

**HONORS PROGRAM BROCHURE  
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Applied Behavioral Science encourages qualified majors to work toward graduation with departmental honors. *Departmental honors* is awarded in recognition of exceptional performance in ABS coursework, completion of a senior honors thesis, and a strong overall academic record. The honors program is especially appropriate for students who are planning graduate study. It offers an opportunity for students to gain experience with empirical research on human behavior and development, scientific writing, and oral presentations.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Grade Point Average

Students who wish to be admitted to the Honors Program must have an overall GPA of 3.25, and a GPA of 3.5 in ABS coursework (including work at other institutions). Students must maintain these GPA minimums to the time of graduation.

Coursework

Admission also requires completion of a minimum of 60 hours in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students must be ABS majors, and must have taken the following courses: ABSC\* 160 or ABSC\* 161; ABSC\* 140; and ABSC\* 308 or PSYC 300. It is strongly recommended that students admitted to the honors program enroll in ABSC\* 496 *Honors and Thesis in Applied Behavioral Science* during the last two semesters prior to graduation (although two semesters are recommended, it is required that students enroll for at least one semester). This course is a faculty-supervised independent study and research course. Students will normally enroll in 1 to 3 hours in the first semester and 3 to 5 hours in the second semester, for a total of 4-6 credits at graduation. The student must earn a grade of "B" or higher in all semesters of ABSC\* 496 in order to graduate with departmental honors.  
(\*courses listed as HDFL before January 1, 2005)

Research Project

Each ABS Honors student will complete a senior honors thesis under the supervision of a faculty member. The thesis should be based on an empirical research project that is of publishable quality. Acceptability of the research project and thesis will be judged by a committee composed of the student's faculty supervisor and two faculty readers. During the first semester of enrollment in ABSC 496, the student will submit a **written proposal** for the research project for approval by his or her committee. The student will submit a **written thesis** based on the research project by stop day of their last semester of enrollment in ABSC 496. The faculty committee will grade the thesis as acceptable or not acceptable for departmental honors. The faculty supervisor alone will assign the student's grade in ABSC 496.

### Oral Presentation

The honors student will give an oral presentation of his or her thesis at a formal meeting of the other honors students, their faculty supervisors and invited guests. If, during a particular semester, fewer than three students are completing honors theses in ABS, the student has the option of presenting or “defending” the thesis before his or her committee. In this presentation, the student will describe the research, present figures, tables and other relevant visual aids, and answer questions. A final option (conditional on permission from the ABS Graduate Student Council) is to present the research as a poster during the Graduate Student Poster Session at the end of the Spring semester. The student is also strongly encouraged to present the thesis at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. For this presentation, the student prepares a poster consisting of an abstract, figures, tables, and other relevant visual aids. During the poster session the student also has an opportunity to describe the research and answer questions for faculty, graduate and undergraduate students and other invited guests.

### Paperwork

To begin the honors program. At the beginning of the student’s first semester of ABSC 496, the student and supervisor should complete the *Departmental Honors Intent Form* and submit it to the Honors Coordinator, who will submit it to the college and the department. Intent Forms can be obtained in the front office, 4001 Dole.

To complete the honors program. Once a written thesis has been approved by the student’s committee, the student and faculty supervisor should complete a Certification Form for Departmental Honors and submit it to the College Graduation Office by the Senior grades deadline. Certification Forms are also available in the ABSC front office. A copy of this form should be sent to the honors coordinator so that the student’s name can appear in the graduation program.

## GUIDELINES

### Identifying a Faculty Supervisor

Any faculty member with a regular, joint, or courtesy appointment in the Department of Applied Behavioral Science may serve as the student’s research supervisor. The student is responsible for securing a faculty supervisor. The additional committee members (i.e., faculty readers) will be chosen by the primary research supervisor, in collaboration with the honors student.

### Developing a Research Project

The honors thesis should be based on an empirical study that is conducted by the student under the supervisor’s direction. The idea for the research project does not have to originate from the student alone; rather, the research can be based upon an idea reached jointly by the honors student and the faculty supervisor. Frequently, the project comes from the ongoing research program of the faculty supervisor. The project may not be used for any other purpose (e.g., it cannot be a part of someone’s masters thesis or dissertation). The project must be original research, and should meet reasonable standards for publication. As such, the study should involve reliable and valid measures, good experimental or statistical design, and make some contribution to a research program or to the research literature.

### The Thesis Proposal

Once the student has identified both a faculty supervisor and a research question for empirical investigation, he or she should write a thesis proposal. The thesis proposal is a written plan for the student's research project. The proposal should begin with a review of the relevant research literature and a clear statement of the student's hypotheses based on this literature. This literature review should be followed by a detailed review of the methods to be used in the study, including a description of the procedures, the measures, and the proposed subject sample. Finally, the proposal should conclude by discussing the anticipated findings, and the conclusions that might be drawn from the work. This written plan must be approved by the student's committee before the study is carried out.

### HSC-L Approval

In most cases, the student (under the sponsorship of the research advisor) must obtain approval for the research project from the University of Kansas Human Subjects Committee-Lawrence (HSC-L). HSC-L approval involves the completion of a 1-hour on-line tutorial and the submission of a research plan. The student's faculty advisor should assist him or her in developing and submitting this research plan. Specific guidelines and forms for securing HSC-L approval can be obtained at [www.research.ukans.edu](http://www.research.ukans.edu).

### The Thesis

Structure of the thesis. The thesis should conform to APA manuscript style, with the exception that the tables and figures may appear in the text rather than at the end of the manuscript. Thus, the text of the student's thesis should include an **Introduction**, in which he or she reviews the relevant research literature and states the study's hypotheses, a **Method** section, in which the specific procedures are outlined, a **Results** section, in which the findings of the study are summarized, and a **Discussion** section, in which the results are interpreted in light of the research literature and conclusions about the hypotheses are drawn. Of course, the manuscript should also include a complete list of all **References** and **tables** and/or **figures** as necessary. The student is advised to review the guidelines for APA style provided in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2001), and/or to ask one's faculty advisor for a copy of a manuscript already prepared in APA style.

Approval of the thesis. The student must submit the written thesis at the end of his or her senior year. The thesis must be approved by the committee consisting of the student's research supervisor, and two faculty readers. The deadline for thesis submission is stop day.

### Oral Presentation

The goals of the oral presentation are to (a) provide practice in condensing a large amount of technical information into a brief talk for a broad audience, (b) to provide practice in public speaking, and (c) to allow students and faculty to learn about the work that goes on in other research programs. The presentation should generally follow a similar format to the thesis, consisting of an introduction, method, results, and discussion. The presentation should be between 10 and 15 minutes in length, leaving approximately 5 minutes at the end of the talk for a question and answer session. Questions may be posed by either faculty or other students. The presentation should be accompanied by some visual aids, such as transparencies, handouts, or slides.