What is Honours?

In Honours, each student does their own research project. Honours projects cover a wide variety of topics and methods, from the ecological sciences, natural resource management, geographic information systems, Indigenous land management, cultural resource management, social sciences and much more. Past students from our School have studied:

- the effects of urban salinity on town buildings,
- fire effects in endangered ecosystems,
- economic valuations of remnant vegetation,
- travel motivations of ‘grey nomads’,
- social implications of Landcare,
- the ecology and conservation of brolgas,
- and many, many more!

The Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management includes the option of Honours in the fourth year (for internal students), or you can come in and do Honours once you have finished another degree (for external students):

- Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management (Honours)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours)

Why study Honours?

There are lots of good reasons to do Honours. An Honours degree gives students a cutting edge when seeking jobs. Many Honours projects are undertaken in collaboration with potential employers, such as state, regional and local government agencies. Honours projects build on the experiences and skills learnt in undergraduate studies, including:

- time management: manage your own research project over an entire year;
- report writing: write your first 80–100 page report – your own Honours thesis;
- information searching: collect information from around the world using new library database technologies;
- fieldwork: learn indispensable field skills in social and ecological projects to gather data for your very own project.

But, perhaps most importantly, Honours gives you the first big chance to 'stretch your legs' on your very own project. Many students remember Honours as one of the most challenging and rewarding years at University

Are there any prerequisites?

Honours is a challenging year, and is best suited to motivated students with good undergraduate marks. Usually, Honours entry requires strong marks in an undergraduate Bachelor degree, from CSU or another University. To be eligible for honours entry, students
normally must have a Credit grade in at least 50% of their Level 2 and 3 subjects, and no failures in Level 2 and 3 subjects. Your undergraduate degree does not have to be finished, but needs to be nearing completion. Most students apply for Honours during their final year of undergraduate study, before they have finished their undergraduate course.

**Can I study part–time or by DE?**

Many Honours projects can be undertaken part–time or by Distance. However, distance students must attend CSU to present their honours seminars and are strongly encouraged to meet with their supervisor on campus. Part–time studies must be completed in two years. Some research projects present practical constraints which make distance or part–time options impractical.

**How do I apply for entry?**

If you are currently finishing your final year of undergraduate study at CSU, you should:

- discuss possible honours projects with lecturers who teach subjects which interest you, and
- ring, phone or email the School’s Honours Coordinators.

If you do not currently study in our School, your first step should be to contact the School Honours Coordinator:

- **Dr Paul Humphries** or Dr Melanie Massaro (Course Coordinator Honours), School of Environmental Sciences, PO Box 789 Albury, NSW, 2640
  Phone (02) 6051 9920, Email: phumphries@csu.edu.au
  Phone (02) 6051 9810, Email: mmassaro@csu.edu.au

After discussing potential projects with supervisors, all prospective honours students must submit a completed 'Application for Admission' form.

Ensure that you have discussed potential projects with lecturers or Honours coordinators before you submit this form, as applications will only be accepted after students have a supervisor willing to supervise them.

**What do Honours Supervisors do?**

Supervisors help students to design and carry out their honours project. Every Honours student has two supervisors, most of whom are lecturers in our School. To ensure that all Honours students receive adequate attention, each staff member is permitted to be the principal supervisor for only two (full–time) honours students at a time.
How do I choose a supervisor?

You choose each other. Honours places are limited by the availability of staff to supervise projects, so you need the agreement of a supervisor to enrol in Honours. There is often strong competition between students for popular supervisors. Generally, students with the strongest undergraduate grades are most likely to be successful.

You should contact potential supervisors as early as possible to discuss your interests and the availability of places. It is worth discussing projects with several staff whose projects might appeal to you. You may decide not to work on a project you have been considering; alternatively, a supervisor may be unable to accept you. This is a normal part of the process of matching students to supervisors and projects.

Can I design my own project?

Sometimes. Many supervisors have a short-list of specific projects which are well suited to honours students, and which they are keen to supervise in coming years. However, the process is flexible, and some students propose their own project ideas. The student and supervisor then convert these ideas into concrete research plans. Supervisors have considerable experience to ensure that projects provide sufficient challenge for honours students, and can also be reliably completed within the tight time constraints.

When should I first enquire about Honours?

You can chat to potential supervisors at any time. However, the best time is from July to September, when staff are planning projects for the following year. Arrange a meeting with potential supervisors or the Honours Coordinator, to discuss the types of project which interest you, and to see what projects are available in the coming year.

What about HECS and Austudy?

Honours is treated as a continuation of an undergraduate degree, and most students are eligible to apply for Youth Assistance or Austudy. All CSU Honours courses are HECS accredited by DETYA.

Can I get a Scholarship?

