

Honours Thesis Guidelines

NUTR 4499 – Honours Thesis (One unit)

This course offers students an opportunity to conduct a research project as part of their undergraduate program. Interested students are required to dialogue with faculty regarding potential topics and faculty availability for the supervision of the research project.

As per the Undergraduate Academic Calendar, students wishing to obtain an honours degree must make formal application through the Department chairperson by **May 1** of the third year of the program or after the completion of 15.0 units, using the standardized application form. The minimum requirements for acceptance into the honours degree are a GPA of 3.0 in the last 10 academic units, with no grade less than C in any of these units. Full requirements, as per the Academic Calendar, may be viewed on the second page of the application form.

Once in receipt of the application form, the Chair, in consultation with department faculty members, makes the decision to accept the applicant into the honours degree or not. Students should anticipate a formal acceptance letter (via email) by the end of May.

Course outlines must be created as part of the course registration process. A sample of a thesis course outline can be reviewed to better help both the student and faculty member to understand the expectations.

Thesis Timeline*

First Semester (Proposal Stage)

In the first semester, the student will thoroughly plan the honours project under the supervision of a departmental faculty member, write a thesis proposal, and present it through a public thesis proposal presentation.

During the proposal stage, the student will:

1. Meet regularly (weekly/bi-weekly) with the thesis supervisor to report on the work completed and/or to discuss problems encountered.
2. Develop a thesis proposal which will include:
 - Statement of the research problem
 - Literature review
 - Theoretical framework
 - Description of the methodology
 - Plan for analysis
 - Discussion of ethical considerations and safeguards
 - Budget (if applicable)
3. Present the proposal through a public thesis proposal presentation. Students are encouraged to participate in the same day group proposal presentation organized by the department if one is scheduled. This event offers all honours students and supervisors an opportunity to receive feedback on the proposed research project.

4. Complete an Application for Ethics Approval (if required) once the proposal has been presented and finalized.

The Ethics Process:

- Students use the Standard Application for Research Ethics Clearance (REB.FORM.001) or the Student Research as Part of Faculty Research (REB.FORM.006) or the Application for Use of Secondary Data (REB.FORM.005). The REB.FORMS can be found here: [Forms and Applications \(msvu.ca\)](#)
- When the student's project is part of a larger study, it is very important for the student (and supervisor) to clearly delineate the work that the student is responsible for within the honours thesis proposal.
- The student provides two hard copies to the Chair of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee for review by the department committee.
- Once approved at the departmental level, the Departmental Research Ethics Committee Chair writes a cover letter stating its approval.
- Students then submit two copies of their ethics application, accompanied by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee Chair's approval letter, to the University Research Ethics Coordinator prior to the end of term.
- Students who conduct research with human participants, or use secondary data collected from human participants, must have their research approved by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee **and** by the MSVU Research Ethics Board Chair before proceeding with any contacting of potential participants and/or data collection/analysis.

The proposal and oral presentation must be completed and approved by the thesis supervisor by **December 15th***¹ of the year enrolled. In certain situations, exceptions will be considered on an individual basis by the Department of Applied Human Nutrition. Students may be asked to withdraw if deadlines are not met.

If work in the first semester is deemed unacceptable and/or the student fails to meet the established deadlines, the student will be required to withdraw from the course. Students are directed to [2.2.13 Withdrawal \(msvu.ca\)](#) for an explanation of the withdrawal process including grade and financial implications.

Second Semester

In the second semester, once ethics is approved, the student will carry out the planned project, write the thesis, and present the thesis at a public thesis defense. The student must carry the project to its conclusion in order to be awarded credit for the course work. The faculty supervisor will submit a final grade (alpha, not Pass or Fail) to the Registrar based on the student's performance in all aspects of conducting the thesis.

During this stage the student will:

1. Participate in regular (weekly/bi-weekly) meetings with the supervisor as recommended.

¹ If following the fall/winter sequence

2. Engage in research activities as delineated in the research proposal.
3. The findings which will arise from the analysis, discussion of the findings, and a discussion of implications for practice will be added to the proposal document to constitute a complete thesis.

A typical thesis will include:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Problem Statement/Research Goals & Objectives
- Theoretical Framework
- Methods/Research Design
- Results
- Discussion
- Implications for dietetic practice/policy/future research
- Conclusion

In the writing of the thesis students are expected to adhere to the correct use of language standards. They are reminded that the University regulations on plagiarism and cheating will be strictly enforced. These regulations are posted on the departmental bulletin boards and information may be also obtained from your supervisor and the University website.

Referencing for the thesis should be completed using the following format:

- APA Style 7th edition.
- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors - Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals (<http://www.icmje.org/index.html>).
- This is the format found in the Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research; and this requirement is consistent with what is required of MScAHN theses.

For students concerned about convocation deadline, they must ensure the thesis is successfully defended and all revisions are completed prior to the final date for submission of marks.

*While Fall/Winter is the usual sequence for honours work. From time to time, students will begin their projects during SSI, SSII or Winter. If this is the case, students and supervising faculty must still adhere to the above thesis timeline schedule, ensuring deliverables are accomplished and the project is moving forward. It is expected that students will finish honours work within two semesters (SSI & SSII; SSII & Fall; Fall & Winter; Winter & SSI).