

BSc(Med)Hon Guidelines

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Background

The BSc(Med)Hons program is a one-year supervised research program leading to the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science (Medicine) Honours. Depending on the subject area chosen the program may be taken by interrupting medical studies at the end of Year 3, 4 or 5. The course aims to:

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- enable students to acquire an appreciation of the value of observation and research in the development of medical science
- enable students to determine the 'current state of knowledge' in a defined field
- provide experience in the written and spoken presentation of scientific information and scholarly research, and
- provide an invaluable background in basic research philosophy and techniques on which a subsequent career in specialised medical research may be built.

Seminar presentations

Students are required to present their research projects at the BSc(Med)Hons seminars held twice a year. At the first seminar organised in mid-year students present the aims and methodology involved in their research project and at the end-of-year seminar the findings of their research project are presented. Seminars will consist of a 15-minute presentation followed by a 10-min question time.

Supervision

Supervisors have a responsibility to provide a suitable research environment for their students. Students must have a supervisor and a co-supervisor. Where study is located at an external location, one supervisor should be on-site with the other attached to the School of enrolment.

Supervisor's responsibilities:

- have regular contact to provide ongoing support, resolve any problems, meet deadlines
- ensure that a seminar program is available for every student
- act as an independent assessor at the seminar presentations of other students
- attend BSc(Med)Hon seminar presentations where possible; in instances where a supervisor cannot be present, a delegate from their department should attend
- set timeline for submission of the thesis for examination
- nominate four independent assessors to examine the thesis – two will be chosen
- submit final reports with assessment details and the school's recommendation for grade of Honours

Examination of thesis

Theses (3 copies) must be examined by two assessors who are external to the supervisors - at least one being external to the School of enrolment. Both examiners mark the thesis. Four potential examiners must be nominated on application for enrolment in the Honours program.

Recommendations for Examiners should be given to the Faculty Postgraduate Administrative Officer who, on consultation with the Committee Chairperson, will appoint the Examiners. At least one examiner should have direct experience in supervision of Honours students. To avoid any conflict of interest, examiners should not be recent or current collaborators of the Supervisor or Co-supervisor. There should be no correspondence or discussion between the Supervisors and the Examiners related to the student and any questions that an Examiner may have should be addressed to the Faculty Postgraduate Administrative Officer. On occasion, a Supervisor may wish to nominate as the external examiner some one who has minimal contact with the student, but who has a conjoint appointment in the School of enrolment. These requests will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis by the Committee and may be given approval.

Assessment

The thesis, an essay or literature review, both seminar presentations and the supervisors' reports (one page) are compulsory components of the assessment. For students studying overseas, they will need to return to UNSW to present at the seminars.

Assessment of seminar presentations

In order to bring uniformity of assessment across the program, starting in 2001 the seminar presentations organised by the Committee will be used for assessment. By attending the seminars and encouraging discussion, Committee members, supervisors and examiners will ensure that students are appropriately assessed on their performance.

The assessors of the presentations will include the Committee members, the internal examiner, and supervisors of other students in the program. Students will be given an average mark based on assessment recorded by at least 5 individuals.

Assessment of the literature review or essay

The literature review or essay is to be marked by the internal examiner.

Examiners responsibilities

The internal examiner will mark the literature review or essay, attend and grade both seminars and examine and mark the thesis. The external examiner will only be required to examine and mark the thesis.

Final evaluation and award of Honours

In order to encourage uniformity of assessment across the program, the following procedures will be introduced:

- at least one member of the Committee will read and grade a student's thesis in addition to the 2 examiners. This grade will be used to help determine the student's ranking.
- at their December meeting the Committee will review the theses, grades and recommendations made by supervisors for award of Honours
- the Committee will then make the final recommendation for the grade of Honours to be awarded

In the grading of Honours in general the following guidelines and standards will apply:

Honours Class I is awarded for first class work where the student has produced an exceptional thesis and shown experimental initiative and thoroughness in the project

Honours Class II, division 1 is awarded for very good work competently and conscientiously performed in the project and the thesis

Honours Class II, division 2 is awarded for good work in the project and thesis presentation but where the student has demonstrated little original contribution and has required considerable help from the supervisor

Honours Class III is awarded where the project has been completed and a thesis presented but where there are well-grounded reservations about the student's performance in the degree of work of in competence.

Guidelines for supervisors

In general when marking out of 10 the following represent these grades:

5.0 - 6.4:	Pass Only	Honours Class III
6.5 - 7.4 :	Credit	Honours Class II, Division 2
7.5 - 8.4 :	Distinction	Honours Class II, Division 1
8.5 and above:	High Distinction	Honours Class I

The student's raw marks are to be allocated in this quantitative fashion and then weighted according to the recommendation in the table above:

▪ thesis	50%
▪ literature review or essay	10%
▪ first seminar	5%
▪ second seminar	15%

This quantitative assessment is then used in conjunction with a qualitative continuous assessment of the student's performance taken in comparison with other students, worth 20%.

Assessment components

	% of Mark	Tentative dates
Thesis <20,000 words	50	12 Dec 2007
Literature review (3,000 words)	10	4 May 2007
Seminar 1	5	11 Jul 2007
Seminar 2	15	5 Dec 2007
Student continuous performance assessment	20	
<i>Adherence to schedules eg lab work, essay, seminars, thesis</i>	<i>3/20</i>	
<i>Ability to learn and improve eg in experimental work, writing and surveying literature</i>	<i>3/20</i>	
<i>Ability to understand and communicate ideas and respond appropriately to instruction</i>	<i>3/20</i>	
<i>Ability to think logically and critically, and to plan effectively</i>	<i>3/20</i>	
<i>Ability in laboratory or experimental procedures and in writing</i>	<i>3/20</i>	
<i>Degree of initiative, motivation and perseverance in experimental work and writing</i>	<i>2/20</i>	
<i>Degree of independence in work and in writing</i>	<i>3/20</i>	