

Program in Quantitative Social Science

Guidelines for Honors Theses

This document describes relevant dates and guidelines for honors theses written in the Program in Quantitative Social Science (QSS).

Milestones

Third year – Spring Quarter

- **Register for QSS 81:** Register for QSS 81 in the fall and begin/continue to think about research topics and consult with potential advisors as early as possible.

Fourth year – Fall Quarter

- **Initial prospectus:** Students are required to submit an informal 1-page prospectus identifying a list of possible advisors and detailing a topic area and research question of interest. Details on the format of the initial prospectus appear at the end of this document.
Due: Friday of Week 1
- **Advisor selection:** Each student will select an advisor and notify the QSS 81 instructor of this choice by email, CC'ing the advisor.
Due: Friday of Week 2
- **Final prospectus:** Each student will submit a polished prospectus. The prospectus should be 1.5-2 pages, single spaced, and should describe the topic and research question, as well as proposed methods and data sources. The prospectus should indicate whether funding will be required to complete the project.
Due: Friday of Week 3
- **Apply for funding (if needed):** Students whose projects require funding, for instance to purchase proprietary data or collect data, must develop an itemized budget and identify and apply for grants. QSS is one such potential source of funding. To be considered, send a refined prospectus and itemized budget to the QSS 81 instructor, copying the advisor, by the end of the fourth week of classes. The instructor will compile a list of all such projects requiring funding to submit to FAS on behalf of QSS for consideration. Students should also review other available funding sources such as the Rockefeller Center, Senior Honors Thesis Grants and Ethics Institute, Thomas D. Sayles Research Grant.
Due: Friday of Week 4

- **Proposal:** Each student must submit an initial draft of a research proposal. This 10-page proposal (double spaced) is an expanded version of the prospectus. In addition to detailing the research question, the proposal should review relevant academic literature and explain the anticipated contribution of the thesis to the field of study. More information on the proposal will be provided in class.

Due: Friday of Week 7

- **CITI training and CPHS protocol:** Each student must complete CITI training and review the CPHS protocol. For details see <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~cphs/tosubmit/education/index.html>.

Due: Friday of Week 8

- **Thesis plan:** Each student will submit a short document proposing a schedule for data collection and research activities over the winter term.

Due: Final date of fall term classes

Note: If students plan on gathering data from human subjects in the winter term, they should also submit a CPHS protocol with the assistance of their advisor during the winter break.

Fourth year – Winter Quarter

- **Revised proposal:** Students will submit a 12-page (double spaced) revised proposal that incorporates comments from the advisor, peers, and the QSS 81 Instructor. It is expected that significant portions of this text will be incorporated into the final thesis draft.

Due: Friday of Week 4

- **Completion of analytic work:** Students will be expected to have completed the main analysis by the close of the winter term. To document their progress, students will submit code, underlying datasets, and any generated tables or figures to the QSS 81 instructor.

Due: Final date of examination period

Fourth year – Spring Quarter

- **Complete thesis draft:** Each student will submit a complete draft of his or her thesis to their advisor and the QSS 81 Instructor.

Due: Friday of Week 6

- **Defense:** All QSS theses will be presented and defended. The QSS web page contains details on formatting and thesis cover pages.

Due: Weeks 7 and 8

- **Final thesis draft:** Each student will submit the final draft of his or her thesis to the advisor and the QSS 81 Instructor.

Due: Last day of the examination period

Meetings

- During the Fall and Winter Quarter, all students writing theses will meet as a group with the QSS 81 Instructor. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory.

Assessment

- Each student writing an honors thesis should sign up for QSS 81 during the Fall Quarter of his or her fourth year. The QSS 81 instructor will provide each student with an unofficial grade for performance in this class following the Fall 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 81 will be entered at the end of the Spring quarter.
- Each QSS thesis will be evaluated by the thesis advisor, the QSS 81 Instructor, and a second reader (to be named by the QSS 81 Instructor in consultation with the advisor). The instructor will record the recommendations of this group and 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. While advisors are expected to give feedback and may provide access to research opportunities, the final analysis and text must be completed by the student rather than the advisor. However, after submission and evaluation of the thesis, students may ask their advisor to join the project as a co-author. For more information on authorship, see <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~osp/docs/Authorship.pdf>

Length

- QSS theses should be suitable for a conference or academic journal submission in the student's field of study. Students will produce final documents of approximately 8,500-12,000 words, not including appendices.

Program in Quantitative Social Science Initial Prospectus Guidelines

Although you are not expected to have finalized your thesis topic, the initial prospectus serves as a record of your intentions and next steps. It should be no longer than 1 page, and should address the following questions:

1. What is your general research topic?
2. And more specifically, what is the question you will examine? Why is this question important and interesting?
3. What method(s) will you employ to address your question? What courses have you taken on your preferred method(s)?
4. What resources are available to you at Dartmouth that will help you in assembling evidence that speaks to your question?
5. Which faculty could potentially serve as advisors?