

Honors Committee Requirements & Evaluation

Below are the required components of the Honors Thesis Proposal. Depending on your subject and discipline, it is likely that your Methods/Process section (esp. in the sciences) or your Larger Context section (for social sciences and humanities, among others) will be the longest and most important section.

- Working Title
- Advisor Name & Department
- Student Pronouns
- Abstract
- Personal Interest
- Larger Context
- Methods/Process
- Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations (8 sources, 4 annotated)

Evaluation Process

1. All proposals come before the committee anonymously but with advisor names identified. Nearly all theses are evaluated in January and February.
2. The proposal sections are scrutinized by the committee, which determines whether a proposal is rated *acceptable*, *pass with concerns*, or *unacceptable*.
3. The committee's evaluation of the proposal will be paraphrased for you and your advisor.
4. If the committee has significant reservations about your proposal, additional revisions could be required, so please put significant effort into the document.

Explanation & Definition of Sections:

The purpose of a thesis is to articulate and investigate a question that is both personally stimulating, useful to others, and presented in discipline-specific ways. It is a culmination of the student's unbiased research and balanced analysis, sensitive to the arguments on both sides of the rhetorical equation. Students should start not with a presumption but with an observation, then devise a way to seek explanations for that observation. These are the components of a thesis proposal:

Abstract: a thumbnail sketch of the proposal: What questions will you explore? A summary of the main point(s) of each major section of the proposal; not an introduction but rather a synopsis of the project.

Personal Interest: discuss any relevant connections between your project and such things as courses taken, personal or work experiences, hobbies, volunteerism, study abroad, etc.

Larger Context: the "so what" & "who cares" section. When completing this section, it will help to address some of the following questions: Who is the audience? Why is this work important to them? How could your results/project contribute to the discipline? References to two scholarly sources are required in this section.

Methods/Process: What are you doing? How will you do it? Do you have sufficient resources? What is the end-result? Make sure to define any discipline-specific terminology.