What honors are available to undergraduate students in the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences?
The Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences is part of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the honors requirements are those of the college as well as our department:

- **Cum Laude (Honors)** – Need a minimum of a 3.5 upper division GPA upon graduation (so including your final semester’s grades). There are no additional requirements to graduate cum laude, and it will happen automatically if you have the appropriate GPA upon graduation.

- **Magna Cum Laude (High Honors)** – Need a minimum of 3.75 upper division GPA as well as **successful completion of an honors thesis based on research and meeting all requirements associated with submission of the thesis**.

- **Summa Cum Laude (Highest Honors)** – Need a minimum of 3.85 upper division GPA as well as **successful completion of an honors thesis based on research and meeting all requirements associated with submission of the thesis**.

What is an honors thesis?
For purposes of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, an honors thesis is an original research project that is conducted and written up under the supervision of a faculty mentor within the department. It is a lengthy and time-consuming process, and we recommend that students allow a MINIMUM of one year to complete this project.

There are some advantages to doing an honors thesis. First, it allows you an opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty member. This is especially helpful as you seek letters of recommendation for jobs or graduate programs. If you are considering applying to a graduate
program that involves research, it looks very good on your application to have already conducted research on your own. In fact, completing a thesis looks good on your resume regardless of what you wind up doing next! It is also really good preparation for doing a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation – you will have a much better idea of what to do if you have already gone through the process of doing an honors thesis at the undergraduate level. Finally, successfully completing an honors thesis will help you to get magna or summa cum laude honors (high or highest honors), which also looks good on your resume.

What if my GPA drops below the cut-off, or what if I don’t successfully finish the thesis in time? Unfortunately, even if you successfully complete the thesis requirements you will not graduate with high or highest honors if you do not meet the GPA cut-off upon graduation (including your last semester’s grades). If you do not successfully finish the project, or do not finish it in time for graduation you also will not graduate with high or highest honors, even if you meet the GPA requirements. Given that conducting independent research, even under the guidance of a mentor, is a challenging and very time-consuming process, please make sure that you will have enough time to dedicate to this work and to successfully complete the project. We recommend that you do not attempt an honors thesis if you have less than one year to dedicate to it, and we also recommend that you have enough time in your schedule to actually do the associated work. This means that if you have a heavy class schedule and/or multiple jobs or other extra-curricular activities it might be tough to have the time needed to successfully complete the project. If you think there is a chance that your GPA may drop below the required level, you might want to consider whether you want to pursue a thesis. While it is still good experience to do research regardless of the outcome, if you don’t meet the GPA requirement you will not graduate with high or highest honors.

How do I find a mentor and a thesis idea?
The biggest challenges for students are identifying a faculty mentor for the thesis and figuring out an appropriate research project. If you would like to do an honors thesis, you need to contact Dr. Fogarty, the undergraduate honors coordinator for the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, as soon as possible (see contact information at the end). She can speak to you about current requirements and deadlines, and help you identify faculty members who might
be a good fit for your research interests. Ultimately it is the student’s responsibility to contact and meet with potential mentors, see who is available and interested in working with them, and work with the identified mentor to develop a reasonable research project that could be completed within their time frame. In our department, we have found that most students generally take a MINIMUM of one year from start to finish. It is NOT advisable to start looking for a mentor and topic the semester before you intend to graduate, and unlikely you will be able to complete an acceptable thesis within that time frame. It is also unlikely that you would be able to meet the associated deadlines.

Sometimes professors are engaged in current research studies in which a student can take a piece, or add to it for their honors thesis. There are also professors who already have existing data sets that could be analyzed in different ways. Working with professors on these types of projects is really helpful, because the professor is in a good position to help your research along, and it is more likely that you will be able to finish within the short time frame. There are times when students have independent ideas and are able to go out and conduct their own research, but unless they have special access to a population this could be a difficult type of research project to get done in a short time frame.

Please keep in mind that faculty members are under no obligation to mentor your thesis, and please be considerate of their time. It is important to keep meeting appointment times and complete work by any assigned deadlines. Faculty may discontinue working with you on your thesis if you are inconsiderate or not making adequate progress. Most faculty members will insist on an honors thesis contract, and failure to meet the requirements of the contract may lead to the faculty member terminating the project.

