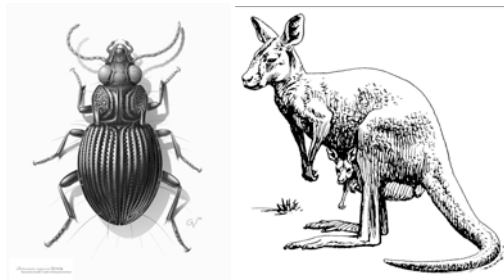


University of New England

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

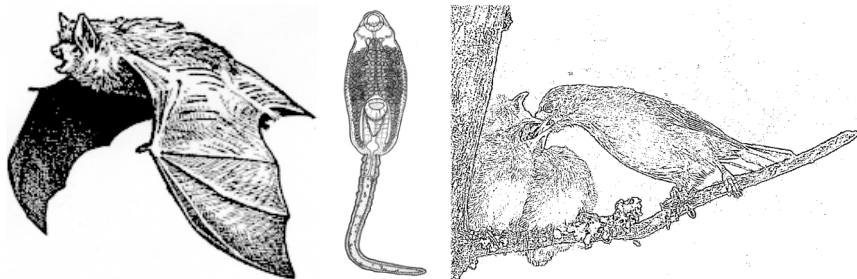
School of Environmental and Rural Sciences

Zoology



ZOOL400

Honours in Zoology



Unit Information and Guidelines

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Unit Information and Guidelines

Introduction

Honours units are offered to allow well-qualified graduates to undertake a fourth year of study after completing a 144 credit point Bachelor degree (*e.g.* B. Zool., B. Sc., B. Ag. Sci., B. Env. Sci.). The major component of this additional year is a research project focusing on any area of Zoology. This will enable students to gain valuable hands-on research experience, improve their career prospects and/or provide a pathway to higher degree studies such as a PhD.

Honours can be studied either internally or externally, and in a full-time or part-time mode. Students can commence studies in any trimester. The unit is two trimesters in duration full-time, or double this for candidates studying part-time. Specific deadlines are approved for each student following discussions with their supervisor and Honours Panel.

Honours coordinator



Dr Stuart Cairns is the Honours coordinator for Zoology.

To prepare for entry into Honours, students are encouraged to approach potential supervisors in the first instance. It is recommended that students start by discussing potential project areas with staff that have similar research interests. If unsure, Stuart is available to discuss these matters with students. Stuart can also assist with issues concerning enrolment, assessment or administration.

Please note that discussions should be conducted by making prior appointment using the contact details below.

Honours coordinator contact details

Phone: 02 6773 2170

Email: scairns@une.edu.au

The Honours coordinator is responsible for assisting with supervision arrangements, approving enrolment and submission of grades. Students experiencing personal problems with their supervisors may discuss these matters with the Honours Coordinator, but note that the actual content and research undertaken is the responsibility of the student in consultation with the supervisor.

Administrative enquiries

Administrative enquiries about this unit can also be made directly, via AskUNE: askune.custhelp.com/app/ask.

Enrolling in Honours

Students interested in completing an Honours in Zoology can begin by consulting staff webpages to identify potential supervisors. Staff webpages, research interests, all required forms and additional information such as potential scholarships that may be available can be found here:

<http://www.une.edu.au/ers/discipline-zoology.php>

Students would be wise to start discussing projects with potential supervisors 2-3 months before enrolment is due, as it takes time to determine the right project and supervisor combination. Up to date information on enrolment deadlines these can be found here: <http://www.une.edu.au/admissions>

The process of enrolling can be complex. The guide shown below outlines what is required. Students should consult with their potential Supervisor, The Honours Coordinator and AskUNE if they require further information. Note that enrolment into Honours is via 'Direct Entry', **not through UAC**.

1. Talk to potential supervisors to discuss projects of possible interest. Students may suggest their own project, adopt a suggestion from their supervisor or develop a new project in consultation with their supervisor.

