

# HONOURS MANUAL SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



# CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>2. HONOURS PROGRAM STRUCTURE</b>	3
<b>3. ELIGIBILITY</b>	4
<b>4. APPLICATION PROCESS AND ADMISSION</b>	4
<b>5. TYPICAL PROGRAM COMPLETION PROCESS</b>	4
<b>6. SUPERVISION</b>	5
6.1 Identifying Supervisor	5
6.2 Supervision Ground Rules	5
<b>7. OTHER LEARNING SUPPORT</b>	6
<b>8. THE HONOURS THESIS / DISSERTATION</b>	6
8.1 Format	6
8.2 Referencing	7
8.3 Plagiarism	7
8.4 Submission Of The Thesis	7
8.5 Extension	8
8.6 Late Penalties	8
<b>9. THESIS EXAMINATION</b>	8
9.1 Grade dispute	8
9.2 Final grade allocation	8

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This manual contains information about the Honours Program in the School of Education (SoE) at the University of Newcastle (UoN). It is written for prospective Honours students, current Honours students and supervisors. The Honours Program Coordinator (PC) will refer to this manual in all procedural matters. The manual outlines the program structure, eligibility rules, application process, procedures for procuring a supervisor, supervision ground rules, thesis requirements, submission process, examination, and final grade allocation.

In all procedural matters the Honours PC is the first point of call. The PC's role is to:

- provide guidance to prospective and current students,
- advise academic staff,
- oversee the admissions process,
- approve supervision arrangements,
- administer and evaluate progress reports, and
- manage the thesis examination process.

The Honours PC will also deal with grievances, except when this is directed at the PC, in which case grievances should be taken to a Deputy Head of School (HoS) or the HoS.

## 2. HONOURS PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The [Bachelor Honours Degree](#) “qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning” (Source – Australian Qualifications Framework 2013, p.49). “Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional/highly skilled work and/or further learning” (op cit, p.13).

The Honours Programs in the SoE are referred to as [Embedded Honours](#) and involve a research project integrated into a four year 330 unit degree program schedule in one of the following programs:

- [Bachelor of Education \(Secondary\) \(Honours\)](#)
- [Bachelor of Education \(Early Childhood and Primary\) \(Honours\)](#)
- [Bachelor of Education \(Primary\) \(Honours\)](#)

The **Bachelor of Education (Honours)** programs consists of the following four courses:

- [EDUC4955 Education Honours I: Introduction to Education Research](#) (10 units);
- [EDUC4965 Education Honours II: Research Design and Methods](#) (10 units);
- [EDUC4975A Honours III: Thesis A](#) (10 units); and
- [EDUC4975B Honours IV: Thesis B](#) (10 units).

All four courses must be completed to be eligible for the award of an Honours degree.

The expected pattern of enrolment is for students to undertake Honours I (EDUC4955) and Honours II (EDUC4965) in their third year (in Semester 1 & 2 respectively), followed by Honours III (EDUC4975A) and Honours IV (EDUC4975B) in Semester 1 & 2 of their fourth year. EDUC4975A and EDUC4975B make up the independent research thesis component of the program, spreading this work over the full year. These courses must be completed in order within a 12-month period (i.e., in consecutive terms).

EDUC4975A will only count towards a student's program once EDUC4975B has been completed. Neither can be completed as a standalone course.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

All Bachelor of Education students who have completed a minimum of 160 units (80 of which must be in Education incorporating both EDUC2102 and EDUC1103) over the first two years of their program, with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 5.0 and above, are eligible to be considered for admission.

GPA is calculated from all courses completed. The following formula is used in the calculation of cumulative GPA:

0	FF Grades
4	Pass
5	Credit
6	Distinction
7	High Distinction

### 4. APPLICATION PROCESS AND ADMISSION

Students submit their application for the Honours Program, inclusive of a completed application form (downloadable from the respective Honours Program handbook) and a current academic transcript to the Honours PC ([EducationHonours@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:EducationHonours@newcastle.edu.au)). The closing date for applications is Friday of Week 13, Semester 2 of the student's second year.

Applicants with a borderline GPA score should include additional evidence of their capacity to undertake independent research in an Honours project (e.g., a letter of support from an academic staff member in the SoE). These applications will be considered by the Head of School (SoE), with the final decision resting with the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College of Human and Social Futures.

**Please note:** Applicants who commenced mid-year (Semester 2) will not be able to complete the Honours program in four years. Due to course sequence/availability, there is a 4.5-year minimum timeframe for program completion. These students should discuss their enrolment pattern with a Program Advisor and refer to the relevant program plan.

Once the Honours PC has reviewed the applications, eligible students will receive a letter of invitation into the Honours Program from the PC, which must be accepted in writing (via reply email). Upon notification of acceptance, students will be manually transferred into the relevant Bachelor of Education Honours program, after which they may enrol in EDUC4955 (and other Honours courses in turn). All commencing Honours students will meet with the Honours PC, prior to commencement of the research component of the Program.

