

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, LINGUISTICS AND THEATRE STUDIES
HONOURS: ENGLISH LITERATURE

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', i.e. to provide critical response to the direction adopted and the arguments produced by the student.

1. Students are expected to see their supervisors for a 50-minute session every week for the first 9 weeks of the semester, at a mutually agreed time. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she attends these sessions. In the event of the student being indisposed, he/she must inform the supervisor in order to schedule a 'make-up' session. Whether you can 'carry over' your allowance of supervision hours (i.e. miss one week and double up the next) is entirely up to the supervisor.
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 dissertation 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. In the event of such a request being made, the student must be responsible: i.e. (1) only ask for material that he/she is more or less certain to find useful; (2) to give the library time to obtain such material. Students would be well advised to think about this issue (i.e. whether the library has all the works they will want to consult) soon after selecting their topic (i.e. in the first term).
 - to discover his/her engagement with such secondary material and to refer to it in an appropriate fashion.
 - 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 each week; 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 draw the student's attention to weaknesses in the soundness, coherence, integration and presentation of his/her argument.
 - to read and critically evaluate any material submitted and return it to the student with appropriate comments within a week of it being submitted.

- 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.