



The University of Sydney
School of Geosciences

Honours Program 2010



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What Honours is about

The Honours year represents the bridge between (content-driven) undergraduate studies and (research-driven) postgraduate studies. It is an exciting year. For the first time, you have the opportunity to take intellectual leadership of a major research undertaking. It is challenging, but also rewarding. Students who successfully complete an Honours year gain an edge in life, whether that be manifested in employment, further studies, or a desire to better understand the world.

Honours in the School of Geosciences in 2010 will comprise the equivalent of 48 credit points (effectively, two semesters of full time enrollment), with the following requirements:

- 25% from the equivalent of 12 cp of approved coursework units
- 75% Thesis

If you are enrolled full-time and commencing in Sem 1, 2010, your thesis will be due in at 5.00pm on Friday, 29 October 2010. If you wish to enroll part-time, you should consult the Honours coordinator about due dates.

It is possible to commence Honours in the July Semester, however this involves preliminary approval from the Honours coordinator. Note that most Coursework options are not available in the July Semester, meaning that separate and individual arrangements need to be made.

Honours grades

You receive one grade for Honours, at the completion of your 48 credit points. (For full-time students commencing in the February Semester, this is in Nov-Dec.)

H1 (First Class)	80+
H2 (Second Class, First Division)	75-79
H2 (Second Class, Second Division)	70-74
H3 (Third Class)	65-69
No award of Honours	less than 65

Elaboration of expectations in each grade is provided in the Box.

Your final Honours grade is based upon work completed during your Honours year, and in the case of University Medals, your WAM.

Honours marking guidelines

95-100

Outstanding First Class quality of clear Medal standard, demonstrating independent thought throughout, a flair for the subject, comprehensive knowledge of the subject area and a level of achievement similar to that expected by first rate academic journals. This mark reflects an exceptional achievement with a high degree of initiative and self-reliance, considerable student input into the direction of the study, and critical evaluation of the established work in the area. Qualities of an outstanding thesis may include;

1. A well chosen issue for investigation with the aims and conclusions being clearly stated within the context of a well-developed and relevant body of literature.
2. Research design and investigation procedures that are appropriate to the problem selected.
3. Some evidence of originality in experimental design.
4. A clear, grammatically correct, concise and coherent and thesis that is logical in its structure and has tables, maps, graphs, etc. that are well presented, referenced and accurate. References are correctly cited and, where necessary, detailed data and statistical sources are included in appendices.
5. A high level of understanding of the subject area, including the significance of the work and the limitations of the work.
6. An ability to work with an advisor, but not to rely upon the advisor to generate ideas. In other words, a high level of initiative should be shown.
7. A thesis that is publishable in some form (after abbreviation and minor modifications) in a geographical journal.

90-94

Very high standard of work similar to above but overall performance is borderline for award of a Medal. Lower level of performance in certain categories or areas of study above.

80-89

Clear First Class quality, showing a broad and deep command of the field, with the presentation of some novel insights. Student will have shown a solid foundation of conceptual thought and a breadth of factual knowledge of the discipline, clear familiarity with and ability to use central methodology and experimental practices of the discipline, and clear evidence of some independence of thought in the subject area. Some student input into the direction of the study or development of techniques, and critical discussion of the outcomes.

75-79

Second class honours, first division - student will have shown a command of the theory and practice of the discipline. They will have demonstrated their ability to conduct work at an independent level and complete tasks in a timely manner, and have an adequate understanding of the background factual basis of the subject. Student shows some initiative but is more reliant on other people for ideas and techniques and the project is dependent on supervisor's suggestions. Student is dedicated to work and capable of undertaking a higher degree.

70-74

Second class honours, second division - student is proficient in the theory and practice of their discipline but has not developed complete independence of thought, practical mastery or clarity of presentation. Student shows adequate but limited understanding of the topic and has largely followed the direction of the supervisor.

65-69

Third class honours - performance indicates that the student has successfully completed the work, but at a standard barely meeting honours criteria. The student's understanding of the topic is extremely limited and they have shown little or no independence of thought or performance.

0-64

The student's performance in fourth year is not such as to justify the award of honours.