What is the model being used in the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences?
The model we are using in this department is that of an individual faculty member mentoring each thesis, with departmental review of the thesis proposal and final product by a standing committee. There are four faculty members who sit on the committee and one committee chair. Currently the committee consists of Dr. Diehl, Dr. Fogarty, Dr. Forthun, and Dr. Kumaran. The committee must review and approve proposals before research work is done, and comments and
suggestions made should be taken into account when proceeding with the project. The committee must also review and approve the final thesis before it is submitted to the college for review. Please note that IF YOU DO NOT MEET THE DEPARTMENTAL DEADLINES YOUR THESIS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED BY THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE, AND YOU MAY NOT SUBMIT TO THE COLLEGE (CALS) OFFICE! Any comments and suggestions made should be incorporated into the manuscript prior to first submission to the college office. Please note that program coordinator at the college office will likely also have suggestions and comments that must be addressed prior to final submission to him.

What are the deadlines I should be concerned about?
Deadlines change every semester. There are several submission deadlines

- A brief 2-page proposal due to the departmental committee for review approximately 10 days prior to the submission deadline of the college (see proposal deadlines section below).
- The college also requires review of the 2-page proposal once the department approves it (see proposal deadlines section below).
- Your mentor will require a more substantial proposal that will be turned in to your faculty mentor at the same time that the 2-page proposal is due to the college. The more substantial proposal will not be reviewed by the departmental committee, and will not be turned in to the college. It is for the faculty mentor only.
- The fully completed thesis is due to the committee for review no later than mid-way through the semester in which you intend to graduate (this date varies by semester, see schedule below).
- Revised thesis due to the college office for first check (deadline varies each semester)
- Finalized thesis due to the college office (this date is published on UF and CALS websites – see http://cals.ufl.edu/students/honors-thesis.php upcoming dates listed below)

When are proposals due?

- The short departmental proposal MUST be submitted to the committee NO LATER than the cut-off date in order to be reviewed. If you miss the deadline, you will NOT be
allowed to submit an honors thesis. Here is a list of current deadlines as of summer 2014 through spring 2015 (subject to change – please check with the honors coordinator to verify the current deadlines):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation semester</th>
<th>Short proposal (Dept.)</th>
<th>Short proposal (CALS)</th>
<th>Full proposal due to mentor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>April 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>June 13</td>
<td>August 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ONLY proposals that have been developed with a faculty mentor and in final form approved by the faculty mentor will be reviewed by the department. You are NOT allowed to work on a thesis project without a faculty mentor, and the committee will NOT review partial proposals or drafts of proposals, and will not review proposals that faculty mentors have not approved. To ensure this, we will only accept submissions online that are sent through the faculty mentor.

What should the 2-page proposal look like?
This information comes directly from the CALS office, and is the same for all CALS students (please check the website to make sure that all information is current, as things vary slightly from year to year):

**Page limit:** Two pages, single spaced, plus a cover page. The text should be no more than one page, and the second page should include literature citations and optional items such as figures or tables. Include the project title, names and signatures of the student, faculty mentor, and Departmental Honors Coordinator on the cover page.

**Format:** Arrange the text in three parts, using the subheadings listed below. Address the items listed under each section.

1. **Literature review and justification:**
   - Briefly describe the background and overall context of the research, citing references. Point out the gap in the literature that this project will fill.
• Justify that the project includes the original, creative work of the student as informed and
directed by the faculty mentor (i.e., the student is not simply helping a graduate student or
post-doc with his/her research)
• Describe the impact of the research on the scientific discipline, society, or plants, animals
or humans (as the case may be); what is the benefit?

II. Research objective, anticipated results:
• State the objective(s), research question(s), or hypothesis clearly and concisely.
• Describe the anticipated results; the most likely among the possibilities.
• Will the project be worthwhile only if the student finds the anticipated results, or can a
quality thesis be written regardless? What is the backup plan?

III. Methodology, timeline, analysis plan:
• Briefly describe the methods, citing a reference to published protocol if available.
• Provide sufficient detail to give a reader confidence that the student understands what to
do and how to do it.
• Include a timeline, indicating how much time will be devoted to various aspects of the
study (e.g., planning/training, data collection, analysis, writing, etc); is it realistic given
the anticipated graduation date?
• Describe how the data/results will be analyzed, interpreted and presented.

Submission: The 2-page thesis proposals must be submitted to the Departmental Honors
Coordinator BY THE FACULTY MENTOR (no direct submissions from students allowed) via
e-mail by the current deadline (see above for current deadlines). The Departmental Honors
Committee will review the proposal, and provide feedback. You will be expected to make any
needed changes prior to submission to the CALS office. If approved, signatures should be
obtained and it can then be submitted to the CALS Dean’s office (2002 McCarty Hall) for final
approval. The Dean’s office will notify the student, faculty mentor, and Departmental Honors
Coordinator if revisions are required or if the research can proceed as proposed.
What should the full proposal look like?

