

Entrepreneurship Major Honors Thesis Prospectus

Overview

A senior entrepreneurship thesis provides the opportunity for entrepreneurship majors to engage in a substantial research project whose intent is to make an original contribution to the discipline or to develop a plan for a substantial new business venture. The subject and parameters of the chosen study are to be decided in consultation with a faculty mentor. Four hours of HNR 4998 completed in the pursuit of the Thesis will count toward graduation as four hours of electives in the Entrepreneurship major.

The Mentor

The Mentor chairs the Thesis Committee. The Mentor for an entrepreneurship Thesis must be a member of the entrepreneurship faculty and have research expertise. The Mentor is solicited by the student in consultation with the Department Chair. Criteria for Mentor selection could include the prospective Mentor's own research interests and expertise, and how these may fit the domain of the student's proposed Thesis topic. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Department Chair to initiate the selection process.

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.

Thesis Committee

In accordance with Honors Program guidelines, the Thesis Committee should be comprised of three Elon faculty in long-term contracts whose background and expertise is consonant with the research that is proposed.

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 entrepreneurship 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 ENT 4999.

Though the range of choice of topics for a thesis is vast, the nature of the inquiry undertaken will fall into one of four categories. First, the study that is undertaken may be *scholarly* in nature, whether theoretical or empirical. The form of this kind of Thesis would be that of a scholarly paper, with the practical goal of presentation at a regional or national conference. Second, the study that is undertaken may be *managerial* in nature, and be a research study performed on behalf of a business client, with two outcomes. First, the study is to strive to provide significant

contribution to actionable strategy for that client. And, second, the student is to strive for findings that make some sort of contribution to the knowledge of entrepreneurship practice in general. And, third, the study that is undertaken may be a *case study*. A case Thesis should take the general form of a Harvard Business School Press case. As such, it is to be highly referenced, and present important questions and issues in the context of some particular problem faced by a manager and her or his firm, where that individual must recommend or implement some actionable strategy in response to a problem she or he faces, in a timely manner. And fourth, the thesis may be a *business plan* for a substantially new business venture. In keeping with the research objectives of an honors thesis, the business plan must contain a substantial amount of applied research that will support the business plan in the following areas: marketing research, environmental analysis, competitive analysis, and pro-forma financial statement development.

Qualitative or quantitative studies or applied research is to follow established conventions, and conform to the format guidelines of the Honors Program.

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 Marketing majors must also make a formal presentation of their results directed to the faculty and allow audience questions.

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