



Department of Biology 2025-2026 Biology 4999E: Honors Research Thesis



COURSE INFORMATION

Lecture:

The first lecture will be held

Additional times are flexible and depend on the requirements of your project.

Prerequisites: Registration in year 4 of an Honors Specialization module offered through the Department of Biology. Students must have arranged a project with a supervisor and filled out an application form before completing registration.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean's Designate (Biology Program Counsellors or Science Academic Advisor) to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COURSE CONTACT INFORMATION

Course Coordinator: Dr. Susanne Kohalmi, WSC319; skohalmi@uwo.ca

Office Hours: make an appointment by email: skohalmi@uwo.ca

Office hours will be held in person unless COVID requires online meetings which will use zoom.

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructors and place the course number into the header. Please give some options for possible meeting times which fit into your schedule.

Course Assistant: Ms. Beata Malczewski, NCB301D, bmalcze@uwo.ca

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Create and write a research proposal. The central hypothesis or goal will be developed in collaboration with a research supervisor.
- Search, read, and evaluate the primary scientific literature associated with the project.
- Conduct and troubleshoot research. Evaluate and analyse the data collected.
- Write and present a progress report and final thesis based on the research conducted.
- Defend the data, approach, and interpretation.

COURSE CMMUNICATION

Students should check BrightSpace ((<https://westernu.brightspace.com>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. The missing of critical information due to your failure to check OWL cannot be used as a basis for appeal. Announcements about the course, will be sent to your UWO email address. It is your responsibility to keep this account in a state that allows you to receive email, and to check it regularly. As above, a failure to check your UWO email cannot be used as a basis for appeal.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES and Finding a Supervisor

Students interested in completing a Biology Honors Research Thesis must apply through the Course Coordinator, using the application form available from the Biology Department Course Website. It is the responsibility of the student to find an appropriate Supervisor. Available faculty and potential research thesis topics are normally posted within the Department in the winter term for theses to be completed in the following academic year. Students are required to make appointments and discuss potential thesis topics with faculty with whom they would like to work, before submitting their applications. The application form needs to be signed by the supervisor of the proposed research project and submitted to the course co-ordinator by the posted deadline.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Check OWL BRIGHTSPACE for updates. If dates need to be changed it will be announced ahead of time.

Forms that need to be filled out will be available through BRIGHTSPACE. Most forms, with the exception of RILs can only be submitted once.

Item	Deadline/notes
Meet with supervisor	Sept 12
Submit advisory committee composition form	5 pm Friday Sept 19
Submit form for your proposal meeting date	5 pm Friday Sept 26
Submit Proposal	Due 5 pm Friday Oct 10 Meeting between 9 am Tues Oct 21 and 5 pm Fri Oct 31
Submit form for progression meeting date	5 pm Fri Dec 5
Submit Progress report	Due 5 pm Fri Jan 9 Meeting between 9 am Tues Jan 13 and 5 pm Fri Jan 23
Submit written thesis	Due 5 pm Thur April 2
Biology Day aka Thesis presentation day	Saturday March 28

Throughout both terms, RILs need to be submitted on a weekly basis. Every week RILs are due on Monday by midnight. You can only submit one RIL per week – describing your work from the previous week.

Additional forms can be announced on BrightSpace.

Submission Deadlines and other Dates

Submissions (proposal, progress report, thesis) must be uploaded to Turnitin.com and send to the advisory committee and course co-ordinator **in a single message**. For the advisory committee (advisors and supervisor) please inquire if they prefer a submission by email or as a hard copy. Submissions are only complete when copies are provided to the advisory committee/course co-ordinator **AND** uploaded to Turnitin.com.

- Late submissions will be determined by the Turnitin.com time recorded.

