

Departmental Honors in the Computer Science Major Statement of Policies, Procedures, and Deadlines (2019-20)

To qualify for Departmental Honors in the **Computer Science Major**, a student must:

1. Complete all departmental requirements for the major and have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for **all course work taken in the Department**.
2. Have a grade point average of 3.0 for all work taken at Skidmore.
3. File with the Department a declaration of intention to qualify for honors, signed by the student and the thesis advisor, by the end of the official add-drop period of the Fall Semester (Wednesday, 18 September 2019) or of the Spring Semester (Tuesday, 4 February 2020).
4. Submit an honors thesis to the thesis advisor one week prior to the final due date for thesis submittal. The final thesis must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant no later than 4:00 p.m. of the day falling eleven days prior to the last day of classes of the spring semester (Friday, 17 April 2020) and of the fall semester (Friday, 29 November 2019). No honors thesis will be accepted after this date. The Administrative Assistant will then distribute copies to the review committee (see below). Honors theses will be read by the review committee and an oral presentation of the student's work will be given to the Department.

In consultation with the student and his/her thesis advisor, the Administrative Assistant will schedule the oral presentation for a date following the submission of the thesis, but no later than three days prior to the deadline specified by the Office of Academic Advising for receipt of departmental honors recommendations. In addition, the Administrative Assistant will distribute a willingness-to-serve form to determine which departmental faculty are willing to serve on the review committee, which will be chaired by the thesis advisor. Ordinarily, everyone willing to serve will be a member of the review committee; the Chair of the Department will solicit participation if fewer than two (beyond the thesis advisor) initially express willingness, and will encourage a fair sharing of this responsibility. The Chair of the Department will schedule a departmental meeting, on or before the due date for honors recommendations, for the purpose of determining the departmental recommendation on honors.

If the conditions enumerated above are met, then the review committee will review both the thesis and oral presentation and determine if they are of the exceptional quality which merits honors. The review committee will submit its recommendation to the Department for final adjudication.

An honors thesis may develop from work done in a regular course offering in computer science, an independent study, a collaborative research project, or from taking CS 381/382, Senior Thesis.

Guidelines for Students

The usual route to writing an honors thesis in computer science is to sign up for CS 381 in the fall semester of your senior year and CS 382 in the spring semester. Writing a senior thesis, especially one that merits departmental honors, will require an extended concentrated effort on your part and will require you to plan in advance. To help you to do this, we strongly advise that you pay attention to the following guidelines:

1. You should decide on your general area of study, choose a thesis advisor, and submit your declaration by the end of the add-drop period of the fall semester (see above).
2. You should have a preliminary choice of topic by the end of September.
3. You should begin your literature search immediately.
4. You should have an outline and/or a progress report for your thesis advisor before the end of classes in December.
5. You should submit your first draft to your thesis advisor early enough (roughly by the first week in March) so that several revisions and/or corrections can be made before turning in your final draft to the review committee.