

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
HONOURS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

Notes on the Honours Thesis Supervision

The Honours Thesis is likely to be a student's first encounter with the challenge of writing a long essay in an appropriate academic register. The responsibility for this exercise rests with the student. It is not the supervisor's task to do any 'thinking' for the student; the supervisor's task is to guide 'from behind', *ie* to provide critical response to the direction adopted and the arguments produced by the student.

1. You may expect to consult with your supervisor for up to 6 one-hour sessions. These sessions can take place at times mutually agreed between you and your supervisor. How those sessions will be distributed should be decided between you and your supervisor. However, supervision is expected to end by the last day of the 9th week of the semester in which you are submitting your thesis; this is to help you prevent trying to finish up your thesis at the last minute. Note that face-to-face meeting is not mandatory, and those meetings may be supplemented by additional interaction through email, etc, depending on what meets your and your supervisor's needs best. It is recommended that the supervision time should be used when you have specific issues to discuss, *eg* when you need feedback on a particular problem you have encountered, or when you need feedback on your writing. It would not be productive to meet your supervisor when you do not have specific things to share or discuss; the supervisor should not be expected to give you things to think about or set the issues for you.

2. It is the student's responsibility:
 - to discover his/her particular focus on the chosen topic;
 - to work out how best to articulate his/her argument and divide his/her thesis into its component parts;
 - to discover availability of secondary material in the NUS Library and, where desirable, to get the supervisor's help in obtaining supplementary reading;
 - to ensure that his/her argument is coherent;
 - to ensure that presentation and all references, etc are in the required form;
 - to submit the thesis as scheduled by the Department.
 - in the event of illness to acquire the proper medical documentation to submit to the department should an extension be needed.

3. It is the supervisor's responsibility:
 - to be available at the mutually agreed time; in the event of unavoidable indisposition, to be available at the earliest possible date thereafter;
 - to respond to questions asked and to provide suggestions/advice where appropriate;
 - to provide critical comments on the student's writing in order to draw the student's attention to weaknesses in the soundness, coherence, integration and presentation of his/her argument;

- to keep abreast of the student's progress and discuss with the student any 'falling behind' at the earliest possible moment after it has become evident;
 - to inform the Honours Year Co-ordinator about any difficulty the student may be experiencing.
4. In the event of the student experiencing a difficulty of whatever kind, it is his/her responsibility to discuss this with the supervisor at the earliest opportunity. If this has been done to no satisfactory effect, or, for whatever reason, the student feels unable to discuss the issue with the supervisor, it is the student's responsibility to seek the advice of the Honours Year Co-ordinator or the Head of Department at the earliest possible opportunity.