- If your submission is late without accommodation: -10% from the value of the submission for every day being late. Regardless of deductions the submissions are mandatory – you cannot pass the course without submitting all mandatory items.
 - For other items (various forms such as composition of advisory committee, meeting times, RILs etc.) online submission forms will be provided through BrightSpace. Per form/submission: -1% from final mark for being late. The submission of these forms is mandatory – you cannot pass the course without submitting all mandatory items.
 - The RILs should also be provided to the Supervisor at the time of the proposal, time of progression meeting and at the time of thesis submission.
 - RILs must be filled out for EVERY week during both terms starting in the week of Sept 8 till week of April 7. You have to submit a RIL for reading weeks – as some projects require your attention during this time. RILs do not need to be submitted during week of Dec 11 till week of Jan 1 (you can submit RILs during this time if there are things you want to get recorded for your project – but the submission during this time is optional not mandatory!). RILs need to be submitted on Mondays by midnight. You only can submit one RIL per week. Please make sure you establish this weekly routine! The submission of RILs is mandatory and you cannot pass this course without submitting mandatory items. To fulfill this mandatory requirement, you have to submit at least 20 RILs on time!
 - You have to attend Biology Thesis Day.
 - To pass this course the average mark from your advisors and supervisor for your final thesis has to be at least a 60%
-
- Next to our Biology Thesis Day there is typically also an Ontario Biology Day often scheduled for the second last weekend in March. Attending this undergraduate conference is optional and it gives you the opportunity for practicing your presentation. Details on how to attend and possible selection criteria for Ontario Biology Day will be provided during class.

Lecture Schedule

Check OWL BRIGHTSPACE for updates and specific details on in-class activities and homework.

	Class
September 8	Introduction
September 15	Proposals
September 22	LIGHTNING TALKS
September 29	TBA
October 6	LIGHTNING TALKS
October 13	Thanksgiving
October 20	Grad School and other Career Options
October 27	Study Design
November 3	Reading Week
November 10	Progress reports
November 17	LIGHTNING TALKS
November 24	LIGHTNING TALKS
December 2 December 8	No class <i>Don't let the exam period and Christmas break derail your momentum!</i>
January 5	No class <i>Get sorted out ☺ your reports and meetings are due soon</i>
January 12	Research Ethics
January 19	The Joy of Writing
January 26	Data Analysis
February 2	Presentations
February 9	Conferences
February 17	No class: Reading Week <i>Reading week is an excellent time for a final push! Aim to complete your experimental work this week!</i>
February 23- March 23	No classes <i>It is the final stretch. Spend your time wisely. Presentations are during this time.</i>
March 30	Wrap-up meeting

Commented [SK1]: The day of the Tues Sept 29 - but will anyone show up for the Monday night class?

METHODS of EVALUATION

Biology 4999E is 1.5 FCE (full course equivalents) and runs for the entire 2025/26 academic year. Expect to invest a significant amount of time, as appropriate for this weighting.

Item	Source	Value (%)
Proposal	From advisors	15
	From supervisor	5
Progression	From advisors	15
	From supervisor	10
Written thesis	From advisors	25
	From supervisor	15
Public presentation	From a judging panel	15

- To pass this course the average mark from your advisors and supervisor for your final thesis has to be at least a 60%

Marks are submitted to the course coordinator/assistant and will be posted by us as soon as we have received them from **ALL supervisors and advisors**. If you have issues with your marks, please make an appointment with the course coordinator.

Use of Generative AI Tools

For this course, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini), to generate ideas, the reports and the thesis are not allowed. A goal of this course is to introduce you to scientific writing. The best policy is to learn and structure your own writing. It is important that you learn how to access current literature and to generate novel and creative projects. Those tools however are permitted to get feedback on clarity of your document, spelling, or bounce ideas of it - but make sure that you are communicating your own ideas.

A note must be added to all of your written submissions to acknowledge and describe how generative AI was used in the preparation.

Instructors might use generative AI (Co-pilot) to assist with grading

If you are in doubt as to what would be an ethical usage of Generative AI, please, complete the tutorial below.

<https://teaching.uwo.ca/teaching/assessing/academic-integrity.html>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Students must have arranged a supervisor prior to starting this course. and met with that supervisor by Friday September 12.
- Attendance of scheduled classes is mandatory (see schedule above, changes will be posted on Brightspace if required).
- Submission and evaluation of the proposal, progression, final thesis presentation and final written thesis are mandatory. You cannot complete the class without completing these milestones.
- Submission of various forms as detailed above is mandatory.
- Students are required to maintain a 'Research Investment Log' (RIL) and to provide this to the course coordinator and supervisor(s) as detailed below.
- The presentation of two lightning talks is mandatory.
- Attendance and presenting your final thesis report on Biology Thesis Day is mandatory. For date see schedule with important dates.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance of scheduled classes is mandatory, and a roll will be taken (attendance sheet). Not signing the attendance sheet will be recorded as being absent. There are 15 scheduled classes (see Table). Attendance of fewer than 13 without appropriate accommodation will incur a 3% penalty on the final grade. Falsifying attendance information (e.g. signing the attendance register on behalf of someone else) will be treated as an academic offense.

Attendance of proposal and progression meetings is mandatory.

