Honors in Education Committee
Dr. Bettie Ray Butler – MDSK (2015-18)
Dr. Michael Matthews – SPCD - Chair (2013-16)
Dr. Misty Hathcock – REEL/OFE (2015-18)
Dr. Jim Bird – EDLD (2015-18)
Dr. Matt Eastin (Geography & Earth Sciences) (2015-16)
Purpose

The purpose of the Honors in Education Program is to identify exceptional undergraduate students who show potential for future accomplishments in educational research. While there are many outstanding students at UNC Charlotte, the Honors in Education Program confers formal recognition of excellence to a select few who are among the very highest achievers in all education programs.

Admission Criteria

Admission to the Honors in Education program requires the following:

1. Admission to a teacher education program with a 3.50 or higher cumulative GPA
2. Completion of 30 semester hours of coursework taken prior to application for the Honors in Education Program
3. Completed application form and recommendation by academic advisor and department chair
4. A one page statement explaining:
   a. the student’s academic/career goals in the field of education, and
   b. how the Honors in Education Program is relevant to the student’s academic and/or career interests

Many education students meet the minimal criteria. Before applying to the Honors in Education Program, students should meet with their academic advisors to discuss their interest, motivation, and chances of being successful. After all, it is a good idea to find out if there is a good fit between student interest and program expectations before expending the effort to complete an application. Academic advisors can provide important information about the program.

Program Requirements

To qualify for graduation with Honors in Education recognition, a student must:

1. Be formally admitted to the Honors in Education program by the Honors in Education Committee (Appendix A);
2. Complete EDUC 3789 ((Seminar: Honors in Education) – 3 hours) with a grade of A or B;
3. Select a research advisor;
4. Develop your research project proposal and its accompanying IRB (Institutional Review Board) application if appropriate;
5. Submit the proposal to the Honors in Education Committee, which may approve, amend, or reject the proposal;
6. As soon as possible after proposal is approved, submit IRB application;
7. File for honors candidacy with the Honors in Education Committee and the University Honors Council in accordance with guidelines set by the University Honors Council and the College of Education http://honorscollege.uncc.edu/students/application-candidacy
8. Maintain an overall GPA of 3.5 or higher in all UNC Charlotte coursework;
9. Select 1-2 additional readers for your honors thesis to be approved by your research advisor;
10. Complete EDUC 3790 (Honors Thesis in Education – 3 hours) with a grade of A prior to student teaching;
11. Orally defend the honors thesis before the Thesis Committee (research advisor, thesis reader and any invited guests).

Honors Courses

Students admitted to the Honors in Education Program must complete EDUC 3789 (Seminar: Honors in Education) and EDUC 3790 (Honors Thesis in Education). The Honors Thesis in Education must receive a grade of “A” to qualify for honors at graduation.

Honors Thesis Options

Writing a thesis is a time-consuming and labor-intensive undertaking. Education majors must complete their honors thesis prior to the student teaching semester which includes:
- the oral defense of the thesis has been completed;
- only minor revisions (corrections of editing, grammar, spelling, punctuation) remain to be completed;
- all necessary signatures indicating approval of the final report; and
- the student has submitted the summary paragraph describing their project findings to the University Honors Program by deadline.

Types of Honors Theses

All honors theses involve research. This research should include a literature review which involves synthesis of other researchers’ work on your topic. In addition you should include your own original information, analysis, and conclusions. A written report of a research project must be submitted for the honors thesis.

Ultimately, the thesis proposal must be acceptable to the research advisor and it must be approved by the Honors in Education Committee. Proposals which adhere closely to thesis guidelines are typically easier to approve and complete than proposals which deviate significantly from the guidelines.

1. Research Project

This type of thesis will probably require Human Subjects approval from the university’s IRB (Institutional Review Board). Make sure to work closely with your EDUC 3789 instructor and research advisor if you do this type of thesis. If doing a research project, a student must identify an original question for which data have not already been reported (conduct a literature review). For this option, a student must:
- present a literature review and research question;
- identify your data sources and data collection methods;
- collect data from relevant sources;
• analyze the data;
• interpret the data;
• draw conclusions about the research findings.

2. **Case Study**

Honors students may choose to describe in detail a particular experience within a school setting or a culture that exemplifies a theoretical concept or principle of teaching/learning. Such a project would be a case study. Case studies require honors students to report:

- the theoretical concept or principle to be exemplified
- how data were obtained
- dates, times, and types of contacts (focus groups, interviews, etc.) with participants (teachers, students, etc.)
- manner of obtaining informed consent from individuals
- compliance with IRB regulations
- descriptions of data
- descriptions of generalizations/interpretations/conclusions
- justifications for generalizations (above)

3. **Historical or Archival Research**

Honors students may write a thesis that examines historical sources of data located principally in a library or other archive. Students who take this approach must address the following components:

- research question
- description of data sources (what counts; what does not)
- descriptions of “weight” given to historical, archival data sources
- conclusions and implications (what did you learn?)

4. **Educational Comparisons**

Honors students may propose and carry out a variety of comparisons between educational institutions, countries, districts, or other bodies. This type of thesis MAY require Human Subjects approval from the university’s IRB (Institutional Review Board). Make sure to work closely with your EDUC 3789 instructor and research advisor if you do this type of thesis. Students who participate in international study abroad programs may wish to complete this type of thesis. Theses of this type will contain:

- clear descriptions of each unit to be compared
- description of data to be or already collected
- descriptions of data collection methods
- descriptions of group similarities and differences
- conclusions drawn from analyzing the comparison(s)
5. **Additional Options**

Additional options for demonstrating “exceptional” academic ability are not precluded for an honors thesis. However, if electing a different approach than provided in #1 – 4 above, the responsibility will lie with the student to demonstrate convincingly to the Honors in Education Committee that a different type of honors thesis would:

- reflect your own academic development and be educationally responsible,
- contribute substantially to your own professional knowledge of education, or
- contribute to the development of your career goals in education.

