

Macquarie University

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

HONOURS STUDENTS' GUIDE

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Departmental web page
<http://www.es.mq.edu.au/humgeog/Honours.htm>

Macquarie University Coursework Studies Honours pages
<http://www.reg.mq.edu.au/Undergrad/current/Honours/index.htm>

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The Department of Human Geography offers Honours programs leading to a number of degrees depending on your background and first degree: BA (Hons), BSc(Hons), BSocSc(Hons) and BEnvMgt(Hons).

The Honours program is a fourth undergraduate year, which gives you a valuable additional qualification that may help you find employment, and opens the way for post graduate research in the future. Although no special prerequisites are required for Honours, entry into the program is based on your grade point average.

Before starting Honours we strongly recommend you discuss the matter with the Honours Convenor and lecturers in your area of interest. Sometimes your interest can span more than one department, in which case you can be co-supervised by lecturers from other departments. Sometimes it is not possible to provide supervision for a particular topic. In this case, you would need to change or adapt your proposal if you want to proceed.

Eligibility

You must have qualified for a Bachelor degree with a coherency in relevant units at 300 and/or 400 level. As well, you should have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 overall and at 300-level. However, consideration will be given to students who do not have the required GPA if a special case is made, e.g., showing achievement in a particular area which is to be further researched. Applicants from other tertiary institutions will be given equivalence.

Procedure

- Discuss potential research topics with appropriate staff before enrolling.
- Obtain an application form from the Student Centre and lodge it there by 31 October (for first semester next year) or by 30 June (for a mid

year start). Late applications are only available under certain circumstances. Acceptance is subject to final results. Mid-year Honours entry is not always available.

- You can enroll full-time (two semesters), or part-time (four semesters) if you can show you have regular employment or domestic duties which take at least 20 hours a week.
- The Honours program formally begins on the first day of the relevant semester.

Selection of a research topic

You should have a broad area of interest, e.g. resource and land use conflict or medical geography, when applying for entry into the Honours program. It will become a specific research topic through discussion with staff members, the selection of a supervisor and your course work. When deciding on your topic it is important to consider logistics and likely costs. The department provides assistance, where possible, and occasionally students obtain an external scholarship or other assistance. Yet it is important to consider the costs, especially if fieldwork outside Sydney is involved. See <http://www.es.mq.edu.au/humgeog/hntheses.htm> for a list of honours theses completed by previous students.

Selection and role of your supervisor

Usually your supervisor is an academic who has some expertise in the area you want to research. If you have a research topic and are unsure who would be an appropriate supervisor, talk to the Honours Convenor or the Head of Department who will make the appropriate arrangements.

Your supervisor will help formulate the research topic and plan your research program and be someone off whom you can bounce ideas. If however, you cannot or do not establish a good working relationship with your supervisor, it is possible to change. Issues such as this should be raised with the Honours Convenor or Head of Department. See <http://www.es.mq.edu.au/humgeog/staff.htm> for links to Staff home pages outlining their areas of research interest.

The Human Geography Honours Scholarship and The Jim Rose Prize

A Human Geography Honours Scholarship of \$1500 is available each year for new candidates in Human Geography Honours, including Honours in any degree or joint program with Human Geography. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of academic merit. Applications must be received in writing by the published deadline. See <http://www.es.mq.edu.au/humgeog/pdfs/Hons%20scholarship.pdf> or contact the Honours Convenor for more information.

The Jim Rose Prize for Honours is awarded to the top student in the Honours program at the end of each year. The Prize is in honour of, and funded from

a bequest by, Jim Rose, Foundation Chair in Geography at Macquarie University. The Prize is worth \$500.

Honours pathway

The Human Geography Honours program involves a 24 credit point program which is listed as GEOS491 (full-time) and GEOS494 (part-time) or an approved code for joint programs with other disciplines. The 24 credit points are made up as follows:

1. Research thesis: worth 16 credit points (two thirds of your final grade), and;
2. Course work: worth 8 credit points (one third of your final grade)¹.

1. Research thesis

Research thesis: the thesis must be no more than 20,000 words (excluding references, essential appendices and footnotes). Alternative mediums should be discussed with your supervisor. Over length material may not be examined.

Theses are read by three examiners, at least one of whom is external to the department. Students jointly supervised with another department are assessed by examiners appointed by each of the departments. Appeals should be made in the first place to the Head of Department. Students with good grades are encouraged to publish the results of their research.

2. Course work

Honours students are required to undertake two, 4 credit point units:

- HGEO806: Thinking Geographically, and;
- HGEO807: Research Methods in Human Geography.

These units will help you with your thesis and **importantly** count towards one third of your final grade.

Assessment

The Honours grade is based on both the coursework units (one third) and the thesis (two thirds). It is important to realise that consistent performance in both the coursework and the thesis is critical for overall success in Honours. Students are given a grade based on the following standardized marks approved by Senate:

First class (high)	96+
First class (mid)	90-95
First class (low)	85-89
Second class, division I	75-84
Second class, division II	65-74
Third class	50-64
Fail	<50

¹ Please note that although you must complete these units you do not formally enroll in them.

Ethics

Research involving people must receive University ethics clearance. More information and the ethics application form is available on <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/>. Apply for ethics clearance early as delays can occur. Your supervisor and course work will assist with this.

Submission of thesis

Three loose-leaf copies of the thesis should be submitted to the Head of Department by 4pm on the Monday of the last week of class of the relevant semester. The department keeps two copies and one is returned to you. The deadline will only be extended for serious medical or misadventure reasons. Extensions must be applied for before the deadline.

Other requirements

Within the first two weeks of the beginning of semester you will need to sign an Honours contract outlining the requirements of the program. This will include:

- A presentation of your proposed research topic within the first half of the semester of enrolment for full-time students, and within 12 weeks of enrolment for part-time students. HGEO807 will assist you in developing your research proposal.
- A review of progress will be undertaken at approximately the mid-point of candidature. The review provides a good opportunity to assess progress on research development, adequacy of resources and to raise any other issues which may be affecting progress.
- In the second half of your candidature you will be required to make a formal but not assessable presentation reporting on your research.

Facilities and general information

The Department of Human Geography is housed in building E7A on floors 6 and 7. It has photocopying and fax facilities and access to graphics assistance. Desk and computer space may be available. Students and their supervisor are allowed up to \$150 for expenses related to the total Honours program including fieldwork and photocopying. Any other expenses are the responsibility of the student. All expenses over \$50 must be pre-approved by the Honours Convenor or the Head of Department.

Further inquiries

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the Honours Convenor, Head of Department or Executive Officer of the Department of Human Geography, whose details appear on page 1. For further information about enrolment deadlines, procedures etc see the Macquarie University Coursework Studies pages:

<http://www.reg.mq.edu.au/Undergrad/current/Honours/index.htm>