Attendance of the entire biology thesis day is mandatory. Those who arrive late, leave early, or fail to attend without appropriate accommodation will incur a penalty of 5% on the final grade (in addition to whatever marks they lose by failing to perform the public presentation).

Attendance to perform your project, of lab meetings, of meetings with your supervisor and laboratory/field/ experimental time is arranged through your supervisor.

TIME INVESTMENT

You will get out of this course what you put in. In addition to the mandatory classes and biology thesis day, you are expected to attend lab meetings, and one-on-one meetings with your supervisors as required by your supervisor. On top of this, anticipate investing at least 15 hr/week in the various aspects of your research, ranging from reading to experimental work, to writing. We will discuss time management strategies in class, and you will also keep a 'Research Investment Log' (RIL) to help you evaluate your input more objectively.

SUPERVISORS, CO-SUPERVISORS, MENTORS AND ADVISORS

You must have arranged a supervisor, and met with them, and submitted an application form by June 30. You will be withdrawn from the course if we haven't received the application form on time.

The supervisor has to be a faculty member in the Department of Biology, a cross appointment to Biology or hold an adjunct position within Biology.

In addition to a Supervisor, a Co-supervisor is required if:

- the supervisor holds an adjunct appointment in Biology.
- the supervisor has not previously supervised a Biology 4999E student.

The Co-supervisor must be a regular or cross-appointed faculty member in the Department of Biology. Co-supervisors are found with the help of the supervisor. Note that both the supervisor and the co-supervisor can contribute to evaluations and must attend the proposal and progress report meetings.

Sometimes, a postdoc or PhD student from a lab will be involved in mentoring honours thesis students in the lab. These mentors (optional) cannot replace a supervisor or co-supervisor, and do not contribute to evaluations, but are allowed to attend the proposal and progression meetings. There can be up to two mentors but only one mentor is allowed to attend the proposal and progression meeting.

Supervisor evaluations

Your supervisor(s) will evaluate your performance at three points during the year: at the proposal, at the time of your progression, and when you submit your thesis. The purpose of these evaluations is to provide you with formal feedback on your work ethic, laboratory skills, time management, interpersonal skills, and other 'soft' aspects of your performance in the laboratory. We will discuss these expectations in class. To aid your supervisor(s) in understanding your investment in the project, you will provide them with an updated RIL collection at each of these junctures. The supervisors will provide you with formal feedback at each of these points.

Advisory committee

In addition to the Supervisor/Co-Supervisor and mentor (optional), each thesis is overseen by two advisory committee members, who evaluate the proposal, progression, and final thesis, and who provide formal and informal advice as required. Select this advisory committee in consultation with your Supervisor. At least one of the advisory committee members must be a regular or cross-appointed faculty member in the Department of Biology (i.e. not an adjunct, or a faculty member whose academic appointments are elsewhere in the University). One of the advisory committee members may be an adjunct, or a faculty member whose academic appointments are elsewhere in the University, or a PhD student or Postdoc from the Department of Biology, although the PhD student or Postdoc **cannot** be from your supervisor's or co-supervisors lab group.

The composition of the advisory committee is subject to approval by the course coordinator. Please confirm the composition of your advisory committee by submitting the appropriate form provided through BrightSpace (for deadline see Table).

Advisor evaluations

Your advisors will evaluate your performance at three points during the year: at the proposal, at the time of your progression, and they evaluate your final thesis. They can/might provide you with feedback during advisory meetings and can leave annotations on written reports.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Working in a safe environment is everyone's responsibility: the student, co-workers and supervisor. No student will be allowed to start their research project until they have completed the necessary safety training. **It is part of your supervisor's responsibility to ensure you have the appropriate training.** Once you have completed the necessary training, you must provide your supervisor with proof of completion (e.g. certificate) for her/his records. Almost all training is offered through <https://www.uwo.ca/hr/learning/required/index.html>. Use website to sign up for the appropriate training. Most training is online and will be available through OWL once you sign up. You can also check the Biology website for details: <https://www.uwo.ca/biology/administration/health-and-safety/index.html>

- WHMIS (**Comprehensive version**).
- Health and Safety Awareness (for workers)
- Safe Campus Community – preventing Harassment, Violence and Domestic Violence
- Accessibility in service (AODA)
- Mental Health

If you are working in a laboratory, you will also need to do one or more of:

- General Laboratory Safety and Hazardous Waste
- Biosafety

And any additional training in animal handling and procedures or radiation safety, as required by your situation.

