

HONOURS PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2022

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1. Introduction

A degree with Honours demonstrates a superior level of academic achievement and specialised research skills as a result of completing a thesis. It may be a considerable advantage in the job market as it sets you apart from the majority of undergraduate students as a result of your advanced analytical and communication skills.

2. What is the purpose of Honours?

The Honours program aims to provide a post-degree level of study for students seeking to widen their knowledge in one of the specialist areas offered by Federation Business School, and to expose students to both substantive theory and the practice of research in the field of business. The program gives graduates the training necessary to conduct independent high-quality research in business and academic settings and cultivates analytical and critical skills and an awareness of emerging developments in business. The program is particularly suited to those who may wish to undertake study at the higher degree level (Masters or PhD).

3. What is the Federation Business School Honours year?

The Bachelor of Business (Honours) program offers qualified students the opportunity for specialised study in business at an advanced level. The Honours program is a combination of coursework and research.

The School runs Honours programs in the following specialist areas:

- Accounting
- Economics
- Finance
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Human Resource Management
- Management
- Marketing

4. Course Structure

Students will be required to complete four foundation courses and a thesis of 20,000 words. The thesis will be completed under the direct supervision of an academic staff member. Approval of a research topic is subject to the availability of a supervisor in the designated discipline area. Enrolment in the Honours program is by application.

In the Honours Year, you conduct a project by working closely with your supervisor, drawing on the supervisor's experience.

COURSE Code	COURSE Title	Semester	Credit Points
BUHON4004	Methodological and Qualitative Foundations	1	15
BUHON4005	Quantitative Foundations and Numerical Analysis	1	15
BUHON4006	Literature Reviews	1	15
BUHON4007	Study Proposal	1	15
BUHON4026	Honours Thesis	2	60

5. When should I start thinking of Honours?

If you are contemplating Honours, you should start thinking of courses to undertake in the 2nd year as selection is on having the required 2nd and 3rd year courses and your average grade. It is also important to select a research topic and research area in which you have the most interest in your studies in the 2nd and 3rd year.

6. Eligibility into Honours

The applicant's entire academic record is considered for admission into this program.

Compulsory requirement: previous higher education studies with a minimum GPA (credit average overall for 2nd and 3rd year courses plus minimum distinction average for 3rd year courses).

Extra Requirements:

- a willing supervisor for the Honours student's project before the semester of commencing the Honours Year.
- Submit a [Research Proposal form](#) with your application.

7. How do I apply for Honours?

The application method varies depending on your circumstances, please visit our [How to apply](#) page for further information.

8. Fee structure

Fees are subject to change annually.

Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)

Estimated annual tuition fee - commencing 2022

Annual tuition fees are per 120 credit points which represents 1 EFTSL or a standard full-time study load for a year.

The estimated annual fees are indicative only.

Fee assistance

As a Commonwealth Supported Place student, you may be eligible to defer payment of your student contribution through the HECS-HELP loan scheme. Please visit our [HECS-HELP webpage](#) for further information.

Other fees

You may need to pay some other fees such as the [Student Services and Amenities Fee \(SSAF\)](#).

9. Honours workload

The program structure requires four foundation courses in research methodologies incorporating qualitative methods, quantitative techniques, literature synthesis and research proposals, composing and presenting of a research thesis. During semester 1, Honours students should plan to write their literature review and collect research data. In semester 2, students can focus on the analysis and the writing of the Honours thesis.

Time management is important to assist the smooth progression of the research project. Honours students are strongly advised to maintain frequent communication with their academic supervisor. The supervisor is the person who is also responsible for honours progress and who will ultimately approve the final thesis, so regular communication with them is crucial.

10. How to choose a research topic

The topic of the thesis will be negotiated with the supervisor/s after approval by the Honours Coordinator. Students should select a research topic that is within the supervisor's research interest and expertise. Ongoing discussion with the potential supervisor and browsing related journal articles will greatly assist the selection of relevant research topics and ideas.

Honours students should select research topics that are interesting to keep themselves motivated and that can be realistically completed within the Honours study period.

For your reference, please see [the Appendix](#) for some available Honours projects offered by academic supervisors within the School.

