



Honors Program

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN

Guidelines and Directions for HONS 499 (Capstone) – 3 credit hours

The Capstone is a culminating research experience on a topic of the student's and professor's choosing. This course is taken in the academic year in which the student plans to graduate. The general process involves the following steps:

1. Student completes the **“Capstone Intent Form”** in the spring semester of his or her junior year (the year prior to the student's graduation year) and submits this signed form to the Honors Program Director. The completion of this form will require the student to meet with his or her Capstone mentor prior to the senior year to discuss his or her possible project with timelines, the need to get IRB or animal testing approval, etc. and other details pertaining to the project. **This form must be returned to the Honors Program Director prior to the end of the spring semester of that student's junior year. This form must be typed. Handwritten forms will not be accepted.**
2. At the beginning of the fall semester in the year in which the student plans to graduate, the student with help from the faculty mentor will complete and submit the **“Capstone Project Proposal Form”** to the Honors Program Director. Typically, these proposals are due at the beginning of October in the semester before the student plans to complete the Capstone project.
3. The Honors Steering Committee reviews all submitted proposals and either approves the proposal or suggests further revision/modification before approval.
4. The student signs up for HONS 499 based on the following guidelines:

Procedure for signing up for HONS 499 for an **approved** Capstone project:

Honors students in a major with a capstone project will register for that capstone project in that discipline (eg. PSYC 599). That course will count as HONS 499. Records will put you in a special Honors section of that course. *Note:* If a capstone project requirement exists but the Department Chair/Unit Head considers it unworthy of Honors credit, the student must work with a faculty member in that discipline to enrich that project so that it may be counted as worthy of Honors credit.

Honors students in a major w/o a capstone project will register for HONS 499 using an independent study contract. This independent study contract must be signed by the faculty mentor, the unit head of that student's major, and the Honors Program Director. The signed original will then be taken to Records.

Note: You can sign the independent study contract during that fall semester or at the start of the spring semester. It does not have to happen during the normal registration period. If you are not a full-time student without these hours and you are receiving financial aid, you may want to sign up for the Capstone before the end of fall semester prior to the semester in which the student plans to complete the Capstone so that the hours can count toward your full-time status.

The Capstone course is a 3 credit hours.

You are not able to register for these Capstones using VIP.

5. Honors students will be expected to submit a written report, image, composition, or other appropriate product, depending on the discipline and nature of the project, to the faculty mentor.

6. Honors students must present their capstone project before the Honors Steering Committee at Research Day in the spring semester. Students graduating in December can present their work to the HSC on a date selected by the Honors Steering Committee and announced at the beginning of the semester in which the student will graduate.

Presentation of Findings

- Presenters should describe their projects and findings/results in a manner that is accessible to a general audience.
- Presenters should plan on a 10-12 minute presentation with 5 minutes for questions from the audience.

7. Capstone projects may not consist solely of a review of the literature. While the literature review is an important part of the Capstone project, Capstones should include original research or a creative component.

IRB/Animal Testing approval process

If you are testing/surveying human subjects, you and your mentor need to check to see if you need IRB approval. You will need to submit a human subjects application.

You will have to register at <http://eirb.healthsciencessc.org>. You will log in to submit the application.

IRB approval is something that is the responsibility of the student, faculty member, and sponsoring Dept.

If you are doing animal testing, you will need to check the Dept. Chair or Dean of your unit to see what needs to be done regarding this.