Keeping track of your progress and RILs

Time management is one of the biggest challenges you will face during your hours of thesis work. To help you and your supervisor objectively evaluate your progress, you will be required to keep a 'Research Investment Log' (RIL) in which you keep a broad record of the time you spend on different activities. The form will be available through an online link available through BrightSpace. Please fill these weekly (for more details see section below on Submission Deadlines and Other Dates) and **keep a copy** for your own record. Be prepared to bring RILs to class to aid in discussions about progress and time management. In addition, you are required to email a copy of your up-to-date RILs collection to your (co-)supervisor when you submit your proposal, your progress report, and your thesis, to assist them to evaluate your work.

Deliberately falsifying your RILs will adversely affect your supervisor evaluations and may constitute an academic offense.

Data management and backups

Discuss with your supervisor their expectations and lab protocols for data recording and backups. Expect to provide the original of your lab notebook and both summarized and raw data in electronic format to them when you finish your thesis.

Computer failure or loss of data will not be grounds for accommodation or appeal. Keep off-site backups of your data. For your lab notebook, you might take a photo of each full page of your lab notebook, and back that photo up on the cloud. For data entered into spreadsheets, as well as drafts of your work, raw data in electronic format (e.g. electronic images), and collections of journal articles, ensure that these are backed up on the cloud, even if it is just by emailing them to yourself periodically (although there are much more satisfactory solutions).

Lightning talks

You have to give two lightning talks in the fall term (for dates see Table below). During the first one, tell us about your project. For the second one, provide an update of your research: what has worked and what has not. Lightning talks are quick and to the point. You will have 3 min (2 min for the second one) and one slide (**NO animations**) so make the most of it! You have to speak freely without hanging onto notes.

Giving Lightning Talks is mandatory. Missed talks will be rescheduled. Missing your talk without appropriate accommodation will incur a penalty of 5%.

Proposal

You are required to submit a written research proposal to your advisory committee (for deadlines see Table below). The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that you have a good grasp on the context of your project and on your methods, and that the project is likely to produce useable data (which you will need for your thesis!)

- The proposal should be 2000-2500 words, the word count is excluding the References, Tables, Figure legends, timeline, and summary, in 12 point font, with 2.54 cm margins, 1.5 or double spaced.
- The proposal should include a summary/abstract at the beginning, background/ literature description (introduction), a clear statement of your research question(s), hypothesis(es) or objective(s), proposed methods, rationale for your experimental approach preliminary data or progress and a timeline (visual for example a GANTT chart format).
- You may include up to 3 pages of Figures and Tables. Figure legends can be submitted on a separate page (12 point font, 2.54 cm margins, 1.5 or double spaced) and provide all the details necessary to understand the Figure. **Place all Figure legends, Figures and Tables at the end of your document and DO NOT imbed in the text.**

- Please submit your proposal electronically (i.e. by email) as a word document or PDF to all advisory committee members and to your course co-ordinator in a single message. In addition, some advisory committee members might request a hard copy (please inquire). In addition, and at the same time, please submit a copy of the proposal to Turnitin.com on BrightSpace. Ensure that file content is identical to the version you provide to your advisory committee. Submission is only complete if a copy received by everyone **AND** uploaded.
- Ensure that any images are of an appropriate resolution for reading and to keep the total file size below 5 MB.
- Remember to submit your RILs to your supervisor(s) at the same time.
- Late proposals will not be accepted without appropriate accommodation.

You are expected to include preliminary data in your proposal. This is to demonstrate that you have made a start on your project and that it is feasible. For example, you may have done one or more of the following: made some sample analysis with the instrument or program you will be using, tried your microscopy technique on your tissue, provide details on your samples for subsequent analysis, designed approaches for your analysis, practiced some assays, familiarized yourself with computer programs etc. The description will be project dependent. The point is to satisfy your advisers that you have actually made a start, and that your project will generate data (it's **really** hard to write a thesis without any numbers!). Be prepared to discuss your Plan B!

You must present your proposal to your advisory committee in a during a meeting. The time period for the meeting is detailed in the Table below.