Additional details to discuss with your supervisor prior to enrolling include:

- a. Are you enrolling as an Internal student (preferred), or as an External student? Note that attendance at UNE is still required during certain periods for External students (see p. 8).
 - b. Do you wish to study full-time or part-time?
 - c. In which trimester will you commence your enrolment? Some projects will revolve around certain times of the year, such as spring, so will require a specific start date.
2. Once you have decided on a project and supervisor, you will need to complete and lodge the School of Environmental and Rural Sciences (ERS) Honours application form (downloadable from the above link).
 - a. Once you have signed this form and obtained your supervisors signature, submit it to the Honours Coordinator.
 3. Apply online to enrol in a Bachelor of Science with Honours course, selecting ZOOL400 (Honours in Zoology) as your unit. Do this via this link:

<http://www.une.edu.au/for/current-students/course-information/bach-hons-info.php>

- a. You will also need to supply an 'Additional Information Required for Admission to Honours' form during online enrolment. This is where you supply information on your planned course of study, such as a tentative thesis title and summary. Prepare these in consultation with your Supervisor and with your own intellectual input.

Requirements of the unit

The primary requirement is to perform well in conducting the research project and writing the thesis. The student is also required to complete satisfactorily other items of written work and to present two research seminars (details below). There are several other non-assessed, but mandatory, components of the unit, such as **attendance of the Zoology Research Seminar series** (see p. 8 for details).

A significant part of the learning process is via informal contacts with fellow graduates and with academic staff other than the immediate supervisor. Students are therefore encouraged to come to morning tea and other social functions to meet and chat with others. Zoology morning tea is held in the staff common room (room 135) at 1045am each day, and provides a great opportunity to meet with colleagues. On Thursday mornings food is provided according to a rotating roster.

Assessment

Assessment weighting is as follows:

Research Thesis	60%
Written exercise	15%
Literature review	15%
Final research seminar	10%

For successful completion of the unit students are also required to complete the following non-assessed components of the unit:

- Introductory seminar to be presented within one month of beginning study
- Meet with Honours Panel after Internal seminar and set due dates for all components of the unit.
- Attend the Zoology Seminar series unless excused from a specific talk by their supervisor.
- Attend an oral defence of the thesis, where the thesis marking panel discusses the project with the student.

Honours grading system

There are four classes of Honours, with these criteria applying to all items of work:

First Class (Hons I) indicating an overall mark equal to or exceeding 85%. A First Class Honours degree demonstrates that the student has excellent potential for independent research and would be strongly supported in an application for a higher degree and for a scholarship application. A first-class thesis would be free of major faults, demonstrate originality and skills in planning, analysis and execution of a logical research plan, and would be written clearly and succinctly. It would also illustrate the scientific and/or applied relevance of the project work.

Second Class, Division 1 (Hons II-1) indicating an overall mark of 75-84%. This indicates a very competent student who has potential to proceed to a higher degree but would need appreciable guidance to meet the required standards. A II-1 thesis would exhibit a thorough understanding of the research issue and a professional or original approach to its resolution. Research design and analyses would be good, presentation clear, and errors of fact and style minimal.

Second Class, Division 2 (Hons II-2) indicating an overall mark of 65-74%. This implies the student is capable of proceeding to a Master's degree but would need considerable further development before commencing a PhD. Such a thesis is competently written but contains some inadequacies in scope, content, presentation, data analysis or understanding of the topic.

Third Class (Hons III) indicating an overall mark of 50-64%. A student awarded this grade would not be encouraged to seek a higher degree. Thesis work may indicate much effort but suffer inadequacies in scope, content, presentation, data analysis or understanding of the topic.

If the overall mark is <50%, the student has failed the degree and the thesis contains serious inadequacies in some or all areas.

Deadlines

Extensions of time for thesis submission will be granted **only because of circumstances beyond the student's control** (e.g., medical problems evidenced by production of a medical certificate, equipment failures, disasters in the field).

Penalties for late submission will follow the School policy as per undergraduate units. Requests for extensions must be made to the supervisor and coordinator in writing **before the relevant deadline**. Failure to hand in any of the assignments will result in the Honours degree being classified as a "Failed Incomplete".

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

The supervisor will ensure that the project has sufficient scope for Honours and will provide guidance on research approaches. He/she will advise on methods and field sites and ensure that the student knows how to use equipment properly and safely. The supervisor will ensure that the student is aware of correct procedures in the particular discipline area.

