

# GUIDANCE FOR STUDENT – SUPERVISOR COMMUNICATION

## BHSc (Hons) Program • Project/Thesis Courses

Undertaking a project or thesis course is a significant milestone for students, as they integrate the skills and knowledge they have developed to date to tackle a research question. At the same time, supervising a student in a project or thesis course is a significant investment on the part of a supervisor in mentoring that individual into the practices of the discipline and guiding them as they confront the realities of research.

Every project is unique, and research can be unpredictable; thus the BHSc (Hons) Program does not impose any specific framework for assessment of project and thesis courses, and leaves it to the discretion of the supervisor and student to establish what an appropriate evaluation scheme should be for the project.

**It is of paramount importance that students and supervisors maintain good channels of communication** to ensure that they both understand the expectations, and can adapt as necessary as the project unfolds.

In order to achieve this, **we recommend the following practices** for students and supervisors:

### BEFORE THE PROJECT STARTS

Students and supervisors should have an explicit and concrete discussion about expectations, timelines, and evaluation, and put these in writing.

- For some project courses (eg. HTHSCI 3H03, 3H06, 4D03, 4W03), the project proposal must include an evaluation scheme;
- For senior project and thesis courses (eg. HTHSCI 4A thesis courses, 4B06, 4C project/thesis courses, 4D project/thesis courses, 4G project/thesis courses, and 4R project/thesis courses), the proposal forms do not require an evaluation scheme, but we recommend that students and supervisors establish an evaluation scheme between themselves, and put this in writing.

### DURING THE PROJECT

- Check-ins should be held on a regular basis about the progress of the project, with specific feedback sought and provided about how the student is performing with respect to the agreed expectations.
- We know that research is not always predictable, and projects may not unfold as originally planned. As the project progresses, students and supervisors should discuss whether the original expectations, timelines, and evaluation need to be changed or adapted.
- If these discussions are done in person, it can be very useful to document these conversations by exchanging an email to confirm your mutual expectations.

### AS THE PROJECT COMES TO A CLOSE

- As the end of the project nears, students and supervisors should review progress and identify what needs to be accomplished for the project to be considered complete, and set timelines for these goals.
- Supervisors should provide clear instructions about their expectations for a final product, and be willing to provide feedback on at least one draft of the final product in advance of assigning a final grade.

**If at any point you have questions or concerns, students and supervisors should feel free to contact the BHSc (Hons) Program office for further discussion!**