School of Education Honours Manual

1. Introduction

This manual contains information about the Honours Program in the School of Education (SOE) at the University of Newcastle (UON). It is written for prospective Honours students, current Honours students and supervisors. The manual has been approved by the School Teaching and Learning Committee and the Honours Program Management Group. The Honours Program Convenor (PC) will refer to this manual in all procedural matters. The manual outlines the program structure, eligibility rules, application process, procedures for procuring a supervisor, supervision ground rules, thesis requirements, submission process, examination and final grade allocation.

In all procedural matters the Honours PC is the first point of call. The Program Convener's role is to:
- provide guidance to prospective and current students,
- advise academic staff,
- oversee the admissions process,
- approve supervision arrangements,
- administer and evaluate progress reports, and
- manage the thesis examination process.

The Honours PC will also deal with grievances, except when the claim is directed at the Honours PC, in which case grievances should be taken to a Grievance Officer within the School (such as one of the Deputy Heads of School) or the Head of School.

2. Honours Program Structure

The Bachelor Honours Degree *"qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning"* (*Source – Australian Qualifications Framework 2013, p.49*). *"Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional/highly skilled work and/or further learning"* (*op cit, p.13*).

The Honours Programs in the SOE are called Embedded Honours and involve a research project integrated in a four year 330 unit degree program schedule in one of the following programs:
- Bachelor of Education (Secondary) (Honours)
- Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary) (Honours)
- Bachelor of Education (Primary) (Honours)

The **Bachelor of Education (Honours)** programs consists of the following four courses:

- EDUC4955 Honours I: Philosophy of Social Science (10 units);

- EDUC4965 Honours II: Research Design, Theory, and Methods (10 units);

- EDUC4975 Honours III: Thesis Part A (10 units); and

- EDUC4985 Honours IV: Thesis Part B (10 Units).

All four courses must be completed successfully to be eligible for the award of an Honours degree.

The usual pattern of enrolment is for students to undertake EDUC4955 Honours I and EDUC4965 Honours II in their third year (typically in Semester 1 & 2 respectively), followed by EDUC4975 and EDUC4985 in Semester 1 & 2 of the fourth year. EDUC4975 and EDUC4985 make up the independent research thesis component of the program, spreading this work over the full year.

3. Eligibility

All Bachelor of Education (Honours) students who have completed a minimum of 160 units (80 of which must be in Education incorporating both EDUC2102 and EDUC1103) over the first two years of their program, with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 5.0 and above, are eligible to be considered for admission.

GPA is calculated from all courses completed. The following formula is used in the calculation of cumulative GPA:

0	FF Grades
4	Pass
5	Credit
6	Distinction
7	High Distinction

4. Application Process and Admission

Students submit their application for the Honours Pathway/Program, inclusive of a completed application form (available from the NuTeach Blackboard sites) and a current academic transcript to the Honours PC. The closing date for applications to the Honours Pathway/Program is Friday of Week 13, Semester 2, Year 2.

Applicants with a borderline GPA score should include additional evidence of their capacity to undertake independent research in an Honours project (e.g. a letter of support from a lecturer in the SOE). These applications will be considered by the Head of School (HOS) SOE, with the final decision resting with the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Education and Arts.

Please note: Applicants who commenced mid-year (Semester 2) in the Bachelor of Education will not be able to complete the program in four years due to course sequence/availability. These students should discuss their enrolment pattern with the Program Advisor and refer to the relevant program plan – some semesters will be 30 units enrolment only, resulting in a four and half year minimum time frame to complete the program.

Eligible students will receive a letter of invitation into the Pathway/Program, which must be accepted in writing (via email) to the Honours PC. Upon notification of acceptance, students will be manually enrolled in EDUC4955. All commencing Honours students will meet with the Honours PC, prior to commencement of the research component of the Pathway/Program.

5. Typical Program Completion Process

Bachelor of Education (Honours) students will complete EDUC4955 and EDUC4965 in their third year. While undertaking EDUC4965, students should begin identifying a possible supervisor, and commence developing a research proposal. Supervision runs alongside the course requirements for EDUC4965, however the assessment tasks for EDUC4965 are marked by the Course Coordinator. EDUC4975 and EDUC4985 contain no coursework and students are exclusively supervised by their assigned supervisor.

