

**GRADUATION  
WITH RESEARCH DISTINCTION  
OR WITH DISTINCTION  
The Honors Thesis in the Arts and Sciences**

Information for Students and Project Advisors

There are three options for students interested in pursuing graduation *with research distinction* or *with distinction*. The graduation honor ***with research distinction in [the major field]*** recognizes those students who demonstrate excellence in the study of a discipline both through course work and by completing an independent research project culminating in an honors thesis. The course work should provide the student with a broad overview of the discipline and with a meaningful context for the specialized research and thesis project. Students majoring in Mathematics may alternatively choose the graduate-level course work option to graduate ***with distinction in Mathematics***. The graduation honor ***with research distinction*** recognizes those students who complete and successfully defend an honors thesis in a discipline other than the major.

### **The Area of Distinction**

#### **1. Graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]***

The area of distinction is minimally equivalent to the courses listed on the approved Major Program Form or the major program section of an Honors Contract. This serves as the student's official Major Program and must meet all Arts and Sciences requirements for a major program.

The area of distinction also can be an interdisciplinary major previously approved as part of a Personalized Study Program (PSP) or Interdisciplinary Honors Contract. For students majoring in two or more established majors and completing research that is sufficiently interdisciplinary, the area of distinction can be in a related field that warrants a separate title. In the past, for example, students with multiple majors have pursued *with distinction* in areas such as Chinese drama, ecological mathematics, and intercultural communication.

#### **2. Graduation *with distinction in Mathematics***

The area of distinction for graduation *with distinction in Mathematics* is minimally equivalent to the courses listed as part of the Mathematics major on the approved Major Program Form or the major program section of an Honors Contract. This serves as the student's official Major Program and must meet all Arts and Sciences requirements for a major program. The graduate-level course work taken for graduation *with distinction in Mathematics* is taken in addition to the approved major program.

#### **3. Graduation *with research distinction (project/thesis outside the major field)***

As this honor is awarded for a project/thesis completed in a discipline outside the major field, the requirement of an approved major program in the area of distinction does not apply. However, each individual department may determine that a certain body of course work in the discipline and/or related areas is required in order for the completion and successful defense of the thesis to result in the student's graduating *with research distinction*.

Unless a student pursuing graduation *with research distinction* already has an approved Honors Contract, the student must also submit an approved Major Program Form for his/her major field with the application for graduation *with research distinction*.

**The Faculty Project Advisor, for *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction***

Any member of the Ohio State teaching faculty with the rank of assistant professor or higher may advise a student who intends to graduate *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*. The advisor will serve as the departmental representative in approving course work required for graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*. The advisor also will assist the student as a research mentor, introducing the student to those principles and techniques necessary for advanced research in the discipline and providing guidance throughout the term of the project. Under the guidance of the faculty advisor, the student must assume responsibility for design, implementation, and final presentation of the research, so that the research project will be a valuable independent learning experience.

**Requirements for the Degree *with research distinction in [the major field]*, *with distinction in Mathematics*, or *with research distinction***

**1. Point-hour requirements**

- a. **The area of distinction.** The student must meet the grade requirements for course work in the discipline as established by the department, if such requirements exist. For graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with distinction in Mathematics*, the area of distinction is equivalent to the courses listed on the Major Program Form or the major program section of an Honors Contract.
- b. **Cumulative point-hour ratio.** The student must have a minimum 3.4 cumulative point-hour ratio (CPHR) on at least 90 graded Ohio State hours.

**2. Credit hours requirements**

- a. **The area of distinction, for *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with distinction in Mathematics*.** The student generally must complete a full 40-hour major in addition to credit hours received for the research and thesis project or the graduate-level course work in Mathematics. The Honors Committee, however, will consider exceptions in cases where the faculty project advisor provides a statement of explanation to the effect that the breadth component of the *with research distinction in [the major field]* candidacy has been met in some alternate way.
- b. **Thesis hours, for *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*.** The student must enroll in a minimum of eight hours (a maximum of fifteen hours) of independent research work applicable to the *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction* project. Departments have provided an 783H course option, graded on an S/U basis, for this purpose. (Note: The Department of Psychology offers 783.01H, 783.02H, and 783.03H, which are graded A-E, and all of which must be successfully completed for graduation *with research distinction in Psychology* or *with research distinction* when the area of distinction is Psychology.) Some departments also require specific course work either previous to or in conjunction with the independent research.

3. **Examination/Thesis requirements, for *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*.**

- a. **Examination.** The student must submit the completed project to a three-member faculty committee and undergo a minimum one-hour oral examination. This committee is composed of the project advisor, one faculty member from the department of the area of distinction, and an honors representative from a department **other than** the area of distinction. If the project advisor determines that the integrity of the examination process would be best served by the third member also being from the field of distinction, s/he should request an exemption from the outside examiner provision prior to the examination. At the discretion of an individual department, a written examination also may be required.
- b. **Thesis.** The thesis must be submitted electronically to the University Libraries' Knowledge Bank no later than the last day of final examination week of the quarter in which the examination takes place.