11. Supervisors

Choosing a supervisor

Students can visit [the School website](#) to learn about our academic staff's research interests and expertise. You should approach the staff member whose area of interest is related to your thesis.

You are encouraged to meet with your potential academic supervisor, to discuss both your expectations and areas of interest before finally making your decision.

The role and responsibility of the academic supervisor

Your supervisor is your personal advisor and critic. He or she should assist you in defining your topic and locating relevant sources, recommend appropriate methodological and theoretical readings and provide constructive criticism on your thesis. It is important to remember that different people work in different ways and a set of "ground rules" should be established early on to avoid any misunderstanding.

The responsibilities as an Honours student

You are expected to attend scheduled meetings. It may also be a good idea for you to find out what your supervisor's expectations are: what do they expect from you and how often to meet. It is crucial to meet pre-specified deadlines and submit your completed thesis on time.

12. Thesis and Examination

Thesis and research project

Structure of the thesis and research project is decided by the Honours student with the guidance of the academic supervisor depending on whether the project requires any extra

reading or new skills. Some research projects focus on literature review or theory development, while other projects may be more empirical, and evidence based.

The research project should include a research objective, motivation, contribution and implication. Undertaking the research project may involve systematic review of literature, identification of gap in literature and research question(s), the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Honours students are required to write a thesis within the guidance of the academic supervisor. The word limit will be approximately 20,000 words exclusive of the Table of Contents, Reference List, and Appendices.

The research project can consist of a systematic literature review or a new evidence or new insights into a well-established area. It is hoped but it is not a requirement that the Honours thesis results in a published journal article.

Honours students can visit the [University Library's Federation Research Online](#) to explore the research and scholarly output of Federation University Australia's staff, students and affiliates, such as the past Honours theses.

Examination of the Thesis

The Honours thesis will be marked by two independent and suitably qualified examiners. As arrangement for suitable examiners may take some time, the Honours student and academic supervisor are expected to submit an abstract of the thesis to the Honours Coordinator two weeks before the thesis submission due date. The Honours Coordinator will send the abstract to the potential examiners so that they can determine their availability and suitability.

Examination process of the Honours thesis may take up to a **4-week period**.

The examination process is confidential. As such, the names of the examiners will not be released. Honours students will receive a copy of the examination reports. The Honours thesis grade is determined by averaging of the two examiner marks. In the event a third examiner was consulted, the two closest marks will be averaged.

13. Due dates for assessments

Honours Foundation Course:

The Course Coordinators of the four foundation courses will outline the due dates for the assessable tasks and criteria for those courses.

Honours Thesis

Given the examination process is typically a 4-week period, the normal due date for full-time students must be no later than **the end of the 3rd week in October**. This is to allow time for

examination and processing of results so the Federation Business School can provide written notification of results in a timely manner.

For part-time students, the thesis is due for submission no later than **the end of the 1st week in September.**

Honours students who intend to apply for Ph.D. candidature and Ph.D. scholarship should submit the thesis earlier in order to have results prior to the PhD scholarship closing date (usually at the end of October). [The Research Training Program scholarships website](#) currently requires that “Copy of Honours or Masters thesis abstract - If an applicant is completing honours, masters or another award in 2021, written notification of results must be made available by no later than **Tuesday 9 November 2021***”

If a thesis is submitted after the required due date without an extension (please refer to [section on extensions](#)) approved by the Honours Coordinator in writing, the thesis will be penalized at a rate of 5% per business day deducted from the thesis grade.

14. Ethics approval and Human research project

Honours students who require the use of human participants (e.g. for surveys and interviews) must seek approval of their research program through the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Approval must be in place before undertaking any primary research. Your supervisor should be experienced in filling in ethics applications and will guide you in this process.

Students with support from their supervisor will be required to complete the required documentation, which will then be presented to the appropriate committee. Students should not undertake any research with people without the permission of the Committee. For policies, guidelines and form please refer to the ethics website: <https://federation.edu.au/research/internal/ethics/human-ethics>

15. Provision for Honours students

Academic and support staffing

The Faculty website lists academic staff in Federation Business School at Federation University Australia. Students are encouraged to pursue an area that is of interest and speak to staff who can advise students on suitable topics. Proposed topics and supervisors must also be approved by the Honours Coordinator.