The supervisor will endeavour to ensure that the student maintains satisfactory progress on the research. In consultation with the student and the Honours coordinator, the supervisor will plan the Introductory Seminar date and a subsequent Panel Meeting. During this meeting, a timetable for assessable tasks will be drawn up and agreed to by all parties for lodgment with the Honours coordinator. An example is provided below:

Student.....		Supervisor:.....	
Assignment	Provisional Title	Weighting	Deadline
Essay 1	“Optimal foraging dynamics”	15%	15 April
Lit review	“Shorebird feeding behaviour”	15%	15 July
Thesis draft	“Curlew foraging in New England”		11 October
Thesis	“Curlew foraging in New England”	60%	25 October
Final Seminar	“A year in the mud”	10%	30 October
Oral defence			7 November
Signatures:			
Student:.....		Date.....	
Supervisor:.....		Date.....	
Co-supervisor:.....		Date.....	

Progress reports and drafts should be read and annotated as rapidly as possible. The supervisor will organise the appointment of the thesis examiners. The supervisor should indicate to the examiners the level of assistance provided to the student during the research project. The supervisor will also organise marking of the other assessment tasks, including the final seminar. Marks for the various assessment tasks should be recorded by the supervisor and forwarded to the relevant Honours coordinator at the earliest opportunity.

Responsibilities of the Student

It is the student's responsibility to confirm a research project and a willing supervisor prior to enrolment in the degree. The student is then expected to develop the project from an idea or an outline provided by the supervisor. The supervisor may ask the student to write a research plan, and will help develop a timetable for their work.

Regular communication between the student and supervisor about the progress of the research is essential. Although the student is responsible for the day-to-day running of their project, experience of the supervisor is likely to be invaluable when deciding upon study sites, methods and appropriate analyses of results. It is the student's responsibility to regularly consult with their supervisor and organize suitable times for meetings. Note that supervisors may set specific guidelines for these.

Students are also responsible for administration of the project and the program of study. For example, the student must ensure that all work is handed in by the due deadline, and that drafts are submitted to the supervisor with adequate time for comment. Similarly, paperwork required for travel insurance and additional components such as research permits must be completed before fieldwork is undertaken. The supervisor will be able to assist with this process.

Students should not be reticent about organising meetings to discuss their work, concerns, or future plans with their supervisor/s. The role of a Supervisor is to help students succeed; to do this adequately a good understanding of student progress, requirements and concerns is necessary.

The Research Project and Thesis

The aim of the research project is to introduce the student to original scientific work. The student, in conjunction with their supervisor, should thus develop a realistic research project, given the restraints of time, funding and availability of infrastructure.

The thesis must be produced by a suitable word-processing software package and care taken in the presentation and grammar. **The supervisor is expected to comment on the first draft only.** It is the students responsibility to prepare drafts in a timely fashion, enabling sufficient time for assessment and feedback on the work from the Supervisor. As a guide, this should be at least two weeks before the due date of the thesis. Remember that a first draft, particularly the Results and Discussion, should be in such a form that the supervisor has all the necessary information to make constructive suggestions. The final version of the research thesis is the student's responsibility.

The following guidelines should be noted:

Length: **A maximum of 50 pages.**

Use A4 paper, 12 point font, double-spacing. Including figures, tables & references, this should translate into roughly 10,000 -12,500 words.

Students should consult with their supervisor and peruse recent Honours theses that are available in the Zoology library. However, a general layout of a typical thesis is:

Title page

Signed declaration by student

Table of Contents

Summary (Ideally one A4 page)

Introduction (A refined and edited version of the Literature Review)

Methods

Results, including relevant figures, tables & graphs

Discussion & Conclusions

List of References

Appendices (*e.g.*, supplementary data not included in the Results)

It is also permissible to produce a thesis with self-contained data chapters (i.e., each containing a small introduction, methods, results and discussion, in the format of a scientific paper). Students contemplating this approach should discuss this with their Supervisor beforehand. Note that a thesis in this format must also have a general thesis introduction and a unifying conclusion.

Three softbound copies of the thesis are to be submitted to the supervisor before 4pm on the thesis submission date.

It is also customary to provide the supervisor/s with a revised copy once feedback has been received and any factual errors have been corrected.

