although a student could still unofficially consult with them, with the approval of their faculty director.

A faculty director from outside the student's major department or program is acceptable if permitted by the honors liaison and department chair or area coordinator. In this instance, the faculty director would serve as the "outside" committee member, and the student must have two additional committee members from within their relevant major department or program.

A supervisory committee consisting entirely of tenured, tenure-track, or specialized faculty with terminal degrees and/or graduate faculty status does not require approval by the Director of Honors. Academic departments and programs may elect to have more specific criteria for the faculty director and supervisory committee.

The responsibilities of the faculty director include:

- Directing the student's research, study, and writing
- Helping the student structure the basic conception of the HITM project
- Helping the student clarify the objects of the HITM project
- Working with the student to discover an appropriate research or creative strategy for achieving these objectives
- Monitoring the progress of the student
- Providing specific guidance to the student regarding formal deadlines
- Helping the student schedule the defense
- Signing the forms required by the Honors in the Major Program
- Serving as instructor of record for the honors thesis credit hours

The responsibilities of the other members of the supervisory committee include:

- Providing additional viewpoints on all phases of the HITM project – conception, creation, and completion
- Contributing input on the project itself and the evaluation of the project
- Participating in the oral defense

The Faculty Director as Mentor, the Student as Mentee

The Honors in the Major project represents a critical part of the student's transformation from knowledge *consumer* to knowledge *producer*. As such, the faculty director must recognize that an HITM student has unique needs distinct from those of other undergraduate students and of graduate students. In other words, the HITM student is more advanced than many of their undergraduate peers, but they may not necessarily have the specialized training, knowledge, or skills that faculty can expect of a graduate student. Moreover, HITM students may struggle with the highly creative conceptual work of constructing a sound and original project design.

The faculty director will need to take an active and enthusiastic role in fostering the student's growth. This will include recurring meetings with the student to determine what feedback, guidance, training, and resources may be necessary at each stage of the HITM project.

The HITM student, in turn, should plan on coming to those meetings with a summary of what they are currently working on, with a description of what aspects of their project they believe are going well versus aspects they are struggling with, questions, and plans for continued work until the next meeting. The student should self-reflect in preparation for these meetings and not be afraid to state their needs, in an effort to explore with the faculty director what steps could be taken and what resources utilized to meet those needs.

Ultimately, regular active communication about the process and labor of knowledge production is integral to the enthusiastic and effective mentoring of the HITM student. The purpose of recurring meetings is to provide active opportunities for students to get feedback from their director on aspects of the HITM work that are essential for completing a high-quality project in a timely manner that conforms to norms in the field and that support the student's growth as an up-and-coming researcher and professional in the field.

Honors in the Major Awards and Funding Opportunities

Students should identify potential expenses for their HITM project during their Application Semester and determine if they should seek funding for project support through various opportunities at FSU. Some awards and funding opportunities listed on the Honors Program's [Grants and Funding](#) web page include:

- Students who may require funding for their HITM project to cover expenses such as travel, equipment and materials, or reimbursement of survey participants, may apply for the **Bess H. Ward Honors in the Major Thesis Funding Award**.
- Students can nominate their faculty director to be considered for the **Honors in the Major Mentor Award**. This award is offered annually to recognize and honor faculty members whose direction and advisement of HITM project research or creative activity

has significantly contributed to the enhancement and quality of education of undergraduate students at FSU.

- The **Kingsbury Undergraduate Writing Award** is offered annually to an undergraduate student who demonstrates excellence in the writing of an undergraduate project.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I automatically become a member of the University Honors Program if I am admitted to Honors in the Major?

- No. University Honors and Honors in the Major are separate programs at FSU that have separate application processes and criteria.

How do I find a faculty director? How do I find committee members?

- Students should consider what major requirement classes they have most enjoyed and what previous research collaborations they may have had with faculty members to consider faculty director options. Going to office hours to talk with potential faculty directors is a good way to share your interest and explore whether they might have interest in mentoring you. If you need additional guidance, speak with your major's honors liaison.

