

**COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Professional Veterinary Medical Program
Honors Project Guidelines**

Objectives, Workload Expectations, and Evaluation Criteria

I. Background

The faculty of the CVMBS believes it is desirable to cultivate students with outstanding scholarly potential and to promote their interest in resident and post-DVM graduate training programs so they will be positioned to meet the scholarly challenges of the profession and replenish the academic ranks. To this end, the Honors program was established to provide opportunities for PVM students to pursue scholarly efforts that exceed the core requirements in their courses. The "H" grade may be assigned for outstanding performance in a course at the option of the course coordinator and faculty of the course, using written criteria presented to the students *at the beginning of the course*. Special assignments required for attaining an "H" grade must be completed during the regularly scheduled semester in which the course is given. The grades of "I" and "S" cannot be converted to an "H" grade more than 30 days after the final day of the semester, except by approval from the Scholastic Standards Committee. Faculty in some courses may elect to NOT offer the option of Honors.

II. Objectives

The criteria for an "H" grade should be rigorous, require substantial additional work, and be designed to identify students with outstanding intellectual curiosity, problem-solving abilities, critical and creative thinking skills, and a desire for sustained, self-directed scholarship. Honors criteria are expected to require that a student demonstrate achievement in several of the desirable characteristics of a veterinary graduate listed in Section VI.

III. Workload Expectations

An "H" grade may be assigned for students who fulfill scholarly requirements or assignments in addition to those required for an "S" grade (the general guideline for a "S" grade is a course score of 70% or better that is considered to be equivalent to a C grade or better). It is expected that Honors projects will require at least 10 additional hours of work for each course credit hour, or a total of 40 hours of work, whichever is less.

IV. Example Projects

It is highly desirable that Honors assignments be in the form of successful completion of one or more of the following examples: literature research paper, oral presentation, special project, group activity, authoring a manuscript for publication, retrospective or prospective clinical case studies, scientific data collection and analysis, de novo design of instructional modules using material models or computer-based instruction, or other activities that faculty consider relevant to the course and PVM curriculum or to outreach for continuing or client education. Some elective courses with limited enrollment may receive approval to be designated as Honors courses. If approved, faculty teaching these courses have the option of giving an "H" grade to all students who successfully complete the requirements of the course. Faculty teaching these elective courses must identify how they require students to demonstrate several of the desirable characteristics listed in Section VI.

V. Evaluation Criteria

New Honors projects *must* undergo review by the PVM Curriculum Committee *prior to implementation*. Proposals may be brief, one-page documents that succinctly outline items identified in each of the major sections (I through VI) of this document as important components of Honors projects. Longer proposal documents are permissible when needed to fully explain projects with more complex objectives or evaluation criteria. Proposals should be submitted to the Associate Dean for the Professional Veterinary Medical Program (AD-PVM) for review by the PVM Curriculum Committee, *preferably before the beginning of the semester* in which the project will be conducted. Proposals must be submitted *no later than the end of the third week of the semester* in which the project will be conducted, in order to provide adequate time for review by course instructors and the PVM Curriculum Committee, and for completion of the project. Submission may be made by individual students or groups of students desiring approval for a unique project, with the approval of a faculty mentor. Course coordinators may also submit proposals in order to establish global criteria for a course or a group project without enrollment limitations within a course.

Criteria used by the PVM Curriculum Committee to evaluate the prospective merit of an Honors project proposal will be the same as those that should be used by the course coordinator or faculty mentor(s) to evaluate student performance in the project when conducted. Criteria used to evaluate a student's performance in conducting an Honors project should include objective assessment of the time and workload committed to its completion, including time spent in consultation with the faculty mentor(s) or working with other students, the academic or scientific quality of the final result, and the professionalism displayed in the product resulting from those efforts. Written products should adhere to manuscript guidelines for a professional journal, and submission for publication should be encouraged wherever possible. Oral presentations may be assessed using a peer evaluation system by students participating in the Honors project or in the course for which it was completed. However, the evaluation criteria should be well-defined, and must also include validation by instructor(s) assessment.

VI. Desirable Characteristics of a Veterinary Graduate to Enhance through Honors Assignments

1. Skill in oral and written communication.
2. Integrated general understanding of the world, its cultures and people.
3. In-depth/advanced understanding of the concepts and principles of the biological sciences.
4. In-depth/advanced knowledge base of veterinary medical science and comparative biomedicine as described in the curriculum requirements.
5. Essentials of scientific and professional behavior to include thoroughness, reliability, efficiency, and critical analysis.
6. Possess problem solving and critical thinking skills.
7. Experience in scientific investigation and scientific processes.
8. Skills in finding and using information and the management of information.
9. Skills and desire for sustained scholarship and lifelong commitment to learning and professional development.
10. Commitment to betterment of humanity and improvement of one's community, society, and the profession.
11. Business and management skills including management of one's personal affairs.
12. Compassion for people, animals, and a reverence for life.
13. Personal integrity and high ethical standards.

Modified from the PNVEP report, *Future Directions for Veterinary Medicine*.