

Distinguished Independent Study in Biochemistry

If your advisor thinks that you have enough results to write an honors thesis, you must adhere to the following timeline:

The semester before you graduate:

1. Early in the semester, discuss your wish to complete an honors thesis with your research advisor. S/he must agree that you have accomplished enough to merit an honors thesis. S/he must agree to mentor you through the remainder of your research, the writing of your thesis, and the defense of your thesis.
2. By mid-semester, you must submit a thesis proposal to the assistant to the director of the biochemistry program (bubchem@binghamton.edu). This proposal should be 4-8 pages long. It should contain background on your project and provide evidence that you have accomplished enough in your research for an honors thesis. Include data and figures to support your proposal. You are not expected to have completed your experiments at the time you submit the proposal, but it should be evident from the proposal that what experiments remain can reasonably be accomplished in the remaining time. Include an interpretation of the results you have thus far and details about what experiments remain. The deadline for the submission of this proposal is **November 1st** for May graduates, and **March 1st** for December graduates. The director of the biochemistry program will then submit your proposal to the University Biochemistry Committee.
3. Form the committee of professors that will evaluate your thesis. Your committee will consist of three professors: your advisor, one professor chosen by the University Biochemistry Committee, and a third professor that you and your advisor choose. The third professor may be anyone from the biology or chemistry department, although you should choose someone who is generally familiar with the subject matter of your research. Be sure to ask that professor if they are willing to sit on your committee before you submit their name.

The semester that you graduate:

1. Finish your experiments.
2. By March 1st for May graduates, or October 1st for December graduates, have the assistant to the director (bubchem@binghamton.edu) file the Departmental Honors Form with the Dean's office. Included in this form is the title of your thesis, as it will appear in the graduation ceremony booklet. By this point, your advisor should be very sure that you will complete the thesis on time.
3. Write your thesis. The format should be generally the same as Master's and Doctoral theses. You can consult either your faculty research advisor or the Director of Biochemistry for details and examples. Be sure to leave ample time to write your thesis, because it is a time-consuming process. The time it takes to write and polish the thesis is

often underestimated by students. Your thesis should be complete to your advisor's satisfaction one month before the last day of classes.

4. Two weeks before your defense, submit your thesis to your committee members.
5. Two weeks prior to the last day of classes, hold the oral defense of your thesis. This is typically a 30 minute powerpoint presentation that is open to the public. After the presentation, there will be a closed-door defense of the thesis. Unless drastic revisions are demanded by the thesis committee, your advisor should notify the biochemistry department of your successful defense.
6. Make revisions to your thesis as recommended by your committee. This also can be a time-consuming process.
7. Submit your final thesis and at least four copies to the Circulation Desk at Bartle Library for binding. The original and one copy will go to the library. One copy will go to the biochemistry department, and one to your advisor. The last copy is yours. Since the copy that will be used the most is the one that goes to the department and to your advisor, the images on those copies should be as good as the original.