

Senior Honors Thesis and Senior Capstone

The MCB Department encourages its students to engage in a senior project that serves as the culmination of the knowledge gained through the research and course work completed during students' undergraduate career. For students in UA's Honors College, the Senior Honors Thesis is a requirement to graduate with honors. While MCB majors are not required to do a thesis or capstone for program completion, non-honors students have the option to complete such a project by arranging a Senior Capstone experience.

The Senior Honors Thesis is a 2-semester project, which begins during a student's penultimate semester. It is usually comprised of a semester of focused research work, followed by a semester of writing the actual thesis. Research and writing requirements are solely determined by the research mentor, however formatting guidelines may be specified by the Honors College. Submission of a Senior Honors Thesis to the Honors College is required; however, the research mentor is solely responsible for grading.

Senior Capstone is similar to the Senior Honors Thesis, with the exception that submission of the final paper is submitted to and graded by the research mentor only.

Non-Lab-Based Theses & Projects

On occasion, students have been granted permission to complete a Senior Honors Thesis or Senior Capstone project in MCB that is not lab-based. If you are interested in doing such a project, please contact Kara Dyson at kdyson@arizona.edu or Justin Schneider at jmschnei@arizona.edu.

Starting and Finishing Your Senior Honors Thesis or Senior Capstone Experience

1. First, you make sure you have secured a Research Mentor, must be a faculty member.
2. Discuss an arrangement for a thesis or capstone experience with your research mentor. Determine what your project should entail and what tasks you will be required to do over the next two semesters. Also, check the Honors College's web site for information regarding your prospectus and thesis. (<https://www.honors.arizona.edu/capstone>).
3. At the start of your first semester you wish to receive credit for your thesis or capstone project, complete and submit the Registration Form for Senior Honors Thesis or Senior Capstone – First Semester (below).
4. At the end of your first semester, your research mentor will assign you a grade. Before your second semester of thesis/capstone begins, touch base with your research mentor. Clarify what you should be focusing on for this final semester.
5. At the start of your second semester, complete and submit the Registration Form for Senior Honors Thesis or Senior Capstone – Second Semester (below). Use the form to help you plan out your writing tasks for this semester.
6. At the end of the second semester, honors students must submit their Senior Honors Thesis to the Honors College by specific date. Senior Capstone students should submit their final project to their research mentor by the last day of classes. Research mentors will then assign grades for the senior experience.



REGISTRATION FORM FOR SENIOR HONORS THESIS OR SENIOR CAPSTONE

FIRST SEMESTER

Please complete and return this form to the MCB Advising Office by emailing to kdyson@arizona.edu. This form is for departmental records and used to add the student to the specific research units.

Students who submit this form by the posted deadline will have the research credits added to their schedule by the MCB department. **The deadline for submission for Fall 2026 is 9/14/26.**

Students submitting this form after the posted deadline may be required to pay late fees, additionally completing a Change of Schedule form, and/or other consequences. Please contact an MCB advisor directly if you are submitting this form after the deadline for further instruction.

This is a fillable PDF. Please download, save, and fill out electronically. Be sure to fill out each section and provide full details, incomplete forms will not be processed.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Student Name: _____ Student ID #: _____

Student Phone #: _____ Student E-mail: _____

Student Major(s): _____

MCB Course Number (select below):

Number of units (select):

[Note: The U of A and the Board of Regents require a minimum of 45 hours of course work for each unit of credit awarded; approximately 3 hours per week worked for each unit of credit in a 16-week semester]

MCB 498H is **only** offered as a 3 unit course. MCB 498 can be taken for various units.

