

POLITICAL SCIENCE

HONOURS PROSPECTUS

AY26-27

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All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this prospectus. The contents may be subject to changes at the discretion of the department.

This prospectus is current as of 10 June 2026.

SOC4/ARS4 Promotion Requirements

For students in Cohort 2021 and after:

- ARS4/SOC4 – accumulated at least 120 Units

<https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/ug/currentstd/promotion.html>

Returning Year 4 PS major students from Student Exchange Programme (SEP)

Only FASS Dean's Office can approve the SEP credit transfer and promote your seniority level to SOC4 in the CourseReg System. Remember to submit all your required documents to Dean's Office once you have completed your SEP, so they can process the credit transfer and promote you accordingly in time before the course registration exercise.

Refer to <https://fass.nus.edu.sg/upon-return/> for more details on what to submit upon return from SEP.

Some of you may face delays in mapping the credits back in time for promotion to SOC4/ARS4 (e.g. SEP transcript is not ready or there are too many SEP credit transfers pending processing by Dean's Office, etc.). This delay will result in your seniority status being reflected as SOC3 or even SOC2 on the CourseReg page **and the system will not allow you to bid for level-4000 courses in Round 1 as you are not in SOC3 Yet.**

To solve this, please refer a snippet of the CourseReg FAQs for Undergraduate Students:

For Undergraduate Students

General

1. I have just returned from the Student Exchange Programme (SEP) last semester. As my credits transfer is still pending the official transcript from the overseas university, I am still indicated as a Year 3 student when I should be in Year 4. How can I overcome this?

Students who are back from SEP but awaiting the Partner University's (PU) transcript for official credit transfer may access the EduRec Global Education page to "declare" that they have completed the modules while on exchange. This action will trigger the pseudo-promotion process. Based on the cumulative MCs declared to have been completed, students may be pseudo promoted to the next level of seniority for the purpose of ModReg.

Do note that the pseudo-promotion process is a transient measure to adjust the seniority of students who have completed their SEP (but pending official credit transfer) temporarily. Students are still required to complete the official credit transfer process expeditiously to ensure correct representation of their degree requirement fulfilment.

False declaration(s) may subject a student to disciplinary actions.

Please refer to the step-by-step guide (PDF / video) to complete the pseudo promotion declaration process.

Taken from: http://www.nus.edu.sg/CourseReg/faqs_undergraduate.html

You may view your seniority level on the Course REG [Select course] page.

Level 5000R Courses

Registration for PS level 5000 courses will be also via the CourseReg exercise.

Only PS students who meet SOC4 seniority requirements can apply for PS Level-**5000R** courses. You may directly register for the course on during Coursereg.

Waiver of pre-requisites for Honours courses or maximum/minimum workload

For some PS-Level 4000 courses, there are pre-requisites. If you do not meet the course pre-requisite and would like to request a waiver of the pre-requisite (e.g. you have read other similar courses in the same subfield). You may write to the lecturer directly to appeal to read their course. If they are agreeable, please forward the approval email to the department (Ngoi.Michelle@nus.edu.sg) and we will waive the pre- requisite for you in the CourseReg system so that you can bid for the course in the next round.

Students who wish to apply for maximum workload wavier or to underload should send their appeal on Edurec. Alternative, if the window to submit your workload waiver is over, students can email FASHELP@nus.edu.sg together with their study plans and reasons for doing a higher/lower workload. Only upon approval by Dean's Office can the Department then add/remove the additional/unnecessary courses for you.

Your maximum workload will be dependent on your GPA, more information can be found here at: <https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/ug/currentstd/workload.html>

HONOURS THESIS (HT) – PS4401

What is an Honours Thesis?

An HT is an independent research project that addresses an important question or puzzle, and provides a strong argument based on sound and substantial empirical evidence.

It is a major research undertaking at an undergraduate level, and requires far more effort in terms of originality, detail, clarity and independence than an ISC or a normal course essay.

Each HT is worth 8 units.

The subject of the HT must fall within one of the four main sub-fields in the Department:

1. Comparative Politics (CP)
2. International Relations (IR)
3. Political Theory (PT)
4. Governance and Public Policy (GPP)

The HT will be examined on the basis of several criteria including:

1. Presentation
2. Coherence and consistency
3. Comprehensiveness (including the use of primary sources)
4. Factual accuracy
5. Writing discipline

The usual conventions pertaining to any research (for example, footnoting, bibliographic sources and appendices) must be followed.

