

RURAL SCIENCE/LIVESTOCK SCIENCE HONOURS (RUSC 490)

Introduction

All students wishing to be considered for award of the BRurSc with Honours must undertake and complete this unit in their final year of candidature. The award of Honours is based on the student's performance in the second, third and fourth years of candidature including the thesis.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this unit students have developed:

- ❖ • expertise and increased knowledge in a given field
- ❖ • ability to conceive, conduct and report original research
- ❖ • ability to correctly review and reference scientific material
- ❖ • ability to critically assess own and other scientific work
- ❖ • ability to communicate findings in professional manner and in accordance with national and international standards

Assessment

RUSC 490 is assessed on the basis of two marks. The first mark, worth 80 percent of the final mark, is based solely on the submitted Honours thesis. Two examiners, one of whom is the supervisor of the project, independently assess the thesis using the marking criteria set out below. If the grades vary too greatly and the two examiners can not agree on a final mark, it is referred to a third examiner. The Unit coordinator asks the supervisor for advice in selecting examiners and sends out theses (bound copies) for examination, with advice on the nature of the thesis and the grading scale.

The second mark, worth 20 percent of the final mark, is based on a seminar undertaken in the fourth term and assessed by both peers and academics in a public forum. The principal supervisors (or their nominee) of the presenting Honours students for that year, will be required to attend and grade seminars. All Honours students will be part of the Panel, and peer-assessment will make up 40% of the final Symposium grade. Each seminar will be presented in an allocated 20 minute time slot (15 minute presentation + 5 minutes for questions), presented during a Rural Science Seminar Series slot in the fourth term. Attendance at Symposia presentations is compulsory.

Enrolment

Students are required to be accepted by a member of academic staff for approval of the project topic and supervision. Supervisors will be available to discuss the work and provide

as much guidance as necessary on the presentation of the material. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain contact with his/her supervisor.

Students are to submit a form to the RUSC490 Unit Co-ordinator indicating they have located a supervisor/s and project topic. The form is to be signed by the supervisor indicating that they have been formally approached and they are willing and available to supervise the project.

This form must be handed to Dr Chris Guppy by 20th October 2008

Critical dates

1) **Week 4** - Students are to deliver an informal 10 minute introductory seminar and submit PowerPoint slides and notes. This seminar is not assessable and will be not compulsory for externals, but is compulsory for all internal RUSC490 students.

2) **Week 13** - RUSC490 students will deliver a **completed first draft** of their literature review to their supervisor, and if not completed 5% will be deducted from their final thesis grade. The literature review is to be submitted directly to the supervisor who will endeavor to provide feedback within 2 weeks. The review is ALSO to be submitted using Blackboard to allow the Unit Coordinator to ascertain that it has been completed. The literature review is not assessable

3) **Friday October 31st 4.30pm** - the student will submit two soft bound copies of their thesis and a CD containing all data to the Administrative Assistant in Agronomy and Soil Science. Both copies will be returned by the examiner's without being written upon; one to be given to the supervisor and a second to be stored in the School library. Corrections to the thesis are not required following examination.

There is a sliding scale of penalties for late submission of Theses. The scale is 5% for every increment of 4 days late up to 12 days and 30% thereafter. Honours is like any other unit and will be graded accordingly from HD through N. A failure (N) can be given not only for a poor standard of work but also if the report is not submitted within one month of the due date. Re-enrolment in the Project requires a new topic for investigation and report. Students who believe that they have a valid reason to explain late submission of project reports should prepare, in consultation with their supervisor(s), a substantial case in writing for consideration by the School TLC. If extension of time is granted, a grade of SET is given to the student. In such circumstances, the thesis must be submitted before 30 January in the following year.

Calculation of Honours grades

Final honours grade is calculated by the Unit coordinator.

In 2008 the following protocol in RUSC490 will be used. Weighting is based on years and units according to the level that they are taught.

BRURSC					
% weighting	10%	15%	20%	20%	35%
Unit cluster	2 nd yr core	3 rd yr core	Electives	AGSY410, AGEX310	Project

BLISC				
% weighting	10%	30%	25%	35%
Unit cluster	2 nd yr core	3 rd and 4 th yr core	3 rd and 4 th yr elective	Project

The point scoring system awarded to each grade is set out below:

Grade	Point	Total Point Score
N	-3	
P	0	
C	1	100
D	2	200
HD	3	300

To increase sensitivity for the thesis point score, ½ points will be attributed e.g. 2.5 for > 81 but < 85. Each unit grade is awarded a point, these are added per unit cluster multiplied by % weighting and divided by number of units in cluster, for example (3rd year core RURSC):

ECON223	AGRO311	AGRO321	ANUT221	ANPR321	SOIL310	GENE351	ENVE335	TOTAL
3	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	14

The 14 points are then multiplied by 15 (weighting %) and divided by 8 (units) to give 26.3 points. Honours grades are based on a combination of total coursework and thesis point score as follows:

Honours	Coursework and thesis total point score
No Honours	< 133
H2B	133 -156
H2A	156 -180
H1	> 180
University Medal	> 230

Only coursework units completed at UNE will be considered for Honours Grade.

Thesis presentation

The thesis style and presentation should be as follows:

- ❖ Typed, A4 paper, one side only
- ❖ Wide left-hand margin of 2.5-3.0 cm
- ❖ 1.5 spacing

❖ 12 font

A good thesis is concise, proof-read and consistent with respect to labeling and language. Aim to keep them short, under 10000 words, and reference them according to the CSIRO Journal Style (AJAR) if using Endnote, which you are all encouraged to use! Please consult UNE's *Referencing Guide*- <http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/students/publications/referencing.pdf> when writing your thesis for correct referencing, formatting, etc.

Theses may not be longer than 14 000 words (excluding References, Appendices, Figures and Tables) and penalties will apply for theses that are longer. A penalty of 5% of thesis grade for every 2000 words over the limit will be enforced.

To give you some idea of the importance of each aspect of the thesis, the following scheme will be used as a guideline for the marking of your thesis.

MARKING SCHEME FOR HONOURS THESIS

1. Literature Review - scientific content (~6000 words)
 - Correctness of citing references
 - Critical assessment of literature cited
 - Adequacy of coverage of literature
 - Incorporation of suggestions for future work
 - Presentation/writing style/overall organization
2. Materials and Methods - appropriate to task able to be followed by others
 - Suitable controls
 - Sufficient replicates
 - Appendices
3. Experimentation - appropriate strategies/experimental designs
 - Logical sequence
 - Presentation of results
 - Suggestions of next step
4. Results/Discussion/Conclusion - observations of all results
 - Interpretation of results
 - Discussion of results
 - Connecting results obtained in different sections
 - Relating student's results to published work
5. Presentation - logical presentation
 - Presentation of results (figures, tables)
 - Writing style