Honours program

Milestone dates

Mid-February	Confirm your coursework options with Bill Pritchard
Tuesday 2 March	<u>Compulsory introduction class</u> 1pm-3pm Madsen Conference room (449)
Thursday 4 March	<u>Compulsory class</u> introducing IT and administrative issues 1pm-3pm Madsen 331
March-April-May	Coursework requirements
5 April 4pm	Closing date for submissions to the 21 April meeting of the Human Research Ethics Committee
19 April 4pm	Closing date for submissions to the 2 May meeting of the Human Research Ethics Committee
3 May 4pm	Closing date for submissions to the 17 May meeting of the Human Research Ethics Committee
Friday 13 August	Mid-year presentations (all students required to give a mid-year progress presentation)
Friday 29 October 5pm	Theses due
Tuesday 2 November	Geosciences Honours presentation day

Additional to these dates are various other requirements relating to individual coursework options.



Important facts

Penalty for Lateness

A penalty of 5% per day will be deducted for late Seminar Reports and Thesis submission. No extensions are granted unless a Special Consideration form is submitted and approval granted.

Final Examination

In exceptional circumstances there may be an oral examination after theses have been examined. This will provide a student with the opportunity to present and defend their thesis.

Number of Assessors and the Assessment Process

The thesis will be assessed by three examiners. One of these examiners is the student's supervisor. The examiners will initially be selected based upon the recommendation of the supervisor, but this is subject to change in order to make workloads equitable or if the Honours Coordinator believes that a particular recommended examiner is not suitable. In these cases, the Honours Coordinator will discuss the matter with the supervisor. The examiners will mostly come from within the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney. However, depending upon the topic and workloads, it is possible that the Honours Coordinator, after consultation with the Head of School, will request an examiner from outside the School.

Once the examiners have agreed on a grade, this information is presented to the Honours Coordinator, who will calculate the raw grade and final mark for the Honours year. All of this numerical information will be presented to the School of Geosciences Examiners Board which will confirm the grades and marks to be submitted to the relevant Faculty. Note that final marks are confidential until released by the Faculty.

Thesis: General Background

- (1) The thesis involves original research on a topic which must be acceptable to the Honours Coordinator in consultation with the adviser. In certain circumstances a dissertation may be undertaken instead of a thesis. A dissertation consists of a scholarly appreciation of existing data from an original point of view with minimal fieldwork; a thesis is based on the analysis of a problem requiring the collection of data in the field.
 - (2) Each student is expected to work closely with his/her supervisor during the year. Regular consultation is required. It is not the responsibility of the adviser to chase students for consultation. It is reasonable for students to expect an average of one hour per week consultation with their supervisor.
 - (3) Progress through the year will be continually assessed by the respective supervisors, and will also be monitored at intervals through student presentations and progress reports.
 - (4) Students are expected to collect, present, analyse and interpret data relating to a specific research problem. Use may be made of data from organisations, however it is important to remember that data provision is sometimes unreliable and this may delay your progress. The thesis should provide evidence of a student's ability to plan and conduct research using appropriate concepts and techniques with the guidance of a supervisor. It should also demonstrate the student's ability to communicate research results clearly and concisely in the manner of scholarly dissertation.
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Thesis: Details

1. The thesis word limit is 10,000-20,000 words depending upon the subject matter. Illustrations and other data (including the Reference List, Appendices and footnotes) are additional to the word limit.¹
2. Three identical copies of the thesis must be presented for examination. The original copy is to be in full standard binding with the spine suitably embossed and to show the key title of the work, the surname of the student and the degree. The title of the thesis and the name of the student should be on the front cover. The binding may be of any colour.
3. Inside the front cover, an A4 page should include;
"Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honours, University of Sydney, 2009".
4. Theses must be submitted on A4 paper. They should be typed on one side of the page only. Spacing should be either 1.5 or double. Margins should be about:
38 mm on the binding side,
12 mm on the other three sides.
5. Theses should be in 12 point font.
6. Any notes at the bottom of a page are to be clearly separated by a line spaced at 1.5 lines below the last line of the main text. These footnotes should be single spaced.
7. The typeface should be Times New Roman, Ariel or a near equivalent.
8. Further guidance will be given by your supervisor.

Students may be required to insert emendations to the bound copy of their thesis after examination.