While the departmental honors committee no longer requires review of a formal, full thesis proposal, we ask that faculty members work individually with students and insure that a full proposal is completed at the time of submission of the brief proposal. The reason for this is that we have found that students need to be this far along in the process by this time period in order for the student to successfully finish the project. However, as a committee we have decided that we no longer need to review the larger proposal, and we trust the advising professor to work individually with the student to create an appropriate proposal. Below is the suggested format, which will help the student in developing the project and final thesis:

- Approximately 7-10 pages in length (a little shorter or longer is fine, just include what is needed)
- Parts that MUST be included:
  - Introduction/background section (around 3-5 pages)
    - Brief literature review
    - Objectives
    - Research questions
    - Hypotheses
    - Expected outcomes
  - Proposed methods and data analysis (around 1-2 pages)
  - Timetable for completing the project, giving dates of completion for each step (1 page)
  - Reference section (sources used in writing the proposal) and bibliography (additional sources you intend to use in the final product) (around 1-2 pages)

What should the final honors thesis include?

- Abstract
- Introduction and literature review
- Research questions/hypotheses
- Methods section (including information on the sample, instruments used, how the research was conducted)
Both the departmental proposal and the final thesis should be written using APA style (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition). There is no page limit to the final thesis – it should be long enough to include all of the needed information.

When is the final thesis due to the committee?
The final thesis is due to the departmental committee for review a few weeks prior to the CALS office deadline for FIRST review. This date changes each semester, but is generally around 2-3 weeks prior to the FINAL submission date. The final submission date is listed on the UF website under “Academic Dates and Deadlines” (https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/Pages/dates-and-deadlines.aspx). Here is a list of previous and upcoming final submission deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation semester</th>
<th>Departmental Deadline</th>
<th>College submission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>July 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>November 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>April 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Failure to meet these deadlines will disqualify the project, and the student will be unable to receive summa or magna cum laude honors that semester. The departmental committee will only review fully completed theses that have been reviewed and approved by the faculty mentor. Please do NOT submit incomplete theses or theses that have not been reviewed and approved by the faculty mentor. In order to insure that the faculty member has read and approved the final thesis, we will only accept submissions through e-mail via the faculty mentor, who must state that the project is in its full and final form. The committee will vote pass/fail, and a majority will rule. There will be no allowances for revisions or second reviews, so if you do not pass the first time, unfortunately you will not be allowed to graduate with summa or magna cum laude honors.
In addition, feedback will be provided regarding any needed changes that should be made prior to submission to the college office.

**How do I submit my 2-page thesis proposal and final thesis to the committee and the college office?**

In the case of the 2-page proposal, please have your faculty mentor submit the finalized version on your behalf to Dr. Fogarty at kfogarty@ufl.edu. If this proposal is approved by the committee, please bring a paper copy, along with signature page cover sheet (see the CALS honors website for the link to the cover sheet: signed by the student and mentor, to Dr. Fogarty (Room 3014D, McCarty Hall D). She will sign off (assuming it has been approved by the committee) and it can be brought to the CALS office.

The final thesis should be sent to Dr. Fogarty in electronic format via e-mail (kfogarty@ufl.edu) by your faculty mentor. She will forward your manuscript to committee members, and provide you with feedback from the committee after they have reviewed it. If your thesis passes, you will likely still need to make some changes to your thesis before submitting it to the college office. The college office has its own procedure for receiving submissions which vary from year to year, so please refer to the website for more information.

http://cals.ufl.edu/students/honors-thesis.php
http://cals.ufl.edu/students/honors-resources.php

**What other deadlines do I need to be aware of?**

- In addition to doing an honors thesis through the department, if you are also part of the CALS Honors Program (which is a separate program to which you must apply and be accepted) you will have separate requirements that you must meet for this program. See the CALS Honors website for more information about requirements and deadlines. As part of this program you will complete an honors thesis, and the coursework involved in the program will help you along as you work on your thesis. However, you may still complete an honors thesis and graduate with magna or summa cum laude even if you are not part of the CALS Honors Program.
• If you are conducting research with human subjects, please note that your project will need to have approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Your faculty mentor will work with you to create a submission to the IRB if one does not already exist for the project, and talk to you about submission deadlines.

• If you are interested in trying to get funding to support your research (approximately $1750), you may wish to submit a proposal to the University Scholars program, which has separate deadlines. Usually you apply for this program in the spring of your junior year, so you must start the research process early in order to apply for this program. Note that you may apply for this funding even if your research is not an honors thesis. For more information go to the website: http://www.scholars.ufl.edu/

What is the contact information for the undergraduate honors coordinator?
Dr. Kate Fogarty
Room 3014D, McCarty Hall D
(352) 273-3527
kfogarty@ufl.edu