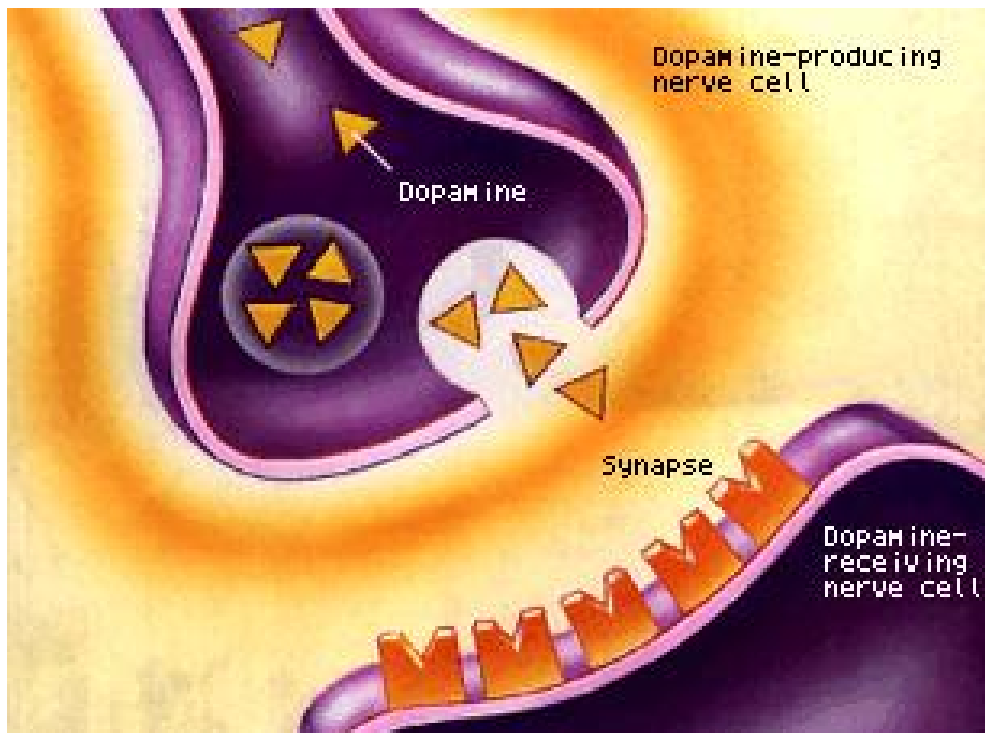


# School of Medical Sciences Discipline of Pharmacology

## *Information for Prospective Honours Candidates in 2009*



## *Welcome...*

Right now, with pressures of study and exams just a couple of months away, planning for next year might be the last thing on your mind. You mightn't have given much thought to an Honours degree in Pharmacology or indeed in any other biomedical discipline. But please take a moment to browse through this Handbook. It contains important information that can help you make an informed decision concerning your immediate preparation for a career in biomedical science.

## *Why Honours...?*

The Honours year is very different to the first part of your degree. For a start, there are no more lectures or "recipe book" lab classes. You can choose your own project, tackling an unsolved problem in an area you're keenly interested in. The satisfaction of contributing to the growth of knowledge is one of the great rewards of research.

Also, for the first time since you started school, your life won't be controlled by detailed "timetables" stipulating when and where you have to be in attendance for every day of the academic year. Other than a handful of deadlines for a few pieces of assessment, during Honours you're fully responsible for your own learning and progress. Rest assured that the skills developed during this experience will help you for the rest of your life. Consequently, most BSc or BHSc graduates with Honours feel as though they finally achieved the personal development goals they were aiming for when they first enrolled at Uni. After Honours, the whole Uni exercise seems much more worthwhile...

# Background Info on Honours in Pharmacology

## Intro & Aims of Our Honours Program

The course consists primarily of a supervised research project to be carried out either within the Discipline or in one of its associated institutions, including CSIRO Health Sciences and Nutrition and the Department of Clinical Pharmacology at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The aims of our Honours program are:

1. To provide an opportunity for students to carry out research work under supervision while taking primary responsibility for organizing their own work schedule.
2. To allow students to become familiar with the scientific research environment to help decision-making about further career directions, including post-graduate study.
3. To provide training in the application of basic principles to problem-solving and in the use of various scientific methods which may provide an employment advantage over a basic degree.