Scholarships (usually about $4000) are very occasionally available to students who undertake specific Honours projects. This money is usually provided by external organizations (e.g. a government agency) to attract top students to particular projects. Funds go directly to the student, and are not for project expenses. Scholarship holders also receive an award from the
Dean of Science. Scholarships are usually advertised in October or November each year. Talk to your supervisor about this.

**When can I start Honours?**

There are two intakes every year: at the start of first semester (early February) and second semester (mid July). Whilst Honours inquiries are welcome at any time of the year, if you are interested in starting in the middle of the following year, it is best to inquire and enrol in the preceding year, to ensure a place is available for you. Note that some projects, particularly those involving field work, may need to start in second semester, due to seasonal constraints on field work.

**How long does Honours take?**

Honours projects can be undertaken full–time or part–time. Full–time projects take two semesters (about 9 months). Full–time students who start in February usually finish in the following November. Students beginning mid–year, in July, usually finish in the following June. Part–time students have four semesters (i.e. twice as long) to complete their Honours study.

**What do I have to do in Honours?**

Honours students receive an overall grade (e.g. 1st Class Honours, 2nd Class Honours) based on their marks in two Honours subjects:

- a literature review (10%), and
- their research project (90%). This mark is made up of 90% of a written thesis and 10% for a final oral presentation.

In addition, all Honours students must complete a number of activities and one other subject, which provide extra experience and training in research methods and communication skills, including:

- attending an induction meeting on the first day of their Honours;
- preparing an initial project proposal, with their supervisor's help;
- giving two presentations on their project, one near the start and one towards the end of their project;
- attending library training sessions.
- Completing a research methods or statistics subject (this can be a formal subject taught by the university, or – after negotiation with the student’s supervisor – an appropriate alternative subject.)
What is a 'thesis'?  

A thesis (or dissertation) is the major report or assignment which students submit at the end of their Honours year. Theses vary in length, but are often about 60–80 double–spaced pages in length (plus references and appendices), depending on the topic studied.

Who marks my thesis?  

Each Honours theses is marked by two examiners, one from CSU and one from another institution (normally another University). The use of an external examiner ensures that CSU’s Honours grades are rigorously benchmarked against the same standards as students in other universities. The student's supervisor does not mark the thesis.

Which subjects should I enrol in?  

Honours students normally do two subjects:

- Their research project  
  - a selection of: Honours Project/Dissertation HRS408, HRS416, HRS424 and/or HRS432, adding up to 56 points (90%)  
  - a Literature Review based on their thesis topic (10%)  
- ONE of a Research Methods subject (does not contribute to Honours grade):  
  - HRS410 Research Methods shell subject (8 points) determined by Honours coordinator and supervisor;  
  - SCI415 Social Science Research Methods for Natural Resource Management (8 points) for social science students; or  
  - STA404 Statistical Reasoning (8 points) for ecology students.

Note that these subjects add up to 64 points in total (32 in each semester).

The subject codes HRS408, HRS416, HRS424 and HRS432 all represent the same overall project (the thesis), and simply break the year–long thesis into separate subjects for each semester. The last 2 numbers of each code (08, 16, 32 points) denote the number of points each subject is worth.

All variations from these subject choices must be agreed to by your supervisor and the School Honours Coordinator.
Full–time students

A typical enrolment pattern for full–time Honours students is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Subject Code</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>HRS410, STA404 or SCI415</td>
<td>8 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRS424</td>
<td>24 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>HRS432</td>
<td>32 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>64 points</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Part–time students

Part–time students spread the same subject load over four semesters, with 16 points each semester.

Part–time students normally take the literature review and research methods subjects in semester 1 and 2. Both subjects may be studied in semester 1, or one in semester 1 and one in semester 2. The order should be decided with your supervisor.

A typical enrolment pattern for part–time Honours students is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Subject Code</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>HRS416, OR HRS408 and one of HRS410, STA404 or SCI415</td>
<td>16 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRS416</td>
<td>16 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>HRS416, OR HRS408 and one of HRS410, STA404 or SCI415</td>
<td>16 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 3</td>
<td>HRS 416</td>
<td>16 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 4</td>
<td>HRS 416</td>
<td>16 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>64 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you need help with your subject selection, please contact either:

- School Administrative Officer, Frances Baker
  fbaker@csu.edu.au, Phone 605 19833
- School Honours Coordinators, Dr Paul Humphries (phumphries@csu.edu.au, phone 6051 9920) or Dr Melanie Massaro (mmassaro@csu.edu.au, phone 6051 9810).

What should I do now?

If you are interested in studying Honours at CSU, please enquire further. Ring or email or arrange a visit with the Honours Coordinator, and chat with our lecturers.
Honours coordinators:
  - Dr Paul Humphries, email: phumphries@csu.edu.au, Phone (02) 6051 9920
  - Dr Melanie Massaro, email: mmassaro@csu.edu.au, phone (02) 6051 9810