

Honors in the Major 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. If a student wishes to include such a fourth committee member, they must first secure the approval of the Director of the University Honors Program. 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 19 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 [DigiNole](#) archive. 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 a 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 1500+ HITM projects completed at FSU between 2009 and 2020, see Appendix G.

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 G 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 8 of this handbook for more information.

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

- Yes. The FSU [DigiNole](#) archive 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 the Honors Program. See page 9 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 rescheduled 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 three-semester 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 17 and 18 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 DigiNole submission requirement?

- There may be important reasons why the submission of your HITM project to an open access database like the DigiNole archive may not be appropriate, even if you have the option to request an embargo. For example, making your project available to the public on DigiNole might compromise the privacy and safety of your or your research subjects, even if they have been anonymized. If you believe you have legitimate reasons for not submitting your HITM project to DigiNole, 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 Assistant Director of Honors in the Major, the Director of the Honors Program 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.