

Social Work Policy for Honors Theses

Scope of the Project

The honors thesis in social work requires a student to conduct an in-depth investigation of an issue of significance to social work research and practice. It should also be an issue of particular interest to the student. This culminating honors experience requires a more rigorous research project than is expected in other senior level courses. It will allow the student to engage in the scholarly and creative application of knowledge acquired in her major, expanding her understanding of the issue she examines in detail.

Components of the Project

An honors thesis in social work will include the following components:

- An extensive literature review presented in a bibliography using APA style documentation.
- Rigorous investigation of an issue that is of significance to the social work profession and of particular interest to the student.
- Presentation of the project in a scholarly paper that adheres to the format of professional social work journals, and contains a comprehensive record of the project that includes appendices containing charts, graphs, and other supplementary materials, and a comprehensive bibliography. APA style documentation is required for all components of the thesis.
- A formal oral presentation of the project to social work faculty, peers, and other invited guests.

Timeline

The student will meet with her thesis director during the pre-registration period of the semester immediately preceding the one in which the project will be completed. In this conference, they will explore and begin to refine project ideas. During the remainder of that semester, the student will begin her literature review, reporting progress to the thesis director. No later than the end of the first week of the semester in which she is registered for thesis, the student will present a thesis proposal for review and will make any necessary revisions. As soon as the proposal has been approved, the student and thesis director will develop a timeline for the project that will present deadlines for each project component, allowing time for revisions at each stage.

Grading

Grading will be based on the expectation that student performance will exceed standards imposed on social work senior research projects that are not classified as honors theses. Clear excellence in research and writing will be required.

The final thesis grade will be assigned by the instructor after the student has completed suggested revisions of each component and presented a complete report. The grade will be largely determined by the thoroughness and quality of the research conducted and the professionalism of its presentation.

The student will complete a paper that is 20-30 pages in length, double-spaced using 12-point font. A bibliography including no fewer than 20 citations will also be required. Tables, graphs, and other appropriate data will be presented in appendices.

While the grade will be based primarily on the quality of the student's research and written report, she will also be evaluated on the clarity and professionalism of the oral report of her findings.