ETSU Honors College

Guidelines for Mentoring Student Honors Theses

The role of the Faculty Mentor is to help students develop all the abilities required to do quality, independent, academic research that contributes to their discipline and to guide the research to a final undergraduate Honors Thesis. The mentor’s task includes,

* Guiding the student in selecting, developing and refining a research or creative thesis

topic in his/her major field

* Teaching the student important, discipline-distinct research skills and fostering an enriched perspective on his/her field of study
* Enabling the student to become self-reliant
* Decoding the system, including policies, rules and regulations and
* Developing an appreciation for the value of research beyond the thesis project

Mentors also

* Are responsible for the academic integrity of the student's work
* Should make the student aware and sensitive to plagiarism and/or misrepresentation of information
* Should maintain an ethical relationship with the student

Suggestions on how to guide the undergraduate research student through his/her thesis project are as follows:

* University and Midway Honors students enroll in UHON 3008 (Foundations of Research) by fall of their junior year. UHON 3008 is not always required for Fine & Performing Arts and Honors-in-Discipline students, but *all* Honors students should determine a research topic and choose a faculty mentor by spring of their junior year. This is the mentor and student’s initial planning stage. (*The Thesis Contract Form is due in the Honors College at this time*.)
* In the student’s senior year, Mentors should meet with the student weekly if possible, even if for only a brief period, to help the student develop a schedule for regular, measurable work and to provide feedback. In some cases, Honors students may need to complete research prior to their senior year to comply with student teaching, internships, study abroad, field work, etc.
* The mentor should plan a timetable that describes points of progress with the student. Student should have a draft by the first semester of the senior year.
* The mentor should guide the student throughout the thesis process during his/her senior year, making sure that the final product contains the following components in a publishable format:
* Abstract
* Research Question/Issue/Creative Challenge
* Background/Previous Work/Literature Review
* Methodology/Approach to Discipline
* Supporting Evidence, Findings
* Discussion, Implications, Consequences
* Conclusions
* Excellent Organization and Writing Free of Mechanical/Grammatical Errors