Qualifying Criteria

HT is only available for PS Honours students in their **Graduating Year**, and it must be completed in that semester.

Pre-requisites (Cohort 2021 and after - CHS):

Completed 110 Units, including 40 Units of PS major requirements with a minimum SJGPA of 4.00 and GPA of 3.50.

Students may seek a waiver of the SJGPA pre-requisite from the department if they have a minimum GPA of 4.25 after completing 110 Units.

Preclusion

PS4660, PS4660HM, PS4401HM, PE4401S, PE4401SHM, PE4660S, PE4660SHM

Registration

An email blast will be sent to all SOC4 PS Honours students, inviting applicants to write an HT.

Students are responsible for drawing up a proposal of the intended HT based on the application form attached in the email. The application form should include a proposed HT title, a synopsis of the intended study and the name of the proposed supervisor.

The submitted proposal should comprise the following:

- Research question or puzzle, and its significance or originality,
- Hypothesis or argument and its significance, and
- Feasibility of this research project
- Timeline of your research plans

Preparation is very important. Students are strongly encouraged to start working on a proposal and undertake necessary preliminary research for it as soon as possible.

Advance Registration of HT for Semester 2

There is no Advance Registration for HT submission for Semester 1 of the academic year. Advance Registration of HT will only be available every semester 2.

An email blast for “Advance Registration for HT submission in Semester 2, AY20xx/20xx” will be sent out at the start of September every year.

Students can use their previous Semester 2, AY20xx/20xx exam results for this Advance Registration of HT.

The department will pre-allocate PS4401 to you within 2 weeks of the start of the semester. Please check to ensure that you have been enrolled for this course during the course registration exercise.

If you wish to withdraw, you should let us know via email.

Supervisor

The role of the supervisor is to provide general guidance on the research topic. Students should not expect their supervisors to correct grammatical errors. You are primarily responsible and independent for the standard of research and presentation.

The normal procedure is for each supervisee to be assigned to one formal supervisor. The frequency of contact between supervisor and supervisee is a flexible arrangement to be worked out between themselves.

As much as possible, the supervisor should be from within the Department. In cases where the supervisor is from another Department, please ensure that your supervisor is at least of a lecturer/ research associate position within the NUS umbrella.

The Department reserves the right to approve or disapprove applications for HTs and has the final say on the assignment of supervisors for the proposed HT.

You must inform the department if you would like to change your HT supervisor after department's approval have been given. Approval for you to change your supervisor will be at the discretion of the Undergraduate Student Committee (UGC).

Submission

Word Count

PS4401 – The word limit for the thesis is **8,000** (excluding cover page, content page, and abstract, list of abbreviations, acknowledgement, preface, footnotes, endnotes, appendix and bibliography).

PE4401S – The word limit for the thesis is **12,000** (excluding cover page, content page, and abstract, list of abbreviations, acknowledgement, preface, footnotes, endnotes, appendix and bibliography).

As much as possible, please screenshot any tables/ graphs/ photos so that it is not included in the wordcount.

To ensure that the thesis adheres to this limit, you are encouraged to use the word count function in your word processing programme regularly, both when writing the thesis and when making corrections.

The penalty for excess words in the thesis is as follows:

1)	1 – 999 words	1.0 mark
2)	1,000 – 1,999	2.5 marks
3)	2,000 – 2,999	5.0 marks
4)	> 3,000 words	7.5 marks

The penalty scheme will be strictly enforced. Please be aware that even minor penalties can change the grade in an HT or ISC and, in some cases, the class of Honours awarded.

Recommended Report Format

1. Each thesis, in general, should include cover page, abstract, acknowledgement, list of abbreviations (if any), contents, main text (all chapters), bibliography, and appendix (if any).
2. The main text in the report should be typed using a general font (i.e. Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri etc), with a font size of 12.
3. For presentation and professionalism, single-sided printing format is preferred.

