

Application for the Psychology Research Honors Program

Email completed application and proposal to Professor David Dodell-Feder (d.dodell-feder@rochester.edu) no later than August 1st before your senior year

Note. You can (and are encouraged to) apply in the spring of your junior year. However, your acceptance into the honors program is contingent on your final junior year grades.

Student's Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Campus Address: _____

Current GPA in Psychology courses only (minimum 3.3): _____

Overall GPA: _____

PSYC 219W Completion Date and Grade (minimum B+): _____

List all completed 300-level research courses (minimum of one required before senior year):

Course	Mentor	Semester	Grade
1.			
2.			
3.			

Please attach the following documents:

1. A list of all completed Psychology courses and final grade received in each (see p. 2).
2. Honors Research Proposal, including timeline (see guidelines on p. 3).

Faculty Advisor Name **Department** **Email**

Faculty Advisor Signature **Date**

Co-Mentor Name (if applicable) **Department/Email** **Signature** **Date**

Faculty: By signing this form, you are stating that you have thoroughly reviewed the student's proposal and timeline and that you approve of the proposal as meeting the quality expected of an Honor's thesis.

Student Name **Signature** **Date**

Proposal Outline:

The honors research thesis proposal is a 4-5 page (maximum), double-spaced proposal of the research you want to conduct to fulfill requirements for the honors degree. The proposal should be written under the guidance of your faculty advisor. Thus, substantial planning and pre-review by your faculty mentor is expected and the submission of first drafts or proposals that have not been thoroughly vetted by your advisor is highly discouraged. The proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the originality of the proposal idea (e.g., does it extend previous research), the feasibility of actually conducting the study within the time and financial constraints of honor's projects and faculty research, the organization and writing style (i.e., is it clear and accurate), the thoroughness of the literature review and conceptual rationale for conducting the study, and the ability of your methodological design to adequately test your hypotheses.

Your paper should contain the following information:

Background, Significance, and Aims

(1) *Briefly introduce the problem.* The paper should open with a brief introduction to the specific problem under study. This gives readers some sense of the topic and specific problem that you will be addressing in the proposal and provides a framework from which to understand your subsequent literature review.

(2) *Describe the background and significance of your study in detail.* This part of the introduction answers the questions of "What do we know about the problem under study?" So, to familiarize the reader with the status of the literature in your area of study, what is required is a brief review of the literature relevant to your research question. As you progress through this part of the paper, you should increasingly narrow your focus to covering research and theory that directly addresses the variables or constructs in your proposal. In the process, this should help build a case for the significance or importance of your study by showing how it fits in with prior research and theory.

(3) *Address the contribution of your study, your aims, and your hypotheses.* Clearly state what questions your study is designed to address (i.e., your aims and the variables you are investigating) and how they extend previous research and theoretical findings. It is also critical to develop your specific hypotheses (i.e., what do you predict in terms of the relationships among your variables?) and your justification for the hypotheses from your prior literature review (Why do I expect those results?).

Methodological Plan

Participants. Describe in a few sentences the characteristics of the participants you would plan to recruit along with any necessary information on the procedures you would employ in recruiting them.

Procedures. In this section, concisely tell the reader how the study will be executed; that is, provide an account of what you and the participants will do. This often centers around providing a general description of the methods you will use to collect your data. Will you employ interviews, behavioral observations, or questionnaires? Where will the study be conducted? What constructs are the methods designed to tap (e.g., marital conflict, mood, intrinsic motivation, parenting styles)? How long will the procedure last?

Measures. If possible, briefly describe how you will measure your variables. For example, if you will conduct observations of events and behaviors, what coding system you will use or modify to capture the relevant constructs? If you will use interviews or questionnaires, what specific measure will be used or what kinds of questions that will be asked? Do you plan on developing your own measure or are you using or adapting a previous measure for your proposal?

Timeline

Provide an approximate timeline and list of activities to be conducted for the Honors project during the 389 and 393 courses (e.g., literature review, data collection, training and completing observational coding, data entry and analysis, preparation of final thesis). The effort planned should reflect the number of hours required for the Honors Sequence. Students should discuss the timeline and activities plan with their Faculty Advisor prior to submitting the application.

Identifying a Second Reader

Every student must have a second reader on their thesis. This is a faculty member, chosen by the student and Faculty Advisor, who would be well-suited to evaluate the quality of the project. The second reader is usually a PSY faculty member, but could be a faculty member from another department. The second reader can be identified at any time and no later than mid-spring. Students are encouraged to identify a second reader early and can request meetings and/or feedback on early drafts of the thesis.

Co-Mentor

If the student's Faculty Advisor is not a faculty member in PSY, a Co-Mentor must be selected. The Co-Mentor must sign off on the Honors application, stay apprised of the project, and meet with the student as needed. When students have a Co-Mentor, that person serves the second reader role.

Activities towards the Honors Degree

The 389/393 Honors Sequence are two separate 4.0 credit courses towards the honors degree. As a credit bearing sequence, the expectation is that students will devote at minimum 10 hours per week (or 120 hours over the course of each semester) in activities related to their project. These hours must be independent from hours devoted to any other research based course (e.g., Independent Study Course). This work is not the same as a typical research assistant position, but requires substantially more independent effort by the student.

In summary, to complete the Honors Degree, students must:

- Sign up for the 389/393 course sequence.
- Devote 10 hours per week of research activities related to the project in the fall and spring.
- Attend Honors course meetings (held approximately 3-5 times per semester).
- Present the status of the project to the Honors Committee at the end of the fall semester. (We understand that students will be at different stages in their projects by the end of the fall semester.)
- Complete a full thesis that is approved by the Faculty Advisor and rated acceptable by a second reader.
- Present the final thesis to the department at the end of the spring semester.