

Thesis Committee Guidebook

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 may be any member of ASU faculty with professional expertise in the project area. (This excludes graduate students.) 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. This member assists with research support, reviewing drafts of the work, and providing feedback. The Second Committee Member may be a 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.

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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 online to Barrett Advising. After a student submits a prospectus, their Director will receive an email requesting approval. Even if they are working in a group project, all Barrett students are required to submit an individual prospectus. Any changes to the committee should be reported to Barrett Advising.

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: 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. I 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.

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Defense & Final Thesis Approval

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 present at the defense. It is the students responsibility to consult with their committee to determine a defense date, time and location, and report this information to Barrett.

Honors Defense and Thesis Approval Form

Students must submit this online form in order to: 1) report their defense date, and 2) generate a thesis approval link. Once submitted, Directors will receive a thesis approval link on the date of the defense.

Defenses are open to the ASU community and published on [Barrett's Defense Calendar](#). 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 the student 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. The student should be prepared to make final changes to the project after the defense if the committee requests them.

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| Approved | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor revisions may be suggested• Director reports approval using the Final Thesis Approval link that is emailed to them on the defense date. |
| Provisional Approval | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revisions are required, ranging from minor to significant• Director reports approval after revisions are complete using the Final Thesis Approval link that is emailed to them on the defense date. |
| Not Approved | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall execution of the Thesis/Creative Project or defense does not meet expectations or standards.• Discuss next steps with the committee; the Director and committee may continue working with the student to make substantial revisions• Notify Barrett Advising as this outcome may impact Barrett graduation timeline |

Thesis Director Approval

Thesis Directors must report approval to Barrett Advising on behalf of committee using the Final Thesis Approval link that is emailed to them on the defense date.

Digital Submission

Each Barrett student is required to upload their approved project to the Barrett Digital Collection. Students can request a one or two year embargo on their submission if appropriate. Formatting is at the discretion of the Director.

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Spring Deadlines

Prospectus due (submit within this window):

early-April through mid-September

Defense and Thesis Approval Form due:

early-March

Recommended Thesis Defense completed:

early-April

Director Thesis Approval due (Director will be emailed approval link on date of Defense): mid-April

Digital Repository Upload due: mid-April

Fall Deadlines

Prospectus due (submit within this window):

early-November through mid-February

Defense and Thesis Approval Form due: mid-

October

Recommended Thesis Defense completed:

late-October

Director Thesis Approval due (Director will be emailed approval link on date of Defense): mid-November

Digital Repository Upload due: mid-November

For specific deadlines, see barretthonors.asu.edu/thesis/importantdates.

Celebrating Accomplishments

The Celebrating Honors Symposium is an annual Barrett signature event that occurs in April. All community members are invited to attend the interdisciplinary showcase of original student work. 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.

Additional Resources

More resources for Committee Members can be found on the Barrett website: barretthonors.asu.edu/thesis/resources-committee-members