4. You should **ideally** follow the Chicago Manual of Style for references – with reference number(s) in the text and corresponding reference(s) at the bottom of each page. In addition, you should compile all references used into the bibliography. An online version is available via NUS Library at <http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/c.php?g=145569&p=955494>. You may also use some of last year's theses as examples in this regard. Past theses can be found in the NUS Library ScholarBank at <https://scholarbank.nus.edu.sg/>.
5. Please submit the following by the stipulated deadlines
 - a. **Upload 1 x Microsoft Word file in *Canvas* (for word count and plagiarism check purposes)**
 - b. **Upload 1 x PDF file in *Canvas* (for submission to NUS Library ScholarBank)**
6. Penalties will be imposed for late submissions.
7. For illustrations of the Cover Page, Spine of HT and Title Page, please refer to Appendix A, B and C. When in doubt, consult the Central Library for a model copy of the HT. You can refer to this website <http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/polsci> and click on "Theses" at the top, and do a search for a particular HT title and the location in the Central Library.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) will **NOT** be tolerated. Since the HT is equivalent to 8 Units, should be taken seriously.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will be severely penalised. Such cases may be referred to the University's Board of Discipline (BOD).

Please refer to the following link on plagiarism matters:

<https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/ug/policies/plagiarism/index.html>

INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE (ISC) – PS4660

What is an ISC?

The ISC is available only for PS Honours students in their **Graduating Semesters**.

For students who does not wish to do the HT, the Independent Study course (ISC) at level-4000 gives senior students a chance to do some independent critical reading or research work.

Each ISC is worth 4 units, this requires the student to work on the ISC for a total of 12.5 hours per week.

The student is responsible for drawing up a broad proposal of the intended ISC. This proposal should fall into one of the four sub-fields in the Department:

1. Comparative Politics (CP)
2. International Relations (IR)
3. Political Theory (PT)
4. Governance and Public Policy (GPP)

Students may opt to form a “Group ISC” consisting of 2 to 3 students, supervised by a single lecturer. Although group members will work on a single broad theme or topic, it is expected that each member will focus on different substantive areas and submit his/her own written ISC report. For example, a group might be working on the topic of “technology and political violence”, but each member may focus on 3 different regions or countries where the theme might be applied, and submit their own ISC report.

Qualifying Criteria

PS4660 Pre-requisite (Cohort 2021 onwards - CHS):

Completed 100 Units including 40 Units in PS, with a minimum GPA of 3.20.

Preclusion

PS4401, PS4401HM, PS4660HM, PE4401S, PE4401SHM, PE4660S, PE4660SHM

Registration

An email will be sent to all SOC4 Honours students, inviting applications to read an ISC.

Students are responsible for drawing up the proposal of the intended ISC based on the application form attached in the email. The application form should include a proposed ISC title, a synopsis of the intended study and the name of the proposed supervisor.

Supervisor

In an ISC, the supervisor's role is that of a facilitator.

The primary responsibility for work on the ISC, including the final product, is with the student. Students should bear in mind that this is a Level-4000 ISC and the work required, and subsequently graded, will reflect this.

The nature of the work for the ISC is to be determined through discussion and agreement between the supervisor and the student. The frequency of contact between supervisor and supervisee is a flexible arrangement to be worked out between themselves.

The Department reserves the right to approve or disapprove applications for ISCs and has the final say on the assignment of supervisors for the proposed ISCs.

You must inform the department if you would like to change your ISC supervisor after the Department's approval have been given. Approval for you to change your supervisor will be at the discretion of the Undergraduate Student Committee (UGC).

Submission

Students are required to submit an essay of between **4000-5000 words**.

Please submit the following by the stipulated deadlines:

- **Upload 1 x Microsoft Word file in *Canvas* (for word count and plagiarism check purposes)**

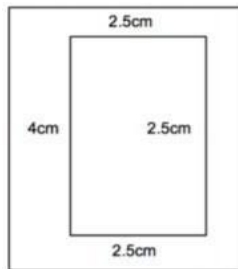
Formatting:

The main text in the report should be typed using a **general** font (i.e. Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri etc), with a **font size of 12**.

Printing & Binding:

The left margin should be 4.0 cm wide. The top, bottom, and right margins should be 2.5 cm wide.

Refer to the following diagram.



Plagiarism

Plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) will **NOT** be tolerated.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will be severely penalised. Such cases may be referred to the University's Board of Discipline (BOD).

Please refer to the following link on plagiarism matters:

<https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/ug/policies/plagiarism/index.html>

PENALTY POLICIES FOR HT & ISC*

These penalty schemes will be strictly enforced. Please be aware that even minor penalties can change the grade for an HT/ISC and, in some cases, the class of Honours awarded.

Change/Alteration of title after deadline for title confirmation

The imposition of a title confirmation 2 weeks before its submission is a test of professionalism and discipline.