Access to faculty building

Honours students may require access to study spaces outside normal hours or on weekends via swipe card access using student card. Arrangements can be made through your supervisor.

For more information, please visit the following site for student study spaces

<https://federation.edu.au/library/student-resources/student-commons>

Library services

Our **library** provides extensive resources and friendly assistance to support students' study. Please visit the library website for current services available for students.

<https://federation.edu.au/library/student-resources/current-library-services>

Students will need to get a student card from Student HQ as it is needed to borrow books from the library, use computers, printing and access 24hr areas.

Students have open access to the research and scholarly output of Federation University Australia's staff, students and affiliates by visiting the [University Library's Federation Research Online](#).

Computing facilities

Students have access to the Federation University Australia's computer network and its software packages. Access is automatic on enrolment. Assistance with computing packages is available through various academic staff. Any difficulties with the use of the computer network should be addressed to the ICT Service Desk. It is strongly advised that Honours students purchase their own Laptop or PC. There are [computer grants](#) from the University if you have a high level of personal and/or financial hardship.

Honours students have additional access to computer labs located across our campuses. To arrange access to the computer labs, please visit the following site:

<https://federation.edu.au/library/student-resources/student-commons>

16. Honours year grant scheme

For more information on scholarships and grants, please see the following site:

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/starting-at-federation/scholarships>

17. Can I enrol for a higher degree by research if I do not have an Honours degree?

It may be difficult to enrol for a higher degree by research if you do not have an Honours Degree, or other recognised research experience. However, provided that you meet certain requirements, you may be able to enrol in a higher degree by research but this will be assessed on a case-by-case base.

18. Can I study Honours part time?

The Honours Program is designed to be taken full-time over two consecutive semesters (which is nine months including examination time). With approval and where appropriate, it may also be taken part-time over 18 months. You should give proper consideration to this in advance. If you have multiple outside commitments, including working more than 10-15 hours per week, you should seriously consider enrolling part-time. It will not normally be possible for students to convert from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) during the course of the academic year. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that a full-time Honours workload really is full-time and that your commitment to study must take precedence over your commitment to work.

19. Can I defer?

Deferment is possible provided the application is lodged prior to first semester census date.

Please visit the [Ongoing student support](#) to find more information.

20. Extension of Thesis Submission

Extensions to submission deadlines will normally only be granted with the approval of the Honours Program Coordinator in exceptional circumstances that could not reasonably be foreseen prior to commencing studies. Any requests for extensions must be made to the Honours Coordinator in writing and must be done well in advance of the due date. Honours students may apply for leave from their studies during enrolment. Students simply continue with their studies at the end of the period of leave. Periods of leave are generally for either a semester or a year.

21. Other queries about Honours

For any inquiry that is addressed in this handbook, students are more than welcome to contact the Honours Program Coordinator.

Dr. Phong (Daniel) Nguyen

Lecturer in Finance; Honours Program Coordinator

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APPENDIX – Honours Research Projects

Honours Research Projects Offered by Academic Supervisors

Dr Abdel K Halabi (abdel.halabi@federation.edu.au)

This project will examine the financial implications of Covid on Australia's leading sporting leagues. Analysis will be undertaken on key revenue and expenditure items in the Annual Reports of leagues such as Australian Football, NRL, Soccer, Netball, and Tennis to examine the effect covid has had on the sports industry in Australia.

Dr Daniel Nguyen (dp.nguyen@federation.edu.au)

Gold – How much is enough to survive?

In most of previous crises and particularly during the peak period of Covid19 induced crisis, gold price obviously rocketed while most of other asset markets crashed. The previous literature has focused their discussion on hedging and safe-haven properties of gold holdings. This research project aims at re-visiting co-movement of gold with other asset markets to estimate optimal weight of gold in a diversified portfolio that can minimise loss in crises but still capture market rallies. We will employ a statistical framework combining vine copula and safety-first rule so that dynamic relationships of gold and other investable assets can be fully captured during different market conditions.

