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Streamlining the Format Review Process: Best Practices and Lessons Learned

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Streamlining the Format Review Process

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

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Image sources: <https://www.sentencechecker.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/online-thesis-checking-tool.jpg>

Honors Undergraduate Theses At a Glance

- Honors Undergraduate Theses (previously Honors in the Major) began in 1989
- Modelled after Masters Theses
- Over 2700 completed
- Went electronic in 2011
 - Will scan print works with consent of alumni
- Almost 600,000 downloads since July 2015
 - Migrated all records into [STARS](#)

Honors Undergraduate Theses Format Review Process 2015 and earlier

In-person appointments with outside reviewer
Met with students individually

Later moved to review via email

After final approval, students uploaded to a library server

Honors Undergraduate Theses Format Review Process

Late-2014

- UCF Libraries received funding for Digital Commons
 - Part of bepress
 - 600 institutions world-wide
 - Includes peer-review tools

Mid-2015

- [STARS](#) debuted
- Migration of all legacy HUTs to STARS
 - Including metadata-only records for print-only works

Honors Undergraduate Theses Format Review Process 2016 through Summer 2018

Students complete and receive approval for their thesis from their advisors and the Honors College

- Students submit their approved version to STARS
- Digital Projects Librarian posts them at the end of each semester, including managing embargoes and campus-only releases when needed

This process continued through Summer 2018

Honors Undergraduate Theses Format Review Process Summer 2018

Office of Honors Research (OHR), UCF Libraries, and Thesis Editor began exploring using the peer review capabilities of STARS for format review

- Using a modified version of [“Caterpillar”](#) workflow
- Customized text of decision letters
 - More appropriate for UCF’s process
- Tweaked metadata fields for student submission
 - Specifically making certain fields required
- Created instructions for initial upload for format review and final revisions

Honors Undergraduate Format Review Process Fall 2018

First semester of new process!

Problems/Challenges we encountered

- Students did second submission instead of revising original
- Could only do plain text edits to decision letters
- Forgot to include the link to website on original instructions (oops)
- Some students still waited until the very last minute to submit/revise

Honors Undergraduate Theses Format Review Process

Spring 2019

Continued to edit and tweak process

- Made further edits to decision letters
- Revised instructions based on questions from students
- Reviewed metadata and instructions for each field
- New feature rolled out that allowed submissions to automatically lock

Honors Undergraduate Theses Format Review Process Summer & Fall 2019

Made additional edits to instructions for students

Format review process went well, and no edits were made to decision letters



Instructions for Students

Uploading Your Honors Undergraduate Thesis to STARS

Congratulations on reaching the Format Review process for your Honors Undergraduate Thesis! Your next step is submission to STARS, UCF's institutional repository.

First, you will need to create an account in STARS. We suggest using the "[How to Create an Account in STARS](#)" guide to help with this process.

Next, you will want to review your dissemination (access) options of who you want to be able to view your thesis and when. Dissemination defines the availability of an Honors Undergraduate Thesis to both the academic community and the general public. Use the following explanations in conjunction with advisement by your faculty adviser about publishing within a particular discipline to choose the best dissemination (release) option for your thesis:

1. Immediate worldwide access with no restrictions.
2. Dissemination with limited access to the UCF community for a period of 1, 3, or 5 years. Worldwide access after that period.
3. Pending dissemination of the entire work for six months for patent or other proprietary issues, with an additional six months extension available. Once the patent and proprietary issues are resolved, we recommend immediate worldwide access with no restrictions.
4. Pending dissemination of the entire work for six months for patent or other proprietary issues, with an additional six months extension available. Once the patent and proprietary issues are resolved, dissemination with limited access to the UCF community for a period of 1, 3, or 5 years

Next, you can upload your thesis for format review. At this point, you may include draft information on the submission form, however, the more you complete now, the less you will need to complete when you submit your final thesis.

