



STEP-BY-STEP THESIS GUIDE #3: SELECTING YOUR THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRIMARY THESIS ADVISOR

A student usually identifies a Primary Thesis Advisor a year before the planned defense (that is, before registering for our required **HC 477H: Thesis Prospectus** class, which students take at least two terms before their planned defenses). We recommend that you email a letter of introduction (include your Major and UO ID) and make an appointment with the faculty member you would like to work with on your thesis (try to schedule your appointment during the faculty member's regularly-scheduled office hours). Take the time to introduce yourself, your topic, and invite the faculty member to be your Primary Thesis Advisor.

The Primary Thesis Advisor of a Clark Honors College senior thesis is a faculty member in the major (or affiliated with the major for interdisciplinary programs such as International Studies), and ***must be a tenure-related or career non-tenure-track faculty member of the University of Oregon who is a specialist in your field of study.*** *If you have any questions about whether a faculty member falls into the categories above, please contact your CHC advisor. A faculty member listed on the UO website as an "Assistant Professor," "Associate Professor," or "Professor," is usually eligible to serve as your primary advisor.* Graduate students cannot serve as Primary Thesis Advisors. Faculty determine their own criteria when deciding whether to accept a CHC student's request to serve as Primary Thesis Advisor.

The Primary Thesis Advisor helps shape the student's thesis project and directs it from inception through the required oral defense. The Primary Thesis Advisor suggests initial and advanced research materials, meets regularly with the student, discusses and evaluates student progress, responds to multiple drafts, and attends both the required **HC 477H: Thesis Prospectus** class presentation and the hour-long oral thesis defense. The Primary Thesis Advisor also guarantees that the student's work meets the field's disciplinary standards.

The three-person committee—Primary Thesis Advisor, Second Reader, and CHC Representative—adjudicates the thesis immediately following the defense: Pass with Distinction, Pass with Honors, Pass, Fail, or if a decision should be withheld pending revisions. The Primary Thesis Advisor may preside over the oral defense or may request that the CHC Representative do so. The Primary Thesis Advisor assumes responsibility for revisions that the committee deems necessary following the defense.

CHC REPRESENTATIVE

A student will choose the CHC Representative. Students are expected to invite a CHC Representative to join their Thesis Committee while they are taking HC 477H: Thesis Prospectus, and then to

confirm the CHC Representative's participation in the committee by the end of Week 9 of the HC 477H term. The student then notifies the CHC Academic and Thesis Programs Manager Miriam Jordan at mjordan@uoregon.edu, so that this information is updated in the students' records. A list of CHC faculty who are currently available to serve as CHC thesis representative during a given academic year can be found in [Canvas](#), under "Step 3: The Thesis Committee" in the CHC Representative job description.

Students are requested to send an email letter of introduction (include your student ID) to the CHC faculty member of their choosing, and/or to meet with the faculty member in person during office hours. In both cases, the student should describe their thesis, explain their thesis timeline, and respectfully ask for the faculty member's participation on their thesis committee. Students are encouraged (but not required) to select a CHC faculty member who is fairly removed from their field of study.

The CHC Representative treats process-related questions and communicates with the Primary Thesis Advisor, Second Reader, and student about the overall thesis process, time-management issues, deadlines, defense scheduling, and evaluation criteria. The CHC Representative reads the Thesis Draft and brings to the Thesis Committee's adjudication the standards of the Clark Honors College.

When a CHC faculty member agrees to be the student's CHC Representative, **the student must notify the Academic and Thesis Programs Manager**, who will update the student file. The student will then receive notification on the next steps in the thesis process.

SECOND READER

Selected in consultation with the Primary Thesis Advisor, the Second Reader is an expert in a field directly or closely related to the thesis project: s/he can be a tenured, tenure-related, or non-tenure-track UO faculty member, a post-doctoral or graduate teaching fellow, or a professional in the field with a Bachelor's Degree in that field. The student may identify the Second Reader as early as desired but no later than the term before the defense term. Once you have identified your second reader, please notify Miriam Jordan, the Academic and Thesis Programs Manager in the CHC, via email (mjordan@uoregon.edu).

At the very least, the Second Reader reads the Defense Draft of the thesis and attends the oral defense. But the Second Reader has a flexible role in the thesis process: s/he may read and respond to multiple drafts as deemed appropriate by the Primary Thesis Advisor. The Second Reader participates in the oral defense and, with the two other committee members, determines the thesis's adjudication (see above).

THIRD READER (ONLY IF NECESSARY)

On rare occasions, a Clark Honors College faculty member will serve as Primary Thesis Advisor. In this instance, an additional CHC Representative is not necessary. However, students still need three members serving on a Thesis Defense Committee. Therefore, students in this situation will need to

identify a Third Reader. The job description for the Third Reader would be similar to the Second Reader (can be a tenured, tenure-related, or non-tenure-track UO faculty member, a post-doctoral or graduate teaching fellow, or a professional in the field with a Bachelor's Degree in that field).