

How to Get Going on Your Independent Honors Research Thesis

Writing an honors thesis is rewarding because it allows you to explore a topic in ways that are not normally possible in structured courses. You choose your research questions, your data sources, and your analytical approach. Your thesis is “yours” and this is very exciting. At the same time, doing a thesis is a lot of work and you need to be self-motivated. Starting early, finding an advisor to work with, and devoting sufficient time each week to work on your thesis is critical.

Choosing an Honors Thesis Advisor. In your junior year, you should identify an advisor. Ideally, your advisor will be a marketing professor or someone from a related field such as psychology or economics with whom you have already taken a course. Ideally, you want a faculty member who is an active researcher to help you refine your research questions and choose appropriate methods to address these questions. The Marketing Department honors advisor can help you identify potential thesis advisors, but you will need to convince a specific faculty member to be your thesis advisor. Before you approach a faculty member to be your thesis advisor, you should have a clear idea about the types of questions and topics you would like to pursue. Once a faculty member has agreed to serve as your thesis advisor, you and the faculty member can work to finalize your research domain and research topic.

Choosing an Honors Thesis Topic. Ideas for your honors research work and thesis might come from things you observe in the market, articles you have read, topics discussed in class, or from research articles in top journals in marketing, economics, psychology or other fields that can provide insights into consumer and firm behavior. The top journals in marketing are the *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, and *Marketing Science*. Before meeting with potential thesis advisors, put together a one-page document on up to three research topics. The one-page document should include: the focal research question; why that question is interesting to you, literature streams that may be relevant; a proposed methodology, and potential contributions of working on this topic.