Dr Renee Paulet (renee.paulet@federation.edu.au)

Sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM)

Sustainable HRM is an emergent approach to HRM for the 21st century that acknowledges HRM has a role to play in helping organizations achieve their environmental, social, and economic goals. This research project will explore the prevalence and significance of a Sustainable HRM approach in Australian organizations. Qualitative interviews will be undertaken to develop an in-depth understanding of sustainable HRM within the chosen case study organisations.

Dr Somakanthie Pillay (soma.pillay@federation.edu.au)

I would be interested in any area within management, cross cultural management, diversity, work-life balance and ethics, to mention a few. But currently, my research projects are as described below.

Project 1 - Future of Work- Enablers and challenges of Work integrated Learning (WIL)

Research Question: What are the predictors and challengers to effective WIL models?

Rationale: Enhancing student employability and improving graduate outcomes has become a key priority for Australian Universities. Monitoring graduate outcomes and questioning the capabilities and skills of university graduates and their ability to be successful in the rapidly changing labour market, is more important than ever.

Contribution: This project will offer insights into portfolio career requiring graduates with a diverse range of skills that will equip them for the uncertainty and rigors of entrepreneurial endeavours.

Project 2 - Examining the relationship between learning cycles and knowledge types, and Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Research Question: How does students' learning cycles and knowledge moderate the effectiveness of their WIL?

Rationale: The project aim is to examine students' learning cycle and knowledge types and its impact on Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

Contribution: While traditional curricula often focus on curriculum design in isolation, this study focuses on how WIL students can acquire all types of employable knowledge through experiencing a complete learning cycle.

Professor Philip Taylor (philip.taylor@federation.edu.au)

Intersections of age and gender in the labour market

Ageism is presently a topic of intense debate in Australian (and elsewhere) public policy and inside workplaces. This project will consider the extent to which ageism can be considered to be gendered, that is, is it experienced differently according to age and gender. Undertaking a systematic review of the international research literature, the project will consider whether the often made claim that older women experience a double jeopardy of age and gender is strongly supported or whether this is grounded in weak evidence.

This project will suit someone interested in undertaking a research career, or with interests in advocacy, social policy or HR. Given the degree of interest in the topic the project will provide a good basis for undertaking a PhD that will have impact and open up a range of career opportunities.

Dr Wen Sharpe (w.sharpe@federation.edu.au)

My research interests are related to auditing and empirical financial accounting research, particularly in the areas of the quality of financial information in capital market decisions,

the measurement of executive traits from communication, and interdisciplinary application of agency and information asymmetry theories to marketing. I am interested to work with Honours students on potential projects by studying the evolutionary theoretical role of CEO facial recognition issues in auditors' responses and management decision making. This research area in the past has been dominated by psychologists and application in various aspects of managerial decision making is still in its infancy. The purpose of the project is to examine the association between CEO facial recognition and decision making by auditors, financial analysts, investors, or consumers. This work can be contributed to the literature in accounting, finance, and marketing.

Professor Harpinder Sandhu (harpinder.sandhu@federation.edu.au)

Co-Supervisor: **Dr Tim Harrison**, Ararat Rural City Council(tharrison@ararat.vic.gov.au)

Project 1 - Circular economy in Ararat Rural City Council: Identifying challenges and potential solutions

The disciplines of Industrial Ecology and Ecological Economics were the first to use the term 'circular economy' in opposition to the dominant 'linear economy' approach prevalent since industrialisation. The circular economy model goes beyond the usual notion of recycling and efficient waste management. It involves a wide range of 'resource value retention' strategies. While there is great - interest at regional, state and national level to adopt principles of circular economy, there is still gap in our understanding of current challenges and barriers in the adoption of circular economy especially in regional Australia. By focusing on Ararat Rural City council region, the project intends to identify challenges and potential solutions for the uptake of circular economy in the Ararat region. The project will use a mix methodology comprising of qualitative and quantitative methods. It will involve comprehensive literature review to understand the status of circular economy in global and national context. Data will be collected by conducting surveys of relevant stakeholders, interviews with key informants and from publicly available databases.

