

Required Elements of the Creative Thesis Proposal *(supplement to the Honors College Thesis Guide)*

Creative projects have more flexibility in the content and format but must include an academic component in addition to the creative project. The proposal should therefore reflect both the scope of the creative project as well as its academic component.

Formatting

Proposals should be typed, double-spaced, using 12-point font, and paginated with one-inch margins. Format style is based on your discipline. Discuss with your thesis advisor if you should use MLA, APA, Chicago, etc. The Proposal should be 8-10 pages total (suggestions for length of each section are listed below). Pages must be numbered.

Title page - 1 page

- contains short, descriptive title of the proposed thesis
- author, institution, thesis advisor
- date of delivery

Introduction - 2-3 pages

This section sets the context for your proposed project and must capture the reader's interest.

- For a creative thesis or project-based thesis, your proposal should focus on what you plan to do and why this project is important to you and relevant to your major/interests/goals .
- Explain the background of your creative project, starting from a broad picture narrowing in on your specific project.
- Review what is known about your research topic (the academic component) as far as it is relevant to your thesis.
- Cite relevant references; use primary and secondary sources.
- The introduction should be at a level that makes it easy to understand for readers with a general background in your discipline.
- Define any terms that may be unfamiliar to those outside of your discipline.
- If you are stuck on this section, try writing it last. Your best overview of the project will most likely come after you have written the other sections of your proposal.

Thesis statement - up to a ½ page

In a couple of sentences, identify what you intend to accomplish with your creative project.

- This statement can take the form of a hypothesis, research question, project statement, or goal statement.
- The thesis statement should capture the essence of your intended project and also help to put boundaries around it.
- Provide a persuasive rationale for your argument by answering the following questions: Why is your project important? To whom is it important?

Approach/methods - 2-3 pages

Please DESCRIBE in detail what your project will involve, what the outcome or result will be, and how you will incorporate research-based analysis into your final thesis.

- **Academic component:** Explain how you will tie in the academic component to your project.
- **Procedures:** Explain how you will complete your project; using what medium.
- **The Completed Project Package:** Describe how you will present your final project: production,

recordings, pictures, etc.

- **Production Schedule (if applicable):** Include any public performance, showing, or presentation schedule.
- **Unique requirements:** Provide details as to how each of the following will be handled; include cost estimates where appropriate): equipment, processing, technical assistance.
- **Evaluation:** Develop specific criteria for evaluation of completed project.

Work plan, including timeline - 2-3 pages

Describe in detail what you plan to do from the date you turn in your proposal until the completion of your thesis project.

- List the stages of your project.
- Indicate deadlines you have set for completing each stage of the project, including any work you have already completed.
- Include public performance dates as applicable.
- Think about any particular challenges that need to be overcome and allow for extra time to complete stages.

List of references - 1-2 pages

- Cite all ideas, concepts, text, data that are not your own.
- If you make a statement, back it up with your own data or a reference.
- All references cited in the text must be listed.
- Do not use footnotes or endnotes in the proposal.

Appendices – if needed

- Include photos, survey instruments, IRB/IACUC approval letter, etc.

Tips

Grammar/spelling

- Poor grammar and spelling distract from the content of the proposal. The reader focuses on the grammar and spelling problems and misses key points made in the text. Modern word processing programs have grammar and spell checkers. Use them, and then proof read the document again yourself to catch what the word processor may have missed.
- Read your proposal aloud - then have a friend read it aloud. If your sentences seem too long, make two or three sentences instead of one.
- Simple wording is generally better.

Revisions

- You have been given a due date for your proposal to be turned into the Honors College (generally mid-February for Spring term and mid/late September for Fall term). Please note that this draft should be, to your eyes, in a finished state.
- Your advisor needs time to review your proposal **BEFORE** it is submitted to the Honors College. Ideally, he or she should have 2-3 chances to review your proposal before you submit it. This will give you and your advisor a chance to work out any major issues with your proposal before it is reviewed by the Thesis committee.
- You will continue to revise your proposal based on your research, conversations with your advisor, and feedback from your committee, but strive to submit the best possible proposal early in the semester.
- It is crucial that you regularly meet with your faculty mentor throughout the semester, even after the final proposal has been submitted.