Criteria for Assessment of the Honours Thesis

The thesis is marked by the Supervisor and another academic within the Zoology Discipline (unless other arrangements are made during the initial meeting with the student's Honours Panel). The Honours Coordinator adjudicates on grades if these differ by more than 20%. Note that Honours Panel refers to the academics that will ultimately mark the thesis. The following areas are important when grading the Honours thesis:

1. Subject Content

- adequacy of candidate's understanding of concepts
- thorough, critical review of previous research and key papers
- clear statement of why research was undertaken, put in context
- clear statement of hypotheses

2. Competence in research

- level of scientific rigour gauged from description of approach

- methods of survey and experimental design
- analysis of results
- interpretation and discussion of results
- adequacy of discussion of project limitations and contribution to the field

3. Presentation

- organisation and presentation of the work
- clarity of writing style
- referencing and graphics

Additional Student Requirements

Residential requirements for external students

It is a requirement that ALL students attend UNE to present their Introductory and Final Research seminars on the nominated dates. Students must also attend their Honours panel meeting and Oral defence.

There is also a requirement for external students to be on campus for a certain period in each semester, allowing where possible attendance of the Zoology Seminar Series. As a guide, at least the equal of an intensive school, *i.e.*, four days per semester is the minimum for this component. **Experience has shown that the success of the project is positively correlated with the amount of contact between the supervisor and student.** The frequency and timing of visits will depend on the nature of the project. The student should consult with their supervisor for more details, as different projects will require different contact hours.

Attendance of the Zoology Seminar Series

Attendance of this seminar series is not assessed, but is **mandatory** for successful completion of the unit. These are advertised in advance, and are currently held at 12 noon every second Thursday in the Zoology lecture theatre (Z1). Attendance exposes students to new ideas from others at UNE and the wider academic community, new approaches and provides an opportunity to observe others presenting seminars and adopt similar techniques when they present their own work.

History has repeatedly demonstrated that students that attend seminars produce theses and present seminars of their own that are of a greater standard. These seminars provide an opportunity to incorporate new ideas into research projects, as well as observing how others present material in a way that the audience appreciates.

Preliminary Panel meeting

This meeting will be organised by the Supervisor, with the Student, Supervisor and other academic to mark the thesis in attendance. During this meeting general requirements of the student will be discussed, as well as the proposed plan for the research project. It is an opportunity for all involved to ask questions and to seek feedback on any issues that are of concern. By the end of the meeting a plan for the research and a list of all deadlines for required components of the unit will be agreed to, signed and submitted to the Honours Coordinator, with copies retained by all in attendance.

Seminars

The **Introductory seminar** is presented early in the project and will consist of a Powerpoint/Keynote outline of the background, aims and methodology of the proposed research project. Students should speak for approximately 10-20 min, allowing 5-10 min afterwards for questions. This seminar provides an opportunity for students to receive feedback on their planned approach from other academics, and also serves to introduce both the student and their interests to the members of the Discipline.

The **Final Research Seminar** is **assessed** and is presented after the thesis has been handed in. The Powerpoint/Keynote presentation should consist of a brief reminder of the Aims, Methods before concentrating on the Results and Conclusions from the research project. Students should consult with their supervisor for the most appropriate format for their needs. Final seminars should run for approximately 25 min, allowing 5 min for questions afterwards. The supervisor is expected to have input in one trial presentation but the final presentation is the responsibility of the student. As a guide for students an assessment form for the final seminar is given at the end of this guide. Assessment of the final Honours seminar is based on a mean of marks awarded by all academics in the audience, collated by the Honours Coordinator.

Written assignments

All written work should be submitted on A4 paper, double-spaced with 12-point fonts. **Two copies** of the work should be submitted to the supervisor by the due date. Appropriate feedback and an allocated mark will be provided to the student.

Writing exercise essay: 3000 word limit, **including** references.

This will be based upon a topic that is decided at the Honours panel meeting that follows the Introductory Seminar. It is generally in a area close to, but not within, student research fields. This provides two benefits to the student. First it allows students to receive feedback on writing style prior to the thesis being graded. Second,

it improves understanding of relevant general Zoological themes that is useful when preparing for and conducting research projects.

The essay is marked by two academics that are NOT on the Honours Research Panel. The work should be written in the style of a *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* article. Students should seek more detail from their supervisor, but use articles here as a guide:

<http://www.cell.com/trends/ecology-evolution>

Literature review: 3000 word limit, **excluding** references.

This piece should form the bulk of the general introduction of the ultimate thesis that is produced by the project. Given this, the Literature review provides an opportunity to receive feedback on whether or not students have addressed all of the required literature and understood relevant concepts before submitting their thesis. Most students should be able to incorporate feedback from this process to produce their introductory chapter of the thesis.

