

Program in Quantitative Social Science

Guidelines for Honors Theses¹

This document lays out several principles and key dates for honors theses written in the Program in Quantitative Social Science (QSS).

The Director of Undergraduate Research (DUR) is the primary contact for students writing honors theses in QSS. This document refers to weeks and days that occur during quarters in a student's third and fourth years on campus. These weeks and days are based on official academic year calendars as published by the Dartmouth College Registrar.

Length and format

- QSS theses should be suitable for conference/academic journal submission. Students will produce final documents of approximately 8,500-10,000 words, possibly with appendices. Because of the relatively short length of QSS theses, it is expected that students will invest heavily in the processes of writing and editing; upon completion each QSS thesis should be a polished manuscript. Manuscript style (APA, APSR, Chicago, etc.) will be determined by the DUR and thesis advisor.

Milestones

Third year – Spring Quarter

- **Prospectus:** Each student will submit a prospectus identifying a list of possible advisors and detailing a topic area of interest, possible methods, and possible research questions. Applicants are encouraged to consult with possible advisors as early as possible. Details on the format of the prospectus appear at the end of this document.
Due: Friday of Week 8

Fourth year – Fall Quarter

- **Updated prospectus:** Each student will update the prospectus after meeting with the DUR during or before the first week of classes.
Due: Friday of Week 2
- **Advisor selection:** Each student will select an advisor and notify the DUR of this choice by email, making sure to CC the advisor. Students may start applying for external funding once an advisor is set. Some funding options are described here: <https://students.dartmouth.edu/ugar/research/getting-started/funding-options>
Due: Friday of Week 3

¹ Approved by the QSS Steering Committee April 13, 2017, and effective April 15, 2017.

- **Proposal:** Each student must submit to his or her advisor and to the DUR an initial draft of a research proposal. This proposal should detail the research question being studied; provide a motivation for the question; contain an initial literature review; and, explain the anticipated contribution of the thesis to the literature being reviewed. Further instructions will be provided by the DUR.
Due: Friday of Week 5
- **Thesis plan:** Each student will submit a short, approximately two page, “thesis plan” proposing a schedule for research activities, for example, data collection, data analysis, and completion of thesis components.
Due: Friday of Week 7
- **CITI training and CPHS protocol:** Each student must complete CITI training. Students working with original or secondary data must also submit a CPHS protocol with the assistance of his or her advisor. For details see <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~cphs/tosubmit/education/index.html>.
Due: Friday of Week 8
- **Revised proposal:** Each student will submit to his or her advisor and to the DUR an updated research proposal that reflects comments received by the student’s advisor and the DUR. This proposal will be circulated to the QSS Steering Committee for feedback.
Due: Friday of Week 10

Fourth year – Winter Quarter

- **Final proposal:** Each student will incorporate feedback from the DUR, the steering committee and his or her advisor.
Due: Friday of Week 1

For theses using original or secondary data:

- **Data collection complete:** Students will submit a short email update to the DUR detailing the status of data collection
Due: Friday of Week 6
- **Analysis complete:** Students will submit a short email update to the DUR detailing the analyses completed.
Due: Friday of Week 7

For theses not using original or secondary data:

- **Completion of analytic work:** Students will submit a short email update to the DUR detailing thesis progress.
Due: Friday of Week 7
- **Initial thesis draft:** Each student will submit a draft of the final thesis to the DUR and his or her advisor.
Due: Friday of Week 8

Fourth year – Spring Quarter

- **Complete thesis draft:** Each student will submit a complete draft to his or her advisor and the DUR.
Due: Friday of Week 4
- **Defense:** All QSS theses will be presented and defended. Hardcopy versions of theses are due to the QSS Chair three weeks before the last day of Spring Quarter. The QSS web page contains details on formatting and thesis cover pages.
Due: Weeks 8 and 9 of the Spring Quarter

Meetings

- During the Fall, Winter, and possibly into the Spring Quarter, all students writing theses will meet as a group with the DUR. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory, and during the meetings students will learn about research procedures and describe to each other the progress of their research programs.

Assessment

- Each student writing an honors thesis should sign up for QSS 88 during the Winter Quarter of his or her fourth year. The DUR will provide to each student an unofficial grade for performance in this class following the Winter quarter. However, the official grade for the course will at that time be ON (continuing to the following Spring quarter) as long as all Winter quarter milestones have been satisfied. The final letter grade for QSS 88 will be entered at the end of the Spring quarter.
- Each QSS thesis will be evaluated by the DUR, the thesis advisor and a second reader, to be named by the DUR. Based on suggestions from advisors, second readers, the DUR will make a proposal to the QSS Steering Committee regarding honors standing for QSS honors theses. The Committee will have ultimate authority over deciding whether a thesis is considered incomplete, complete, worthy of honors, or worthy of high honors.

Co-authorship

- A QSS thesis is the work of a single individual. If a student wishes, after submission and evaluation of the thesis, he or she may ask his or her advisor to join the project as a co-author. For more information on authorship, see <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~osp/docs/Authorship.pdf>

Exceptions

- Individual alterations to rules and due dates specified in this document must be approved by the DUR in consultation with the QSS chair.

Program in Quantitative Social Science Prospectus Guidelines

Use the following questions to guide your thesis prospectus. We suggest that you use them as subheadings in your prospectus. The prospectus should be approximately seven pages long, not including an annotated bibliography.

1. What is your research topic?
2. And more specifically, what is the question you will examine? Why is this question important and interesting?
3. What are the competing answers/theories that pertain to your question?
4. What method(s) will you employ to address your question? What courses have you taken on your preferred method(s)?
5. What resources are available to you at Dartmouth that will help you in assembling evidence that speaks to your question?
6. Which faculty could potentially serve as advisors?
7. Your prospectus should include a preliminary annotated bibliography with perhaps 10-15 sources. An annotated bibliography includes a description in three to four sentences of the main findings of each reference and how it relates to your research.