- Arranging this meeting can be a challenge. Begin by discussing your supervisor's availability, and then make a doodle poll (or equivalent) that takes into account your class schedule and your supervisor's availability. You must organize your progress report and report the date (for the deadline see Table below).
 - Unless expressly indicated by your advisors, assume that all meetings will take place between 8.30 am-5.30 pm Monday to Friday.
 - Suggest times that begin on the half hour (like your classes) – this means you will be less likely to intersect with teaching schedules.
 - You will require a one hour slot for this meeting.
 - Don't be afraid to nudge non-responders a week after your initial email!
 - Meetings should be conducted in person (unless scheduling requires otherwise).
 - Please book one of the biology meeting rooms.
 - Make sure you confirm the time and place with your committee, supervisor(s) and mentor (if applicable) once it is confirmed – schedules fill up fast!
 - You are responsible to send a reminder (and a link if necessary) for your meeting to your advisory committee, supervisor(s) and mentor (if applicable) the day before the proposal.

- Prepare a brief (10-12 min) presentation. Powerpoint is expected. You will then discuss your proposal, and answer questions. This is not intended to be an interrogation (although it may feel like it).
- At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee will fill in a project approval form. Your advisory committee members can provide you with written feedback on your proposal (often in the form of notes on a printed or electronic version of the proposal). They also will submit a grade through a provided online link.
- In the event that the proposal is judged unsuitable, the grade from the original proposal and meeting will stand. However, you may be required to prepare a revised proposal for submission to your advisers within 2 weeks of the date of the original meeting. The purpose of this is to ensure that your project has a likelihood of success.

If you plan to collect data in the summer for your honours research thesis, you should write a proposal and hold your committee meeting prior to beginning data collection. Contact the course coordinator for details.

Progression

You are required to submit a short written progress report (1-2 pages) to your advisory committee in January (for deadline see Table). The purpose of this report is to summarise your progress to date, update the advisory committee members on how your project has changed (if applicable), and detail your plans for on-time completion of the experimental work necessary for your thesis. The date for your progression meeting has to be submitted in December through an online form available through BrightSpace (for deadline see Table below).

- Please submit your progression report electronically (i.e. by email) as a word document or PDF to all advisory committee members and to your course co-ordinator in a single message. In addition, some advisory committee members might request a hard copy (please inquire). In addition, and at the same time, please submit a copy of the proposal to Turnitin.com on BrightSpace. Ensure that file content is identical to the version you provide to your advisory committee. Submission is only complete if a copy received by everyone AND uploaded.
- Late progress reports will not be accepted without appropriate accommodation.

You must present your progress report to your advisory committee in a meeting (for details on timing see Table below).

- As for the proposal, organizing this meeting will not necessarily be easy! You must organise your progress report and report the date using an online form (for deadline see Table below).
- The meeting will take place in person (unless schedules require otherwise). You are responsible to send a reminder (or link) to your committee members by the day before the meeting.
- This meeting will last about an hour. You are expected to make a brief (10-12 minute) presentation (accompanied by Powerpoint) of your progress and plans for completion. This will be followed by a discussion of the project, your progress, and your plans.

- At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee will fill in a progress report form which will be provided to your committee as an online link. Your advisory committee members can provide you with written feedback on your report (often in the form of notes on a printed or electronic version of the progression report) and will submit a grade through an online link.
- In the event that your progress is deemed insufficient, you may be required to have another advisory committee meeting within one month of the first date. This meeting will not necessarily require another formal report and will have no bearing on your mark for the progress report component of the course: its purpose is to assist you in making appropriate progress towards an adequate thesis.

Thesis

The thesis presents the major findings of your project, and it needs to be submitted to your advisory committee and the course co-ordinator, and has to be uploaded to Turnitin.com (for deadline see Table below).

- Prepare and submit the thesis in a format suitable for submission to an appropriate journal in your discipline (consult with your supervisor to select one). Please keep your thesis concise and within 20 pages of text (12 point font, 2.54 cm margins, 1.5 or double spaced). Figures, Figure legends Tables, and Bibliography are not included into the page count but keep it to a reasonable number – no one wants to read a book. Do not integrate Figures and Tables into the text but provide them on separate pages. If the thesis text will be longer than 20 pages total, discuss this with your supervisor, and provide justification and seek approval (by email) from your advisors. Inefficient writing is not appropriate justification. Take the thesis evaluation rubric into consideration when preparing your thesis.
- Please submit your thesis electronically (i.e. by email) as a word document or PDF to all advisory committee members and to your course co-ordinator in a single message. In addition, some advisory committee members might request a hard copy (please inquire). In addition, and at the same time, please submit a copy of the proposal to Turnitin.com on BrightSpace. Ensure that file content is identical to the version you provide to your advisory committee. Submission is only complete if a copy received by everyone AND uploaded.
- Late theses will not be accepted without appropriate accommodation.

