

FAQ for Thesis Directors

1. What are the benefits of being a Thesis Director?

You have the opportunity to work with MTSU's brightest. You are able to involve students in your research and to mentor students in the expectations of the profession. The Honors College pays a small honorarium to Directors whose students successfully defend their thesis. You will also receive the appreciation of the students and the Honors College for playing a key role in the intellectual and professional development of students.

2. What factors should I consider before becoming a Thesis Director?

Can you find a time to be accessible to a student? Will you have time to read the thesis? Is the thesis roughly within your own area of expertise? Does the student seem like a person you can work with? Do you have any prior teaching commitments that will conflict with your availability to the student?

3. Do I have to be a member of the Honors Faculty to become a Thesis Director?

No.

4. What is the time commitment involved with becoming a Thesis Director?

This will vary from one thesis to another, but at a minimum, a thesis Director should meet with a student at least once or twice *weekly* until the proposal is completed, and participate in the thesis proposal meeting. We also recommend weekly meetings as the student is writing his or her thesis. You will need to read individual chapters, send feedback to the student, read revisions and the completed thesis, and be available to sit in on the final thesis defense. We do not advise mentoring more than two or three students at a time.

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5. What are my responsibilities during the thesis process?

You are responsible for giving specific feedback to your student so that they are able to develop a quality proposal. You should also ensure that the student is following his or her timeline as closely as possible and turning in work regularly. It is important for you to maintain regular communication with your student even if you're not always meeting in person. You should try to be available to the student outside of just the regular meetings.

6. How often should I meet with my student during UH 4900 and UH 4950?

This will vary widely, depending on the maturity of the student, but you should probably designate at least one hour a week during which a student can meet with you if needed. You should make an effort to be accessible to the student during more than your scheduled meeting times.

7. When should the student turn his or her drafts in to me?

The deadlines for the proposal and the thesis are specified. You should work with the student during the proposal process to outline a reasonable timeline for other work.

8. What are the timelines within the process?

A thesis project is a two-semester process. In the first semester, a thesis or creative proposal (UH 4900) is due approximately five weeks after school begins. After the deadline, meetings are held to discuss the proposal, and a revised one may be required. After revisions are made, the final proposal is submitted for approval, and the student may register for UH 4950. Students should begin work immediately on the project (over holiday breaks and/or over the summer). Waiting until the semester it is due to be finished is a recipe for disaster.

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9. In what style or format should the thesis project be written?

Students should read and follow the *Honors Thesis Guide*. There is a specific style designated for the cover page. Bibliographic and footnote styles will vary by discipline. The best way to get a feel for this is to look at past theses, which are in the Honors library. In all cases, though, students, in consultation with their Directors, should use the style most appropriate for their field of study. Major styles include, but are not limited to, APA, MLA, and Chicago.

10. Are there any special considerations if a student is doing a creative thesis?

There must always be some written component. Otherwise, this will vary significantly by discipline and by project.

11. Who leads the UH 4900 and/or UH 4950 meetings?

The Dean, Associate Dean, or another administrative delegate of the Honors College.

12. What should I do if my student wants to change his or her thesis topic after the proposal has been approved?

Certainly, you want to begin by talking with the student. Many students just need extra guidance in this area. It is usually better to modify an existing proposal than to start all over, but if a student is hitting a dead end, we would prefer that he or she switch rather than give up on the thesis altogether. If you conclude that it is in your student's best interest to switch topics, then please reach out to the Dean or Associate Dean for approval and advice.

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13. What should I do if my student does not respond to my emails or phone calls?

Alert the Dean, or the Associate Dean so that we know this. We want all students to succeed, but success is often determined by whether students take personal responsibility for their projects.

14. Whom should I contact if I have questions?

For questions about deadlines and general guidelines contact -

uhc@mtsu.edu

For thesis questions, contact -

Dr. John R. Vile at John.Vile@mtsu.edu or Dr. Philip Phillips at Phillip.Phillips@mtsu.edu