

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

DISCIPLINE OF PATHOLOGY

HONOURS 2009

The Honours course in the Discipline of Pathology is designed to ensure that the full potential of a student can be realised. It aims to provide a thorough training in both practical and theoretical aspects of research, providing the student with a sound scientific and research background which will enable them to proceed towards the acquisition of a higher degree, or to move directly into a career, for example, in industry, the government service or teaching.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION:

Admission is open to students who have a pass of sufficient merit in appropriate third year subjects, and who have the approval of the Head of Discipline. Under normal circumstances, a candidate for Honours in Pathology will have completed undergraduate studies in Pathology, Physiology, Pharmacology, Biomedical Sciences and/or related topics. Generally, an average of credits or higher in third year subjects is considered sufficient. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate with a background in other related disciplines may be permitted to enrol as a candidate for Honours in Pathology, provided such enrolment is approved by the Head of Discipline. In such cases, the candidate may be required to attend additional undergraduate classes in the relevant discipline as directed by the Head of Discipline.

HONOURS APPLICATION PROCESS

Students who wish to enrol in the Discipline of Pathology Honours Program must download and complete the Pathology Honours Application Form ([link](#)) and arrange to meet a potential Honours supervisor. This form must then be signed by the potential Honours supervisor and submitted along with a current academic transcript to the Honours Coordinator via and School of Medical Sciences Office (Room 131a, Medical School North Building).

Once the Honours coordinator has approved the application, the student is forwarded either the Domestic Student Faculty Honours Application Form or the International Student Faculty Honours Application Form ([links](#)) which should be completed and signed and returned to the Honours coordinator who submits them to the Faculty Office. This then finalises the application process for domestic students. For International student applications, the application is forwarded to the International Student Office who processes the application and sends an official letter of offer to the student.

Students are strongly advised to complete the application process by the second week in

December to ensure that they can be placed in a research area of their interest. Nonetheless, some Honours projects may still be available in January and students are still be able to apply for Honours in January. The Honours teaching program formally starts in the first week of February.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

The Pathology Honours Course consists of a program of course work and a supervised research project. Final assessment will be based on performance in both areas. Assessment of the course work, which will constitute 20% of the final grade, will be based on a literature review (5%), research grant proposal (10%), and an interview for the grant proposal (5%). The remaining 80% of the final grade is allocated to the candidate's research project.

COURSE WORK

Course work will comprise of (1) a formal School of Medical Sciences course consisting of lectures given by academic staff within the Disciplines of Pathology, Pharmacology and Anatomical Sciences on various research topics including: research ethics, statistics and graphics, scientific writing (thesis and grants), library and database searches, presentation of seminars which takes place in the first week in February (2) a literature review based on the student's research topic; (3) a research grant proposal on an area of study that may be related to the research topic, and an interview by the Discipline's academic staff regarding the research proposal; and (4) attendance at research seminars and advanced lectures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Each student will be required to submit a literature review in April, that will be based on their research topic. Assessment will be made by two academic staff members of the Discipline, one of which will be the supervisor (or co-supervisor). The literature review will constitute 5% of the final grade.

RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL AND INTERVIEW

Each student will be required to submit a research grant proposal, using the Adelaide Small Grant proposal format, in May. The grant proposal will be assessed by two academic staff members within the Discipline, not including the research supervisor. In conjunction with the grant proposal, each student will then be interviewed by the academic staff members of the Discipline, and asked to give a brief presentation (5 min) and answer questions (10-15 min).

The grant proposal will constitute 10% of the final grade, and the interview will constitute 5% of the final grade.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Each year, the Discipline of Pathology releases a list of Honours research projects available for the following year. Students are encouraged to confer with each staff member offering an honours research project in order to obtain a good perspective of all the projects on offer. Students are not limited to the projects which are offered, and may discuss the possibility of an alternative project with any member of staff who has the facilities to support such a project. However, it should be remembered that the quality of supervision may not be as high with projects that lie outside the supervisor's immediate expertise.

Early in the first semester (March) students will be required to give a 15 minute formal talk about their chosen research project; this talk, which will form 5% of the final assessment, should cover the basic aims of the project and the approach to be employed. It is hoped that these talks, and the ensuing discussions, may result in constructive suggestions and new ideas for the further development of the projects.

Students should aim to have completed all laboratory work by mid October, in order to leave 4-5 clear weeks for the writing up of the project. At the conclusion of the research project, the findings will be presented in the form of a thesis. The thesis represents the culmination of the Honours year, and as such, it must reflect the student's achievements. Supervisors may give guidance with regard to the presentation and layout of the thesis, but the content of the thesis is the responsibility of the student. The understanding and critical assessment of the research area, the interpretation of the results, and the conclusions drawn from the study should be the student's, reflecting their development as an effective researcher. The due date for the submission of the thesis to the Honours Coordinator will be the end of the 2nd week of November. Two temporary bound copies of the thesis are to be submitted.

At least two thesis assessors (with at least one being from within the Discipline) will be appointed by the Honours Coordinator. Each of the nominated assessors will provide a report on the final submitted thesis, the combined reports being worth 45% of the final mark. Should there be any wide discrepancies between the marks provided by the assessors (i.e. greater than 10% total spread), the thesis assessors shall be required to defend their assessment before the Head of Discipline and the academic staff of the Discipline of Pathology in order to resolve the differences.

Following assessment of the written thesis, candidates will be required to defend the findings and conclusions of their project. The viva examination will be held in the last week of November. To begin, students will be required to give a 20 minute seminar (10%

of the final assessment) on the background to their project together with the main results and conclusions. Some questions may be asked by the audience at this time. The candidates will then separately meet before a committee made up of the Head of Discipline, the academic staff of the Discipline and the thesis assessors. There they will be asked specific questions concerning their methods, findings and conclusions and any wider implications of the work. The assessors will each be allotted seven minutes for questions; there will then be a further period of open questioning by the whole committee. Total question time will not exceed 30 minutes. The viva examination shall constitute the remaining 10% of the final assessment.

Each student will also be assessed by their Supervisor with respect to their ability, contribution and application to research in the laboratory. The Supervisor's assessment will constitute 10% of the student's final mark.

A committee made up of the Head of Discipline and the academic staff of the Discipline of Pathology will collate and discuss each candidate's final mark, and may moderate marks in borderline cases.

Following the viva examination, the examiners may recommend corrections to the thesis; if any corrections are required, two copies of the corrected thesis (hard bound) must be re-submitted to the Honours coordinator by the end of the first week of December.

During the period between submission of the thesis and the seminar/viva examination, students must clean-up the portion of the laboratory they have been using, dispose of any unwanted media and other reagents and deposit with their supervisor all papers which have copied using University or research grants as well as their laboratory work-books. Failure to abide by this requirement or failure to submit two copies of the corrected thesis may result in withholding of the Honours result by the University.

SUMMARY OF GRADE ALLOCATIONS

I. Course Work (20%) II. Supervised Research Project (80%)

- Literature Review (5%)
- Introductory Seminar (5%)
- Research Grant Proposal (10%)
- Grant interview (5%)
- Supervisor Assessment (10%)
- Thesis (45%)
- Final Research Seminar (10%)
- Viva Examination (10%)
- Attendance at lectures and seminars

HONOURS ASSESSMENT SCALE

First Class Honours 80-100%

Second Class, Division A Honours 70-79%

Second Class, Division B Honours 60-69%

Third Class Honours 50-59%

Fail 0-49%