

Schreyer Scholars Program - Honors Thesis Policy

To maintain a consistent and high standard for the honors thesis, the writing of an honors thesis and the work that contributes to it will adhere to the following policy:

1. Honors students are expected to base the writing of the thesis on a body of substantial laboratory research. Only under exceptional circumstances and with the advance approval of the Department Head will a literature-based thesis be deemed acceptable.
2. Any Schreyer Scholar engaged in thesis research with a BMB Department faculty member or BMMB graduate faculty member is eligible for receiving their honors degree from the BMB Department. Schreyer Scholars meeting this criterion but who are not majors in BMB, BIOTC or MICRB will be assigned a Scholars Advisor in the BMB Department.
3. Schreyer Scholars who major in BMB, BIOTC or MICRB can also choose to do research with someone other than a BMB Department faculty member or BMMB graduate faculty member. However, if they wish to receive honors in the BMB Department, they must seek approval of the project prior to the start of the thesis research. Only faculty members located at the University Park campus will be considered as eligible mentors. Research not administered under the guidance of faculty located on the University Park campus will not be considered for approval. To obtain approval for a project, the Schreyer Scholar must submit a petition to the BMB departmental office that contains the following:

A statement from the Schreyer Scholar that describes how the proposed thesis research will use molecular approaches to address a biological problem.

A statement from the faculty mentoring the project that briefly outlines the project. The faculty mentor will be considered a co-thesis advisor and, in addition to supervising the project, will perform duties expected of a BMB thesis advisor as described in this policy.

A written approval from a BMB faculty member who will serve as co-thesis advisor. The co-thesis advisor must be distinct from the student's honors advisor in BMB. The BMB faculty member will perform duties expected of a BMB thesis advisor as described in this policy.

To be approved, the petition must receive a majority vote for approval by the scholars advisors in BMB and a vote of approval from the BMB department head. Upon submission of the thesis, the student will be expected to obtain a letter from the supervisor of the research stating that the supervisor has read the thesis and confirming that the work presented in the thesis was performed by the student.

4. Progress reports on thesis research must be turned in each semester to 108 Althouse Lab. It is the responsibility of the Scholar to:

- Secure the form from the Department office (108 Althouse) or from the department 496 web page (Adobe Acrobat format)
 - Complete the top part of the progress report
 - Deliver it to the thesis advisor for approval
 - Return the form to 108 Althouse by the last day of class for the semester. The Department office will monitor all scholars enrolled in BMB/MICRB 496 to ensure that each has turned in a progress report. Following office notation, a copy of the progress report will be forwarded to the BMB/BIOTC/MICRB Scholars Advisor for inclusion in the student's file. A progress report is not required for the semester in which the thesis is submitted.
5. In order to focus their thinking and complete the literature search in a timely fashion, students are strongly encouraged to prepare a draft of the thesis introduction at least three months before the final submission date. This should be submitted only to the thesis advisor for approval.
 6. A rough draft of the thesis must be submitted to the Department office by the Monday of week 10 of the semester in which the degree is to be conferred. It is expected that this draft has already met with the approval of the thesis advisor. The thesis will be forwarded to the Scholars Advisor for preliminary review. The Scholars Advisor's comments will be made on the Thesis Draft Evaluation form, which the student should obtain from the Department office. If serious problems are noted by the Scholars Advisor, the thesis and comments will be forwarded to the Department head for further review and recommendations. If the draft is found to be acceptable by the Scholars Advisor, it will not be forwarded to the Department head. No signatures are required for the rough draft. Students will contact their honors advisor 1 week after submission to recover the draft and comments.
 7. The final draft of the thesis with all necessary signatures, except the Department Head's, must be submitted to 108 Althouse for review and signing by the Department Head at least one week before Schreyer's final thesis submission deadline. Office personnel will make a photocopy of the thesis when all signatures have been affixed and notify the Scholar to come pick up his/her original copy so that he/she can electronically submit.
 8. Deadlines established by the Department are rigorously enforced. Deadlines for the thesis itself, as well as for the various forms/reports of the program, are established to encourage timely progress on the research project. The exact deadlines for each semester will be provided by the Department office. The following summarizes when these deadlines occur:

Week 10: Submit thesis draft and Thesis Draft Evaluation form to the department office. The Evaluation form should have the thesis advisors approval.

Week 11: Student should retrieve the thesis and comments from the scholars advisor, complete the writing of the thesis and return the final draft to the Scholars Advisor for the Scholars Advisor's final approval.

Week 12: Submit to 108 Althouse the final thesis with signatures from the thesis advisor and the honors advisor.

Week 14: Submit to the Scholars office the final thesis with all necessary signatures including the department head's.

9. BMB, BIOTC and MICRB majors who choose not to receive honors in the BMB Department are not bound by this policy. Such students are advised to become familiar with the relevant policies established by the external department.
10. Students working on an honors thesis are expected to adhere to the guidelines for selecting a thesis advisor as outlined in POLICY FOR ARRANGING 496-INDEPENDENT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY.
11. In order for the student to receive an honors degree from the BMB Department, the thesis must be deemed acceptable. A thesis will be deemed unacceptable when:

The thesis advisor fails to approve the thesis.

or

Both the scholar advisor and the department head fail to approve the thesis.

In the event that the thesis is deemed unacceptable, the student has the following options:

a. graduate without honors.

or

b. defer graduating with honors until the deficiency is rectified. This could involve rewriting the thesis or continuing laboratory work beyond the end of the semester. Graduation with honors would then occur at the end of the following semester.