A **1% mark penalty** will be imposed on the final mark if there is a change of title for HT or ISC after the title change submission due date.

Late submission of HT or ISC

Important Note: Penalties will be **strictly imposed** for late submission on *Canvas* submission folder.

Two-Step Penalty System for Late Submissions

- A **daily 5% deduction** from the final mark, cumulative up to 7 consecutive days (including weekends and public holidays), or a maximum of 35% of the final mark.
- Rejection of HT/ISC on the 8th consecutive day.

Time Extensions/ Waiving Penalties of Late Submissions

Time extensions may be granted and/or penalties may be waived by the Undergraduate Student Committee (in consultation with your supervisor) if early (i.e. on or before the HT/ISC submission deadline) documented explanations are given. Valid documents include medical certificates (Units), psychiatric reports or letters by other certified medical professionals and government bodies (e.g. Units or doctor's letter from UHC).

Exceeding the Word Count of the HT[†]

As stated before, the penalty for excess words in the thesis is as follows:

1) 1 – 999 words	1.0 mark
2) 1,000 – 1,999	2.5 marks
3) 2,000 – 2,999	5.0 marks
4) > 3,000 words	7.5 marks

* These rules does not extend to USP-ISCs coordinated by the University's Scholars' Programme (USP)

ETHICS (INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD – IRB)

All undergraduate research (HT, ISC etc.) involving humans as research subjects must be subject to ethics review by the Departmental Ethics Review Committee (DERC).

This is important if you are planning to conduct interviews or surveys for your HT/ISC!

These research projects may be carried out by individual students and the results from such research may or may not be intended for publication or presentation outside the classroom. They include experimental protocols, **observational studies, interviews, questionnaires**, secondary use of data that are not in the public domain and research involving human remains, tissues, or biological fluids.

The Department Ethics and Review Committee (DERC) will determine whether the research can be exempted or expedited (minimal risk projects) or referred to the NUS-IRB for review based on the risk to the research participants.

Please note that ethics board approval, particularly if NUS IRB approval is required, can take anywhere from **one week to two months**. Students are advised to plan well in advance and undertake the necessary measures. **A copy of the ethics approval must be included within the thesis as an appendix.**

For any query and clarifications on IRB, please send an email to Ms. Michelle Ngoi (Ngoi.Michelle@nus.edu.sg).

Political Science Department Policy on the Use of AI Tools for HT Projects

Please note that this policy applies to PS4401, PS4401HM, GL4401, GL4401HM, PE4401S, and PE4401S(HM).

The policy consists of two 'baskets':

I. Academic integrity

Students must duly acknowledge any use of generative AI.

All uses of generative AI at any point in the HT research & writing process need to be declared in table form using this format:

<u>AI Tool Used, including links to chat history (if applicable)</u>	<u>Student-Provided Prompt/Input</u>	<u>Generated Output</u>	<u>How the output was used in the assignment (indicate which page numbers if possible)</u>

This table should be appended at the end of the HT.

- If multiple prompts were used, students should indicate each usage in a separate row and add more rows to the table as needed.
- Students must provide a verbatim record of all prompts & outputs from generative AI tools. Students may copy and paste the prompts and outputs, provide screenshots of prompts and outputs, or provide a unique URL that shares the record of the full conversation with the AI tool.
- Students must provide full and accurate disclosure of how outputs from generative AI were used in the HT, including the pages in the HT where this output was used (if any).

The university also states that "Research materials (including texts, graphics and data) obtained from the internet or other electronic resources should be treated in the same way as research materials obtained from traditional sources." (see <https://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/statements-and-e-resources-on-plagiarism/>) Therefore, in addition to the table declaring generative AI usage, citations should be used to acknowledge where AI tools have been used to generate ideas, information, images, or text (including AI-generated text that has been edited or revised by students). A number of referencing guides have also released advice on citing generative AI, and students should consult the relevant guides for their citations (see for example the Chicago Manual of Style's guidance on citing generative AI:

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Documentation/faq0422.html>)

All HTs must also include a completed Honours Thesis Gen-AI Usage Declaration. The declaration should be placed after the bibliography/works cited section in the HT.

II. Expectations of good academic practice for HTs

The university states that "Copying wholesale from AI, even with attribution, will not guarantee a good grade as you are tested on your ability to demonstrate originality, views, intellectual engagement with content, rigor, and contribution to discourse."