Project 2 - Natural capital accounting in the Ararat rural city council

Wealth of a nation is typically accounted in terms of its financial and produced capital. These measures are estimated each year in the form of gross domestic product (GDP). However, this wealth depends directly on other capitals such as natural, social and human capital. Natural capital includes all biodiversity, ecosystem services, other natural resources, minerals, water, land etc. The value of these natural resources is not included in GDP. Therefore, these are negatively impacted by the economic activities. This project draws on the inclusive wealth accounting framework and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) developed by the United Nations Statistics Division. It will

use this framework to account for natural capital in Ararat region as a case study to highlight the role of natural capital in sustainable economic development.

Project 3 - Role of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the regional economic development

World leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 at a historic United Nations summit. This agenda aims to mobilise resources and direct policies to end poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring inclusive growth and development through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Inclusive growth and development emphasise sustained development across all economic sectors that creates opportunities for all, and reduces poverty. Despite such global efforts, about 9% (689 million) of the world's population lives under poverty, 690 million remain hungry, and 757 million adults still lack basic reading and writing skills, two-thirds of which are women. Role of SDGs in regional Australia is not well known. In order to transform regions, there is need to develop business models that are inclusive and include all segments of the society. This cooperation can ensure inclusive growth and development and help achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, this project aims to understand the status of SDGs in the Ararat council region. The project will comprehensively evaluate various policies and activities in the region to track and monitor SDGs in the Ararat Rural City council region. It will help develop policies that can lead to better economic opportunities in this region.

Project 4 - ESG impact assessment: Wine industry

Business organisations around the world are trying to measure and reduce their impacts on planetary and human health by adopting responsible practices. They often measure and report these impacts in the annual sustainability reports under the umbrella of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The impacts are classified under three key indicators widely known as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) indicators. Wine industry in the Ararat region is a growing industry with a number of world class wineries. Wine industry is dependent on natural resources and in turn can have huge impact on these resources. Therefore, it is important to measure sustainability of grape growing and wine production in order to gain comparative advantage in the competing local and global wine markets. The project will aim to track, monitor, measure the impacts of wine industry in Ararat region across all ESG indicators, and contribute to its transition towards net-zero emission strategy.

Dr Paul McPhee (p.mcphee@federation.edu.au)

Project 1 - Economic Impacts of Covid-19 induced changes to National Savings (including implications of early superannuation access): A National Accounting Approach with Analysis and Policy Implications.

Potential considerations and structure: This project identifies short-term Covid-19 induced changes in economic behaviour and quantifies (measures) their economic impacts (effects through the economy). Factors such as lockdowns, migration, fiscal assistance programs (financial support such as job keeper) and other possible effects are considered. There is specific concern for changes in various expenditures and savings (including early superannuation access). Impacts are quantified (measured) using a National Accounts based Input-Output model and derived multipliers. Potentially corrective policies are discussed and simulated (using the software) to determine possible outcomes. The project can be either a Ballarat or Central Highlands regional economic based study, Victorian based study, or national (Australia wide) study.

Project 2 - Covid-19 induced changes in supply chain values for transport and communication services sectors: A National Accounting Approach with Analysis and Policy Implications.

Potential considerations and structure: This project identifies short-term Covid-19 induced changes upstream and downstream inter-sector linkage values using a National Accounting Input-Output model. These changes can be used to determine supply chain value changes for the various divisions of the transport and communications sectors. Policy implications are discussed, correcting policies are proposed and tested (simulations). The project can be either a Ballarat or Central Highlands regional economic based study, Victorian based study, or national (Australia wide) study.

Dr Helen Song-Turner (h.song-turner@federation.edu.au)

Project 1 - Blockchain Application in Regional University

Background: Through advanced technology, there is a worldwide shift in Higher Education towards internationalization of curriculum programs. Like many universities globally, Federation University has sought to expand the internationalization through partnership programs. Assessment moderation is a quality assurance process that plays a central role in the teaching, learning, and assessment cycle.