REQUIRED FIELDS ARE IN RED

- Your thesis title**
- Keywords that help identify or describe your thesis
- The abstract in text format**
- Thesis completion year and semester**
- The name of your thesis chair(s) or advisor(s)**
- The degree you are earning (e.g. Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering (B.S.Env.E.), etc.) and from which College**
- Department and Degree Program
- The dissemination option you have chosen**
- Your thesis prepared for format review SAVED AS A WORD DOCUMENT. It can be uploaded from your computer or flash drive, or imported from the cloud**
- Any additional files you wish to include

All submissions are locked automatically upon receipt—any necessary revisions can be made during Final Revision. Any additional submissions will be deleted. After your thesis has been reviewed by the Thesis Editor, you will receive notification explaining the next steps you should take.

Any questions about your work, your account, or STARS in general, may be sent to STARS@ucf.edu



Customized text of decision letters

I have reviewed your thesis and require the following corrections:

[FOLLOWED BY A NUMBERED LIST OF REVISIONS]

Pending the above changes, the format of your thesis is approved; I do not need to see a revised draft. Congratulations!

Once you have made these changes, you will be able to upload the final version of your thesis during the Final Revision period, which open 5 days before the submission deadline.

I have reviewed your thesis and require the following corrections:

[FOLLOWED BY A NUMBERED LIST OF REVISIONS]

After you've completed the above changes, submit your thesis to me by email at _____ by [DATE] for a second review.

I've reviewed your thesis and found that it doesn't follow the guidelines as written in the Honors in the Major handbook. Please review those guidelines (and the model) carefully and resubmit your thesis to me by email at _____ for a second review by [DATE].



Final Revisions Instructions

Submitting your Revised, Final thesis for publication:

Please review the submission instructions and verify that all information is filled out correctly and completely, otherwise your submission will be considered incomplete and may not be accepted.

Any questions about your work, your account, or STARS in general, may be sent to STARS@ucf.edu.

1. Log in to your STARS account, then click on the title of your thesis.

The screenshot shows the 'My Account' page for Sally HSM Student. The 'ARTICLES' section contains the following table:

TITLE	STATUS
TAMU0001	under review

The 'Revise Thesis' button is located in the top right corner of the article entry area.

2. Click Revise thesis

This will take you to the original submission page. From here you can edit or add any fields necessary. Verify that all information is fill out correctly and completely, otherwise your submission will be considered incomplete and may not be accepted.

3. Please ensure you have filled out ALL of the fields and verify the data you have entered is correct. CHANGES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER REVISION.

REQUIRED FIELDS ARE IN RED

- Your thesis title
- Keywords that help identify or describe your thesis
- The abstract in text format
- Thesis completion year and semester
- The name of your thesis chair(s) or advisor(s)
- The degree you are earning (e.g. i.e. Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering (B.S.Env.E.), etc.) and from which College
- Department and Degree Program
- The dissemination option you have chosen
- Your thesis prepared for format review SAVED AS A PDF. It can be uploaded from your computer or flash drive, or imported from the cloud
- Any additional files you wish to include

Remember to upload the final, defended, approved version of your thesis as a PDF document.

Honors Undergraduate Theses Format Review Process Spring and Summer 2020

COVID-19 and Remote Learning

- Because we had already moved the format review process online, this piece of publishing the HUTs was relatively seamless

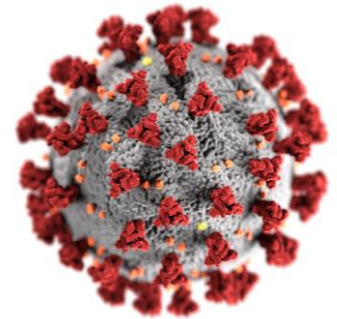


Image from CDC's Public Health Image Library (PHIL), Content providers: CDC/Alissa Eckert, MSMI; Dan Higgins, MAMS;
Image ID 23312, <https://phil.cdc.gov/Details.aspx?pid=23312>

Advantages to Online Format Review

- **Time-saving:** Eliminated the need for in-person appointments and/or email review
- **Efficiency:** Pre-populated responses for format reviewer
 - Still able to add details as needed for each student
- **Smoother process:** Students set up account and become familiar with STARS before final revisions are due
 - Reduced the number of panicked calls and emails right before final deadline
- **Tracking:** OHR could instantly identify where student stood in the process



**KEEP
CALM
IT'S
JUST A
THESIS**

Image sources: <https://keepcalms.com/p/keep-calm-its-just-a-thesis/>



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Questions?

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