

ALDS Honours Project Guidelines

Description

Fourth-year ALDS students with a CGPA of 9.0 or higher are eligible to complete an Honours project for 1.0 credit. These guidelines are intended for students who are completing a thesis (research paper) as their project.

An Honours thesis generally involves some form of data gathering (an experiment, structured observations, corpus data analysis, etc.) as well as literature review and analysis. Successful completion of the thesis requires continuous reading, research and writing under the supervision of a faculty member during the fall and winter terms. The final product will, ordinarily, be a written document of 30-40 pages (double-spaced, not including references and appendices). The steps involved are explained below.

Identifying a topic and thesis supervisor

The first step in completing an Honours thesis is to identify a topic and supervisor. Ideally, this should be done sometime **between March and May of your third year**.

You will be working on your thesis for a full year, so it is important that the topic be something that interests you. Think about things that you have learned about in class, papers you have read, and projects you have completed. The more specific you can be, the easier it will be for you to move forward with your project. Note that it is normal for topics to evolve during the thesis process; the initial goal is simply to identify a topic that will serve as a starting point for developing your thesis.

Once you have identified a general topic, you should make a meeting with a faculty member who does research related to this area of study and ask them if they would be willing to be your thesis supervisor. To facilitate the conversation, it is a good idea to provide the faculty member with a short (one page) description of your proposed topic in advance. In general, a professor will agree to advise you if they do not already have too many advisees, you have chosen an appropriate topic, and you have previously shown yourself to be a dedicated student in your interactions with them. The supervisor should be a regular faculty member in SLALS (Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor) – not a contract instructor.

If you are having difficulty identifying an appropriate supervisor, you should ask the undergraduate advisor for suggestions.

Registering for the thesis course

You should register for the thesis course (ALDS 4908) at the same time as you register for your other fourth-year courses (i.e., in July before your thesis year). In order to register for the thesis course you will need to make an [override request](#).

Your request will be accepted after you complete the [Course Approval form](#) and send it to Kimberley Seguin (kimberley.seguin@carleton.ca), copying the undergraduate advisor (karen.jesney@carleton.ca) and your thesis supervisor.

Timeline

The timeline below is meant to provide general guidance. The specifics depend a great deal on the particular thesis project, and should be discussed with your supervisor.

Before your thesis year	
March – May	Identify an appropriate thesis topic and find a faculty supervisor for your project
July	Register for the thesis course (ALDS 4908) by submitting an override request and completing the Course Approval form
May – August	Complete preparatory work as discussed with your thesis advisor
Your thesis year	
Fall semester	Meet regularly with your thesis advisor and complete elements of the project as agreed upon. Normally this will include literature review, and depending on the project, preparatory work for data collection and/or data analysis.
by October 15	Submit ethics application to CUREB if required
early December	Present your work at the Fall Honours thesis workshop
Winter semester	Continue to meet regularly with your thesis advisor and complete elements of the project as agreed upon. Normally this will include data collection and analysis, as well as writing of the final paper.
late March	Submit a draft of your full paper to your advisor for feedback. This feedback should be used for making revisions.
early April	Present your final results at the Winter Honours thesis conference
last day of the April exam period	Submit your final paper to your thesis advisor

Honours thesis workshop and conference

The Fall Honours thesis workshop normally takes place in early December. It is your opportunity to get feedback on your project from other thesis students and their supervisors. Presentations at the workshop are typically 15 minutes long, followed by time for questions and comments.

The Winter Honours thesis conference normally takes place in early April. This is your opportunity to present your finished project to a broader audience, including other students and faculty members. Presentations at the thesis conference are typically 20 minutes long, followed by time for questions and comments.

Final paper

The final thesis is normally a written paper approximately 30-40 pages long (double spaced, not including references or appendices). The precise content and structure will depend on the topic and should be discussed with your supervisor.

The paper should be carefully formatted and should use APA for citations, references, etc. For more details, see the [Honours Project template](#).

Grading

The thesis will be evaluated by your supervisor and a second reader (another faculty member in SLALS). Grades are based on the quality of the final thesis paper, as well as aspects of the research process.

Questions?

Questions about the details of your specific project should be addressed to your thesis supervisor. General questions about the thesis process can be directed to the undergraduate advisor.