

## Guidelines and Recommendations for an Undergraduate Honors Thesis in Biological Engineering

Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering

University of Florida

### Overview

An *Undergraduate Honors Thesis* is required of graduating seniors in order to graduate *magna cum laude* (high honors) or *summa cum laude* (highest honors). The GPA thresholds for these honors designations are 3.50 and 3.80, respectively, and refer to the GPA beginning after the semester after accumulating 60 credits. In general, the honors thesis requires the completion of an approved research project or creative work.

The Undergraduate Honors Thesis defense requires a presentation by the graduating student to a committee of three faculty, who will evaluate the quality of the honors thesis. Furthermore, it is an examination of the student's skills and training acquired through the experience that is the basis for the honors thesis. The thesis committee must include at least two faculty from the ABE Department and one from outside the ABE Department. This individual can also be from industry (i.e. does not have to be a UF faculty member). Upon completion of the defense, a signature of approval by all three members of the thesis committee is required for the student to receive the honors designation sought.

Please note that if no honors thesis is completed, the student having acquired a 3.50 or 3.80 GPA, will still graduate with *cum laude* honors (minimum of 3.30 after accumulating 60 credits).

### Honors Thesis Considerations

There are several experiences that can be used for an Undergraduate Honors Thesis. This list is meant to provide some general guidelines and is not exhaustive.

- Summer internship or REU experience
- Two semesters of undergraduate research with the same faculty advisor
- Co-op experience
- Other creative/research activity approved by honors thesis chair and BE undergraduate coordinator.

Note that Biological Engineering Design 1 and 2 team efforts and IPPD projects are not suitable for an Undergraduate Honors Thesis.

Please review the information from the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering for additional information.

<https://www.eng.ufl.edu/students/resources/undergraduate-student-handbook/graduating-with-honors/>

For students defending internship or co-op experience projects toward the completion of their undergraduate honors thesis, the student must get written permission from their sponsoring company and submit the Sponsor Permission Form to the ABE Academic Office prior to the defense. This form should note the following:

- The company is aware that the project will be presented to UF faculty members, both within and outside of the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering.

- The company is aware that the project will be submitted to the UF library as part of the undergraduate thesis guidelines, and that these written records may become open to the public immediately or after an embargo period.
- The company is not acting on any additional intellectual property related to the project.
- It is our recommendation that, if a company is concerned with intellectual property issues or intends to act on intellectual property related to the project, the student should not use the internship project as part of their undergraduate honors thesis

### **ABE Department Deadlines**

Declaration Deadline: The student must identify their honors thesis committee by the midpoint of the semester of the graduation term. Please submit your signed form to Robin Snyder.

Defense Deadline: The student must defend the thesis to the supervisory committee and submit the Final Oral Examination and Honors Thesis Submission forms to the ABE Academic Office no later than the last day of classes in the graduating semester. Forms submitted after this deadline will not be accepted. The student must also complete the necessary paperwork with the library and college. Review procedures and complete all necessary forms found here: <https://abe.ufl.edu/undergraduate/resources/>. Scroll down to **Undergraduate Honors Thesis** for the policy and the required forms.

### **University Deadlines:**

After completing all critical ABE deadlines as outlined above, the student must submit both the Honors Thesis Submission form (with all signatures included) and an electronic copy of the completed thesis to the UF Library IR Coordinator by the posted deadline on the [UF Libraries website](#).

### **Defense Documents**

The student's honors thesis must include

1. A written thesis submitted to the honors thesis committee no later than 7 days prior to the oral defense. The honors thesis should include
  - o A title page identifying the thesis title, presenting student, thesis committee members, and the oral defense date.
  - o 250 word abstract (maximum)
  - o A main text with a minimum of 10 written pages
    - The abstract and title page are not included in this count
    - References at the end of the thesis are not in this page count
    - Appendices are not included in this page count
    - The main text should have margins no smaller than 1 inch
    - The main text should use a font size of 12 points
    - The main text should use a spacing of 1.5 lines (no double or single space)
  - o A bibliography for the thesis. There is no page limit for this section.
    - o Appendices are not required, but may be used, however, the thesis committee is not required to read the appendices
      - Do not include critical figures in the appendices
2. An oral presentation and defense to a committee of 3 faculty
  - o The student should prepare a 10 to 15 minute presentation of the honors thesis
  - o The student should be prepared for another 10 to 15 minutes of questions and

answers.