Once a faculty director has been identified, you should talk with them about committee member possibilities. Since one committee member must come from outside of your major department or area, this is an excellent opportunity to include someone whose classes, research, and/or creative work have inspired you.

Can I have a committee member who is outside of FSU?

- A scholar who is not an employee of FSU may serve as a member of the supervisory committee if they are classified as a “visiting scholar” or have a courtesy faculty appointment at FSU. This potential committee member would join as the fourth optional committee member, meaning in this instance that the committee must also consist of three FSU faculty members. If a student wishes to include such a fourth committee member, they must first secure the approval of the Director of Honors by emailing HITM@fsu.edu. Scholars without these FSU affiliation classifications may not serve on the committee, although a student could still unofficially consult with them, with the approval of their faculty director. See page 17 of this handbook for additional information.

What types of HITM projects are suitable for my major?

- Talk about HITM project ideas and possibilities with the honors liaison and with your faculty director. To help brainstorm ideas, you are encouraged to review previous HITM projects from your major in the [Research Repository](#). Another option is to locate a top academic journal in your field (talk with a librarian if you aren't sure how to do this) and look through issues from the last one to two years. What jumps out at you as familiar or intriguing? Finding current peer-reviewed publications that stand out to you, and

looking through their findings and conclusions to see what the authors identify as gaps in knowledge, is good way to consider possibilities. Wherever your ideas come from, talk with your faculty director to identify your next steps.

How long does my HITM project need to be? Is there a word count? How many references do I need to cite?

- Every discipline or field has different conventions regarding sufficient page length and number of works cited. For page length and works cited averages by major, which have been calculated from an analysis of the 1400+ HITM projects completed at FSU between 2009 and 2020, see Appendix C.

Please note that this information is provided to give students an idea about the characteristics of typical HITM projects that have been produced by previous HITM students from their major department or program. You are not required to produce an HITM project that meets or exceeds the averages listed. In other words, you could write a strong HITM project that has fewer pages or works cited than what the table in Appendix C lists. Your faculty director will speak to the conventions of your field and what's appropriate for your HITM project.

For creative HITM projects whose main outcome is visual art, creative writing, a performance, or some other creative output other than written scholarship, note that the final written portion must be a minimum 10 pages of text. See page 6 of this handbook for more information.

Are there examples of completed HITM projects I can look at?

- Yes. The [Research Repository](#) has HITM projects from previous years that you can explore.

Are there examples of the written analytical reflection required for creative HITM projects I can look at?

- Yes. Examples of the written analytical reflection for a creative HITM project can be found on the Honors in the Major's ["Creative Project" web page](#).

Can I write my HITM project in a language other than English?

- The typical language of the HITM project is English. Under special circumstances, the faculty director, supervisory committee, and honors liaison may approve writing the body of the HITM project in a language other than English if doing so is essential for scholarly reasons. In such instances, all committee members must be completely proficient in the alternative language. If this is the case, the faculty director should email a rationale and notification of committee and departmental approval to HITM@fsu.edu for review and approval by the Director of Honors. See page 6 of the handbook for additional information about the language policy for the HITM project.

Why do I have to defend my HITM project in front of a committee?

- Presentation of the results of your work to your supervisory committee, and responding to their questions during the defense, allows you to showcase your accomplishments. It is a great opportunity to practice talking about your work and to have a productive conversation with faculty members about where to take your project

and what comes next.

I need to reschedule my defense. What do I need to do?

- Students do not need special permission from the HITM Program to reschedule their defense if they and the faculty director deem it necessary. Students who have to reschedule their defense after they have submitted a Defense Announcement Form do not need to notify the Honors in the Major program or submit a new form. They should coordinate with their faculty director and committee members and ensure that the space scheduled for the defense is rescheduled accordingly.

I have decided to extend my HITM project into a third semester. What do I need to do?