(https://libguides.nus.edu.sg/new2nus/ai_guidelines_infographics)

The Political Science and Global Studies Honours Year Prospectuses inform students that "An HT is an independent research project that addresses an important question or puzzle, and provides a strong argument based on sound and substantial empirical evidence. It is a major research undertaking at an undergraduate level, and requires far more effort in terms of originality, detail, clarity and independence than an ISC or a normal course essay."

Therefore, while usage of generative AI is not prohibited as long as duly acknowledged, ill-considered or excessive student uses of generative AI can constitute poor academic practice and fail to meet HTs' standards of intellectual independence and rigour.

Expectations of HTs include:

- Effective use of credible sources
 - Students can fall short of this expectation if they do not use sources with academic credibility, for example, relying on AI tools for information without cross-referencing academic sources.
- Independent analysis
 - Students can fall short of this expectation if they rely too much on AI to generate ideas, explanations, or analysis, or if they fail to independently read the sources used in their HT (e.g. when students use generative AI to summarise articles and books instead of reading these sources themselves).
- Independent writing
 - Students can fall short of this expectation if they are overly dependent on AI to generate text used in the HT.

The university's policy for the use of AI in teaching and learning states that "Submissions for unsupervised assessments that duly acknowledge the use of AI should be graded on the quality of the work alone and not penalized just for having used AI." Therefore, HT examiners should not mark down students simply for using AI tools. Rather, paying attention to the nature and extent of AI usage as well as how AI outputs have been used in the HT, they should assess whether particular uses of generative AI would constitute poor academic practice in this context, and the degree to which the quality of the HT is negatively impacted.

HT & ISC DEADLINES

GENERAL DEADLINES FOR PS4401 HONOURS THESIS			
	Semester 1 Normal Registration	Semester 2 Advance Registration	Semester 2 Normal Registration
HT Application Email sent out	22 Jun 2026	19 Oct 2026	16 Nov 2026
Application Submission Deadline	19 Jul 2026	15 Nov 2026	27 Dec 2026
Deadline to change HT title and/or synopsis	End of Week 8, Semester 1 11 Oct 2026	End of Week 8, Semester 2 14 Mar 2027	End of Week 8, Semester 2 14 Mar 2027
*Upload softcopy of HT into <i>Canvas</i> work bin	2 Nov 2026, 0800hrs	5 April 2027, 0800hrs	5 April 2027, 0800hrs
IRB Application Submission	Recommended to be done together with application. Interviews and surveys may commence only <u>after</u> IRB approval is given.		

**Non-negotiable deadlines*

GENERAL DEADLINES FOR ISC		
	Semester 1 normal registration	Semester 2 normal registration
Start of ISC Application	22 Jun 2026	16 Nov 2026
Application Deadline	19 Jul 2026	27 Dec 2026
Deadline to change ISC title and/or synopsis	End of Week 8, Semester 1 11 Oct 2026	End of Week 8, Semester 2 14 Mar 2027
*Upload softcopy of ISC onto <i>Canvas</i> work bin	2 Nov 2026, 0800hrs	5 April 2027, 0800hrs
IRB Application Submission	Recommended to be done together with application. Interviews and surveys may commence only <u>after</u> IRB approval is given.	

**Non-negotiable deadlines*

PRIZES FOR HONOURS STUDENTS

Eligible Honours students may be nominated by the Department for the following Awards/Prizes:

Lee Hsien Loong Award for Outstanding All-Round Achievement (LHL-OAA)

The Lee Hsien Loong Award for Outstanding All-Round Achievement (LHL-OAA) was first implemented in 2010. The Award is presented to post-secondary students who have done well, both academically and non-academically, particularly those who have made outstanding contributions to the community and demonstrated the spirit of Innovation and Enterprise.

The LHL-OAA is awarded to one Singaporean fresh graduate/graduating student from each of the following four groups of educational institutions each year – Junior Colleges/ Centralized Institute (JC/CI), the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), Polytechnics and Autonomous Universities (AUs). All schools from each of the educational institution group are required to nominate suitable candidates for the award. Following this, a selection panel chaired by MOE will decide the eventual recipients of the award through desktop and interview selections.

Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher (OUR) Prize

https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/ug/deans_list/outstanding-undergrad-researcher.html

The Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher (OUR) Prize launched in AY 2006-2007 is an annual, university-wide competition which aims to encourage research among undergraduates at NUS by presenting opportunities for them to participate in research while integrating teaching and research at various levels of experience and expertise. This allows undergraduates to develop the GPAacity for discovery through research.