**Application for the Degree *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction***

Application forms for the degree *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction* are available in the Arts and Sciences Honors Office. The student **should complete the form the quarter before s/he intends to begin the project**. The proposed topic of the thesis, a brief description of the project, the proposed research quarters, and a Major Program Form are part of the application. The major program must be signed by the faculty major advisor, and the application must be signed by the student and project advisor. Some departments also require the signature of the department chair or departmental honors advisor. The completed application should be returned to the Honors Office, which represents the Honors Committee, for approval. The student, faculty project advisor, and major program advisor will receive copies of the approved application. The original remains on file in the Honors Office.

The student may not begin 783H course work until the quarter in which s/he attains junior (Rank 3) standing unless the faculty project advisor provides a statement of explanation to the effect that the student has sufficient background to begin research prior to the senior year. **Before s/he registers for this course work, the application form for graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction* must be completed and approved by the Honors Office.** Changes to the course work on the Major Program Form (or the major program section of the Honors Contract) must be submitted to the Arts and Sciences Honors Office on a Revision Form approved by the major advisor.

**Work on the Project**

The faculty project advisor is responsible for overseeing the entire project. The student and faculty member should establish mutually acceptable guidelines for frequency of consultation, submission of preliminary drafts, and deadlines for submitting work. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in termination of the project.

If the faculty member will be absent during any part of the project, s/he must appoint another faculty member to supervise the project during that period, and the Honors Office should be informed of this appointment. If the student will be conducting research off-campus, the student and faculty member should devise mutually acceptable guidelines for maintaining contact and reporting progress. In some cases, this might include the designation of an "on-site" advisor, and the Honors Office should be informed of these arrangements. The project advisor also should inform the student if it appears that his/her research will require approval of the Institutional Review Board (for human subjects research).

If it appears that the work, while satisfactory, will not be of such superior quality to qualify for graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*, the student and faculty member may agree to continue the project as regular independent study or to terminate the project. The Honors Office must be notified of the decision to drop the project for graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*. In cases where the project either is not completed or does not merit the *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction* designation, the faculty advisor still may judge that sufficient work has been done to merit a grade of "S" (or, in the case of Psychology, a passing letter grade) in the 783H course hours.

### **Completion of the Project for Graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction***

In most cases, completion of the thesis and oral examination will take place during the quarter in which the student graduates. When the faculty member determines that the project is complete, s/he will convene a three-member examination committee. This committee includes the advisor, one other member of the teaching faculty from the same department, and an honors representative from a department **other than** the field of distinction. (If the integrity of the examination would be best served by a committee of three faculty from the same discipline, a request to that effect must be submitted to the Arts and Sciences Honors Office.)

The examination must include a one-hour oral defense and, at the discretion of the department, there may be a written portion as well. All three members of the committee must be present at the oral examination. Failure to observe this procedure means that the student cannot be certified for graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*. The faculty member should inform the student well in advance of specific departmental requirements with regard to written examinations, major area or course work grade-point requirements, and his/her expectations for the oral examination. While there is no single format which would do justice to all disciplines, the Honors Committee encourages examining committees to broaden the scope of the examination beyond a simple review of the thesis. In this manner, the integrity and rigor of the degree *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction* is maintained and enhanced.

The examining committee will, after satisfactory completion of the oral examination, certify the student as qualifying for graduation *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*. The certification form must be returned by a specified date (usually the end of the 8th week of the final quarter) to the Arts and Sciences Honors Office. If the student has met all grade and hour requirements, s/he will then graduate *with research distinction in [the major field]* or *with research distinction*.

### **Format for the Final Copy and Title Page**

**Deadline:** The thesis must be submitted electronically to the University Libraries' Knowledge Bank **no later than** the last day of final examination week of the quarter in which the examination takes place and the student will graduate.

**Manuscript Format:** The Honors Office does not require any particular manuscript format and leaves that decision to the project advisor, who is familiar with the practices of the discipline.

**Title Page:** The title page for the thesis should follow the example below:

Religious Pilgrimage in Medieval England: 1100-1300

A Senior Honors Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation  
*with research distinction in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* in the undergraduate colleges  
of The Ohio State University

by  
Jane Doe

The Ohio State University  
June 2009

Project Advisor: Professor John Smith, Department of History

**NOTE:** Students pursuing graduation *with research distinction* (thesis in an area outside the major field) should **not** include the area of distinction on the title page. Using the example above, if the student was not majoring in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, she would have written, “Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation *with research distinction* in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University.”

## Graduation

**Candidates for graduation *with research distinction* in [the major field], *with distinction in Mathematics*, or *with research distinction* still must submit the standard Application for Baccalaureate Degree.** This application should be submitted through an appointment with an honors counselor in the Arts and Sciences Honors Office one quarter prior to the expected date of graduation. Graduation applications are available in the Honors Office. The Major Program Form submitted with the application for graduation *with research distinction* in [the major field] or *with research distinction* replaces the official Major Program Form in the graduation application. However, any revisions to the courses listed on the major form should be submitted with the application for graduation, on a signed Revision Form.

Candidates who file an Application for Graduation with the Honors Office and complete all *with research distinction* in [the major field], *with distinction in Mathematics*, or *with research distinction* requirements (point-hour, credit hour, and examination requirements) will have the appropriate designation inscribed on the diploma.

Any questions should be directed to Aurelia Kubayanda at 292-5104 (Arts and Sciences Honors Office, 207 Enarson Hall, 154 West 12th Avenue).