- Remember that all HITM projects must be completed and defended successfully before graduation. If you have at least three semesters left before you graduate, you will first need to consult with your faculty director to ensure they support your timeline and that the full scope of the work can be completed prior to graduation. Ideally, you will have this conversation sometime before the end of your Prospectus semester. Once your faculty director approves your plan, you will need to continue to register for HITM credit hours in the second semester, but no paperwork needs to be submitted during the second semester of a three-semester HITM project. Email HITM@fsu.edu to share your plan for a three-semester HITM project. You will resume the Defense semester paperwork in your third semester of the HITM project. *Note: HITM courses are repeatable for up to nine credit hours only. Make sure that if you register for honors thesis credit hours during the summer semester, the summer semester is part of your completion plan.

Can I submit my Prospectus and Prospectus Approval Form in the second semester of a three-semester HITM project instead of in the first semester?

- No. The Prospectus and Prospectus Approval Form are always due by the deadline in the first semester of the HITM project, regardless of whether a student completes the project in two or three semesters.

Are summer HITM deadlines applicable to me even if I register for only Session B?

- Yes. Even though Session B starts later in the summer than Sessions A and C, students registered for Session B are still responsible for meeting the same HITM summer deadlines.

Can I complete my HITM project in one semester if I take six HITM credits all at once?

- No. University policy requires that students spend two to three semesters completing the HITM project because high quality original projects of sufficient depth require longer than one semester to develop and complete.

Are HITM credit hours covered by Bright Futures?

- Yes. Bright Futures will cover HITM credit hours even if those credits are not applied to the major. Bright Futures does not look at degree applicability of a credit hour. It instead looks at the number of credit hours for which a student is enrolled each semester, and then pays accordingly.

I will study abroad during one of the semesters of my HITM project. What should I do?

- You should consult with your faculty director to come up with a three-semester HITM plan before you start. You are encouraged to think broadly about your educational and research options, including study abroad, which can greatly enrich your research experience and even position you well for applying to post-graduate fellowships like the Fulbright. If you wish to study abroad, you will not be registered for main campus credit hours during the semester of study abroad. Therefore, the Honors Program does not expect you to register for HITM credit hours that semester. So again, you should consult with your faculty director to determine out of the three semesters for the HITM project, which semester will you study abroad and which two semesters will you register for HITM credit hours. Doing so will help you make sure you meet the minimum six HITM credit hour requirement. Once you have a plan, you should email it to HITM@fsu.edu.

Can I change my faculty director and/or a committee member after one semester?

- Unless your faculty director or committee member decide not to continue their involvement, or unforeseen difficulties make it imperative for you to find a different faculty director or committee member, it is not advisable to make such a change. First, the faculty director and supervisory committee and you have already committed to the project and put much work into it. And second, your potential new faculty director may not feel comfortable supervising your HITM project when another faculty member has already guided you through work on the project. Should you find yourself in a position where you are thinking about making a change, talk with your major's [honors liaison](#) for guidance. If you do wish to make a change, send an email with your honors liaison CC'd to HITM@fsu.edu with the requested changes.

Does my research need to be reviewed by the IRB?

- Possibly, depending on your proposed research's interaction or intervention with human subjects. Review the IRB resources on pages 14 and 15 of this handbook and discuss with your faculty director whether an IRB review is necessary.

Is my completion of Honors in the Major noted on my diploma and transcript?

- Completion of the HITM Program is recognized by the distinction of graduating "With Honors," as designated on the transcript. HITM recognition is not noted on the diploma.

May I invite my family and friends to my oral defense?

- Yes! Many students will invite members of the public to their oral defense to observe their presentation and to celebrate their achievement. Talk with your faculty director about the possibility of inviting family and friends.

Can I request an exception to the Research Repository submission requirement?