The Professional Experience Unit will accord Honours students preferential internship placement upon completion of the Application to Vary form. This form must be submitted to internship Course Coordinator.

Supervision

To qualify for an Honours degree, students must complete an Honours thesis (see below). The thesis work is supervised by a qualified member of academic staff in the SOE. A supervisor will be a member of academic staff appointed to the School for the duration of the student's thesis work and who holds a research higher degree (PhD or EdD). Students are typically assigned a single supervisor. In the event of unforeseen circumstances affecting the working relationship between the student and the supervisor the Honours PC will be the contingent supervisor until an alternate supervisor is assigned.

5.1 Identifying a Supervisor

A supervisor should be finalised no later than Week 3, S1 of Year 4. Students can gain assistance in identifying an appropriate supervisor by contacting the Honours PC. The supervision arrangements must be formalised with the three parties (Student, Supervisor and Honours PC) consenting to the arrangement via email.

5.2 Some Supervision Ground Rules

Honours students are expected to be highly self-motivating and self-regulated learners capable of independent study under guidance. The formal teaching mode in EDUC4975 & EDUC4985 is individual consultation between the student and a thesis supervisor. Students are entitled to the equivalent of one hour of supervision per week for the duration of EDUC4975 & EDUC4985. Supervision may take place in person, via online conferencing, phone, email or other media.

It is strongly recommended that a meeting schedule is established early on between student and supervisor, and clear expectations are openly discussed and negotiated about key aspects of the supervision, including things like timelines for submission of work and supervisor feedback, frequency, timing, and content of meetings, etc. It is the student's responsibility to keep in regular contact with the Supervisor.

Students should remember that supervisors have many competing demands on their time. Students should therefore arrange meetings well in advance; always provide sufficient time for supervisors to read drafts (as negotiated); and always notify the Supervisor in advance if scheduled meetings cannot be attended.

Students should keep their Supervisor informed if they are experiencing any difficulties that are impeding the progress of the thesis. If they experience problems with the supervisory

process which cannot be dealt with by consulting with the Supervisor, students should consult the Honours Convenor. If the Honours Convenor also happens to be the Supervisor, students should contact the Head of School. It is important that any problems with the progress of the thesis or with supervision are attended to and resolved as they arise.

Students are expected to respond appropriately to the advice and guidance given by their Supervisor about their Honours research project and thesis. The Supervisor will correct elementary errors as a matter of course, however in commenting on drafts the supervisor will more importantly provide advice on such matters as the nature of arguments advanced, important theoretical and conceptual issues, the employment of evidence, or appropriate literature to be consulted. Ultimately, however, the content of the thesis remains the responsibility of the student.

6. Other learning support

Honours students' academic development will be supported by the lecturers involved in the Honours courses and by their supervisor. However, students are encouraged to utilise other available learning support, as appropriate, including accessing:

- information on relevant policies, course outlines and various downloadable forms and electronic templates found on the Honours Backboard site (accessible to all Honours students and their supervisors)

- the UON libraries and librarians, including the Faculty of Education and Arts Senior Research Librarian.

- undertaking relevant short courses and information sessions, such as learning how to effectively search data bases, access research journals, use Endnote reference management software, etc.

- the University's Learning Development unit. This unit works with students to help all students learn and write effectively at all stages of their degree program. Supervisors may refer students who need this extra support.

- regular research seminars for staff and postgraduate students held by the SOE (such as the SSTAR (Students and Staff Talking About Research) seminars). These seminars offer invaluable lessons in the explicit as well as the hidden curriculum of the world of research. Honours students are strongly encouraged to attend and become members of the School's scholarly community.

- support from other Honours students and informal mentoring from postgraduate students. Honours students are encouraged to support each other's learning through forming informal study and / or reading groups. Here important tips can be shared, about how to work effectively with one's supervisor, and share the journey of completing a thesis.

