

Faculty of Science

Honours and MPhil (Science)

Frequently Asked Questions

I have no research experience but would like to do a PhD. How should I do this?

In order to gain entry into the PhD, you will need to obtain research experience, either in the form of Honours or a Master of Philosophy (MPhil).

I have an undergraduate SCIWAM of over 65, am I eligible to do Honours or the Master of Philosophy?

Yes, you are eligible to apply for Honours, and if you have the minimum of a credit average in the relevant final year subjects then you are also eligible to apply to undertake a Master of Philosophy in that field. It should be noted though, that entry into these courses does require the development of a suitable project, appropriate supervision arrangements to be found and approval from the relevant School.

Information about how to calculate SCIWAMS is available at sydney.edu.au/science/cstudent/ug/wam.shtml

Specific eligibility criteria is provided in the Handbooks listed at sydney.edu.au/handbooks

I have an undergraduate SCIWAM under 65, am I eligible to do Honours or the Master of Philosophy?

Generally, although some exceptions do apply, if you have this SCIWAM you will not be eligible to do Honours but you may still be eligible to undertake a Master of Philosophy if you have received the minimum of a credit average in the relevant final year subjects. In both cases, acceptance into these programs requires the development of a suitable project, appropriate supervision arrangements to be found and approval from the relevant School.

Information about how to calculate SCIWAMS is available at sydney.edu.au/science/cstudent/ug/wam.shtml

Specific eligibility criteria is provided in the Handbooks listed at sydney.edu.au/handbooks

I have done my undergraduate degree overseas, can I apply to honours or the Master of Philosophy?

Yes, as an international student you may apply to both Honours and the Master of Philosophy. Your previous results will need to be considered equivalent to the standard entry criteria to be eligible to apply and acceptance into these programs requires the development of a suitable project, appropriate supervision arrangements to be found and approval from the relevant School.

Each program may appeal to you for different reasons, for instance if you wish to undertake a PhD in Australia, then the Honours program may be a quicker pathway to achieve this, however if you are hoping to undertake a PhD elsewhere in the world, a Masters degree may be considered more valuable, dependent on the relevant country and education system.

School websites lists current projects opportunities for Honours students and [Research Supervisor Connect](#) may help you find appropriate projects and Supervisors for PhD and Masters degrees.

What is the difference between Honours and the Master of Philosophy?

Both of these degree options provide students with research experience and are considered pathways to a PhD.

Honours is a shorter pathway, generally about 10 months compared to a minimum of 18 months for the Master of Philosophy.

Both programs generally require students to undertake a coursework component and a substantial research project, the results of which are compiled in a thesis. Specific arrangements vary with for each discipline.

Students are expected to meet milestones and make satisfactory progress through these programs, although these will vary between disciplines.

What is the difference between the Master of Science and the Master of Philosophy in the Faculty of Science?

Both the Master of Science and the Master of Philosophy are considered to be Research Masters Degrees. The Faculty of Science will cease to offer the Master of Science to new students from 2016 and instead offer students to the Master of Philosophy.

The major differences between the two degrees are that students without a degree equivalent to Honours are eligible to apply to the Master of Philosophy unlike the Master of Science which always required previous research experience.

The Master of Philosophy is also designed more as a pathway to the PhD and therefore includes the opportunity to undertake coursework to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary tools to succeed in a research degree.

One other difference is that the Master of Philosophy can be completed within 1.5-2 years, whereas the Master of Science has a minimum of 2 years.

Is the thesis examination different in Honours and the Master of Philosophy?

The theses for Honours and the Master of Philosophy are both required to be a substantially original contribution to the subject concerned, however their examination procedures vary.

The examination process for Honours is set by individual Schools. Honours thesis examinations are relatively quick as students usually receive results

within one to two months. The examination is usually undertaken by academics within the University and the thesis is graded.

In contrast, the Master of Philosophy examination process is governed by the Academic Board *Thesis And Examination Of Higher Degrees By Research Policy 2015*

<http://sydney.edu.au/policies/showdoc.aspx?recnum=PDOC2014/374&RendNum=0>.

Masters theses are examined externally and the examination can take 2-6 months. As a component of a research degree the Master of Philosophy thesis is not graded and therefore students either pass or fail the degree dependent on the examination.

Does it cost more to do Honours or the Master of Philosophy?

Domestic Tuition Fees:

Domestic students will be eligible for a Commonwealth Supported Place to undertake Honours and student contributions may be deferred to HECS-HELP by eligible students (see http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist/HelpfulResources/Documents/2015%20HECS-HELP%20Brochure_04_ACC.pdf for details).

There are no current tuition fees for domestic Master of Philosophy students because places are generally funded by the Research Training Scheme (see http://sydney.edu.au/handbooks/postgrad_hb/research/admission_enrolment/research_training_scheme.shtml for details).

International Tuition Fees:

The annual cost of each degree for International students is very similar, however, as the Master of Philosophy is a longer course, the total cost will be greater depending on the length of candidature (which can be 1.5 – 2 years).

Austudy: It should be noted that domestic students may be eligible for Austudy if undertaking the Honours program as the Master of Philosophy is not an approved program (see <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/austudy> for details).

Can I apply for a Scholarship to undertake an Honours or Master of Philosophy degree?

Students undertaking honours may apply for the University Honours Scholarships (see <http://sydney.edu.au/scholarships/prospective/honours.shtml> for details).

The Faculty of Science also offers a relocation scholarship to honours students that have come from interstate and details are available here: <http://sydney.edu.au/science/fstudent/undergrad/scholarships.shtml>

Students undertaking a Master of Philosophy must have previously completed an honours degree or similar at a high standard (first class or equivalent) to be eligible for Government or University scholarships.

Can I transfer from Honours or the Master of Philosophy into a PhD?

No transfers are permitted from Honours to the Master of Philosophy or the PhD. Master of Philosophy students can be considered for a transfer to the PhD only if they have already undertaken an Honours degree or equivalent.