

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) - Application Requirements

Admission criteria:

Admission to honours is by invitation and follows high achievement in an appropriate bachelor degree. Any specific course entry and completion criteria must also be met.

Other criteria:

- A bachelor degree in one of the Humanities honours majors, with a course weighted average of 65 or higher.
- All applicants must submit a two-page research proposal outlining the intended focus of the honours project or dissertation and demonstrating the capacity to undertake research at an honours level.

Credit for recognised learning (CRL): Applications for recognition of prior learning are assessed on an individual basis.

The research proposal

The research proposal will be used to assess the capacity of the applicant to undertake Honours level study and whether the faculty is able to provide appropriate supervision.

The research proposal should demonstrate:

- A clearly defined, relevant and achievable research project;
- Strong academic writing skills;
- Applicant's capacity to undertake Honours level study in the proposed topic.

Preparing your research proposal

Undertaking honours is a considerable development of your undergraduate studies. The following information is provided to assist you in preparing your research proposal and taking the step beyond your previous studies as part of your application for the program.

- Think of a research topic that interests you and then search for existing scholarly studies or papers on the topic. While the BA Honours program encourages you to challenge yourself and be creative in your thinking and potential research ideas, you are advised to locate your research in the same discipline area as your undergraduate degree to ensure that you have the skills and experience to deliver the research project.
- Identify a specific research focus that you would like to explore.

- The honours research can take the form of either a written dissertation or a creative production thesis. Consider which stream is most appropriate for you:
 - A creative practice thesis consists of two components: a body of creative production (such as a screenplay, series of artworks, theatre production, short film etc.) and a written exegesis of 5,000 words. Both components address the same research focus, albeit in different languages.
 - A thesis by written dissertation is a single study which provides you with the scope to undertake in-depth investigation of a key issue or question that you have identified and pursued through your research. The dissertation is 15,000 words in length.
- While supervision will not be confirmed until the beginning of the academic year, you may approach a potential supervisor to gauge their interest in your proposed topic or research focus. It is worth reading the staff profile pages of potential supervisors within your area to gain a sense of the person or people you would most like to work with. If you have a preferred supervisor in mind, be sure to name them in your research proposal. Every effort will be made to match you with your preferred supervisor, although this might not always be possible.

Your project proposal should be no more than two pages in length.

Format

The following is a suggested format for your proposal, designed to allow you to articulate the most important aspects of your proposed project.

1. Title

The title of the study should clearly communicate the topic and focus of the proposed research. It should be no more than 10-20 words. This is a working title only—it is likely to change many times as your project develops and grows.

2. Draft research question

All Honours research will be guided by at least one research question. A good question will direct your research and help to keep the investigation focused, relevant and achievable. It is expected that the research question will be revised and refined throughout the Honours journey as new discoveries are made. It should be viewed as a work in progress rather than a final product.

In *The Craft of Research* Booth, Colomb and Williams (1995) offer the following structure for a research question:

“1. Name your topic:

I am studying _____,

2. Imply your question:

because I want to find out who/how/why _____,

3. *State the rationale for the question and the project:*

in order to understand how/why/what _____” (45).

3. Broad research objectives

Identify two or three objectives that will assist you in addressing your research question, i.e. list two or three tasks you aim to achieve through your project.

Objectives usually involve verbs like examine, analyse, develop and evaluate, for example:

- Critically analyse discourses on relational aesthetics to support the development of a body of creative work;
- Examine the representation of gender in videogames to identify dominant trends;
- Evaluate strategies for combatting educational disadvantage in rural populations.

4. Introduction and background

Explain your research focus and identify the topic of the study. It would be helpful to indicate briefly what you know about research/work already undertaken in this area. How does your proposed research build on existing work in the field?

5. Research Methods

Indicate how you might set about investigating the research question. What needs to be done, how will you do it, and why do you plan to do it that way?

Describe specific methods and explain how applying them will assist you in answering your research question (e.g. printmaking, discourse analysis, feminist analysis, metafiction, poetry, parody, surveys, documentary film, unstructured interviews, site visits, etc.)

- Why are these the most appropriate methods?
- What other techniques or strategies are required in order to apply these methods?
- Will you require special permissions, protocols or clearances? Are there ethical considerations?

6. Significance of the Research

In this paragraph, you should briefly describe the relevance of your study; why it matters. You might talk about one or another of the following dimensions of the project:

- How does this research contribute to a particular discipline and/or community?
- How might practice in your area be improved/changed because of your study?
- What is the broader significance of your research?

7. References

Your research proposal does not need to have an extensive bibliography, but it will be helpful if you include a very short bibliography that lists any works you cite, plus any texts that you think are central to your proposed project.

Suggested reading:

- Barrett, Estelle and Barbara Bolt. Ed. 2007. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. I.B. Tauris: London
- Booth, Wayne C. et al. 1995. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago
- Grierson, Elizabeth et al. 2009. *Creative Arts Research: Narratives of Methodologies and Practices*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam
- Wisker, Gina. 2009. *The Undergraduate Research Handbook*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke