School of Education
Honours Manual

[Updated March 2016]
1. Introduction
This manual contains information about the Honours Pathway in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. 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 Pathway Management Group. The Honours Pathway Convenor 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 Pathway Convenor is the first point of call. The Pathway Convenor’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. S/he will also deal with grievances, except when the claim is directed at the Honours Pathway Convenor, 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
According to university policy the primary goal of all Honours programs should be research training, and all Honours programs should contain a mix of advanced theory, professional training (where appropriate), research training, and a major research project (thesis).

The Honours Pathway in the School of Education is a so-called ‘embedded Honours’ model, which means that it involves a research project integrated into a four year 320 unit degree program schedule. The program consists of the following three courses:

- EDUC4940 Research Design and Critique (10 units)
- EDUC4965 Honours II: Research Design and Methods (10 units); and
- EDUC4990 Honours III: Project and Thesis (20 units).

All three 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 EDUC4940 in Semester 1 of third year, EDUC4965 in Semester 1 of fourth year, and EDUC4990 in Semester 2 of fourth year, concurrent with internship. Students should consult their Program Enrolment Checklist for details of the placement of the Honours Pathway within their Program.
3. Eligibility
All students who have completed a minimum of 160 units (80 of which must be in Education incorporating both EDUC2102 and EDUC2103) with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 5.5 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Application Process and Admission
Students submit their application for the Honours Pathway, comprising a completed application form (included in Appendix A and available from Program BlackBoard sites) and current academic transcript, to the Honours Pathway Convenor. The closing date for applications for entry to the Program in Semester 2 is Friday of Week 13 of Semester 1 each year. Students with a borderline GPA should also include further evidence of suitability (e.g. letter of support from a lecturer in the School of Education).

Eligible students will receive a letter of invitation into the Pathway, which should be accepted in writing (via email) to the Honours Pathway Convenor. Upon notification of acceptance, students will be enrolled in EDUC4965.

5. Typical Program Completion Process
Typically students will complete EDUC4940 as a normal course. After successfully completing EDUC4940, students in the program should begin identifying a possible supervisor and begin to develop a research proposal. Supervision runs alongside the course requirements for EDUC4965, however the assessment tasks for the course are marked by the Course Coordinator. EDUC4990 contains no coursework and students are solely supervised by their assigned supervisor.

The Professional Experience Unit has agreed that Honours students could be given preference for internship placements. An Honours student will be able to apply for school via the Application to Vary form and give it to their internship Course Coordinator.
6. 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\(^1\) in the School of Education. Students are typically assigned one supervisor. Should unexpected circumstances emerge the Honours Convenor will be the fallback supervisor until a suitable replacement has been found.

6.1 Identifying a Supervisor
A supervisor should be finalised no later than by Week 3 of EDUC4965. Students can get help with identifying an appropriate supervisor by contacting the Honours Convenor. The supervision arrangements must be formalised with the three parties (Student, Supervisor and Convenor) consenting to the arrangement via email.

6.2 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 EDUC4990 is individual consultation between the student and a thesis supervisor. Students are entitled to the equivalent of one hour of supervision\(^2\) per week for the duration of EDUC4990. It is strongly recommended that a meeting schedule is determined at the start. 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 enough time for supervisors to read drafts; and always in advance notify the Supervisor 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 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 as they arise.

Students are expected to respond appropriately to the advice and guidance given by their Supervisor in respect of the 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.

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\(^1\) Refers to qualified academic staff appointed to the school for the duration of the student’s thesis work. In order to be eligible to act as an Honours Supervisor, staff members must hold a research higher degree.
\(^2\) In some instances supervision may take place over the telephone, Skype, email or other media.
7. 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 leaning support:

◆ The Honours Convenor will maintain a Blackboard site for all enrolled Honours students and their supervisors. The site contains relevant policies, course outlines and various downloadable forms and electronic templates to be used.

◆ The University of Newcastle School of Education Honours Pathway is a place for current and past Honours students and their supervisors to share in supporting current students.

◆ The University of Newcastle library offers a wealth of information and extra support. Honours students are strongly encouraged to make use of the library and its excellent librarians, and undertake the relevant short courses and information sessions on offer (such as learning how to search data bases, access research journals, and use Endnote referencing software, etc.).

◆ The University’s Learning Development unit works with students to help all students learn and write effectively at all stages of their degree program. Supervisors might refer students who need this extra support to this service.

◆ The School of Education hosts regular research seminars for staff and postgraduate students (such as the SSTAR seminars). Honours students are strongly encouraged to attend and become members of the scholarly community of the school. The seminars will offer invaluable lessons in the explicit as well as the hidden curriculum of the world of research.

◆ Other Honours students and postgraduate students. Honours students are encouraged to support each other’s learning through forming informal study groups. Here important tips can be shared, also about how to manage one’s supervisor, and it is a good place to share the emotional journey of completing a thesis. Postgraduate students can also be helpful in an informal mentoring capacity.

8. The Honours Thesis
The thesis component provides students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of a relatively narrow 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 supervision of a member of academic staff with expertise in the proposed area of research. Upon successful completion of EDUC4990 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 presented thesis.

8.1 Format
The dissertation must be typed on A4 paper, on one side only, with 1.5 spacing and a clearly readable font. 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 organisation.
6. The main text.
7. A complete reference list (or Bibliography of cited materials).
8. Appendices, if any.

8.2 Referencing
Educational research comprises various traditions that use different referencing styles. The most common referencing style in use is APA (American Psychological Association), but others are in use. The student must choose a referencing style in consultation with their Supervisor and apply it stringently and consistently.
8.3 Plagiarism
Plagiarism refers to the taking of another person’s thoughts or writings and attempting to pass them off as one’s own. It constitutes serious academic misconduct. The University policy on plagiarism can be found at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/academic-integrity/fraud-and-plagiarism.html

Detected plagiarism will be referred to the School of Education Student Academic Conduct Officer (SACO) and may result in a Fail grade for EDUC4990, rendering a student ineligible to take out an Honours degree.

8.4 Submission of the Thesis
The Honours Thesis is due at 5pm on Friday, Week 13 of the semester in which EDUC4990 is undertaken. Students should submit their thesis electronically via the turnitin submission portal on the EDUC4990 Blackboard site.

8.5 Extension
The Supervisor can grant up to two weeks extension and must notify the Honours Convenor of the new submission date. Requests for extensions in excess of two weeks must be lodged formally with the Honours Convenor and be substantiated by strong evidence of extenuating circumstances. The student must accept that late submissions may affect the graduation process, and impede the possibility or progress of any scholarship application.

8.6 Late penalties
Submission of the thesis after the due date without authorised extension will incur a penalty of 10% per day late. A thesis submitted more than five days after the due date, without authorised extension, can only be marked for a passing (50%) or fail grade, regardless of the merits of the final report.

9. Thesis Examination
Prior to submission of the Honours thesis, the Supervisor nominates two examiners, one internal and one external examiner. The nomination is made by submitting the appropriate form to the Honours Convenor, who will approve the nominations or ask for new nominations and make the necessary arrangements. Students are under no circumstances allowed to make contact with the examiners at any point during the examination process.

The examiners will be provided with the Honours Thesis Marking Criteria (see Appendix A). The final mark of the thesis will be an average of the two marks given by the examiners. The student will be given a copy of each of the examiners’ reports.

3 At least one examiner should have expertise in the topic of research and at least one examiner should be an experienced examiner. ‘Internal’ means appointed to the School of Education at the University of Newcastle, ‘external’ refers to an academic outside the School of Education, either at the University of Newcastle or external to the University of Newcastle. The Supervisor cannot be an examiner.
The examination process normally takes 4-6 weeks from the date of submission (not including public holidays).

9.1 Grade dispute
If there is a difference of ten percentage points or more in the examiners’ assessments, a third examiner will be appointed. The Supervisor will nominate the third examiner in close consultation with the Honours Convenor. The final mark will be an average of the two closest marks. The student will be given a copy of the reports of the two examiners closest in marks.

The Honours Convenor 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.

9.2 Final grade allocation
There are three classes of Honours awarded in an ‘Embedded plus Honours’ program:

i. Class I
ii. Class II Division 1
iii. Class II Division 2

Below is an extract from the University of Newcastle’s Honours Policy, as approved for 1 January 2013. The full policy is available here:

The Class of Honours awarded for Embedded Honours Programs will be determined as follows:

i. Criterion One – a WAM, calculated in accordance with University policy, on all courses above the 1000 level, weighted at:
   - 2 for 2000 level courses;
   - 3 for 3000 level courses; and
   - 4 for 4000 and 5000 level courses.

ii. Criterion Two - the average mark received for the research component (at least 30 units).

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4 The third examiner must be an experienced examiner and have at least some expertise in the field of study.
Table Two – Embedded Honours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion 1 (WAM)</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>Criterion 2 (Research Component Mark)</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>Class Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77 – 100</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>75 – 100%</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Class I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72 – 100</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>65 – 100%</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Class II Division 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 – 76</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>75 – 100%</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Class II Division 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 – 71</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>65 – 74%</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Class II Division 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 66</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>64 – 100%</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Ungraded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 100</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>50 – 64%</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Ungraded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the Research Component Mark within the Education Honours Pathway is calculated on the basis of EDUC4965 (10 units) and EDUC4990 (20 units), with both courses weighted appropriately.
Appendix 1: Honours Application Form
(Available on Program BlackBoard Sites)

Faculty of Education and Arts
School of Education
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/education

Application for entry into the School of Education Honours program
v 1.01

Student Details

Name: 

Student Number: 
Campus: 

Program: 

Universal GPA\(^1\): 
160 units completed (80 in Education)\(^2\): 

Statement

Please provide a rationale of up to 300 words for why you would like to pursue Honours in Education

Application Date: 

Important Information

Please submit the application to the Honours Program Convenor before the last week of Semester 1.

Please attach a copy of your transcript to the application.

1. Universal means all courses completed at the point of application. Calculate 0 for F, 4 for P, 5 for C, 6 for D and 7 for HD. Pass/fail courses are not calculated. Courses worth 20 units are calculated twice.
2. It is advisable that you contact your usual program convenor prior to application to ensure that your entire course structure allows for Honours and is on target.
### Appendix 2: EXAMPLE Honours Thesis Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT’S NAME:</th>
<th>DISSETERATION TITLE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXAMINER’S NAME:</td>
<td><strong>FAIL (0-49%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 1: Expertise in a chosen field of research in Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Fails to adequately delineate a field of research/object of study; AND demonstrates poor understanding of key concepts.</td>
<td>☐ Satisfactorily delineates a field of research/object of study; OR demonstrates a sound understanding of key concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 2: An ability to independently design, justify and conduct a small-scale research project</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Fails to adequately articulate research questions/ aims/hypotheses; displays little methodological rigour in design, justification, and execution; provides little analysis and discussion of outcomes or findings (including limitations of the study).</td>
<td>☐ Attempts to articulate research questions/ aims/hypotheses; displays some level of methodological rigour in design, justification, and execution; provides some analysis and discussion of outcomes or findings (including limitations of the study).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 3: Advanced academic research and writing skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Fails to locate or use relevant scholarly literature; conducts very limited analysis; AND fails to express basic ideas effectively.</td>
<td>☐ Locates and engages some relevant scholarly literature; OR applies some critical analysis in its treatment of the scholarly literature; OR expresses ideas reasonably well. [High range, above 60% should be awarded when two of the three are achieved].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 4: An ability to produce a coherent, well-organised and professionally presented thesis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Thesis is neither coherent nor well-structured; Thesis is poorly presented and does not abide by the formatting rules (single-sided, 1.5 spacing, legible font, wide margins); provides inaccurate and/or neglects reference to the work of others; and if applicable, tables, graphs, illustrations, etc. are poorly presented AND poorly used.</td>
<td>☐ Thesis is sometimes coherent but has some occasional structural issues; Thesis is adequately presented and/or abides by most of the formatting rules (single-sided, 1.5 spacing, legible font, wide margins); provides mostly accurate and/or consistently formatted reference to the work of others; and if applicable, tables, graphs, illustrations, etc. may be adequately presented but poorly used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDED GRADE (ON BALANCE)** Choose An Option  
**RECOMMENDED MARK** /100

**EXAMINER’S SIGNATURE** (Insert scanned signature or type here)  
**DATE:**

PLEASE PROVIDE A FULL EXAMINER’S REPORT ON A SEPARATE PAGE