

Cornell University
Department of Animal Science
HONORS THESIS GUIDELINES

(updated 8/08)

These guidelines are for the completion of the Thesis Requirement and the process by which the Animal Science Honors Committee will evaluate your effort. The deadlines are needed to permit adequate review to be completed and final decisions to be made so that recommendations for the award of "*with Distinction in Research*" can be passed on to the College Registrar before Commencement.

The program in Animal Science requires that your thesis be prepared in consultation with your research mentor and, when the two of you agree that it is in optimal form, the thesis will be examined by the Committee. The committee may consult with independent faculty in arriving at its final assessment.

After review of the thesis by members of the Committee, candidates will be required to orally defend their work in closed sessions with members of the Committee. This final evaluation is not intended to be intimidating; rather, it provides an opportunity for the members of the Committee to assess your command of the subject matter under investigation and for them to obtain their own opinion of your independence and development as a beginning scientist. In many cases, the Committee will offer minor, but often important, suggestions for changes in content or presentation to improve the final form of the thesis. It is expected that these changes will be made.

The Animal Science Honors Committee for 2008/2009 is Drs. Yves Boisclair, Jerrie Gavalchin, James Giles, Patricia Johnson, Thomas Overton and Susan Quirk (Chair).

HONORS THESIS GUIDELINES

Schedule:

Start work on the thesis as early as you can - it will always take longer than anticipated and you will be amazed at how quickly time after Spring Break passes.

Discuss with your mentor the planned contents (in outline form) - especially the scope of the literature review, because this should be assembled as early as possible.

Draft the thesis and incorporate ideas and suggestions arising from review and discussion with your mentor.

A "final" version, representing your best effort, must be reviewed and approved by your mentor before it is submitted for examination. Be sure that both parties agree to a time-line, so that the preparation is optimal.

Submit your final version for examination by the Committee by Thursday, 4/16/09. You will be informed later about the number of copies required. These should be editorially polished, complete copies, but simple photocopies of illustrations and figures will suffice. The Committee may insist upon further changes, so do not permanently mount photographs, nor go to the expense of elaborate binding at this time - numbered pages in a folder (clipped together) or a ring-binder will suffice. All Committee copies will be returned to you on Tuesday 5/5/09. One bound, complete copy of the thesis is to be lodged with Dr. Quirk by Monday 5/18/09 - failure to do so will prevent the Registrar being informed of the Committee's recommendation. Depending upon how fancy you choose to have the binding, this can take some time - bear this in mind when making any required revisions after 5/5. The thesis will be placed permanently in the Departmental thesis collection. Many students choose to bind additional copies for themselves, parents, research advisor, etc. You will be contacted from Roberts Hall regarding their requirements for electronic copies of your abstract and thesis.

You will be scheduled to meet individually with members of the Honors Committee, for 15 to 20 minutes, during the morning of Tuesday 5/5. Successful completion of the Program is announced during the undergraduate picnic, that usually follows on the same day.

(over)

The thesis should be prepared using a high quality laser or ink-jet printer. You may expect to need several draft versions, so be sure to save back-ups, not just on your hard drive. There is no strict stipulation on maximal size of the thesis but the text portion (excluding figures, tables, etc.) should not exceed 25 to 30 pages of double-spaced text, using 12 point characters. To help others who will be reading your thesis, please avoid the use of right-justification. Tables and figures should be of high quality with Titles (tables) numbered I, II, III, etc. and Legends (figures) numbered 1, 2, 3, etc. Legends should be sufficiently complete to enable a figure to stand alone and should appear at the bottom of the figure. The title of a table is placed at the top. Additional details about the table are included as footnotes placed at the bottom of the table. See examples of the format of tables and figures in any high quality scientific periodical. All tables and figures should be referenced from the text. To avoid cluttering the text, voluminous raw, or partly processed, data should be included as numbered appendices. The final version of the thesis for the Department of Animal Science collection should be bound in some robust manner within covers of cardstock or heavy plastic: a clip-binder, spiral plastic, or equivalent, will suffice. An electronic copy of the approved thesis should be provided to the college.

The thesis should include the following sections, each clearly separated by a boldface heading (place items 1-4 on separate pages, begin 5 on a new page, but items 6-10 may run on):

1. **Title Page**
2. **Summary or Abstract** - confine to 1 page
3. **Acknowledgments**
4. **Table of Contents**
 - 4a (if warranted) - a list of abbreviations used
5. **Introduction or Preface** - a brief statement that serves to introduce the reader to the subject of your study - finish this with an explicit
6. **Review of the Literature**
7. **Materials and Methods** - include a description of the experimental design, methods employed or developed, statistical methods used, as appropriate - consult with your mentor on the degree to which you detail methodology that is already published. It may be convenient to place fine detail of methods (e.g. recipes, when these are detailed) in an appendix.
8. **Results**
9. **Discussion** - this may include subheadings for "conclusions" or "future directions for this research," if you so choose. For some theses, combining **Results** and **Discussion** may be desirable, and is quite acceptable.
10. **Literature Cited** - adopt any of the standard formats with which you are familiar from your reading of scientific journals. Include full titles and all authors. Be sure to double-check citations in the text with those in the reference list.
 - Appendices (if you wish)