### 5. TYPICAL PROGRAM COMPLETION PROCESS

Bachelor of Education (Honours) students will complete EDUC4955 and EDUC4965 in their third year, which provide the background knowledge required to complete an independent research project. While undertaking EDUC4965, students should begin identifying a possible supervisor and commence developing a research proposal. Supervision runs alongside the course requirements for EDUC4965, however the assessment tasks for EDUC4965 are marked by the Course Coordinator. EDUC4975A and EDUC4975B contain no coursework and students are exclusively supervised by their supervisor as they complete their research project and draft their thesis document.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Professional Experience Unit (PEU) will accord Honours students preferential internship placement. The Honours PC will liaise directly with the PEU to organise this.

## 6. SUPERVISION

To qualify for an Honours degree, students must complete an Honours thesis (see below). The thesis work is supervised by a qualified member of academic staff in the SoE. A supervisor will be a member of academic staff appointed to the School for the duration of the student's thesis work and who holds a research higher degree (PhD or EdD). Students are typically assigned a single supervisor. In the event of unforeseen circumstances affecting the working relationship between the student and the supervisor the Honours PC will be the contingent supervisor until an alternate supervisor is assigned.

### 6.1 IDENTIFYING SUPERVISOR

A supervisor should be finalised no later than Week 13 of Semester 2 in the student's third year. Students can gain assistance in identifying an appropriate supervisor by contacting the Honours PC but should attempt to identify a potential supervisor in the first instance. A [list of SoE staff](#) organised by their area of expertise/research focus is available online and is a useful starting place for identifying a supervisor. Once a supervisor is located, the supervision arrangements must be formalised with all parties (Student, Supervisor and Honours PC) consenting via email.

### 6.2 Supervision Ground Rules

Honours students are expected to be highly self-motivating and self-regulated learners capable of independent study under guidance. The formal teaching mode in EDUC4975A & B is individual consultation between the student and their thesis supervisor. Students are entitled to the equivalent of one hour of supervision per week for the duration of EDUC4975A & B. Supervision may take place in person, via online conferencing (e.g., Zoom), phone, email, and/or written feedback on submitted work.

It is strongly recommended that a meeting schedule is established early on between student and supervisor, and clear expectations are openly discussed and negotiated, including things like timelines for submission of work and supervisor feedback, frequency, timing, and content of meetings. It is the student's responsibility to stay in contact with the Supervisor. Students should remember that supervisors have many competing demands on their time. Students should therefore arrange meetings well in advance; always provide sufficient time for supervisors to read drafts (as negotiated); and always notify the Supervisor in advance if scheduled meetings cannot be attended.

Students should keep their Supervisor informed if they are experiencing any difficulties that are impeding the progress of the thesis. If they experience problems with the supervisory process which cannot be dealt with by consulting with the Supervisor, students should consult the Honours PC. If the Honours PC also happens to be the Supervisor, students should contact the Head of School. It is important that any problems with the progress of the thesis or with supervision are attended to and resolved as they arise.

Students are expected to respond appropriately to the advice and guidance given by their Supervisor about their Honours research project and thesis. The Supervisor will correct elementary errors as a matter of course, however in commenting on drafts the supervisor will more importantly provide advice on such matters as the nature of arguments advanced, important theoretical and conceptual issues, the employment of evidence, or appropriate literature to be consulted. Ultimately, however, the content of the thesis remains the responsibility of the student.

## 7. OTHER LEARNING SUPPORT

Honours students' academic development will be supported by the staff members involved in the Honours courses and by their supervisor. However, students are encouraged to utilise other available learning support, as appropriate, including accessing:

- information on relevant policies, course outlines and various downloadable forms and electronic templates found on the Honours Canvas sites (accessible to all Honours students and their supervisors)
- the UON libraries and librarians, including the [College of Human and Social Futures Research Librarian](#).
- undertaking relevant [short courses and information sessions](#), such as learning how to effectively search databases, access research journals, use Endnote reference management software, etc.
- the University's [Academic Learning Support unit](#). This unit works with students to help all students learn and write effectively at all stages of their degree program. Supervisors may refer students who need this extra support.
- regular research seminars for staff and postgraduate students held by the SoE. These seminars offer invaluable lessons in the explicit as well as the 'hidden curriculum' of the world of research. Honours students are strongly encouraged to attend and become members of the School's scholarly community.
- support from other Honours students and informal mentoring from postgraduate students. Honours students are encouraged to support each other's learning through forming informal study and/or reading groups. Here important tips can be shared about how to work effectively with one's supervisor and share the journey of completing a thesis.

