

Department of Biology Honors Project Guide

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The purpose of the Honors project in Biology is to provide students direct biological research experience. The following guide provides specific departmental requirements, expectations and advice for honors students preparing to participate in the honors research experience in the Department of Biology.

Finding a faculty sponsor:

The Department of Biology recommends that in the fall of the junior year, students should seek out a sponsor for their biology honors project and decide on a mentor/research project early in the spring semester. Sponsors for biology honors projects are generally faculty from the Biology department, but not always. In the past students have worked in laboratories at Summa Hospital, Akron General and Children's Hospital. In addition students have worked for faculty in the Chemistry and Polymer departments. It is important to obtain permission from the Biology department's Honors Preceptor before beginning projects outside of the Biology department. Summer internships have also been used as honors projects however permission must be obtained before the project begins.

The Honors College requires that students and sponsors fill out the honors project form from the Honors college web site ([linkhere](#)) by the end of the junior year but the Department of Biology strongly recommends that students have found a sponsor and in many cases begun their research far in advance of this deadline. Many research projects It is important to begin the process of determining a project as earlier as possible. Some projects (especially those performing field studies) Some biology faculty may not accept students if they don't come to them in time for them to be able to reasonably complete a project in their lab. The summer between the junior and senior year can offer a good time to spend time in the sponsor's laboratory or other research locations o (eg. field station, hospital)

Honors Project Expectations:

Advisors and sponsors should set clear parameters with respect to expectations for the completion of the honors thesis. Students should be sure to ask potential sponsor what their expectations are with respect to how their work will be graded, how long the proposed research is expected to take to finish, how many honors thesis credits they should take and when (ie. Summer, fall or spring), what form the final written work is expected to take, if they expect the research to be presented in any forms in addition to a paper (eg. poster presentation at a meeting) and how the project will be paid for.

In general, the grade for the project is usually based upon completion of a written paper in the form of a scientific journal article. An Honors project in biology is usually 3 to 6 credits. Students who sign up for more than 3 credits usually

require 2 semesters to complete their project. Students are expected to perform 3 hours of laboratory work each week for each credit hour enrolled. If a project extends past one semester (this is common) the student will receive the grade of in progress (IP) for the first semester and subsequent semesters until the project is finished.

Each proposal will have two readers which will be agreed upon at the time of submitting the research proposal. The role of the readers is to give feedback and suggest changes for the final project. As a result **readers and your project mentor should be provided copies of your thesis in its final stages at least 8 weeks before grades are due** (for spring graduates this would typically be the first week of March). You should expect to make changes after your readers give you feedback on the project. With changes made you should provide your project mentor, and any reader that has asked to see the final version, **a final draft for review at least three weeks before grades are due**. With these deadlines in mind you should expect that you will have collected the data for your project in the summer and/or fall with attention paid to writing up the results in the spring semester. The completed project must be signed by all readers and handed in no later than 5 PM on Friday the thirteenth week of the semester.

If the project sponsor believes that progress toward completion of the research and final written results has not been demonstrated by the 8 week deadline or any reader feels that significant additional data collection or writing needs to be done prior to completion the mentor can recommend delaying graduation.