

APK Honors Guidelines

Cum Laude – Honors: For a student in APK to graduate with Honors, they need to achieve a 3.4 GPA on all courses taken at UF beginning the semester after accumulating 60 credits, excluding internship, flexible learning courses, and extension courses.

Magna Cum Laude – High Honors: For a student in APK to graduate with Honors, they need to achieve a 3.7 GPA on all courses taken at UF beginning the semester after accumulating 60 credits, excluding internship, flexible learning courses, and extension courses.

Summa Cum Laude – Highest Honors: For a student in APK to graduate with Honors, they need to achieve a 3.7 GPA on all courses taken at UF beginning the semester after accumulating 60 credits, excluding internship, flexible learning courses, and extension courses **and complete an undergraduate thesis.** See below for further guidelines on completion of an undergraduate thesis.

What is an undergraduate thesis?

The Department of Applied Physiology & Kinesiology defines an undergraduate thesis as a document generated to describe original research, a critical appraisal of literature, or a community outreach/service learning project relevant to the students interests within the field.

Who should consider doing an undergraduate thesis?

Graduating with Highest Honors is a mark of distinction; students with an upper division GPA of at least 3.7 looking to set themselves even further apart from their peers might wish to consider this option. This project will require daily attention and effort over the course of one or more semesters—so only students with a high degree of discipline and sufficient time should opt to complete a thesis project. Additionally, students looking to pursue graduate studies would benefit from completion of an undergraduate thesis, as this affords students the opportunity to refine skills in scholarship, planning, analysis, objectivity, collaboration with professionals, thoroughness, time management, and originality/creativity. Students who have volunteered or worked with an APK faculty as a research assistant or technician in their lab may have an easier time completing an undergraduate thesis than someone who has not been involved in departmental research or outreach.

Faculty Mentor:

Once a student has identified a faculty willing to work with them on a proposed project, the student should officially declare their thesis. (see next section for more on that) Then, the student should work with the mentor to outline a game plan for the entire project—setting up clear deadlines and goals from start to finish. Schedule regular meetings with the faculty mentor to review progress and be sure to give the mentor ample time to review any drafts prior to meetings. Utilize the mentor for questions regarding appropriate research questions,

planning and execution of specific research methods, statistical analyses, and scholarly writing. Although the undergraduate thesis is intended to be a guided project or collaboration between the student and an APK faculty mentor, the project’s quality and timely completion/submission is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Faculty mentors are permitted to withdraw support/partnership from students who are not making adequate progress or are otherwise failing to meet professional standards or deadlines agreed upon when the original plan for the project was designed. Should this occur, the student is responsible for either finding a different faculty mentor or terminating the project. The Department needs to be notified in either case.

How do I “officially” declare my thesis?

Once the student has a faculty mentor, the faculty mentor must email the APK Academic Advisor (student must be cc’d on the email declaring intent to proceed with an honors thesis project. Please note that if the Faculty member is outside of APK please cc the Undergraduate coordinator as well.

Expected semester of graduation	Deadline for declaration of intent to pursue highest honors	Deadline for final submission of honors thesis
Spring	March 15 th of prior year	5 pm on date posted in academic calendar
Summer or Fall	October 15 of prior year	5 pm on date posted in academic calendar

For example, a student anticipating a Spring 2025 graduation would need to have their faculty mentor email a declaration of intent on behalf of the student no later than March 15, 2024. The final project is due by the published deadline date.

WHEN is the final thesis submission due and HOW should it be submitted?

The undergraduate thesis should be submitted to the APK Academic Advisor in electronic format (email with a single PDF file attached) by 5pm on the date listed on the published academic calendar. This email must be sent by the faculty mentor. Prior to the submission deadline, the student must have the finalized thesis approved by the faculty mentor. The Department Chair makes the final decision on whether the thesis qualifies for Highest Honors, so the faculty memo needs to include a signature line for the Dept. Chair.

What are the expected components of an undergraduate thesis?

Undergraduate thesis projects should have distinct components. Those outlined below are recommendations for original research theses. Depending on the type of project (original research, manuscript, systematic review, outreach/service learning), these sections and/or their titles may vary. Students should collaborate with their faculty mentor to develop appropriate sections/components for their specific project. Typical page lengths (double spaced) are provided in parentheses—these are only suggestions; each project will vary. For manuscripts, journal authorship guidelines supersede the formatting below.

