

Guidelines for Biochemistry Honors Thesis Proposals

Any major who is interested in working towards honors in biochemistry is expected to initiate planning and discussion of possible honors research projects with a faculty mentor no later than his/her junior year or the following summer. Students are strongly encouraged to have conducted preliminary research in their general area of interest prior to preparing an honors proposal. Guidelines for the development of a proposal are outlined below. Proposals must be submitted to the honors committee for review by August 1 prior to the senior year.

Before August 1, the honors committee must be established by the faculty mentor with input from the student. The committee will evaluate the proposal and also provide the final determination on awarding of honors. An honors committee is comprised of three voting members; the faculty mentor serves as the fourth member, with voice but no vote. There must be at least one member of the Biochemistry program affiliated faculty from both the Biology and Chemistry Departments on a committee. Committee members will typically be drawn from affiliated faculty, but one member may be from outside the program or institution. Care should be taken to select faculty members who possess relevant expertise and an interest in the research questions of the proposal.

The committee will evaluate the proposal and inform the student if the proposal is accepted, not accepted, or provisionally accepted before the start of classes senior year. Provisional acceptance typically will require revisions that may need to be approved by either the faculty mentor or the entire committee. Any requested revisions should be made and revised proposal submitted for review within two weeks of the initial notification.

Proposal guidelines for students

In preparing your honors proposal, please adhere to the following guidelines, based on the Cottrell College Science Grant application for research funding for liberal arts colleges supported by the Research Corporation. You are expected to consult with your faculty mentor in this work.

Format

- Ensure that your text is easily readable by using 11 or 12 point font and double-spaced text (References and Figure legends may be single-spaced). Margins should be 1 inch and pages should be numbered. Titles of each section should be in bold font.
- Proofread for grammar and spelling errors.
- Prepare four copies of your honors proposal for submission to committee members.

Sections

- Cover sheet, including title (130 character limit), your name, campus contact information, name of faculty mentor, and an Academic Behavior Code statement with your signature.
- Abstract (250 word limit)
- Project description (2500 word limit), including:
 - (a) Statement of the problem and scientific significance – state the research question(s) clearly and give a picture of its broader importance.
 - (b) Plan of procedure – outline the approach you will take, citing key references and preliminary results and demonstrating the feasibility of the approach. Indicate clearly how the research will contribute to the broader problem discussed in the significance section. Figures should be included as necessary and should be embedded within the text. Figure legends and other labels are not included in the word limit for this section.

- Budget – list major equipment and supplies that must be acquired for the project and approximate costs.
- References – annotate the proposal with a list of references formatted according to the specifications for *Journal of Biological Chemistry* (*JBC*, published by ASBMB) or *Biochemistry* (published by ACS).