The problem: One of the major obstacles in this model is the substantial amount of verification of updated course descriptions, discussion of assessment tasks and moderation of marking of students' assessment tasks over the delivery and ratification at the end of

each semester. There is an increasingly high priority placed on the validity, transparency, efficiency, and equality of assessment practices.

The project: The proposed one and half year to three-year research project (potentially a PhD project) is a Blockchain application for regional universities in Australia to address the efficiency and transparency of business delivery model.

Anticipated benefits: The Blockchain powered project aims to create a more transparent, cost efficient and technologically advanced form of higher education system. It anticipates that all existing partners and potential ones would integrate into the Blockchain network to create an efficient, simplified, and ubiquitous environment to reduce the layers of verifications and overcome procedural and administrative barriers.

Project 2 - Working mothers' needs in Australia

Background: working mothers constitute a significant labour force in Australia (ABS, 2020), with more than half of all Australian mothers working part-time or full time while raising their children at the same time. Recent labour force status report by Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) reveals that over 1.1 million (15%) were one parent families with 79.8% of these being single mothers. While the growth in the numbers and status of working mother as a major step towards achieving gender equity, inclusivity, and economic autonomy, there is still lack of understanding of those working mothers' working and family conditions in Australia.

The problem: One of the most challenging problems facing working mothers is the inability to identify and voice their needs and difficulties to the public effectively.

The project: The proposed honour project will seek to understand the needs and difficulties of working mothers in the workplace and home from the perspective of working mothers in Australia with the purpose to devise effective marketing programs to increase the public awareness and create a better environment to working mothers to stay in the workforce and thrive in the society.

Anticipated benefits: The proposed project will contribute to a great understanding of needs and difficulties facing working mothers, helping devise effective methods and marketing programs to alleviate and improve the working and family conditions of working mothers.

Research such as this is particularly valuable in recognising the talents and experiences of the working mothers and how to retain them in the workforce, influencing gender equality in the long run.

Dr Alana Thomson (a.thomson@federation.edu.au)

and Dr Vaughan Reimers (vaughan.reimers@federation.edu.au)

Project 1 - What does sport event marketing look like post-pandemic?

COVID-19 affected the world of sport and events in many ways. Sport events have a well-established place in our lives, and throughout history, as the coming together of people for competition and celebration. Up until COVID-19, a key priority for sport event marketing was ‘bums on seats’, selling tickets to fill sporting stadiums. COVID-19 impacted substantially on this activity, we saw events postpone or cancel, or run in empty stadiums. While countries around the world are opening back up and sport events are starting to welcome crowds back, in some cases ticketed crowds are restricted in size or requiring vaccine passports for admittance, it is likely that the marketing of sport events has characteristically changed for the foreseeable future. This project would focus on understanding how sport event marketing exists within our contemporary business environment, and what some of the emerging challenges, and opportunities are, for sport event marketing in the post-pandemic period.

Project 2 - Sport events and place marketing for regional communities

Sport events are widely acknowledged for their place marketing potential via the visitation of event spectators and the possibility these event spectators may return to the place at a later time or tell their friends to visit the place; televised broadcasts to raise awareness of place by televised audiences; and the use of sport event imagery and narratives to build the brand and reputation of a place in their place marketing and promotion. However, many sport events are hosted, particularly in regional towns, without much data to support these justification nor show a return on government investment in hosting fees. This project would focus on understanding in-depth the range and extent of place marketing aspects possible through event hosting and a case study approach could help to identify promising practice approaches taken by regional event hosts to maximise place marketing activities and measure the return on investment for those host communities.

Project 3 - Social marketing through sports events

With the current growth in sustainable development approaches, the role of sport events to promote social good has grown in importance. While several international event governing bodies (such as the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation) have made strong commitments to upholding social responsibility and promoting social good through their events, we must remember that the realm of sport is not always a shining light of social responsibility and various events have been linked to a series of negative impacts and legacies across a range of environmental and human rights issues. This project would analyse current approaches to social marketing by focal organisations (e.g. event governing bodies, event organising committees, etc) to identify contemporary challenges and opportunities and contribute to knowledge by developing frameworks to maximise outcomes via social marketing through sports events.