

Guidelines for Honors Advising in Psychology, Cognitive Science, and Cognitive Neuroscience for the CoPsy Department

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Thank you for considering mentoring an honors thesis student in the CoPsy Department. We truly appreciate your willingness to let a student work side by side with you in a research endeavor. We hope that the experience is beneficial not only to the student, but also to your research and membership in the Brown community. Below we want to describe a set of practices that we hope you will consider while mentoring a student through the honors process. Please note that below we refer to “sponsors” as indicating the faculty member who is responsible for the student’s training and evaluation.

Sincerely,

Honors Advisor (Daphna Buchsbaum) and Director of Undergraduate Studies (Andrea Simmons), CoPsy Department, Brown University.

Overview: Faculty thesis sponsors are responsible for supervising the student to ensure the student logs 180 hours of instructional time per semester. Regular meetings with the student are essential to discuss publications, data collection, and research progress, with weekly meetings (including lab meetings) strongly recommended, and at least one individual face-to-face meeting per semester. Faculty sponsors should set specific benchmarks for research activities, including deadlines for drafts, data collection, and lab presentations, and establish end-of-semester benchmarks, such as a draft of the introduction and research progress. Ensuring the student has also completed necessary training and obtained IRB/IACUC approval is another critical responsibility. Faculty sponsors must review and provide feedback on the rough draft of the thesis, the penultimate draft, and the final written thesis, as well as oversee the creation and timely submission of the student's poster presentation. Finally, faculty sponsors should discuss authorship for any published papers resulting from the project to ensure clarity and proper credit for the student's contributions.

- 1) Honors students must register for CLPS1980 in their 7th and 8th semesters. Sponsors must have a section of CLPS1980 so that the student can register during the shopping period. If the sponsor does not already have a section number, they will be given one automatically when the student’s honors proposal is accepted. If there is any difficulty with this process, please contact Rosa Moniz, our undergraduate administrative staff person.

- 2) CLPS1980 is a formal course. As such, students are expected to engage in 180 hours of instructional time over the course of the semester. This roughly translates to students putting in 13-14 hours per week engaging in research activities, including meeting with the Sponsor. Students should keep a log of their hours. We recommend that students take CLPS1980 ABC/NC.
- 3) The CLPS1980 course can be used as an elective, capstone, or 2nd lab STEM course for Sc.B. student. However, only 2 semesters of CLPS1980 credit can be applied to a concentration. Please have students speak with their concentration advisor to ensure that *the two required semesters* of CLPS1980 in the 7th and 8th semesters fit into their concentration declaration.
- 4) The honors experience involves a set of deliverables (exact dates posted on the honors website)
 - a) At the end of the first semester a rough draft of a portion of the thesis (e.g., the first draft of your introduction and methods) is submitted to the faculty sponsor and the honors advisor.
 - b) In early April, a penultimate draft of the thesis is submitted to the faculty sponsor, the second faculty reader and the Honors advisor.
 - c) In mid-to-late April, a poster will be presented to the CoPsy Department at an event for all honors students.
 - d) The final written honors thesis, due TBA (late April)

More description about these are listed in #5 and #6

- 5) The poster should be the equivalent of a poster that would be presented at an academic conference. Details about the size/format will be provided to students sometime in the middle of the second semester. Students will have access to the CoPsy department poster printer in order to print the poster in the week leading up to the event. Students should be made aware that their poster is due ~3-4 days before the event, not the day of the event. This will ensure that all posters are printed and hung in a timely manner.
- 6) The final written report should be in the form of a journal manuscript, written for a standard APA journal in the investigator's field, and written in APA style. It should be divided into an Introduction section, Methods and Results for each experiment and a discussion section. If there are multiple experiments, then the student should have separate discussion sections for each experiment as well as a general discussion. We strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the APA publication manual (7th edition) and advise the student to do the same.

Students will often ask about the length of the written report. While we do not have specific page length requirements (because every research project is different), there is an

expectation that the introduction details a year-long investigation and a relatively large set of reading. Thus, it should be substantial. In many cases, an introduction of a thesis is longer than a standard introduction for a manuscript, and presents the details of more individual papers. Introductions are then rewritten and made more dense, if the Sponsor and student choose to submit the research to a journal for publication.

As indicated above, about a month prior to the due date of the written report, a full rough draft of the report must be submitted by the student to the honors advisor, the student's research advisor and a second reader. The second reader is always a member of the CoPsy department, and determined for each student when they apply for honors. The second reader will provide feedback on the draft, for the student to revise the project. The primary research advisor (sponsor) should do this as well. This feedback should be treated as if the student is being given a revise-and-resubmit from a journal, although a point-by-point description of the revisions (i.e., a cover letter) is *not* necessary.

Individual dates for the poster session, the submission of the penultimate draft, and the submission of the final draft change year to year. For this year, they can be found on the honors website of the CoPsy department.

- 7) In preparation of these final deliverables, we recommend the following practices:
 - a) In the first semester, the student prepares a reading list of approximately 20-40 sources, to be read during the two academic semesters. This reading will serve as the backbone of the introduction and motivation for the project.
 - b) That the student and sponsor meet regularly in both semesters to discuss the content of these publications as well as the progress of data collection or analysis or other substantive research endeavors. Even if the project is supervised by another member of the sponsor's lab (e.g., an advanced graduate student or a postdoctoral researcher), face to face meetings with the sponsor are encouraged, and at least one face-to-face meeting per semester between the sponsor and student is expected, particularly given students' expectations that faculty members will be able to write them letters of recommendation for experiences beyond Brown. Please note that we strongly discourage asking junior graduate students from supervising undergraduate thesis projects and do not allow staff members to supervise undergraduates.
 - c) That the sponsor sets particular benchmarks for research activities. This could include, but is not limited to (i) setting due dates for drafts of parts of the written report, (ii) setting deadlines for data collection or analysis, (iii) presentation in lab meetings or other gatherings by the student detailing the project, or (iv) the student submitting laboratory notes taken throughout the semester. Even if benchmarks are not set regularly, we strongly encourage sponsors to set benchmarks for specifically the end of the first semester (e.g., a draft of the introduction as well as research progress).

- d) That the sponsor ensures that the student has received relevant training (e.g., CITI, ethics in psychology, etc.) and relevant IRB or IACUC approval for the project prior to or within the first two weeks of the start of the first semester. Such approvals can take weeks or even months to obtain, so starting before the semester begins is
- e) If relevant, a discussion about authorship of any published paper that might emerge from the project. We encourage all sponsors to read the section on Publication Practices and Responsible Authorship at <https://www.apa.org/research/responsible/publication>

8) We hope that the experience is a positive one, and can ultimately result in conference presentations, journal articles, and a successful mentoring relationship. However, in the unfortunate event of conflict arising between a student and sponsor in the course of the process, we encourage both individuals to contact first the honors advisor (Daphna_Buchsbaum@brown.edu) as well as the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Andrea_Simmons@brown.edu)