

Applied Clinical Honors Thesis Project

The University and School of Nursing (SON) are committed to applied clinical scholarship. Applied clinical scholars determine effective best practices, improve patient care, and can rapidly respond to changes in the healthcare environment, patient populations, and government regulations. Nurses are critical to the application of research findings through diverse roles rife with clinical, ethical, and regulatory challenges. UConn SON Honors students have an opportunity to develop an Applied Clinical Honors Thesis Project inquiry under the mentorship of a nurse scholar toward the completion of an Honors degree and Honors thesis (can be a project/presentation or written document).

As a member of the University of Connecticut Honors Program students will actively participate in academics and co-curricular activities. Students must comply with the Honors Program requirements according to their year of entry into the University of Connecticut. <https://honors.uconn.edu/requirements/>

To ensure Honors nursing students deliver a rigorous clinical project and quality Honors Thesis, while meeting the Honors Program Requirements, the Applied Clinical Program Honors Thesis option would include five sequential parts (Part I – Part V). Ideally, Honors nursing students would select the Applied Clinical Honors option as early as possible in their nursing curriculum, preferably no later than second semester of the sophomore year. Students must opt in by the start of the fall semester of their junior year. The timeline is established to provide nursing Honors students with ample time to explore scholarly goals and interests and to participate in meaningful scholarly activities, while gaining valuable experience alongside a mentor or mentors.

Students in the Applied Clinical Honors Track are required to take selected nursing courses in specific semesters designated as or converted to Honors as negotiated with their Honors Thesis Advisor.

Part I: Honors Project Proposal Application to Applied Clinical Honors Track (Executive Summary)

Honors work is an intellectual process, starting with an inquiry or question. Prospective Honors students are encouraged to peruse faculty webpages to learn about faculty clinical interests in the School of Nursing. Another resource for research ideas is the Healthy People 2030 website (<https://health.gov/healthypeople>) where students can identify data-driven objectives that are already in place to improve health and well-being of our population. Students may also identify a clinical issue they are eager to address through their experience in clinical, didactic course work, or experience. Once a student has a topic in mind, they can then reach out to a potential Honors Thesis Advisor to address the health priority of interest.

To be considered for the Applied Clinical Honors option, Honors nursing students would then prepare a one-page executive summary about the clinical issue they intend to study. Ideally the application process would occur in the second semester sophomore year. Co-requisite: NURS 3120 Health Assessment through the Lifespan.

There are a variety of clinical questions and project types open to Honors students selecting this option. While group projects may be conducted, each student must turn in an individual Applied Clinical Honors Project.

Part II: Nursing Clinical Project Proposal and Project Development

The advancement of the Applied Clinical Honors Thesis project proposal is an iterative process. Honors nursing students first must request clinical project topic approval from the designated Honors Thesis Advisor and School of Nursing Honors Director/Committee. For Part II, the Honors nursing student will complete the listed student activities.

Student Activities:

1. Engage in seminar/workshop/tutorial on the University of Connecticut Library Services including how to use databases to find current evidence and empirical data, and bibliographical databases, such as RefWorks.
2. Complete Honors course listed on preliminary plan of study to further advance understanding of the area of interest.
3. Complete an independent and/or guided review of literature and applicable resources about selected clinical topic.
4. Prepare a written document inclusive of the Review of Literature and Statement of Needs Sections to address these and other questions as appropriate.
 - a) What is the issue or question being addressed and why does it matter?
 - b) Why is the project being proposed necessary?
 - c) Who benefits from the project? What are the local and broad implications of the project?
 - d) Why has not this issue been addressed sufficiently in the past? Who else is working in this field, what have they done, and why is not that enough? Demonstrate your knowledge of the field.
 - e) What is your suggestion on *how* to address the issue?

Student Engagement:

1. Complete a student engagement requisite as appropriate as per plan of study
2. Investigate and consider feasibility of summer project support.

The Honors nursing student will complete Part II by end of first semester Junior year.

Part III: Description of the Clinical Project Development

After completing the literature review/needs assessment, and with agreement of their Honors Thesis Advisor, Honors nursing students will further advance the project based on the current evidence and type of project (e.g., quality improvement, educational, or implementing new intervention).

Student Activities:

1. Prepare a written document in the format of a foundation grant proposal inclusive of the project goals and objectives, methodology to address these and (and other questions) as appropriate.
 - a. How will this clinical scholarship build on existing evidence-based research?
 - b. What method(s) will be used to address the project needs?
 - c. What are the anticipated timelines and milestones of achievement?
2. Complete Honors course listed on plan of study to further advance understanding of the area of interest.

Student Engagement:

1. Participate in nursing service activities related to topic area.
2. Seek opportunities to engage with experts in the topic area.
3. Attend and review seminars as per engagement requirements of plan of study.

The Honors nursing student will complete Part III by end of second semester Junior year.

Part IV: Clinical Project Implementation

Nursing students will continue to refine the project design, propose an assessment method for project success, and implement the project. The Honors nursing student will complete Part IV by end of first semester Senior year.

Student Activities:

1. Prepare a written proposal for project assessment, outcome deliverables, and distribution of results.
 - a. How will you measure the success of the clinical project?
 - b. What outcomes might be delivered from the clinical project?
 - c. How and where might the project results be distributed?
 - d. What is the overall impact of the project on constituents and stakeholders?

2. Complete Honors course listed on plan of study to further advance understanding of the area of interest

Student Engagement:

1. Present project at Honors Frontiers in Research
2. Continue or commence nursing service activities relative to the clinical project topic area
3. Attend and review seminars as per engagement requirements of plan of study

Part V: Completion of Project

This part is the culmination of the Applied Clinical Honors project where students present the final project results and submit a written thesis in the second semester senior year. Final project results may be an oral and poster presentation, educational activity, or other as dependent on the specific project design.