Literature reviews are marked by the supervisor and another academic, usually from within Zoology, but who is NOT on the Honours Research Panel.

Oral Defence

Following the Final Research Seminar and presentation of the thesis, students will attend an Oral Defence meeting. The Student, Supervisor, Honours Coordinator and other academic marking the thesis will attend. This is an opportunity for Student to answer any questions that have arisen from the thesis and seminar, as well as impress upon the examiners their understanding of the research topic. Performance in this meeting is not directly assessed, however it provides an opportunity for students to impress and clarify any potential issues that may have arisen from their thesis, such as a misunderstanding of a result.

Additional information

Plagiarism

Students who have plagiarised material in any work handed in for assessment will be dealt with under the Rules of the University. Ensure you acknowledge all sources and assistance with any work done for this degree. If in doubt, read the UNE policies on these matters:

<http://www.une.edu.au/policies/student.php>

HDR induction days

Depending on the nature of the project, supervisors may ask students to attend HDR induction days run by the School. These days provide general advice about University and School procedures such as fieldwork safety procedures, University vehicles, library services, etc.

Experiments involving animals

The Animal Ethics Committee must approve research involving vertebrate animals. The supervisor will provide advice regarding the need for animal ethics approval. If a project requires approval, then permission for the work to proceed must be granted before any research commences. It is the student's responsibility to ensure any paperwork is filled out fully and submitted to their supervisor. Note that this process can be lengthy, so students should prepare applications at the earliest opportunity.

Research permits

Field work in any area of Zoology usually requires a permit. Permits should be arranged as soon as possible with the help of the supervisor, and are the student's responsibility. Permission to work on private property must also be gained, preferably in writing. Ensure that the supervisor is aware of all such arrangements and retains a photocopy of all permit applications, permits granted and written permission.

Equipment and Travel

Use of equipment in research/teaching laboratories requires the approval of the supervisor or appropriate person responsible for the care and maintenance of the equipment. Appropriate travel and Fieldwork Safety forms need to be completed for any field trips (the Supervisor can supply details). Travel should not be undertaken unless these forms have been completed and the trip has been approved. Failure to seek approval may mean that students are not covered by insurance if an incident occurs.

Lodgement of Plant and Animal Vouchers

Where appropriate, the student is responsible for the lodgment of plant and animal vouchers arising from their Honours work. The vouchers must be correctly prepared and accompanied by appropriate collecting information. The supervisor will provide advice regarding this material.

University Vehicles

University vehicles may be used for research. Students should consult with their supervisor for full details. Use of 4WD vehicles requires the user to pass the relevant driving test. Please refer to the University Travel Policy for full details.

Safety and Security

There is a first aid kit on each floor of each building and students should familiarise themselves with the location of these, as well as the location of the fire extinguishers. All accidents must be reported immediately. It is most important that students familiarise themselves with the designated meeting point for evacuation of buildings; *e.g.*, in the event of a fire. In the event of a fire alarm sounding, the building must be evacuated immediately.

Honours students will often need access to buildings and laboratories at nights and weekends. If this is the case, students should ensure that the "After hours register" is filled out correctly, as per supervisor instructions. Any suspicious activity after hours in buildings should be immediately reported to UNE Security on ext 2099. Notify the Administrative Assistant or Technical staff of any failures of essential services or faults. In the case of emergency requiring police, fire, or ambulance services, dial 0 for an outside line then 000.

Financial Support for Research

Each student receives \$2500 for their research project to cover some of the consumables, minor items of equipment and travel in the field that is required. The School Resource Office manages the grant, and the student and supervisor decide upon how the funds are to be used. The supervisor will advise as to the correct procedures for the purchase of necessary items. Access to photocopying facilities will be made available via an individual access code. The cost of preparation of the thesis is the responsibility of the student, but note that computer facilities are available in the School.

Occasionally, Honours scholarships or additional funding may be available for specific projects. Supervisors also may know where additional funds may be sought. Applying for such funds is a valuable experience for Honours students.

General Information

Library services

What can the Library do for you?

Find out at www.une.edu.au/library/services/unit_guide.php. This guide provides easy pathways to UNE's vast online resources and shows how the Library can help you with your studies. You can borrow books, obtain copies of articles and exam papers, and request advice from librarians on search strategies and information tools to use.