- **Faculty Memo**
 - The faculty mentor should generate a brief memo on department letterhead, formally introducing the student and the project and requesting consideration for Highest Honors
 - This memo serves to (a) verify that the faculty mentor approves of the finalized version of the project and (b) attest to the fact that antiplagiarism software was used to ensure authenticity of the document.
 - Suggested antiplagiarism software: Turnitin.
 - Recommended acceptable value for this type of report is 15% (green zone) or less.
 - The faculty memo should be page 1 of the PDF document as a whole thesis.
 - Faculty should place a signature line for the Department Chair at the bottom of this memo.
 - When the thesis is complete and in its final form, the faculty mentor should email the single PDF document to the APK Academic Advisor
 - Email subject line: Honors Thesis for [insert student's full name]

- **Cover page**
- **Table of contents**
- **Abstract (150-250 words)**
 - Provides a summary of the overall study
 - The format for the abstract usually follows these areas. These sections need not be labeled; instead, authors should use sentences such as those described below:
 - Purpose: "The purpose of this study....." (one sentence)
 - Methods: Usually one to two sentences on how this study was conducted and who the sample or population was
 - Results: Usually two to three brief sentences on the major findings from the study
 - Conclusion: One to two sentences on the major implications or ramifications from the study

- **Chapter 1-Introduction (2-4) pages**
 - Provides the background and setting needed to put the problem in proper context and justifies the need for the project/study.
 - Contains facts, trends, and points of view (opinions) as drawn from professional literature in relevant areas. The presentation of these key points should flow from general trends and concerns to the specific problem/challenge that is/are addressed in the thesis project.
 - Provides a logical lead-in to a clear statement of the project.
 - Chapter 1 also includes a list of any assumptions and limitations, as well as a section (Significance of the Study) that explains what groups could potentially benefit from the study and how/why

- **Chapter 2- Review of Literature (4-6 pages)**
 - Presents the results of previous research related to the study topic, organized by the key variables in the study. A conceptual model showing the relationships among variables related to the research problem can also be included.
 - Provides the rationale for the hypotheses (if applicable)

- Students should collaborate with the faculty mentor about adjustments to this chapter if they are completing a systematic review or community outreach/service learning project
- **Chapter 3-Procedures or Methodology (2-4 pages)**
 - Describes, in detail, the step-by-step procedures used in collecting and analyzing data.
 - Possible sections of Chapter 3 include research design, subject selection, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, chapter summary and others.
 - Students should collaborate with the faculty mentor about adjustments to this chapter if a systematic review or community outreach/service learning project.
- **Chapter 4-Findings (page length will vary depending on thesis)**
 - Reports all results obtained, including appropriate statistics and descriptions of data (if applicable)
 - Includes facts only-what was found with explanation, but not interpretation or conjecture by the author.
 - Is organized and written around objectives of the study (research questions or hypothesis-if applicable)
- **Chapter 5-Summary and conclusion (typically 3-5 pages)**
 - Briefly summarizes intent, procedures, and finding of study.
 - States conclusions based on findings (first point in paper where the author is allowed to include his or her own interpretations.
 - Describes how findings support or refute related studies (implications for current knowledge, if applicable)
 - Includes recommendations for practice based upon findings and conclusions, if applicable
 - Includes recommendations for further research.
- **Appendices**
 - Includes copies of all correspondence, instrumentation, and other written communication used in carrying out the research/project.
 - Includes special lists (i.e., expert panel members etc.)
- **References**
 - Includes complete bibliographic information for all references cited in the text.
 - Uses accepted style manual, such as APA. The faculty mentor should be consulted for recommendations on field-specific publication standards

What are some best practices when preparing for or undertaking a thesis project?

- A completed thesis document should reflect a student's personal best in formal writing and analysis. This includes sentence composition, grammar, punctuation, style, flow of ideas, accuracy, literature citations, level of thought and analysis, and overall organization. Students should develop an outline for each chapter in consultation with the faculty mentor before writing the full text. Students should edit their work carefully after multiple readings, and ask another capable person to provide honest feedback on the draft before submitting it to the faculty mentor.
- Backup computer files on a regular basis. Save frequently while working on the documents associated with your thesis.
- Read through several recently completed undergraduate thesis projects and form some general ideas about the selected topic, approach, and final product.

- Consider what might cause delays, interruptions, or even termination of the project, and develop a plan to avoid/overcome those barriers to success.
- Stay organized. Keep all project materials together and neatly labeled/named. Rely on a calendar to ensure meetings and deadlines are not overlooked.
- Develop a timeline for the project and stick to it.
- Designing and completing an undergraduate thesis project may be challenging during other academic and student activities. However, if insufficient time and effort are not applied, the student may miss deadlines and/or be disappointed in the quality of the end product. A thesis is an extra project that requires extra time and effort. Procrastination may be visible in the final submission and may result in denial of the submission—in which case there is not a resubmission option, and the student will not be given highest honors. If days or even weeks have passed without much thought or action on the thesis project, the student should quickly identify barriers and address/remedy those accordingly.
- Use Turnitin (or other reliable antiplagiarism software) regularly. This way, if corrections are needed, they can be made well in advance of the deadline

Reminder of UF Honor Code

In adopting this Honor Code, the students at the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. Student and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code. Any APK student who submits an Honors Thesis is bound by the following UF Honor Pledge: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.”