Through this competition, undergraduates will have more meaningful experiences at university by fostering learning through hands-on work. It also serves to develop their research skills for use in courses and other academic and professional pursuits; identify academic and career interests; learn about a new field; develop working relationships between classmates and faculty mentors; and provide them a glimpse of graduate life.

NUSS Medal for Outstanding Achievement

Since AY2009-10, the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS) has donated an endowed sum of \$105,000 for the award, “NUSS Medal for Outstanding Achievement”, with the intention to recognise one graduating student from each NUS Faculty/School for outstanding all-round achievements. The establishment of this award shall aid in fostering closer bonds between NUSS and the University and its alumni community. Each winner shall be presented with a gold medal and a NUSS membership with a one-year waiver of the monthly subscription. Each Faculty/School can select a winner, from each year’s graduating cohort, who is an outstanding student having achieved academic excellence as well as made significant co-curricular contributions.

Nominations period: Feb every year. Students are to complete the online nomination form at: https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/ug/deans_list/nuss-medal-for-outstanding-achievement.html

Association of Malay Professionals (AMP) Prize

Department will nominate the best HT or ISC on any aspect that is of relevance to the Malay/Muslim community in Singapore.

Political Science Book Prize (SOC4/ARS4)

Department will nominate the best SOC4/ARS4 graduating student in Political Science. Value of the prize is S\$100 (cash prize).

Gerald De Cruz Memorial Prize

Department will nominate the **Top Honours Thesis (by overall score)** in Political Theory or Asian Politics. Value of the prize is S\$300 (cash prize).

Political Science Honours Thesis Prize

Department will nominate the **Second Best Honours Thesis (by overall score)**. The topic of the winning thesis can be in any of the 4 subfields offered by the department. Value of the prize is S\$200 (cash prize).

The Batul Izzuddin Global Citizen Prize

The award will be given to two graduating students from FASS Political Science or Global Studies who has not only demonstrated academic excellence but has also represented Singapore or their country of origin on the global stage doing the country proud in the process. Value of the prize is S\$250 (cash prize).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Library Resources for Political Science

Political Science: Main

Resources in Political Science

Main	Databases	Journals	Theses	News	Citation Style & EndNote	New Titles	Research / Writing Guides
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Link: <http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/polsci>

- You will be able to find library resources related to Political Science (e.g. Journals, Theses, Citation Style & EndNote, Writing Guides, etc.).
- Library Tutorial for Political Science Honours Students
- You can search and locate Honours Theses written by our past PS honours students (all Political Science HTs stored in the library are required to have the grade of B+ and above). HTs from Semester 1, AY2017/2018 and earlier will be stored as hardcover copies in the NUS Library. HTs from Semester 2, AY2017/2018 onwards will be stored as softcopies in the ScholarBank@NUS.
- ISCs will not be stored.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

HT and ISC Cover Page

*Delete accordingly

[TITLE of HT/ISC in BLOCK LETTERS]

[FULL NAME as shown on Matriculation Card]

AN HONOURS THESIS/ISC* IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
FOR THE BACHELOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (HONOURS)
DEGREE

PRESENTED TO DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

[ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/2027]

APPENDIX B

General Questions and Answers on HTs

1. How is writing an HT different from taking non-HT courses?

In writing an HT, the student needs to be much more independent and responsible than in the case of taking regular non-HT courses. The student has to demonstrate initiative and conduct serious and substantive research independently. This is often a lonely (and frustrating) journey.

The supervisor's role is to provide the student with appropriate advice along the way. From past experiences, some students were over-reliant on their supervisors for guidance at all stages of their research projects. You should attempt an HT **ONLY** if you are confident and ready to take on the enormous intellectual challenge that lies ahead of you. Writing an HT is far more challenging than taking three non-HT courses.

2. What is the difference between a HT and an Independent Study course (ISC)?

Both projects are similar in that students must address an important question or puzzle, and provide a strong argument based on sound and substantial empirical evidence. The major difference is that writing an HT requires much more of your time and energy as an independent researcher. You should write an HT only if you are prepared to put in substantial investments in time and effort along with other necessary sacrifices over several months. You cannot complete writing an HT in just one month, let alone in a few weeks.

