BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT HONORS REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

The Biology Department requirements complement those of the College.

1) GPA requirement
2) Graduate course requirement
3) Proposal
4) Committee selection and responsibilities
5) Grading (for advisors)
6) Progress Report
7) Thesis
8) Dropping Honors
9) Honors Ceremony

Students will need to:

- By mid-August, submit an application for the Biology Honors Program to Barbara Shannon, the Biology Department Undergraduate Coordinator (barbara.shannon@emory.edu). (The application deadline date will be announced each fall semester.)

- Attend a Fall meeting run by Dr. Escobar for all Biology Honors candidates. The date/time/location will be provided to the students once the meeting is scheduled (normally late August).

- Attend a Fall meeting run by the College for ALL College Honors candidates. If a student misses this meeting (there is normally more than one opportunity to attend), they may be dropped from the program. The College Honors Coordinator will contact the Biology Honors candidates with the dates of the meetings.

GPA REQUIREMENT

Students must be a senior, in their last two semesters at Emory, and maintain a 3.50 GPA in both the Biology major and overall (cumulative). Students approved for the Biology Honors Program are required to take two semesters of BIOL 495. BIOL 495A is taken in the first semester (4 credit hours); BIOL 495BW the second semester. (BIOL 495BW is variable credit to enable second-semester seniors the opportunity to pay by the credit hour versus the full semester tuition.) BIOL 495BW will also fulfill the senior writing requirement for the GERs.

Students who plan to graduate in a Fall semester should register for BIOL 495A in the previous Spring semester and BIOL 495BW in the Fall semester (of their final year)

GRADUATE COURSE REQUIREMENT

Students must enroll in and pass a graduate-level (500 level or higher) course that is related to their Honors research project.
--if the class is three or more credit hours, it may fulfill a Biology major elective with approval of the student’s Biology advisor.

--a two credit our course will only fulfill the Honors requirement.

--the graduate course must be taken for letter grade; talk with the instructor about the syllabus, course requirements, etc.

--Students may take a graduate course in the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences (GDBBS) or the Rollins School of Public Health. View the course atlas for available courses.

--Students will need to obtain written permission (e-mail is fine) from the course instructor. Once permission is received, please provide Barbara Shannon (barbara.shannon@emory.edu) with the approval e-mail and she will add the students to the respective graduate class during the add/drop/swap period.

--Students will also need to contact Tonya Woolcock (tdavis6@emory.edu) to request a permission number for BIOL 495A in Fall semester and for BIOL 495BW in Spring semester.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL (by November 1st)

Students will submit (via e-mail to Dr. Escobar) a short research proposal (3-5 pages) describing their honors project. The proposal should introduce the research area and then address the hypotheses to be tested and the methods to be used.

Honors candidates who previously prepared a research proposal for Biology 499R (Undergraduate Research) will need to upgrade their proposal for the honors level and include the above information.

Students using human participants in their research must have IRB approval (http://www.emory.edu/IRB/). Approval to begin such research can take weeks or months; discuss this with the research advisor as soon as possible.

HONORS COMMITTEE (selected by January; specific deadline date determined by the college)

Students must select a committee and e-mail the names of the committee members to the College Honors Coordinator and to Dr. Escobar.

The committee must include at least three faculty members employed at Emory University:
--the research advisor/mentor.
--at least one of whom must be in the Emory College Biology Department.
--at least one of whom must be from outside of the Biology Department.

(There is also an “early bird” opportunity for candidates to submit their committee member information to the college – due October 8th)
Committee Responsibilities

Much like a graduate thesis committee, the Honors Committee mentors, facilitates, and monitors student progress. Specifically, committee members:

--read and evaluate student written and oral progress reports (by March 1st); the student submits a form indicating completion of progress reports to the coordinator.

--read and comment on the student thesis (by the first week in April—specific date determined by the College).

--evaluate the student thesis (written and oral) and assign the level of honors (as elaborated in the Thesis section).

FINAL GRADE SUBMISSION (Advisor only; submit by early December and late April—specific dates determined each semester).

--Research advisors: Please submit (via e-mail) a grade for Fall semester (by December 7th) and for Spring semester (by April 30th) to Dr. Alex Escobar, Biology Honors Program Director (alexander.escobar@emory.edu). Dr. Escobar will submit the final grades in OPUS each semester.

--Grades are based on an A to F scale, with +’s and –’s if needed. If you have any questions about appropriate grades, please contact Dr. Escobar.

PROGRESS REPORT (presented by March 1st; form due by March 3rd to Dr. Escobar)

NOTE: STUDENTS WHO DO NOT COMPLETE THEIR ORAL PRESENTATION BY MARCH 1ST WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE HONORS PROGRAM!

Students will prepare an oral progress report (15-20 minutes) and a short, written progress report to be presented to their committee in February. The February date should allow time for additional experiments if suggested by the committee.

Students should reserve a Biology Department conference room for the presentation (contact Malia Escobar at mescob@emory.edu OR Tonya Woolcock at tdavis6@emory.edu) to reserve a room for 90 minutes minimum.

The Progress Report form can be found on the Biology Department website and should contain the following:

- Hypothesis tested.
- Aims/Goals of the project.
- Experimental approaches.
- Results to date.
-Interpretation/Assessment of results.
-Planned experiments prior to the end of the project.

The committee members will ask questions during and after the progress report presentation. These questions may pertain to specific data or more general issues of the research field—BE PREPARED!

At this meeting, the student will inform their committee that they will be provided with a publication—a quality version of the thesis—by at least two weeks before the final thesis is due to the College, and one week before the student’s defense date. (See the College information for specific dates.)

**THE THESIS** (to be submitted to the committee two weeks before the College due date and at least one week before your defense).

**Under no circumstances should a student submit a thesis to their committee without their research advisor having read, revised, and approved the document.**

The thesis should be submitted to the committee members using a cover sheet (available on the Biology Department website).

NOTE: Some faculty are out of town from mid to late April—be certain to determine that the entire committee will be present during these times.

The final oral presentation during the thesis defense should last about 30 minutes; this will be followed by general questions from the audience. Friends and family are welcome to attend the oral presentation, but will be asked to leave after the general Q&A session, so that the committee can ask additional questions and provide feedback to the student.

Students will earn a level of Honors, as indicated below:

---**Honors:** the student has performed excellent work and understands it, writes about it, and explains it well to an expert and to a general audience.

---**High Honors:** the student has performed excellent work and understands it, writes about it, and explains it well to an expert and to a general audience, and the work has reached the level at which it is ready to be presented (or has already been presented) at a national meeting.

---**Highest Honors:** the student has performed excellent work and understands it, writes about it, and explains it well to an expert and to a general audience, and the work is of publishable quality, i.e., it has been published (or may be published in the future), possibly as part of a larger paper.
DROPPING HONORS

Should a student decide to not complete the Biology Honors Program (at any time during the academic year), please CONTACT DR. ESCOBAR as soon as possible.

Students who drop out of the Biology Honors Program during the second semester (BIOL 495BW) but still need to fulfill a writing requirement for the GERs, will be required to submit a written thesis quality paper that will be read and evaluated by the student’s thesis advisor/mentor.

ELECTRONIC THESIS SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

Biology Honors candidates will be required to complete a mandatory Honors Introductory Module and Copyright/ETD Information session. This will be scheduled by the College (normally in October).

The electronic thesis submission is normally due in mid-April.

Additional information will be provided by the College.

HONORS CEREMONY AND CELEBRATION

Honors students and advisors are invited and expected to attend a special Honors Graduation Ceremony (scheduled by the College). Honors students will be presented with their Honors fourragére – the symbol of their hard work – at this event.