

Research Programs after undergrad

- Honours
- Masters by coursework (and research)

Career Options

Graduates from ANU have been rated as Australia's most employable graduates and among the most sought after by employers worldwide.

The latest Global Employability University Ranking, published by the Times Higher Education, rated ANU as Australia's top university for getting a job for the fourth year in a row.

What is Honours?

- 10 months of a real research project
- Training you to be a real scientist
- An increasing number of jobs in science expect an honours degree (or you might compete better if you have one)
- Necessary if you want to go on to a PhD (*but not main aim of honours*)
- Two intakes per year (first semester, second semester)
- Can go on HECS for domestic students
- **Entry requirements:**
 - Satisfactory completion of undergrad degree, minimum of 70% average on your 6 highest marked second and third year level courses that are relevant to your honours field.
 - Supervisor keen to supervise you
 - Can have sometimes have lower marks (credit average) if a supervisor is keen to supervise you and Susan Howitt (Head of BTLC) lets you in

How is a Masters different from Honours?

- Generally 2 years long.
- Can be all coursework OR can be a combination of coursework and research.
- If a combo, then the research bit is run just like Honours.
- *Fee paying for both domestic and international students.*
- **Entry requirements:**
 - Bachelor degree, or international equivalent, with a minimum GPA of 5.5/7, with at least 8 courses in a cognate area.
 - Supervisor keen to supervise you

Common misconceptions:

- You love birds so you think you must work on birds
 - You have always wanted to do fieldwork on rhinos in Africa
 - You only want to do a research project with a particular supervisor
 - You need to wait for a supervisor to approach you about a research project
 - You only do honours if you want to do a PhD
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- Honours is about training in research, doesn't have to be in your favourite animal or plant (that's a nice bonus if it happens)
 - More important to find a good supervisor and a good project in the broad area in which you are interested
 - The project has to be good (interesting science), feasible (in 10 months) and cost effective (so no rhinos)

Insider info you should know:

- Supervisors are often talking to multiple potential students but ultimately will only take one per year or per cohort
- Research projects are a lot of work for supervisors and the projects can be expensive
- Most supervisors want research projects to end up as something potentially publishable
 - Therefore – supervisors want to “invest” their limited time and resources in to the best students they can find
 - But “best” isn’t just about marks, it’s also about keenness, interest in research, work ethic, future plans, ambition, if they know you already, seeing eye-to-eye, getting along, if they finally found someone to do a particular project, etc.
- In RSB lots of lab leaders have postdocs who can co-supervise, so you can ask them about that (but you need to talk to the lab leader about this first)

How to find an honours project and supervisor:

- Study ALL of the lab leaders in RSB and what they do (RSB web site)
- Study ALL of the lab leaders in the area in which you are interested
- Study the “projects” on the RSB web site - **but don't rely on that alone as some is out of date and things change rapidly**
- Make appointments to go and talk to them.
 - Don't just email and ask what projects they are offering, meet them first to get to know them and so they can get to know you (**this is important**).
 - Talk to them broadly about what you are interested in first
 - Then see if you can come up with something together for an honours project
 - The message here is – potential supervisors are more likely to engage after face to face interaction, if you try and do it all via email, that won't work very well
- Off the shelf vs. tailored honours projects (supervisors differ in what they like to do)
- Tend to be more “off the shelf” in BSB and PS (lab based) and more tailored in E&E (lab, field, theory based)

General advice:

- Start thinking about this soon, if you haven't already
- Supervisors generally only take one per year or cohort – so good to get in early or you will lose that slot
- OK to talk to multiple people (you should)
- Don't be put off that it's hard to meet up with a potential supervisor – everyone is super busy
- Be open to lots of different types of projects – almost everyone ends up liking their project
- Research is intense, fun and highly rewarding – almost all students say it was a great experience