**Selecting a Research Advisor**

The single most important contact for honors students is the research advisor. In the College of Education, you should select a faculty member whose research is as close as possible to your topic of interest. This faculty member may not be your academic advisor. During the EDUC 3789 course, you should contact the individual you want for a research advisor to discuss your project. This faculty member will often be very helpful in identifying an appropriate thesis reader (the second member of your committee), or in some cases, recommending a more suitable research advisor.

The research advisor should collaborate with the honors student to:

- define an appropriate topic
- select relevant literature to read and report
- set clear criteria for progress, expectations, report length and contents
- identify needed resources for the project
- keep the project on schedule (both in doing it and reporting it)
- meet on a regular basis throughout the project
- read and comment on drafts in a timely (not “miracle”) fashion
- assign a grade to the thesis after its completion and after input from the thesis reader.

You must take a proactive stance in meeting with your research advisor to discuss your progress and any problems you’ve encountered. Keep in mind, faculty members agree to work with you because they support your academic development. In some cases, you might end up assisting the faculty member with his/her research. If that occurs, you both benefit. The faculty’s research agenda is advanced and you complete an undergraduate research project at the same time.

The Honors in Education Program requires only two faculty committee members to review/approval your research project. Once you’ve identified your research advisor, talk with him/her to find another faculty member who will be your thesis reader. Ultimately, your research advisor and thesis reader must agree on an “A” for your thesis. If there is a disagreement, you and your research advisor will need to find a qualified third reader to offer additional input.
Selecting a Thesis Reader

Your research advisor can help you select an appropriate thesis reader. The thesis reader may be an honors faculty member or member of the Honors in Education Committee. The thesis reader should be supportive of your project and have sufficient time to read your written drafts and provide feedback.

Honors Thesis Defense

An honors student must orally defend the honors thesis to the research advisor and thesis reader(s). The honors student may also invite additional guests to the thesis defense. The student must consult with the research advisor to schedule an appropriate day, time, and location for the honors defense. Such a defense should be announced to the College and University community with at least 21 days advance notice. Any thesis defense that is rescheduled must also provide a minimum of seven days notice for the new date. This may be done by having the research advisor email the Chair of the Honors in Education Committee with the following information:

- Student name and program
- Thesis title
- Date, time, and location

All thesis defenses are public forums. Once notified of the particulars, the Chair of the Honors in Education Committee will provide public announcement of the thesis defense and an invitation for interested faculty.

Academic Integrity

All conduct in the Honors in Education Program is subject to The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity (Policy Statement 105 http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html). This code forbids all types of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and complicity. All evaluations of student academic work in the honors program assume that student work is free from academic dishonesty of any type (including false reporting and fabrication), and grades will therefore be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. In addition, students who violate the Code can be expelled from UNC Charlotte.

Research advisors should encourage honors students to submit their project report to a plagiarism detection service such as TurnItIn.com to verify originality of their work.

Honors in Education Committee

The Honors in Education Committee is comprised of faculty members elected from each department within the College of Education. In addition, a faculty member from the College of Liberal Arts and Science is elected to serve on the committee as well. This Committee will review each applicant’s materials on an ad hoc basis and notify (1) the student and (2) the department chair of students who have been admitted into the Honors in Education
Program. The purpose of this Committee is to oversee the Honors in Education Program to include:

- Notifying eligible students each semester and inviting them to apply
- Reviewing and approving applications for acceptance into the Program
- Reading and approving honors project proposals
- Recommending instructors and scheduling for EDUC 3789 honors seminar course

**Timelines**

The University Honors College maintains deadlines of importance to honors students across campus [http://honorscollege.uncc.edu/students/important-deadlines](http://honorscollege.uncc.edu/students/important-deadlines).

The Honors in Education Program has additional deadlines [http://education.uncc.edu/honors](http://education.uncc.edu/honors).

Students in the Honors in Education Program are encouraged to submit all forms at least one week before these deadlines.
Appendix A

Application for University of North Carolina Charlotte
College of Education
Honors in Education Program

Name: ___________________________________________ Student ID Number: __________________

Campus Address: ____________________________________________________________

Check the best way to contact you:

☐ Local Phone Number: __________________________
☐ Cell Phone Number: __________________________
☐ E-mail address: ______________________________

Permanent Address: __________________________________________________________

Date Accepted into Teacher Education: ________________________________
Major: ____________________________ Minor: ________________________________
Licensure Area: _____________________________________________________________
Cumulative GPA: _______

Please attach the following:

☐ Unofficial copy of your student transcript (print from Banner)
☐ A well written 1 page statement explaining your current academic and career goals in
the field of education and how the Honors in Education Program is relevant to your
academic and/or career interests.
☐ A brief description of your project/research interests (e.g. Special Populations,
Specific Content Areas)

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Student signature  Date

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Academic Advisor signature  Date
NOTE: Your signature indicates this student has available space to take honors coursework
prior to student teaching.

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Department Chair signature  Date
NOTE: Your signature indicates a positive recommendation for this student.

Submit this form and required attachments to: Chair, Honors in Education Committee

Date Received: ______________