

HONORS THESIS MEMO

To: Business Majors who will be seniors in the 2025-2026 Academic Year

From: Hagit Weihs, Senior Honors Thesis Coordinator, Business Program

Subject: Procedures for Organizing, Preparing, and Defending the Senior Honors Thesis

Date: March 25, 2025

As registration for the next academic year approaches, we are distributing this memo to inform those interested in writing a senior honors thesis in Business of the requirements and procedures of the program. Please read through this document carefully.

Consistent with the University guidelines, some meetings referenced in the following guidelines may transpire online. Likewise, depending on the preferences of the participating individuals, consultations with your readers, and other Brandeis faculty, may need to be arranged online.

I. Application Process and Enrollment

1. At the time of application for the senior honors thesis program, students must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 in the Business Major (excluding BUS 89a and BUS 98a) and be on track to complete at least 20 credits of BUS courses (excluding BUS 89a and BUS 98a) by the end of the first semester of their senior year.
2. Students who wish to write a thesis must enroll in BUS 99a for the fall semester. Permission to continue with BUS 99b in the spring is conditional on making satisfactory progress (See II(1), below) in the fall. Each BUS 99 course carries four credits; these do not count towards meeting the minimum requirements of the major.
3. All students considering an honors thesis should begin early to think about a topic and plan their senior year to accommodate a substantial research program. Please speak to instructors about potential honors thesis research ideas: they can provide useful guidance and ideas. We have seen successful theses built around many different types of methods, including business analyses, case studies, and methods that have harnessed econometric techniques or experimental data.
4. To apply for admission to BUS 99a, a student must submit a one-page thesis proposal. The thesis proposal should clearly state (i) the research question(s) that the honors thesis will address, and (ii) the method(s) and data the student intends to use to analyze the question. *To the extent possible, the student should discuss his/her thesis proposal in advance with a faculty member who is knowledgeable in the relevant field.* **The one-page proposal is due by 5:00 PM EST on Friday, August 22, 2025**, and students will be notified of their acceptance into the program no later than a day before the end of the add/drop period. There will be no exceptions to this deadline. Students who do not meet this deadline will not be allowed to register in BUS 99a and will forfeit their chance of writing a senior honors thesis. Proposals should be sent to hagit@brandeis.edu with the subject heading "Business Honors Thesis Proposal".

5. The Honors Coordinator will consult with potential advisors to judge whether the project seems feasible and appropriate and also assign advisors with expertise in the relevant area of interest. Our program attempts to distribute advising responsibilities fairly among faculty members. While we try to honor a student's request to work with a particular faculty member, in some cases it may not be possible to assign a student's first choice of advisor.
6. The Business Faculty will determine which thesis proposals are accepted into the Business Program. As not all proposals are accepted, students should sign up for an additional course in case they are not able to enroll in BUS 99a. If your proposal is accepted, the Honors Program coordinator will direct you to enroll in BUS 99a. It is your responsibility to enroll in the course **before** the last day to add classes.
7. Each potential thesis writer will be assigned two faculty advisors – a primary one that s/he consults regularly, and a secondary one that s/he also consults, but less frequently.
8. Although students may consult with faculty beforehand and request to work with particular faculty members, in the interest of matching students with faculty whose research interests best align with the proposed topics and in the interest of distributing the burden of advising equitably, students should know that they may not always get their first choice of advisors.

II. Guidelines, Meetings, and Resources During the Thesis Process

1. The fall semester of the program will include two meetings. The first meeting, to be scheduled for mid-September, will be an opportunity for students to get together with other honors thesis writers, learn about their thesis topics, exchange information on where to locate research resources, and so on. The second meeting, scheduled for **December 12, 2025, at 10:00 AM EST**, will occur in groups of 3 or 4 students with their primary and secondary advisors. At the November meeting, honors thesis writers will formally present completed work and research results obtained thus far. A written report that forms the background for the presentation is due on December 5, 2025. In addition to the work completed and a summary of the results, this written report must contain a detailed review of the literature relevant to the student's research.
2. Following the November meeting, advisors and the Honors Program Coordinator will meet to judge whether the thesis is viable and whether the student should be allowed to enroll in BUS 99b for the spring 2026 semester. Projects that are not viable will be terminated at this stage; students may also choose to stop writing the thesis at this stage. If this course of action is chosen, the student (in consultation with the primary advisor) will complete and submit a research paper and thereby receive independent study credit for BUS 99a for the fall semester (pending approval from the Registrar).
3. As with any class, BUS 99a can be dropped. The last day to drop without a W, as well as the last day to drop with a W are specified on Brandeis's academic calendar.
4. Students should plan to meet at least once every two weeks with their primary advisor and at least once a month with their secondary advisor.

5. The BUS Program has arranged for an Economics Ph.D. student to serve as a TA for BUS 99a. The TA will be available during regular office hours (TBA) to assist with econometrics questions if they arise.
6. A BUS 99 website on MOODLE provides links for help with research and statistics questions.
7. The first draft of the thesis is due on March 13, 2026, and the second draft of the thesis is due on March 27, 2026. It must be submitted electronically to both advisors. Students should use the remaining weeks until the final presentation to incorporate any comments made by their primary and secondary advisors; complete additional work; and edit their paper, as required. The third draft of the thesis is due on April 10, 2026, and must be submitted electronically to both advisors and the Honors Program Coordinator.
8. Students will formally present their final thesis on April 17, 2026, between 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST.
9. Following the final thesis presentations, advisors will make a recommendation on the level of Honors. This recommendation will be made to the Business Faculty who will vote on the level of Honors at the Business Faculty meeting in May.
10. Students should use the remaining weeks of the spring semester to incorporate any comments made during the final presentation and finalize their thesis. The final version of the thesis that incorporates comments and corrections raised during the final presentation is due on April 24, 2026, and should be submitted to the primary and secondary advisors, as well as to the Business Honors Program Coordinator.
11. The Business Faculty will vote on the Honors level of each thesis during the Business Faculty meeting on April 30, 2026.

III. Thesis Completion

The student is responsible for making three bound copies (copy center) of the final version of their thesis, and a fourth copy for the library which is to be submitted online through a library release form. This form will give the library permission to add the thesis to its collections. Of the three bound copies, one is for the Business Program, and the remaining two are for each of your advisors. These are due May 7, 2026.

Note: As the Senior Honors Thesis Coordinator, I will be the person who facilitates coordination with the procedures, including the dates described herein. For questions on econometric issues, see the BUS 99 TA or your primary or secondary advisor.

IMPORTANT DATES*:

Friday, August 22, 2025, by 5:00 PM EST: One-page thesis proposal due

Wednesday, September 10, 2025: Notification of acceptance and last day to enroll in BUS 99a.

Thursday, November 13, 2025: Last day to drop BUS 99

Friday, December 5, 2025: draft for presentation on December 12th due by 5:00 pm.

Friday, December 12, 2025, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM EST: Presentation of preliminary results

Friday, March 13, 2026: First draft of thesis due

Friday, March 27, 2026: Second draft of thesis due

Friday, April 10, 2026: Third draft of thesis due

Friday, April 17, 2026, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST: Final thesis presentation

Friday, April 24, 2026: Final thesis due for circulation to faculty

Thursday, April 30, 2026, 10:00 AM (study day): Faculty voting on Honors Level

Friday, May 7, 2026: Final version submitted to the library and the Business Program.

* Dates are subject to minor changes in case of changes to Brandeis academic calendar or availability of faculty