

## **Thesis Guidelines for Students in the Department of Education and Wellness**

### The Process of Matching Students with Mentors

The mentoring relationship between the Honors Student and the faculty mentor is critical to the successful completion of the Honors thesis. The expertise of the faculty member and scholarly interests of the student should promote a productive, engaging relationship. It is essential that the students choose a faculty mentor who has time in their teaching and research schedule to meet the demands of the mentoring relationship.

After an initial discussion between the honor student and the prospective mentor in the department, the faculty member will talk with their department chair prior to formally accepting the request to mentor.

In discussions between the student and faculty, academic preparation and plans for the student (i.e., specific courses taken or additional background) must be determined. It is possible that specific courses must be taken in order to complete the project. These will become part of the agreement between the faculty and the student.

### Thesis Academic Credit:

Department of Education and Wellness majors must seek approval to substitute a course for HNR 498 hours from the chair of the department and the Teacher Education Committee as necessary.

### What Constitutes acceptable thesis work in the Department of Education and Wellness?

The Honors thesis constitutes a significant body of work in which the Honors Student demonstrates their growth and development as a researcher. The Honors thesis is driven by a spirit of inquiry, in which the student asks a question of educational significance. After an extensive literature search, the Honors Student will refine their question and determine a methodology to collect and analyze data. Results of the inquiry may include a better understanding of the research question, some answers to the research question, and/or further questions. Data collection and analytical methods may be her qualitative or quantitative, depending upon the nature of the research question. In any case, the faculty mentor will guide the Honors Student through this process, assisting the student in refining the research question, evaluating the quality of the literature review, and offering advice on data collection methods and data analysis. Finally, the faculty mentor will carefully review the final thesis to ensure that it represents the highest level of scholarship of which this Honors Student is capable.

It is possible that a student may want to implement a program or conduct a service-learning project to answer their research question. In this case, the faculty mentor will assist the student in determining a likely site for the project and enlisting the support of agencies, schools, institutions or neighborhoods located in the local community, other regions of the state, nation, or

international settings. The faculty member will provide guidance on the project design and implementation, as well as data collection and analysis.

A public presentation of the Honors thesis and a defense are required by the Honors Program. For Honors Students in the early childhood, elementary, middle grades or special education programs, it is recommended that the Honors Student and their mentor present the student's research during one of the regularly scheduled meetings of the Department of Education and Wellness.

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#### Time Line for Completion of the Honors Thesis

The proposal for the Honors thesis should be submitted during fall semester of the student's junior year. Honors Students are encouraged to complete their theses prior to student teaching.