- There may be important reasons why the submission of your HITM project to an open access database like the Research Repository may not be appropriate, even if you have

the option to request an embargo. For example, making your project available to the public on Research Repository might compromise the privacy and safety of you or your research subjects, even if they have been anonymized. If you believe you have legitimate reasons for not submitting your HITM project to the Research Repository, first consult with your faculty director. If they agree with your concerns, you should email a brief rationale to HITM@fsu.edu with your faculty director CC'd on the email. In consultation with the Associate Director of Honors in the Major, the Director of Honors will review the rationale for your exception request, and a decision will be communicated to you and your faculty director via email within three to five business days.

Am I required to sign up for the Honors in the Major Canvas org site?

- Students are strongly encouraged to do so in order to meet program requirements and streamline their honors thesis experience. Most importantly, the Canvas org site contains links to sign up for a mandatory digital accessibility training students must complete during their Prospectus semester. The org site also contains resources to help with creating document accessibility, as well as links to other resources like optional writing consultations offered by [FSU's Writing Center](#). Students will be emailed at the start of their Prospectus semester an invitation to join the HITM Canvas org site.

Appendix A: Things to Discuss with Your Faculty Director

STARTING A PROJECT

- What is your research focus?
- Does your idea need to be scaled down or scaled up?
- What are the resources you'll need to get started?
- Will you need to get Human Subjects IRB certification?
- How many semesters will you need?
- Are they planning on being off-campus for any length of time during your project?

FIRST TERM/PROSPECTUS

- How often/how will you check in?
- Set up a timeline for sending paper drafts to faculty director and committee
- Make sure your faculty director has all the due dates on their calendar
- What do they expect from a prospectus?
- Will you need to defend your prospectus?
- Are there any sources they recommend you use?
- Do they have examples of past prospectuses?
- Who will serve on your supervisory committee?
- How will they assign your grade for the semester?
- Are there any funding opportunities you might apply for?
- Do they know of opportunities to present or publish your work?

MIDDLE TERMS (optional)

- How often/how will you check in?
- What progress should you have made by the end of term?
- How will they assign your grade for the semester?

LAST TERM/DEFENSE

- How often/how will you check in?
- What/Where/When should your defense take place?
- Set up a timeline for sending drafts to committee members
- What do they expect from your final paper/project?
- Will your defense be open or closed? What should the format be?
- Who will reserve the space for your defense? Will it be virtual?
- Will you embargo your final HITM project?
- Do you want your HITM project to be viewable to everyone? Or just FSU campus?

If you or your director have questions, concerns, or confusion about HITM guidelines and policies, please feel free to contact us at HITM@fsu.edu

Appendix B: Research Prospectus Outline

A research prospectus is a preliminary plan for conducting a study. This is not a detailed, technical research proposal, but, rather, a considered analysis of the issues you are likely to confront in such a study. In essence, it is a *preliminary* proposal. In completing this task, you should be sure to consider at least the following:

Research Problem. What is the research problem you are trying to solve? [A problem is a situation that, left untreated, produces a negative consequence for some group, institution or individual(s). “Girls score lower on technology attitude scales than boys” isn’t necessarily a problem; “girls are less inclined to pursue careers in technology-related fields” is.] What makes it a problem? For whom? Who says so?

Assumptions. On what assumptions are you basing your work? Which of them seem to be verifiable in the literature? Which are more speculative?

Theoretical Issues. What theoretical issues arise in your proposed study? For example, “theoretically,” how would you explain this problem and the results you suspect you might get to another scholar? (Do you take a behavioral view? Social systems view?) Are there other theoretical orientations that should be considered in the design of your study?

Literature Review. What, in general, does the literature say about your topic? [This need not be a complete review, but you should cite some of the major theory, research and writers in the field.]

Research Questions. Based on your problem, what are the research questions you are trying to answer? Why and how will answering these questions contribute to solving the research problem? Remember...a research question can be answered **ONLY** with data or information.

General Research Plan. In general, how would you propose to conduct this research study so that it answers your research questions? What kind of data will you gather (specify type, such as surveys, observations, interviews...or some combination of these types)? From whom will you gather it? Why them? How will you reduce the data - make sense of it? How will you assure that the data are of high quality?

Anticipated Difficulties and Pitfalls. What kind of difficulties and pitfalls might you expect in doing a study of this type? What will you do to prevent them or minimize their effects?

Anticipated Benefits. Who will benefit from the fact that this research is undertaken? How? Why? Who might be disturbed this proposed study? How? Why?

This should be a thoughtful, reflective paper that presents a balanced view of the proposed study - both its problems and its opportunities. It should serve as a first, solid communication with your committee about the kind of thinking you have been doing on an anticipated area of inquiry that might comprise at least a portion of your dissertation work.

Appendix C: Page Length and Works Cited Averages by Major

The following averages have been calculated from an analysis of the 1400+ HITM projects completed in the Honors in the Major program at FSU between 2009 and 2020. Averages are organized alphabetically by major department or program, or in some instances, by college. Averages are provided for those major departments, programs, or colleges in which five or more HITM projects have been completed between 2009 and 2020.

Page length averages include the written portion of the project, works cited pages, appendices, figures, tables, and images. Title pages, table of contents and table of figures pages, and acknowledgment pages have been excluded from the calculation of averages.

Works cited averages are the number of distinct sources cited and include primary, secondary, peer-reviewed, and non-peer-reviewed sources.

This table is intended to give students an idea about the characteristics of a typical HITM project from their major department, program, or college. They are not intended to be prescriptive benchmarks. In other words, you should use these averages to set goals and inform your conversations with your faculty director as you work on your HITM project. Always consult with your faculty director about the conventions of your field and what's appropriate for your HITM project.

HITM Averages for Page Length and Works Cited by Major Department, Program, or College, 2009-2020		
Major Department, Program, or College	Page Length	Works Cited
Anthropology	43	27
Art	18	8
Art History	49	30
Biological Science	26	25
Chemistry & Biochemistry	28	22
Classics	52	37
Communication	54	34
Communication Science & Disorders	24	21
Computer Science	24	20
Criminology	41	44
Earth, Ocean, & Atmospheric Science	27	22
Economics	36	28
Engineering – Chemical & Biomedical	42	18
Engineering - Industrial	47	22
Engineering - Mechanical	36	22
English	49	29
Finance	25	16
History	56	46
International Affairs	50	44
Mathematics	37	15
Modern Languages & Linguistics	43	30
Music	52	28
Nursing	26	29
Nutrition, Food, & Exercise Sciences	31	42
Philosophy	35	15
Physics	29	13
Political Science	42	31
Psychology	25	25
Religion	61	38
Social Work	35	22
Sociology	40	23
Statistics	25	12
Theatre	40	18

Appendix D: Department and Program HITM Web Pages

Below is a partial list of web pages that departments and programs at FSU have created for their majors in the Honors in the Major program. This list is incomplete. If you do not see your department or program listed below, consult your honors liaison to ensure you are meeting any additional HITM requirements for your major.

- Art: <https://art.fsu.edu/honors-in-the-major/>
- Biological Science: <https://www.bio.fsu.edu/undergrad/research.php>
- Chemical and Biomedical Engineering: <https://www.eng.famu.fsu.edu/cbe/undergraduate/urp>
- Chemistry and Biochemistry: <https://www.chem.fsu.edu/honors/>
- Classics: <https://classics.fsu.edu/undergraduate-programs/honors-in-the-major>
- Economics: <https://cosspp.fsu.edu/economics/undergraduate-program/honors-in-the-major/>
- History: <https://history.fsu.edu/undergraduate-program/honors-major>
- Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences: <https://med.fsu.edu/imsdegree/honors-major>
- Interdisciplinary Social Science: <https://cosspp.fsu.edu/iss/honors-in-the-major/>
- Motion Picture Arts: <https://fsufilmhandbook.com/honors/>