Student Activities:

1. Students will take Nursing Honors Thesis NURS 4597W course. The objective is that the student will write a comprehensive and meritorious thesis using skills of critical and analytical thinking, and scholarly writing. The thesis may be inclusive of material from chapters or sections of Part I, II and/or III with editing for quality and content under the advisement of the Honors Thesis Advisor. The course will help to prepare the student for graduate school or can be used to demonstrate to future employers the comprehensive, rigorous requirements of the Honors educational experience.
2. Complete any remaining Honors courses listed on plan of study
3. Submit requisite documents and forms within established timelines to the UConn Honors office.
4. Present the final project at the SON Honors Celebration following the University Honors Medal Ceremony (weekend before graduation).

Student Engagement:

1. Continue or commence nursing service activities relative to the clinical project topic area.
2. Attend and review seminars as per engagement requirements of plan of study.

Appendix A
Applied Clinical Honors Plan of Study

- *NURS courses in the chart are now available to Honors students by instructor permission as “honors conversions”*
- *NURS 3100, 3120, 3220, 4597W (plus 4299) are proposed to be the courses all honors students in this track would complete. These classes may be suitable for C&C revision for an Honors designation. Honors “courses” are flexible in delivery formatting, e.g., NURS 3100 instructor may meet simultaneously with all students, but has an added 1-hour discussion, or bi-weekly meetings etc. for the Honors project associated with the class*
- *If there is a late transfer to the nursing program, the Honors committee in conjunction with the student’s Honors advisor will review and allocate an appropriate applied clinical course fulfillment options.*

		Honors Credit Information (Must be at least 15 Honors credits in the major or related)					
		Subject	Catalog #	Term	Year	Credits	
2000-level or above	NURS	3100 Clinical Science 1	1 ST	SOPHOMORE	3	12	
2000-level or above	NURS	3120 Health Assessment through the Lifespan	2 ND	SOPHOMORE	3		
2000-level or above	NURS	3220 Clinical Science Subacute/chronic	1ST	JUNIOR	3		
Thesis / Project Course 2000-level or above	NURS	4597W	2 nd	SENIOR	3		
2000-level or above	NURS	4299 – Independent study Project proposal	2ND	ALL YEARS	1-3	4-6*	

Other Requirements	Engagement in the Major	Demonstrated engagement in the major field as agreed upon by the student and their Honors academic advisor.	Presentation at Fall Frontiers in Honors Poster Session – Fall Senior Year Participate in one SON or UConn Honors Recruitment event Participate in nursing service activities related to topic area Attend and Review (6) pre-approved relevant Scholarly seminars
	Honors Thesis/Project	Submission of approved Honors thesis/project. (Submitted in hardcopy to the Honors Program office with a signed Honors thesis approval form.)	
	GPA	Cumulative GPA of at least a 3.400	

- Students may take more credits of 4299 Independent Study, but must take 4 credits (each semester spring sophomore, fall and spring junior and fall senior years) with up to 6 being counted in honors plan of study.

Appendix B

Activity	Examples
Activity/Projects	<p>Engage with an educator or clinical faculty member at the hospital to do chart audits.</p> <p>Develop educational program or module that addresses the gaps in care</p> <p>OB audit of the treatment of severe range BPs in preeclampsia</p> <p>Psychopharmacology and polypharmacy with patients presenting with co-morbidities</p> <p>SDOH impact on healthcare access for patients with mental illness and an incarceration experience.</p>
Review of Hospital Protocols	<p>Compare and contrast protocols against current literature supporting EBP. Are policies based on current evidence? Are policies effective?</p> <p>Chart audits to identify, analyze, and report gaps in care - do they need to solve or propose new approach? by developing an educational program or module that addresses the gaps in care?</p> <p>Do gaps in care exist in the health care facility in which I practice?</p> <p>Do gaps in knowledge or practice exist in a nurse training program?</p>

	<p>Is there a gap between the evidence-based practice (EBP) recommendations and an application to improve patient care and/or population health leading to poor health outcomes?</p> <p>What are the benefits and harms of alternative accepted methods to prevent, diagnose, treat and/or monitor a clinical condition, or to improve the delivery of patient care?</p>
<p>Informatics</p>	<p>Does the data captured on the IT system sufficient to address assessments for all specialty areas? What data is missing that impacts patient outcomes?</p> <p>What data is collected, is it valid, significant, does it have utility, impact patient outcomes? Is the data easily interpreted by providers and patients? Can the data be transferred, but kept confidential? Is the program amenable to protocol changes?</p>
<p>Quality Improvement</p>	<p>Patient-centered issues that negatively impact patient outcomes</p> <p>Systems QI projects – what are the working conditions that can affect the delivery of nursing care (pandemic, mental health issues of nurses, loss of workforce)?</p>

	<p>What are the strengths, limitations, overarching intent of a procedure, simulation, equipment, educational module?</p> <p>What are the working conditions that can affect the delivery of nursing care, impact the education of the workforce?</p>
Simulation	Create and validate a clinical nursing simulation activity that addresses a clinical problem that includes theory and research.
Community Health	<p>Evaluate a clinical patient or health issue or outcome within the context of a community's strengths and weaknesses (based on the Social Determinants of Health)</p> <p>What patient or health issues or outcomes exist within the context of a community's strengths and weaknesses based on the Social Determinants of Health?</p> <p>Qualitative research about a clinical phenomenon of interest (How or why research questions)</p>
Case Study Project	Identify a phenomenon of interest for the case study design. Define, design, and conduct a single or multiple case study project with 1-3 participants or from multiple cases from the literature