## How Do I Get into Pharmacology Honours?

Students who have completed a B.Sc., B.Health Sci. including a third year major in a relevant area (usually Pharmacology) are eligible to apply for entry to the Honours program, as are medical students who have successfully completed at least three years of their course. Successful students have generally achieved an average credit rating for their relevant major, or an overall credit for their medical course studies in the year of application. Decisions regarding entry are made only after the publication of the third year results, and students applying from other universities should provide a certified copy of their academic record with their application. Offers of positions in the Honours program will be made by letter towards the end of the year, or early next year. Honours students are expected to commence their studies in early February, and finish towards the end of November.

## What Does Honours Involve?

The Honours year centres around a research project which is designed in close consultation with the proposed supervisor and the Discipline Honours Coordinator. The latter section of this Handbook contains summaries of the general areas of interest of various research groups associated with the Discipline of Pharmacology, including a number of external Research Groups that are affiliated with our Discipline.

In addition to working on the project in the lab, a number of other activities are involved in the Honours program, most of which are directly related to the research project. Each student will present a series of seminars and various pieces of assessment as follows:

**(1) First seminar:** early in first semester; on a designated topic unrelated to the research project and designed to encourage critical evaluation of a major area in pharmacology. Duration: 20 minutes + 10 minutes for questions.

**(2) Second seminar:** in mid first semester; a preview of the research project with emphasis on the background, scientific significance, objectives and methodology of the project. Duration: 20 minutes + 10 minutes for questions.

**(3) Third seminar/thesis defence:** late in second semester after the thesis has been handed up. This is a scientific conference style presentation which presents the findings from your thesis. It is followed by questions from your examiners who have read all the theses presented. Duration: 10 minutes + 20 minutes for questions

**(4) Written assignment** (honours project- background and research plan)

A written assignment in a similar format to your thesis will be required to be submitted in May. This should contain your honours project background and research plan

**(5) Thesis:** This is in the form of a scientific paper using detailed instructions to authors as required by the journal. Assessment of the thesis will be the major component of the examination process. The thesis will consist of 4 double sided pages in the journal format which equates to about 30 double spaced typed pages

## Assessment procedures

Allocation of components to the final score will be as follows:

Initial seminar (on topic unrelated to thesis)	5 %
Written assignment (Honours project background/ research plan)	10 %
Second seminar	10 %
Thesis	50 %
Supervisors mark	5 %
Thesis defence viva	<u>20 %</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## How will my Honours Work be Supervised?

Each student will be allocated a supervisor or supervisors, who will be responsible for planning and advising on the execution of the research project, training the student in scientific technique(s), advising on appropriate reading, courses etc, participating in the assessment process and liaising between the student and other members of the Discipline. In planning an Honours year for next year, prospective students should approach potential supervisors towards the end of this year to discuss their proposed projects (summaries of possible research areas are included in this booklet). Any externally based project will have an intramural supervisor, based within our Discipline, who will act as a "link" with students whose projects are based in other institutions.

The Honours Coordinator for the Discipline (Dr Abdallah Salem) is available to discuss general aspects of the Honours year with prospective students, and can be contacted on 8303 4327 or by Email: [abdallah.salem@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:abdallah.salem@adelaide.edu.au)

## What Do I Do Now?

Have a look through the research areas listed in this booklet, and then visit the labs where the research is taking place. Talk to the potential supervisors about the kind of project you'd like to do. This step is vital - if you don't talk about the project, you may find that you end up doing something that you weren't expecting from the description in the booklet!

If you have any ideas for projects that are not covered in this booklet, talk to the honours coordinator about the possibility that one could be set up for you. Sometimes this may involve collaboration with other disciplines. Anything **MAY** be possible - it's always worth exploring alternative projects.

If you are thinking about Honours next year but haven't made up your mind 100% yet, go ahead and submit the Application Form. It is quite acceptable to pursue multiple options at this stage, and then make your final decision early next year.

## Honours Scholarships

In 2009, honours scholarships will be available for students who enrol in honours pharmacology and specific projects supervised by members of the Centre for Pain, Addiction and Anaesthetic research (CPAAR). The annual value of the scholarship will be \$3000. CPAAR will also cover travel expenses to national meetings if students are presenting material.

The School of Medical Sciences will also offer Honours scholarship valued at \$3000 upon enrolment in Honours Pharmacology.

Selection for these scholarships will be made according to academic merit. There will be additional selection criteria for CPAAR scholarships. Projects supervised by members of CPAAR and relevant to CPAAR research aims are indicated by an asterisk (\*). Please contact the honours coordinator for more information about these scholarships.