7. The Honours Thesis / Dissertation

The thesis component provides students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of a topic within Education and to design and conduct research on that topic. Students produce a thesis of approximately 12,000 words on an approved topic selected and researched by the candidate under the supervision of a member of academic staff with expertise in the proposed area of research. Upon successful completion of the thesis component students should:

1. Be able to demonstrate expertise in a chosen field of research in Education;

2. Be able to independently design, justify and conduct a small-scale research project;

3. Have advanced academic research skills and highly developed academic writing skills; and

4. Have produced a coherent, well-organised and professionally defensible thesis.

7.1 Format

The dissertation must be presented with 1.5 spacing and a clearly readable font.[4] Block quotations and footnotes or endnotes may be typed in single spacing. Adequate margins should be used. The content of the thesis is normally ordered as follows:

1. A title page giving the title of the dissertation in full; the name and any degrees held by the student; the name of the degree for which the dissertation is being submitted; the name of the School and of the University; and the date of the submission. An electronic copy of a template can be downloaded from the Honours Blackboard site.

2. A table of contents.

3. A summary/abstract of no more than 400 words.

4. A signed statement of authorship to the effect that the dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution and that, to the best of the student's knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation (an electronic copy of a template can be downloaded from the Honours Blackboard site).

5. An acknowledgement of any assistance given or work carried out by another person or organisations.

6. The main text.

7. A complete reference list (or Bibliography of cited materials).

8. Appendices, if any.

7.2 Referencing

Research in the field of Education includes a range of disciplines and traditions that use different referencing styles. The most common referencing style is APA (American Psychological Association). The student must choose an appropriate referencing style in consultation with their Supervisor and apply the agreed upon referencing style consistently.

7.3 Plagiarism

Plagiarism constitutes serious academic misconduct. To reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in the academic environment students must read the [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Academic misconduct will be referred to the School of Education Student Academic Conduct Officer (SACO) and may result in a Fail grade for the Thesis component. A fail grade will render a student ineligible to complete their Honours degree.

7.4 Submission of the Thesis

The Honours Thesis is due at 5pm on Friday, Week 13 of the semester in which EDUC4985 is undertaken. Students should submit their thesis electronically via the Turnitin submission portal on the EDUC4985 Blackboard site.

7.5 Extension

The Supervisor can grant an extension of up to two-weeks and must notify the Honours PC of the new submission date. In extenuating circumstances, requests for extensions in excess of two weeks must be formally lodged with the Honours PC via the UoN adverse circumstances process. In making requests for any extensions, the student accepts that late submissions may have flow-on effects in terms of thesis examination and EDUC4985 course completion, which in turn may delay the graduation process.

7.6 Late penalties

Submission of the thesis after the due date without an approved extension will incur a penalty of 10% per day late. A thesis submitted more than five days after the due date, without an approved extension, will only receive either a Pass (50%) or a Fail grade, regardless of the merits of the final report.

8. Thesis Examination

Prior to submission of the Honours thesis, the Supervisor nominates two (internal and /or external) examiners, to the Honours PC. At least one examiner should have expertise in the topic of research and at least one examiner should be an experienced examiner. The supervisor cannot be an examiner. The Honours PC will approve the nominations, (or ask for new nominations), and make the necessary arrangements with the designated examiners. Students are not permitted to make contact with the examiners under any circumstances, at any point of the examination process.

The examiners will be provided with an Honours Thesis Marking Criteria (an example will be provided to students when commencing their Honours Thesis course(s)). The final thesis mark will be an average of the marks given by the two examiners. The student will be given a copy of each of the examiners' reports.

The examination process normally takes 4-6 weeks from the date of submission.

8.1 Grade dispute

For information concerning Finalising marking outcomes of the Research Component (Research Thesis/Dissertation) and any Right of Appeal please refer to the Bachelor Honours Policy.

The Honours PC will inform the student when there has been an assessment dispute and the thesis has gone to a third examiner. Under these circumstances, delays in finalising results are to be expected.

8.2 Final grade allocation

There are three classes of Honours awarded in an Embedded Honours program:

i.   Class I

ii. Class II Division 1

iii. Class II Division 2

Please refer to the Bachelor Honours Policy for further information on admission and grading for Embedded Honours programs