

## **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 thesis 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 thesis director options. Going to office hours to talk with potential thesis 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 thesis 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 thesis director.

### **What types of HITM thesis projects are suitable for my major?**

- Talk about thesis project ideas and possibilities with your thesis director. To help brainstorm ideas, you are encouraged to review previous thesis 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

good way to consider possibilities. Wherever your ideas come from, talk with your thesis director to identify your next steps.

**How long does my thesis 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. The following averages have been calculated from an analysis of the 1500+ honors theses completed in the Honors in the Major program at FSU since 2009. 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 honors thesis projects have been completed since 2009. Page length averages include the written thesis, 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 honors thesis 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 thesis director as you work on your honors thesis. Always consult with your thesis director about the conventions of your field and what is appropriate for your HITM thesis project.

<b>HITM Averages for Page Length and Works Cited by Major Department, Program, or College, 2009-2020</b>		
<b>Major Department, Program, or College</b>	<b>Page Length</b>	<b>Works Cited</b>
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

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

- Yes. The [DigiNole](#) archive has HITM thesis projects from previous years that you can explore.

### **Why do I have to defend my HITM thesis in front of a committee?**

- Presentation of the results of your work to your supervisory committee, and responding to their questions during the oral 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 about where to take your project and what comes next.

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

- Remember that all HITM thesis projects must be complete before you graduate. If you have at least three semesters left before you graduate, you will first need to consult with your thesis director to ensure they support this plan and agree that it is necessary. Ideally, you will have this conversation sometime before the end of your Prospectus Semester. Once your thesis director approves your plan, you will need to continue to register for thesis credits in the second semester, but no paperwork needs to be submitted during the second semester of a three-semester honors thesis project. You will resume the Defense Semester paperwork in your third semester of the honors thesis project. \*Note: many honors thesis credit courses offered by colleges, departments, and programs are repeatable for up to 9 credit hours only. Make sure that if you register for thesis credits during the Summer semester, the Summer semester is part of your three-semester completion plan.

### **Can I complete my HITM thesis in one semester if I take 6 thesis credits all at once?**

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

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

- You should consult with your thesis director to come up with a three-semester HITM thesis 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 credits during the semester of study abroad. Therefore, the Honors Program does not expect you to register for honors thesis credits that semester. So again, you should consult with your thesis director to determine out of the three semesters for the HITM thesis, which semester will you study abroad and which two semesters will you register for honors thesis credits. Doing so will help you make sure you meet the minimum 6 honors thesis credit requirement. Once you have a plan, you should email it to [HITM@fsu.edu](mailto:HITM@fsu.edu).

### **Can I change my thesis director and/or a committee member after one semester?**

- Unless your thesis director or committee member decide not to continue their involvement, or unforeseen difficulties make it imperative for you to find a different thesis director or committee member, it is not advisable to make such a change. First,

the thesis director and supervisory committee and you have already committed to the project and put much work into it. And second, your potential new thesis director may not feel comfortable supervising your HITM thesis 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.

**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 8 and 9 of this handbook, and discuss with your thesis 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 loved ones to their oral defense to observe their presentation and to celebrate their achievement. Talk with your thesis director about the possibility of inviting family and friends.

**Can I request an exception to the DigiNole submission requirement?**

- Sometimes, there may be important reasons why the submission of your honors thesis to an open access database like the [DigiNole](#) archive may not be appropriate, even if you have the option to request an embargo. One example could be that making your thesis available to the public on [DigiNole](#) may 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 thesis to [DigiNole](#), first consult with your thesis director. If they agree with your concerns, you should email a brief rationale to [HITM@fsu.edu](mailto:HITM@fsu.edu) with your thesis director CC'd on the email. The Director of the Honors Program will review your rationale, and a decision will be communicated to you and your thesis director via email within three to five business days.