Submission

Submission of honours theses to the department of geosciences must include a hardcopy as well as an electronic submission. The electronic submission should be produced (and therefore stored) as one or a set of .pdf files on CD or DVD media. Use of a "print" utility such as PDFCreator from any word-processing package eases the creation of .pdf files.

Additional information attached to, or part of, a thesis, such as spreadsheet, database files or output from proprietary programs or devices, should be accompanied by a "usage" description and be stored with the thesis.

Please sign the copyright release form accompanying this document so that your thesis may be included in the institutional repository.

Supervisors

1. The role of the supervisor in this process is to help you formulate your research topic and to plan your research program. Continuing guidance and advice from your supervisor should be a crucial part of the learning process.
2. As previously stated, regular consultation with your supervisor is required. It is not the responsibility of the supervisor to chase students for this consultation. It is reasonable for students to expect an average of one hour per week consultation with their supervisor.
3. In some cases students may wish to consult more than one supervisor. In all instances it is important that there is a nominated Primary Supervisor, and that this person is currently a full-time academic staff member within the School of Geosciences.

If you have doubts about your ability to establish a productive working relationship with your supervisor, or if difficulties do arise at a later stage, you should discuss your concerns with the Honours Coordinator.

Appeals

Appeals against marks for individual components of the total Honours mark should be dealt with by the School's Honours Coordinator in the first instance and as soon as possible. An appeal against an Honours grade awarded by the Honours Meeting of the Faculty, should be made to the Faculty, and it is the Faculty's responsibility to resolve the appeal according to established University policy.

Plagiarism

The University of Sydney has a policy on plagiarism. The full policy on Academic Honesty (Plagiarism) may be found at the Policy Online website <http://www.usyd.edu.au/senate/policies/Plagiarism.pdf> A key definition from that policy has been included below, but students who have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism should either speak with their supervisor or the Honours Coordinator and/or read the full policy for clarification:

¹ In the case of Human Geography theses where interviews are the primary source of data, interview quotes from informants are excluded from word count requirements.

“Plagiarism means presenting another person’s ideas, findings or work as one’s own by copying or reproducing them without due acknowledgement of the source”.

Honours Room

Enrolled Honours students will be provided with swipe card access to the Honours Room (Room 438 in the Madsen Building) and the postgraduate computer room (Room 304 in Madsen).

Possible Withdrawal from the Honours Program

Each year a small number of students withdraw from the Honours program for a variety of reasons. Students who may be contemplating withdrawing as one option should discuss this with their supervisor and/or the Honours coordinator. There may be other ways of handling problems, or if withdrawing is the best option there are ways of handling this process well. Discussions about withdrawal will be treated with confidence if requested and with sensitivity.



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Details

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In order for Work to be accepted to and remain on the eScholarship Repository, the Contributor acknowledges that:
the Work is academic and postgraduate (unless Work is an Honours Thesis or is otherwise approved by the University in writing);
and
text material submitted is final draft or published version, and non-text material submitted is in its final form.

Warranties

The Contributor warrants that:
the Work is their original work;
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they have obtained consents in writing from third parties which have any materials reproduced in the Work to publish the Work;
they can grant the rights under this Deed Poll and the University's exercise of those rights will not infringe the copyright or other intellectual property rights of third parties;
to the best of their knowledge, the Work is accurate as at the date in which the final version of the Work is submitted to the University and as far as reasonably possible they have sought to verify all statements in the Work which purport to be true and accurate;
to the best of their knowledge, the Work does not contain any scandalous, defamatory, or obscene material or any material which is actionable for interference with privacy, infringement of copyright, breach of confidence, passing off or contravention of any other private right; and
they have not engaged in any practices in preparing the Work that would amount to plagiarism or any other form of academic

dishonesty or research misconduct under University policies and rules or which would (or would be likely to) bring the Contributor or the University into disrepute, and that they have complied with the University's policies, procedures and rules. where the work is a thesis, it is a direct equivalent of the final officially approved version that was submitted, and no emendation of content has occurred other than minor variations in formatting, that are the result of the conversion to digital format.

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EXECUTED as a Deed Poll on the terms above.

Signed, sealed and delivered by the CONTRIBUTOR

.....
Signature

.....
Printed Name

.....
Date

In the presence of:

.....
Signature

.....
Printed Name