Learning support

The Academic Skills Office (ASO) is UNE's learning support unit. The ASO has a wealth of print and online resources to help you with your academic study skills development or problems.

ASO fact sheets

The ASO has developed a series of fact sheets that answer the questions most frequently asked by students. They can be found at www.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/students/factsheets/.

ASO discussion forum

If you would like to discuss specific issues related to study skills or academic writing with an advisor, or benefit from the questions other students ask, you can log on to the ASO Discussion Forum at www.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/students/services/help-for-you.php#onlinechat

Key terms

A glossary of some of the key terms used to describe academic and administrative activities, roles and structures at UNE can be found at www.une.edu.au/policies/pdf/glossarykeyterms.pdf. It is very useful for understanding the terminology associated with your study.

Other Support at UNE

Other support services are available to assist you throughout the course of your studies. Some of these services are outlined below. For the full range of support services, go to www.une.edu.au/for/current-students/ and follow the links.

Student Assist

Student Assist's support services include disability and special needs support, counselling, and career development. To see the range of services they offer, go to www.une.edu.au/student-assist/.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

The Oorala Aboriginal Centre is a study support and advisory centre for internal and external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at UNE. To find out more about the support services Oorala offers, go to www.une.edu.au/oorala/.

International students

International Services provides support for international students and provides a link between the administrative and academic functions at UNE. For more information about the services offered, go to www.une.edu.au/elis and for an e-copy of the International Student Handbook go to www.une.edu.au/elis/brochures/.

AskUNE

If you have questions that are not answered by this booklet, go to [AskUNE](#). At AskUNE you can find answers to many common enquiries or submit an enquiry of your own by clicking on the 'Contact Us' tab.

Academic staff research interests

Students should look at staff webpages for project information, starting here:

<http://www.une.edu.au/ers/discipline-zoology.php>

Broad research interests of staff and contact details are listed below.



Dr Nigel Andrew

Email: nigel.andrew@une.edu.au

Building S1 Room: 142

Phone: 02 6773 2937

- Insect-plant interactions
- Insect physiology and behaviour
- Adaptation to climatic extremes
- Environmental gradients
- <http://www.une.edu.au/ers/research/insect-ecology-lab/>



Dr Stuart Cairns

Email: scairns@une.edu.au

Building S1 Room: 116

Phone: 02 6773 2170

- Animal population ecology
- Foraging and resource utilisation
- Distance sampling
- Occupancy estimation



Prof Fritz Geiser

Email: fgeiser@une.edu.au

Building S1 Room: 61

Phone: 02 6773 2170

- Environmental physiology
- Thermal biology and energetics
- Hibernation and daily torpor
- Biology of mammals and birds



Dr Tommy Leung

Email: tleung6@une.edu.au

Building S1 Room: 117

Phone: 02 6773 4083

- Parasite-host interactions
- Parasite life-cycles
- Infectious disease ecology
- Parasite community ecology



Dr Paul McDonald

Email: paul.mcdonald@une.edu.au

Building S1 Room: 148

Phone: 02 6773 3317

- Animal behaviour, with a focus on birds
- Cooperation and sociality
- Bioacoustics
- Miner associated dieback
- <http://www.une.edu.au/ers/research/abel/>

ZOOL400 Enrolment Checklist

Step	Task
1	Consult: http://www.une.edu.au/ers/discipline-zoology.php This has links to potential supervisor webpages, all required forms and contact information potential students require.
2	Consult: http://www.une.edu.au/admissions for current deadlines for enrolment via Direct Entry. Projects are best discussed 1-2 months before enrolments are due, so start early!
3	Talk to potential supervisors about projects of mutual interest. Agree on a project, start date and enrolment type (part/full-time, internal/external).
4	Complete and lodge with the Honours Coordinator an ERS Honours application form.
5	Apply online to enrol in the Bachelor of Science with Honours course, selecting ZOOL400 as your unit. Submit an 'Additional Information Required for Admission to Honours' Form during this step.

Assessment summary

Assessment task:	Weighting
Introductory seminar	Mandatory
Attend Honours Panel meeting	Mandatory
Attend Zoology Seminar Series	Mandatory
Written exercise	15%
Literature review	15%
Research thesis	60%
Final research seminar	10%
Oral defence	Mandatory