Semester (select): Fall Spring Year: _____

PROJECT INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

Faculty Member's Name: _____ Faculty Member's Phone #: _____

Home Department of Faculty Member: _____

Title of Project: _____

Brief description/summary of project (please send a 1-2 page summary or honors prospectus with your registration form for the 1st semester):

Hours per week student will spend on project: _____ Project Advisor/Student contact hours per week: _____

Date(s) for mid-semester evaluation of student performance: _____ [Note: At least one mid-semester evaluation should be done before the drop deadline]

If appropriate, name of another person who will help supervise the student: _____



The student will be required to attend lab meetings (select): Yes No

The student will be required to maintain a laboratory notebook (select): Yes No

Techniques the student will learn and utilize as part of this research project (list):

Tangible products the student will submit as part of this Honors Thesis or Capstone such as papers, posters, data, Power Point presentations, stocks, strains, etc. (list):

Additional requirements for this research project (list):

The University of Arizona would like to ensure that research experiences for undergraduates continue to be of high quality, reflecting the true nature of the directed or independent research agreed upon. In order to define the research experience for both the student and the project advisor, detailed information regarding the research project is necessary. **This Approval Form should be as specific as possible so that both the project advisor and student are aware of the expectations for the project, as well as what criteria will be used to award a grade.** The full listing of University of Arizona Policies for Independent Study is available in the current Academic Catalog.

REQUIRED SIGNATURES:

The student's grade for this course is based upon the student's completion and performance of the criteria listed in the Project Information & Requirements section above.

Project Advisor/Faculty Member _____ DATE _____

Student _____ DATE _____

MCB Academic Advisor _____ DATE _____



REGISTRATION FORM FOR SENIOR HONORS THESIS OR SENIOR CAPSTONE

SECOND SEMESTER

Please complete and return this form to the MCB Advising Office by emailing to kdyson@arizona.edu. This form is for departmental records and used to add the student to the specific research units.

Students who submit this form by the posted deadline will have the research credits added to their schedule by the MCB department. **The deadline for submission for Fall 2026 is 9/14/26.**

Students submitting this form after the posted deadline may be required to pay late fees, additionally completing a Change of Schedule form, and/or other consequences. Please contact an MCB advisor directly if you are submitting this form after the deadline for further instruction.

This is a fillable PDF. Please download, save, and fill out electronically. Be sure to fill out each section and provide full details, incomplete forms will not be processed.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Student Name: _____ Student ID #: _____

Student Phone #: _____ Student E-mail: _____

Student Major(s): _____

MCB Course Number (select below):

Number of units (select):

[Note: The U of A and the Board of Regents require a minimum of 45 hours of course work for each unit of credit awarded; approximately 3 hours per week worked for each unit of credit in a 16-week semester]

MCB 498H is **only** offered as a 3 unit course. MCB 498 can be taken for various units.

Semester (select): Fall Spring Year: _____

PROJECT INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

Faculty Member's Name: _____ Faculty Member's Phone #: _____

Home Department of Faculty Member: _____

Title of Project: _____

Brief description/summary of project:

Hours per week student will spend on project: _____ Project Advisor/Student contact hours per week: _____

Date(s) for mid-semester evaluation of student performance: _____ [Note: At least one mid-semester evaluation should be done before the drop deadline]

If appropriate, name of another person who will help supervise the student: _____



Final product(s) the student will submit as part of this writing project:

Specific criteria for writing project (e.g. required page length, number of sources/citations, formatting, etc.):

SCHEDULE OF TASKS (e.g. due dates for outline, rough draft, literature review, etc.)

The purpose of this project is to create a high quality written document based on literature research, experimental results, or both. Creating quality written documents takes time. Therefore, we ask that the student-mentor team devise a plan that sets deadlines for submission of appropriate segments by the student (e.g. methods section, results sections, figures) as deemed appropriate for the project. Similar deadlines for return of critical review should be set for the faculty mentor. Consequences for failure to comply with the established deadline should be clearly defined.

Task:

Date to be completed by:

The University of Arizona would like to ensure that research experiences for undergraduates continue to be of high quality, reflecting the true nature of the directed or independent research agreed upon. In order to define the research experience for both the student and the project advisor, detailed information regarding the research project is necessary. **This Approval Form should be as specific as possible so that both the project advisor and student are aware of the expectations for the project, as well as what criteria will be used to award a grade.** The full listing of University of Arizona Policies for Independent Study is available in the current Academic Catalog.

REQUIRED SIGNATURES:

The student's grade for this course is based upon the student's completion and performance of the criteria listed in the Project Information & Requirements section above.

Project Advisor/Faculty Member _____

DATE _____

Student _____

DATE _____

MCB Academic Advisor _____

DATE _____