

## **Supplementary requirements of the Humanities Honours thesis**

version effective from academic year 2021\_2022

In the third year of their programme, all participants in the Humanities Honours Programme write an Honours thesis (15 EC), half of which replaces the regular Bachelor's thesis (7.5 EC).

The Honours thesis, just like the regular Bachelor's thesis, is a test of mastery at the end of the degree programme followed by the student. As such, the Honours thesis must firstly meet the requirements that apply to the Bachelor's thesis within the student's own programme. This also means that students who write an Honours thesis conform, in principle, to the organisational procedures for the Bachelor's thesis designated within their own degree programmes, for instance as regards the assignment of supervisors and the organisation of thesis seminars.

However, lecturers and coordinators are requested to grant Honours students a degree of freedom when it comes to choosing the subject and the supervising lecturer, and to take account of the fact that an Honours thesis comprises 15 EC instead of 7.5 EC, and thus requires more time than a regular Bachelor's thesis.

Moreover, the Honours thesis must show that the Honours student has the insight and the skills that are defined as learning outcomes for the Humanities Honours Programme (see appendix containing the objective and the learning outcomes of the Humanities Honours Programme). As such, the Honours Thesis must meet the following supplementary requirements.

### **Registration and procedure**

- Students should register for the Humanities Honours thesis (course code HHP3V15002) via the programme coordinator of the Honours programme (humanitieshonours@uu.nl).
- Students inform their supervisors that they are writing an Honours thesis to which supplementary requirements apply.
- Each student contacts the Honours Coordinator of their own department for an intake interview and advice on any Honours-specific supervision.
- If supervision within the student's own programme is subject to an obligation to register for the regular thesis (for instance because separate working groups are organised for this), then students ensure for themselves that this registration takes place via Osiris during the registration period.

### **Quantitative requirements**

The volume of the Honours thesis (15 EC, instead of 7.5 EC for the regular BA thesis) cannot simply be translated into a doubling of the number of words or the incorporated literature and sources that are required for the Bachelor's thesis. The Honours character must above all be reflected in the quality of the thesis. Nonetheless, some quantitative guidelines are

appropriate: the Honours Thesis should have 1.5 times the number of words of a Bachelor's Thesis.

Note: The size of an Honours thesis within the GKG domain follows the guidelines of the relevant programme for a 15 EC thesis (i.e. the size is 2 x that of a 7.5 EC thesis).

### **Qualitative requirements**

The main distinction between an HHP thesis and a regular BA thesis lies in the challenging nature of the questions, the difficulty of the sources and/or the depth of the elaboration of these sources. An important characteristic of the HHP thesis is independence: the ability to formulate substantive questions within one's own discipline and to set up a critically sound research strategy for this purpose.

Besides this the Honours thesis demonstrates the qualities formulated as learning outcomes for the Humanities Honours Programme. This involves connecting to one (or more) of the three tracks of the HHP:

- *Depth*: the ability to carry out analyses at a high level and to make interpretations on issues within one's own field of study. For example, to collect and study more difficult sources than are typically expected for a BA thesis.
- *Breadth*: the ability to relate issues within one's own field to approaches that occupy a key position in other fields within the humanities (and in the case of multi – or interdisciplinary focus, possibly outside this field as well).
- *Societal context*: the ability to place questions and insights within one's own field of study in a societal context and/or to render them productive in the study of societal issues. For example, a research project in collaboration with a societal organization outside the university.

**In the introduction to the thesis, the student is expected to clearly indicate in one paragraph which of these three tracks apply to the thesis in question** (this can be done, for example, when discussing the research question and explaining the sources and method).

Each of the tracks can be strengthened by also including the international context: the ability to grasp and position questions and insights within one's own field in an international academic context.

### **Learning tracks**

In the Honours courses, students have worked with an increasing degree of independence on three key HHP learning tracks that focus on depth, multi- or interdisciplinary breadth and societal context respectively. The Honours thesis ties in with this individual development and should be positioned on the basis of the relevant learning track(s). Each Honours thesis

must, in its introduction and conclusion, devote attention to the position of the academic research within the Humanities.

### **Honours thesis seminar**

In the second or third block, the Honours Director organises a seminar in which the specific aspects of the Honours thesis are discussed and the participants can share experiences. Moreover, all participants should discuss the structure and realisation of their research with other persons at least once. This discussion takes place on the basis of peer review, which is organized by the coordinator of the domain.

### **Honours thesis conference**

At the end of the third year, the members of the third-year cohort organise a closing conference at which all members present their Honours thesis. This may be in the form of plenary presentations, parallel workshops, poster presentations, round-table discussion or other forms – the main objective is that each Honours student has the chance to present his or her research at that time.

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## **Appendix: Objectives and learning outcomes of the Honours Programme**

The Humanities Honours Programme focuses on talented and ambitious students at the Faculty of Humanities: students who want to get more out of themselves and their studies in terms of academic depth, interdisciplinary breadth and societal context. The HHP regards diversity as a key force in the Humanities and, as such, it encourages students to acquire a broad range of perspectives (methodological, disciplinary, geographical and social).

Intellectual curiosity, creativity, personal development and international orientation are core values in the HHP curriculum. The curriculum realises these values by offering particularly challenging, small-scale teaching in which the lecturer plays a coaching role, and which differs from regular BA programmes in both depth and form. Here students always have the space to develop their own interests and to set their own priority areas regarding depth (for instance in the academic-scientific sense) and breadth (for instance in terms of societal impact).

### **Learning objectives**

The Humanities Honours Programme enables talented students to:

1. acquire in-depth insight into the position of their own field of study within the broader domain of academic research and society;
2. achieve greater depth in the field of study of their own degree programme than is possible in the regular programme;

3. achieve greater involvement in academic research in their own field of study than can be achieved in the regular programme;
4. develop personal, social and professional skills appropriate to excellent humanities scholars: a strong sense of responsibility, creativity, a good capacity for (self)reflection, project and time management, interdisciplinary teamwork and leadership.

### **Learning outcomes**

The objectives of the Humanities Honours Programme are expressed in concrete terms with the help of the following learning outcomes. Honours graduates:

1. understand issues that are central to the other fields of study at the Faculty of Humanities and can relate issues in their own field of study to these;
2. are able to conduct analyses and make interpretations at a high level with regard to issues within their own field of study;
3. know how academic research within their own field of study – within the context of the Faculty of Humanities and Utrecht University – is organised and conducted;
4. can render insights from their own field of study productive when studying societal issues;
5. are able to define and initiate field-specific projects with a high degree of independence;
6. are able to work together with others in (multidisciplinary) teams and can here contribute relevant academic knowledge from their own field of study;
7. show involvement in the academic community of their own programme and of the Faculty of Humanities;
8. are able to formulate a personal learning pathway that contributes to their own academic and professional development, to implement this, to reflect on this critically and to adjust it if necessary;
9. have acquired experience with understanding and positioning their own knowledge and their own field of study in an international context;
10. make a creative contribution to independent and joint projects and shows the ability to conclude commenced projects successfully and within the envisaged time.