Your advisors will evaluate the thesis and submit a mark through an online link. They may provide feedback for example in form of annotations. You do not need to make any changes to the thesis based on the feedback, but it may be helpful either for you to further hone your scientific skills in future, or in preparing your thesis for publication.

Biology Thesis Day

You will present and defend your major findings in an oral presentation at Biology Thesis Day (for date see Table below). Oral presentations will be 12 minutes, and will allow three minutes for questions. They will be evaluated by at least two examiners (who may or may not be members of your advisory committee). Presentations will be timed to ensure that schedules are kept on time. Details will be announced closer to the actual presentation day.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs*, posted on the Academic Calendar:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf,

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- Examinations scheduled during official examination periods (Defined by policy)
- Practical laboratory and performance tests (Defined by policy)
- Presentations

When a student mistakenly submits their one allowed Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** for the assessments listed above or those in the **Coursework with Assessment Flexibility** section below, the request cannot be recalled and reapplied. This privilege is forfeited.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Religious Accommodation

When conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request an accommodation for their absence in writing to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. This notice should be made as early as possible but not later than two weeks prior to the writing or the examination (or one week prior to the writing of the test).

Please visit the Diversity Calendars posted on our university's EDID website for the recognized religious holidays:

<https://www.edi.uwo.ca>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic Accommodation_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf).

General Academic Policies

The website for Registrar Services is <https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Requests for Relief (formally known as "appeals")

Policy on Request for Relief from Academic Decision:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/requests_for_relief_from_academic_decisions.pdf

Procedures on Request for Relief from Academic Decision (Undergraduate):

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_requests_for_relief_procedure.pdf

[If cross-listed as a grad course] Procedures on Request for Relief from Academic Decision (Graduate):

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/graduate_requests_for_relief_procedure.pdf

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Procedures on Scholastic Offences (Undergraduate):

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_scholastic_offence_procedure.pdf

Plagiarism and Scholastic Offenses

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at this website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

"Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar)."

Plagiarism is not only cheating – since you are now researchers, it undermines the entire scientific enterprise. This concept applies with equal force to all assignments in Biology 4999E, including laboratory reports, figures, and computer projects. The following guides will help you avoid committing plagiarism:

<http://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>

http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/guides/cheating_brochure.pdf

Use of Electronic Devices During Assessments

In courses offered by the Faculty of Science, the possession of unauthorized electronic devices during any in-person assessment (such as tests, midterms, and final examinations) is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses, and wireless earbuds or headphones.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise in advance by the instructor, the presence of any such device at your desk, on your person, or within reach during an assessment will be treated as a *scholastic offence*, even if the device is not in use.

Only devices expressly permitted by the instructor (e.g., non-programmable calculators) may be brought into the assessment room. It is your responsibility to review and comply with these expectations.

Turnitin

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

You will be required to submit your proposal, progress report, and thesis to turnitin.com, as well as to your advisors. In the unlikely event that you haven't come across it yet, turnitin.com is an anti-plagiarism tool that checks the text of your submission against the work of your classmates (which shouldn't be a problem, since you all do different projects), the turnitin.com database (previous assignments submitted to turnitin.com) and the entire internet. This means that if you copy things from the internet (or from other students), you will be caught. Please be aware that turnitin.com is clever enough to detect plagiarism where a few words are changed in an attempt to make the passage 'different'.

And for the legalese:

Assignments will be subject to submission to turnitin.com for textual similarity review by the commercial plagiarism software under license to the University. All documents submitted to the turnitin.com system will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in documents subsequently submitted to the system. Use of this service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Use of Generative AI Tools

Unless otherwise stated, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, or similar platforms) is **not permitted** in the completion of any course assessments, including but not limited to: assignments, lab reports, presentations, tests, and final examinations.

Using such tools for content generation, code writing, problem solving, translation, or summarization—when not explicitly allowed—will be treated as a **scholastic offence**.

If the use of generative AI is permitted for a particular assessment, the conditions of use will be specified by the instructor in advance. If no such permission is granted, students must assume that use is prohibited. It is your responsibility to seek clarification before using any AI tools in academic work.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously

(e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Remote Proctoring Software may be used in this course, including in the event of health lock-down. Tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at:

<https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Professionalism & Privacy:

- Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:
- Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL.
- All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission .
- Permitted recordings are not to be distributed.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Advising webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic-related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning-skills counsellors at Learning Development and Success (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the

Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.

More information about Indigenous Services (<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/>) and this Land Acknowledgement (<https://communications.uwo.ca/comms/land-acknowledgement/>) are available.