Honors Project Guidelines

The Basics

1. Projects should be supervised and approved by a K-State mentor with appropriate expertise. The first step: student and mentor discuss and come up with a plan.

2. Projects can involve multiple mentors and/or external experts as well, but *one* K-Stater must serve as the designated project supervisor (approves both proposal and completed project).

3. Submit the project proposal and obtain project approval *prior to* beginning the proposed project.

4. You will find the project proposal form in the University Honors Program Info module in Canvas (follow "STUDENT LINK: submit your honors project proposal here" to find that form).

5. Students have the option to earn academic credit for the honors project and should consult with the UHP if they think that will benefit them.

6. Senior projects/capstone courses **cannot** be counted "as" the honors project. However, completing a meaningful extension or addition to the parameters of the required work/research would be acceptable if the instructor was amenable.

What Is an Honors Project?

An ideal honors project should be a *significant intellectual and/or creative effort* that:

1. *Reflects interests and goals*
   o Signals the intellectual interests of the student
   o Adds value for the future aspirations of the student

2. *Is rewarding and worth undertaking*
   o Challenges the student to grow in knowledge and skills
   o Explores questions or pursues creative inquiry that is valuable within a particular field or interdisciplinary framework

3. *And results in an intellectual product*
   o Documents results in a field- and topic-appropriate medium
   o Demonstrates the ability to produce/present results in a polished way

Categories

We identify four tracks for completion of the honors project in order to highlight the diversity of options and to recognize the varied aspirations of our students.

1. *Research* – traditional "honors thesis" where students complete research under faculty supervision.

2. *Professional* – intellectual product developed through or based upon a full-time internship or co-op experience for a minimum of ten weeks. Two distinct internships with a single employer may also be used as the basis for a project, provided they total at least ten weeks (with UHP approval granted before the second internship).

3. *International* – intellectual product developed through or based upon study or service abroad for a minimum of ten weeks.

4. *Creative* – based upon the creation of original creative work, principally for students in fields for whom artistic production is an essential scholarly activity.

How Much Work?

1. Since students need to be supervised/mentored by somebody with relevant expertise, these individuals can help in setting discipline-appropriate expectations, both for the scope of the project and the form of the intellectual product.

2. We are reluctant to impose specific length or format requirements, or guideline for hours involved. Different fields have very different approaches. *A good standard for many disciplines might be comparability to the major intellectual product of a 3-hour capstone course in the student's major.*

3. We encourage students to aspire to publish the results of their honors project. Considering outlets for publication can help to frame appropriate parameters.

4. Publication is not always feasible. We *do not expect* projects to be publishable in major journals to be sufficient, valuable learning experiences. Students also have the option of asking us to include their project in the Honors section of K-Rex as a means of publishing.

5. Students who pursue creative projects might consider where they might perform or display their work as a guide to framing appropriate parameters.

6. We want successful, high-achieving students to be able to complete their honors projects. Thus, the scale of the project should usually be limited to something that the student can complete in a semester or two, given appropriate, regular application of effort.

Standard for Successful Completion?

In short, we want students to do quality work that **both the university and the student would be proud to showcase** when presented with the opportunity. Project mentors are key to knowing how to balance high standards with achievable expectations.

1. To reiterate, while "publishable" is an aspirational goal, it is not the minimum standard for a successful project.

2. Completed projects should reflect:
   - Significant effort
   - Sound methodology
   - Successful execution
   - Knowledge of the discipline
   - Demonstrated critical and/or creative thinking
   - Clear and effective communication
   - Polished writing

3. We do not *require* projects to be publically presented once completed. However, presenting your intellectual work is a valuable learning experience that reflects the value the university places on disseminating knowledge. Thus, we encourage students to present their results and recognize the prerogative of a college, department and/or research mentor to deem it necessary.

4. The project supervisor ultimately approves completion of the honors project.

   - Would they be comfortable sharing the project with their peers as an honors project mentored by them?

   - Would they be comfortable knowing the student was sharing the project with alumni or employers and representing it as the product of a high-achieving K-State student?