## 8. THE HONOURS THESIS / DISSERTATION

The thesis component provides students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of a topic within Education and to design and conduct research on that topic. Students produce a thesis of approximately 12,000 words on an approved topic selected and researched by the candidate under the supervision of a member of academic staff with expertise in the proposed area of research. Upon successful completion of the thesis component students should:

1. Be able to demonstrate expertise in a chosen field of research in Education;
2. Be able to independently design, justify and conduct a small-scale research project;
3. Have advanced academic research skills and highly developed academic writing skills; and
4. Have produced a coherent, well-organised and professionally defensible thesis.

### 8.1 Format

The dissertation must be presented with 1.5 line spacing and a clearly readable font (e.g., Calibri, Time New Roman etc). Block quotations and footnotes or endnotes may be typed in single spacing. Adequate margins should be used. The content of the thesis is normally ordered as follows:

1. A title page giving the title of the dissertation in full; the name and any degrees held by the student; the name of the degree for which the dissertation is being submitted; the name of the School and of the University; and the date of the submission. An electronic copy of a template can be downloaded from the Honours Canvas site.
2. A table of contents.
3. A summary/abstract of no more than 400 words.
4. A signed statement of authorship to the effect that the dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution and that, to the best of the student's knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation (an electronic copy of a template can be downloaded from the Honours Canvas site).
5. An acknowledgement of any assistance given or work carried out by another person or organisations.
6. The main text.
7. A complete reference list (or Bibliography of cited materials).
8. Appendices, if any.

### **8.2 Referencing**

Research in the field of Education includes a range of disciplines and traditions that use different referencing styles. The most common referencing style is APA (American Psychological Association). The student must choose an appropriate referencing style in consultation with their Supervisor and apply the agreed upon referencing style consistently.

### **8.3 PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism constitutes serious academic misconduct. To reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in the academic environment students must read the [Academic Integrity and Ethical Academic Conduct Policy](#).

Given the recent appearance of powerful generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, particular attention should be paid to [UoN's information, policies and guidance](#) regarding acceptable (and unacceptable) use of AI. The speed of technical advances may result in regular updates to UoN's position regarding these tools. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they act in accordance with the most up to date policy/guidance during the completion of their research project and thesis. Students are urged to err on the side of caution and should consult with their supervisor prior to using AI tools when preparing their thesis.

Academic misconduct will be referred to the SoE Student Academic Conduct Officer (SACO) and may result in a Fail grade for the Thesis component. A fail grade will render a student ineligible to complete their Honours program.

### **8.4 Submission of THE THESIS**

The Honours Thesis is due at 5pm on Friday, Week 12 of the semester in which EDUC4975B is undertaken (typically Semester 2 of the fourth year). Students should submit their thesis electronically via the submission portal on the EDUC4975B Canvas site.

## 8.5 EXTENSION

The Supervisor can grant an extension of up to two-weeks and must notify the Honours PC of the new submission date. In extenuating circumstances, requests for extensions in excess of two weeks must be formally lodged with the Honours PC via the UoN adverse circumstances process. In making requests for any extensions, the student accepts that late submissions may have flow-on effects in terms of thesis examination and EDUC4975B course completion, which in turn may delay the graduation process. Efforts will be made to support timely thesis examination, but students requesting an extension should expect that they will not be able to graduate until the following year.

## 8.6 LATE PENALTIES

Submission of the thesis after the due date without an approved extension will incur a penalty of 10% per day late. A thesis submitted more than five days after the due date, without an approved extension, will only receive either a Pass (50%) or a Fail grade, regardless of the merits of the final report.

# 9. THESIS EXAMINATION

Prior to submission of the Honours thesis, the Supervisor nominates two examiners to the Honours PC (one internal and one external to SoE). At least one examiner should have expertise in the topic of research and at least one examiner should be an experienced examiner. The supervisor cannot be an examiner. The Honours PC will approve the nominations (or ask for new nominations) and make the necessary arrangements with the designated examiners. Students are not permitted to make contact with the examiners under any circumstances, at any point of the examination process.

The examiners will be provided with an Honours Thesis Marking Criteria (an example will be provided to students when commencing their Honours Thesis courses). The final thesis mark will be an average of the marks given by the two examiners. The student will be given a copy of each of the examiners' reports. The examination process normally takes 4-6 weeks from the date of submission.

## 9.1 Grade dispute

For information concerning finalising marking outcomes of the research component (Research Thesis/Dissertation) and any right of appeal please refer to the [Bachelor Honours Policy](#).

The Honours PC will inform the student when there has been an assessment dispute and the thesis has gone to a third examiner. Under these circumstances, delays in finalising results are to be expected.

## 9.2 Final grade allocation

There are three classes of Honours awarded in an Embedded Honours program:

- Class I
- Class II Division 1
- Class II Division 2

Please refer to the [Grading Scales and Administrative Codes](#) document within the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#) for further information on grading for Embedded Honours programs.