

Guidelines for an Honors Thesis in Music

University of Utah School of Music

The honors thesis is a significant creative and/or scholarly research project that serves as the culmination of a student's undergraduate honors experience, carried out under the supervision of a faculty Thesis Mentor. A thesis consists of substantial work exceeding the requirements of the equivalent non-honors degree. It should further develop the student's intellectual, professional, and personal growth and demonstrate expertise in the major field, a command of relevant scholarship, and an effort to contribute to existing art and/or scholarship.

In music, the thesis may take many forms. It could be a research paper, an original composition with artist's statement, a lecture recital, a recital with extensive program notes, etc. Students may propose alternative formats for the honors thesis in music. The format as well as the topic should be described in the Thesis Proposal Form and agreed upon by the Thesis Mentor and Honors Faculty Advisor. The thesis should be an effort to make an original contribution to the student's field and should demonstrate research expertise, strong communication skills, and a command of relevant literature in that field.

Recommended Timeline

Note: This augments the Honors College thesis guidance at <https://honors.utah.edu/thesis/>. It is for a student planning to graduate in the spring. For a fall graduation, adjust the timeline accordingly.

Penultimate year:

Consider potential thesis topics. Meet with the School of Music Honors Faculty Advisor to discuss your topic idea(s) and potential thesis mentors.

Spring of your Penultimate Year or August of Your Thesis Year:

Invite a faculty member to be your Thesis Mentor. Develop your thesis topic and complete the Honors Thesis Proposal Form. (Your Honors Faculty Advisor and Thesis Mentor will need to sign this form.) Be sure to meet with your Thesis Mentor to agree on a schedule for reviewing your progress, submitting drafts, making final revisions, etc. If you are a performance major, you may want to consider the timeline for your thesis as you plan your recital and vice versa. For most students graduating in the spring, it will make most sense to take MUSC 4999 (Honors Thesis course in the School of Music) in the spring semester, but you may also choose to take it in the fall.

September of Your Thesis Year:

Submit your Honors Thesis Proposal Form to the Honors College. The soft turn-in date for this form is September 15th to ensure you are on track.

Thesis Year, Especially the Semester of MUSC 4999:

Work with your Thesis Mentor on your project.

When you submit your thesis, it will be archived by the Marriott Library, but consider other venues for presenting your work as well, like the U's annual [Undergraduate Research](#)

[Symposium](#), research conferences related to your discipline, or the [U's Undergraduate Research Journal](#).

March–April of Thesis Year:

Complete and submit your thesis. Signed and approved theses are due to the Honors College the day that grades are due in the semester in which you are graduating. Please give yourself and your Thesis Mentor at least three weeks to make final revisions and collect your three signatures. Share the final version of the thesis and request signatures from the Honors Faculty Advisor and School of Music Director at least two weeks before the thesis submission due date. Turn in a signed [USpace Permission Form](#) when you submit your thesis. USpace is the J. Willard Marriott Library's institutional repository and provides permanent electronic storage for your work to be publicly available. If you have questions or concerns about making your thesis available through USpace, please contact the main Honors Office.