

The Senior Honors Project

Proposal Guidelines

John Carroll University
Honors Program

The proposal is a crucial part of the Senior Honors Project. It is in the proposal that the student outlines the area of study, the methodology to be employed, the resources to be enlisted, the anticipated form of the final project, and the timetable for the completion of the final project. In order to accomplish these goals, students must already have completed preliminary research into their proposed topic. All students who either complete HP450 or a research project in a department in place of HP450 must write a proposal.

Before any significant work begins on the project itself, the proposal must be approved by the student, the advisor of the project, by the Director of the Honors Program or Honors Program Reader, and by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences or the Boler School of Business.

The proposal is the Senior Honors Project in microcosm. It should therefore be written in formal language, clearly argued and convincingly supported, integrating relevant resources of the chosen discipline. Proposals or Senior Honors Projects that fail to meet these requirements will not be accepted. Because it will be reviewed by readers outside the student's chosen discipline, the proposal should be written in language and with background information that renders the project accessible to an educated lay audience. Please note that this expectation may require a slight deviation from disciplinary standards. The final SHP however, may be written in language appropriate to informed readers in the discipline.

Each proposal should be composed of three parts: a **narrative** of the proposed project; a **bibliography**; and a tentative **timetable**. All portions of the proposal should be paginated consecutively and include the following components:

1. Narrative of the proposed project (4-6 pages, double spaced)

The narrative account should clearly and concisely outline the project. It should state what is being proposed, why it is being proposed and how the student expects to complete the project. Thus, the account must include the following items. Given that various disciplines establish their own expectations for research proposals, students may primarily follow the structure of their chosen discipline in constructing the body of their proposal, but are expected to include these items somewhere into the narrative:

- a. an introductory paragraph that provides a concise summary of your proposed project with a thesis statement, working hypothesis or tentative argument;

- b. a brief rationale for the project. Explain concisely how this particular project will serve as a capstone to your undergraduate career, and possibly how it will help you prepare for your studies or career after JCU. This component should not be dominate the proposal but merely contextual the work you plan to complete;
- c. a sense of the scholarly context in which the project is set, such as previous work in the area, historical background, and limitations;
- d. a demonstration of your knowledge of the relevant scholarly issues and questions related to your topic by means of a literature review. This component is crucial to the successful completion of your project in a timely fashion and thus is the backbone of your proposal. Here you demonstrate your awareness of relevant scholarship exists on your subject, that you have already begun to engage with this scholarship by pointing to the key findings, problems, and questions that the scholarship has posed, and how your work will contribute to our understanding of the topic;
- e. an explanation of your proposed research approach or methodology, including comments on what research, laboratory work, interviews, surveys, etc., you will undertake. If you are intending to conduct and analyze a survey as part of your project, you must also include a draft of the survey with your proposal;
- f. your plans for the dissemination of your work. This might be a poster or paper presentation at a conference (such as Celebration of Scholarship) or a publication submission. All students must plan to disseminate their work in some manner;
- g. some comments on what you anticipate the final form of your project will be.

2. Bibliography

Your proposal must include a preliminary bibliography of those sources which you anticipate being essential to your project. For most disciplines and most projects, you will need to provide both primary and secondary sources. Your bibliography should be approximately one page in length, and it should be in proper format for your discipline (e.g., Turabian, MLA).

3. Timetable

Your proposal must include a timetable. This timetable should indicate approximate dates for completion of the various parts of your project. Among the dates you should present are ones for acceptance of the proposal, for beginning your research, for completion of research, for first draft of final project, for final completion date, and deadlines related to disseminating your findings (such as Celebration of Scholarship). The timetable might also include dates for meetings with your project advisor. At the very least, you should indicate how frequently you will meet with your advisor. Remember that the final project must be submitted no later than one week before the last class day of the semester in which one is registered for HP450 or for a course in your major department.

Sample copies of previously approved Senior Honors Project Proposals are on file in the Honors Program Office and online in the “Library of Sample Proposals” off the Honors Program “Forms” page.

Students who expect to do any form of human experimentation, including surveys, must submit their proposal to the JCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. A student who intends to do any form of animal experimentation must file a protocol review form with The Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC). Information about these processes is available from the Honors Office or the Office of Sponsored Research (see the document “Submitting Proposals to the Institutional Review Board” on the Honors Program “Forms” site). Proposals will not be submitted to the Dean until IRB or IACUC approval (or waiver) has been granted.

A student must submit a draft of the Senior Honors Project proposal by the end of the third week of the semester during which he or she wishes to register for the senior project. This draft should have already been reviewed by the faculty advisor and appropriate revisions undertaken. Electronic submissions are preferred. Comments on this draft will be sent to both the student and the faculty advisor.

A student must submit a final draft of the Senior Honors Project proposal **by the end of the fifth week of the semester** for which he or she plans to complete the project. A hard copy of the proposal, including the application form, the narrative of your project, a bibliography, a schedule, and IRB/IACUC approval if required, should be submitted to the Honors Program Office.

The draft will then be forwarded to the second reader – usually drawn from the Honors Program Committee – who will also review the final project. If the second reader approves the proposal, it will be forwarded to the Dean of Arts and Sciences or the Boler School of Business (depending on the discipline in which the student completes the project). If the proposal is not accepted, it will be returned to the student for further revision.

No new proposals will be accepted for formal submission to the Dean after the end of the fifth week of the semester.

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