

## **Human Resource Management Major Honors Thesis Requirements**

A senior honors thesis for majors is an opportunity to engage in a substantial research project or a developmental project (applied thesis). The thesis must make an original contribution or expand on an existing work in Human Resource Management (HRM) (broadly defined). The details of this project must be established in consultation with a faculty mentor. Four hours of HNR 4998 academic credit will count as 4 hours of concentration credit in the HRM major.

### **Mentor**

The mentor for an HRM Major honors student thesis in the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship must be a faculty member in the department. The mentor, selected in consultation with the department chair, must have research, applied and/or creative expertise and interests that are consistent with the proposed thesis project. A faculty member may accept one new thesis each year and may supervise up to two thesis projects at the same time, one in progress and one new thesis. The mentor is responsible for coordinating with the committee members to oversee the project. Committee members will assist the mentor in reviewing intermediate and final work products, as necessary.

### **Thesis Committee**

In accordance with Honors Program guidelines, the thesis committee will be made up of three Elon faculty on long-term contracts who have a background or expertise that allow them to contribute to the project and evaluate the work. In cases of an applied thesis project, it is recommended that the business client be consulted as an unofficial member of the committee.

### **Description**

The intent of the Honors Thesis is to have the student strive to make an original scholarly or managerial contribution to the theory or the practice of the HRM discipline. As such, it is to be understood by the Honors student that the scope and magnitude of their Thesis are expected to be beyond that which is undertaken in standard courses, other forms of independent study, or in MGT 4990.

Traditional qualitative and quantitative research projects must follow established conventions, be consistent with the development of such projects, and conform to format guidelines established by the Honors Program. The project report may be structured as an academic article suitable for submission to an academic journal in the field (guidelines for such works, including page lengths and formats, will be discussed with the faculty mentor).

Applied projects must manifest appropriate theoretical concepts, follow content and production conventions for such works, and be targeted to the HRM practices in for-profit or not-for profit enterprises. Examples of applied projects include best practices in employee recruitment and selection, evaluations of job design and job evaluation practices, and the administration of performance management programs.

If projects involve directly working with clients, client contacts, discussion topics, decisions and commitments/work product timelines must be documented. Applied works must be accompanied by written documentation explaining the significance of the project, reviewing pertinent literature, and

providing historical, theoretical, methodological, contextual and/or other appropriate justification of the project, plus bibliography and appendices. In the event that client needs require the honors student to complete the applied research project on an accelerated timeline, the faculty mentor will work with the department chair to coordinate academic credit and faculty workload issues.

### **Academic Credit/Timeline**

The distribution of credit hours will be determined in consultation with the mentor. However, thesis credit may not be granted in Winter Term or summer, and a student may not take more than four hours of thesis credit in a semester.

Both student and mentor are expected to follow the deadlines set forth by the Honors Program for thesis proposals, mid-semester reports, and final project, etc. After identification of a research mentor in consultation with the department chair, students should enroll in 1 – 2 semester hour(s) of HNR 4998 with the mentor in which the student and mentor develop the thesis proposal, no later than spring of the student's junior year.

After acceptance of the proposal, students will most likely enroll in 2 – 3 hours of HNR in each subsequent semester. Final arrangement of distribution should be made in consultation with the faculty mentor and the department chair.

\* The thesis defense must comply with the format and policies of the Honors Program. All HRM majors must also make a formal presentation of their results directed to the client (faculty or business) and allow audience questions.