THESIS COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a committee member for a Thesis/Creative Project. Barrett, The Honors College realizes that students cannot succeed without faculty support, and we are grateful for your willingness to participate in this journey with Honors students. A Thesis/Creative Project should be a collaborative effort between students and their committee members. Barrett allows more than one student to work on a single Thesis/Creative Project at the discretion of the Thesis Director. It is essential to set expectations very early, hold regular meetings, and create a timeline with benchmarks for students’ work.

Thesis/Creative Project Committee Members
The committee consists of a Director, a Second Committee Member, and may include a Third Committee Member. The Barrett Advising Office educates students on the importance of understanding the role of their committee and strongly reinforces the responsibility of the student to communicate with each committee member on a regular basis throughout the process. The qualifications of the committee members are at the discretion of each academic unit; for specific committee requirements, consult with your Faculty Honors Advisor(s).

Director
The Director, chosen by the student, is a regularly-appointed member of the ASU faculty with professional expertise in the project area. The Director must be a tenure-line faculty member or lecturer. The Director will work with the student most closely throughout the process. The Director is responsible for providing project expectations, guidance, and evaluation of the final work. The student should meet regularly with the Director throughout the project. Among the members of the committee, the Director’s recommendations are the most heavily weighted.

Second Committee Member
The Second Committee Member is an individual whom the student and Director decide is appropriate to serve based on their knowledge and experience. A Second Committee Member assists with research support, reviewing drafts of the work, and providing feedback. The Second Committee Member may be a regular faculty member at ASU or a qualified professional in a related field. The specific credentials and responsibilities of the Second Committee Member may be determined by the Director and the academic unit.

Third Committee Member
Third Committee Members are often optional, but always encouraged. A Third Committee Member offers insights beyond those of the Director and Second Committee Member. They can be from multiple disciplines in either industry or the larger community. With agreement from your Director, a student may apply for the External Examiner Program, which provides funding for an expert outside of ASU to act as a Third Committee Member. An External Examiner is only eligible for the role of Third Committee Member.

Prospectus
The prospectus serves as an action plan for the Thesis/Creative Project and provides a definitive list of goals, procedures, expectations, and an overall timeline including internal deadlines for the project. The prospectus is submitted to Barrett Advising, and must include signatures from the Director and Second Committee Member. An unsigned prospectus will not be accepted. Even if they are working on a group project, all students are required to submit an individual prospectus. Any changes to the committee members should be reported in the form of a revised prospectus.
**Deadlines**
Meeting the Prospectus deadline is highly recommended. To meet this deadline, submit the prospectus one year prior to project completion. If you are unable to meet this, prepare to meet the final deadline.
To meet the Final Prospectus deadline, you must submit your prospectus at the start of the semester prior to project completion.

**The Institutional Review Board (IRB)**
All research activities involving the use of human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before data collection can begin. Research involving human subjects should be discussed within the prospectus. Please discuss training and IRB application processes with students: [http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans](http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans).

**Credits & Grading**
Most departments allow up to 6 credits for the Thesis/Creative Project, which is the maximum amount. Students will register for the Thesis/Creative Project credits through the department of the Director (XXX). These courses are a sequence and may not be taken together in the same semester.

- **XXX 492** - Honors Directed Study: Independent study in which a student, under the supervision of a committee, conducts research or creative work for the Honors Thesis/Creative Project.
- **XXX 493** - Honors Thesis: Supervised research or creative activity focused on completion of the Honors Thesis/Creative Project, including a defense.

The Director is the primary evaluator of the project and responsible for assigning grades. Grading criteria should be determined between the student and Director at the start of the project and included in the prospectus. Typically grading is determined on a letter scale A through E. Plus/minus is allowed as well as a Pass/Fail option if you determine that is the best fit for the project. Students who are in danger of failing should be encouraged to withdraw from thesis credits by the semester withdraw date or work with the Honors Advising Office for an appropriate plan of action.

For projects in which a student enrolls in XXX 492, a grade of Z may be assigned for this phase of work. A grade of Z is defined as “course in progress.” The Z grade delays placement of a final grade until the project is completed and successfully defended. Grades are not used with thesis grades. After project completion, Directors must submit a grade change request for any Z grade; any unresolved grades may impact ASU and/or Barrett graduation.

**Thesis/Creative Project Defense**
The defense is designed to be an intellectual exercise and opportunity for the student to demonstrate what they have learned during the process; it reflects the culmination of the student’s Barrett Honors experience. It is an opportunity for the committee to provide further feedback and engage in dialog with the student about the project. All committee members must be physically present at the defense.

**Defense Reporting Form**
Determining a defense location is the responsibility of the student and committee members. The online Defense Reporting Form confirms that a student has scheduled a defense date, time, and location. Defense information is posted to the online Defense Calendar to encourage all members of the ASU community to attend. Barrett respects the judgment of the Director to hold a closed defense.

**At the Defense**
The way a defense is conducted varies by committee; the format, content, and length should be discussed with well before the defense. The student will make a presentation and answer questions from the committee members. After the defense the committee will decide the Thesis outcome (see next page). The student should be prepared to make final changes to the project after the defense if the committee requests them.
| **APPROVED** | • Minor revisions may be suggested  
• All committee members sign the Signature Title Page |
| **PROVISIONAL APPROVAL** | • Revisions are required, ranging from minor to significant  
• Second and Third Committee Members give recommendations and may sign the Signature Title Page  
• Director will sign the Signature Title Page after the required revisions are complete |
| **NOT APPROVED** | • Overall execution of the Thesis/Creative Project or defense does not meet expectations or standards.  
• Signature Title Page will not be signed  
• Discuss next steps with the committee  
• The Director and committee may continue working with the student to make substantial revisions  
• Notify Honors Advisor as this outcome may impact Barrett graduation timeline |

**Final Submission**

*Signature Title Page*

A Signature Title Page must bear the original signatures of all committee members. Photocopies and electronic signatures are not accepted. Templates are available on the Barrett website.

*Submission*

Students submit their final project through the ASU Library Digital Repository. In-person submission consists of the Signature Title Page, an abstract written in English, and a confirmation email of the digital submission. A printed version of the final project is not needed for submission. Formatting is at the discretion of the Director. All students must submit a final Thesis/Creative Project in order to participate in Barrett Graduation.

*Deadlines*

**Spring Deadlines**
- Prospectus: early April (year prior to completion)
- Final Prospectus: mid-September
- Online Defense Reporting Form: early March
- Recommended Defense Completed: early April
- Final Submission (signed Signature Title Page, abstract, and digital submission): mid-April

**Fall Deadlines**
- Prospectus: early November (year prior to completion)
- Final Prospectus: mid-February
- Online Defense Reporting Form: mid-October
- Recommended Defense Completed: late October
- Final Submission (signed Signature Title Page, abstract, and digital submission): mid-November

For specific deadlines, see the Barrett website.

**Celebrating Accomplishments**

The Celebrating Honors Symposium is an annual Barrett signature event. All community members are invited to attend the interdisciplinary showcase of original student work. It takes place annually in mid-April. Faculty overseeing Theses/Creative Projects are also encouraged to attend the symposium and celebrate the accomplishments of their students.

The Barrett Convocation ceremony is a special time to recognize both Honors graduates and the faculty who have mentored them. This is a time to thank you for helping students with their scholarly work. Directors are contacted to attend when the student graduates.