3. Would my decision not to read an HT affect my chances of gaining admission into a graduate school in the future?

Our department's graduate programme does not require applicants to write a HT during their undergraduate years. The requirements for graduate entry admission varies from one school to another, but as far as we know, most graduate schools require no more than a writing sample. However, you should still check with the graduate school of your interest to be sure.

4. What constitutes a strong HT proposal? How original should the proposal be?

Your proposal should be sufficiently detailed enough to convince your potential supervisor of its merits. For starters, you might submit an abstract via email, with a note explaining that you are ready to submit a more detailed proposal or to elaborate on it in a face-to-face meeting. You should also explain your reasons to the faculty member you have contacted on why he or she would be a suitable supervisor to help in your research. The success of the HT application depends, in no small part, on your communication and interactions with the potential supervisor, so you should place utmost importance on this process.

As you are still an undergraduate student, we do not expect you to generate a wholly path-breaking research question or answer. That said, within the limitations you face, you are required to come up with a question on which relatively little research has been done to date, and an argument original enough to pique the interest of your potential supervisor. Finding that kind of question and answer through a good deal of preliminary research is one essential part of any promising research project, and would help convince your potential supervisor that you are worth working with over a period of one semester. (Remember that the staff member would have to invest a substantial amount of his or her time in supervising any HT too.)

In addition to the originality of your question and argument, we look for evidence that you are adequately prepared to undertake your research project (How many relevant courses have you taken? Do you have any relevant internship or any other kind of relevant experience? How familiar are you with the relevant literature?), and feasibility of your proposed research (Is there enough literature/data available? Can the data be collected in Singapore within a reasonably short period of time? Does the research involve any fieldwork, and if so, where, and how much fieldwork?). You should also make sure that there is a reasonable match between your HT proposal and your potential supervisor's expertise, in terms of sub-fields (e.g., international relations, public administration), specific themes (e.g., corruption, democratization, migration), and/or regional/country specialization (e.g., Europe, China).

- 5. I have asked one faculty member to be my supervisor, and he/she said "no". Can I ask another faculty member? Can I keep on trying until I find someone who is willing to be my supervisor?**

You can, but if more than two faculty members say "no", it is possible that there may be significant problems with your proposal. In such situation, you may approach the faculty members who declined your request to find out why they are not able to supervise your thesis and request for some inputs where applicable to help you refine your proposal.

- 6. Can I submit a HT proposal and an ISC proposal concurrently?**

No, students can submit only one application (either a HT or an ISC), not both.

- 7. How many drafts am I expected to write if my application for a HT is successful? Is there a prescribed weekly number of hours I have to adhere to in writing my HT?**

It all depends on the student and his/her supervisor.

- 8. Are other professors other than my supervisor allowed to read my HT draft(s) and make comments to help improve my work?**

There is no rule against it. It is up to the student's supervisor and other professors to decide.

9. If extenuating circumstances occur during the course of writing my HT (e.g. severe illness) that causes me to take a leave of absence from NUS, am I allowed to defer my HT to a subsequent semester? Do I have to reapply?

Such requests will be considered by the Undergraduate Student Committee (in consultation with your supervisor) on a case-by-case basis.

10. How are HTs graded?

As mentioned in the Honours Prospectus, the HT will be graded on its own merits and on several criterion such as presentation, coherence and consistency, comprehensiveness (including the use of primary sources), factual accuracy and writing discipline, etc.

11. Is there a minimum word limit?

There is no minimum word limit. Having said that, given the fact that a HT is worth 15 Units (pre-CHS)/ 8 Units (CHS), it should be reasonably long and certainly longer than an ISC.

12. Can I use aesthetic designs in my HT?

There is no rule against aesthetic designs but we recommend that students should focus more on the contents and substance of their HT instead.

13. Does the word count include words in graphs and tables?

No. After you have done the graph and tables, you may consider pasting the graph and table as a picture file (jpeg) instead so that the word processing program does not count the words in the graph or table.

The word count also doesn't include words in your abstract, content page, references, bibliography, acknowledgements, etc.

The word count will start from the 1st word in your introductory chapter to the last word in your final concluding chapter (including words in your chapter titles).

14. Do I need to follow the Chicago Manual of Style for references, or can I use my preferred style?

While it is recommended that you use the Chicago Manual of Style for references for your HT, you can use other styles that suits your preferences. Just ensure that the citation style you use remains uniform throughout your HT.