



UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2011-2012

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I. Welcome from the Director

Welcome to the Cleveland State University Scholars Program. This handbook is written for students who are members of the program which is administered by the Honors Program Office. In the fall of 2007, the University Scholars Program debuted with 70 members in a student body of 16,000. As the program matures, we hope to include up to 10% of the student body – over 1500 students. As a member of this group, you enjoy a unique set of opportunities at CSU.

The University Scholars Program is coordinated by the same office as the University Honors Program which was founded in 2004. Although the Scholars Program benefits from the resources and support system provided by the Honors Program, the two programs have different sets of privileges and responsibilities. This handbook clarifies both the privileges extended to and the responsibilities expected of University Scholars students.

Cleveland State University has made a great commitment to the University Scholars Program and to the students who are its participants. The central mission of the Scholars Program is to support and challenge the academically talented and highly motivated students at the University. In exchange for the investment that the Cleveland State University community makes in the Scholars Program, participants are expected to engage actively in the life of the University and to enhance and invigorate the educational environment for all students.

II. Mission Statement

The central mission of the University Scholars Program is to improve how the University serves the educational needs of its most academically talented and highly motivated students. The program encourages the participation of the broadest possible range of talented students.

The University Scholars Program will achieve its goals by providing students admitted to the program with: (1) challenging, enriched, or interdisciplinary curricular opportunities during their first two years; and (2) a specially tailored course of study during their final two years. *¹

¹ Although we refer to “years” in this handbook, we recognize that not all Scholars students will graduate in four years or less.

III. Rights and Responsibilities

A. Rights

Access to the following:

- Honors-designated classes. These classes are taught by faculty selected for their teaching excellence. They are low enrollment courses (typically around 25 students) with greater breadth and depth than non-Honors classes.
- Scholars floors in the residence halls.
- Access to the Honors/Scholars Program lounge in MC 412.
- Intensive, personalized academic advising with the University Scholars Advisor.
- Scholars experience in the major. This varies from major to major but typically gives the student the opportunity to work closely with faculty and engage in a research experience in the discipline. In most cases, the upper-division requirements are the same as the Honors upper-division requirements.

B. Responsibilities –Requirements of all Scholars Students:

- **Academic Integrity:**

The University Scholars Program is committed to honesty and integrity and holds its members to superior standards of ethical conduct. The purpose of the Scholars Program is to promote intellectual effort and achievement; academic dishonesty is in direct opposition to this purpose. Academic dishonesty, therefore, is unacceptable, and students must be prepared to accept the appropriate sanctions for any dishonest academic behavior. Please refer to the Cleveland State University Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/StudentCodeOfConduct.pdf>

Plagiarism – that is, copying or taking credit for others’ work – constitutes academic dishonesty and will result in dismissal from the program. It is important to bear in mind that sophisticated resources are now available to professors to aid in the detection of plagiarism. For CSU’s statement on plagiarism, consult the following site: <http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/writingcenter/WAC/Plagiarism.html>

The rules of proper academic attribution can be complex; if you have questions or concerns, you should address them to the relevant professor or reference librarian.

The University Scholars Program applies a stricter standard than those found in the Student Code of Conduct. If, at any time, a student has been found guilty of academic dishonesty, irrespective of whether it is a “major” or “minor” infraction (see Code), the student shall be dismissed from the Scholars Program.

Note also that the Student Code of Conduct cannot include every possible violation (for example, every foreseeable form of cheating). Nonetheless, Scholars students are expected to conduct themselves with the utmost academic integrity in order to remain in the program.

- **Academic Progress:**

All students in the University Scholars Program must make satisfactory progress toward graduation. There are two criteria for satisfactory academic progress:

- successful completion of required honors coursework; and
- a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 or better.

Application of these criteria depends in part on whether a student is in the lower-division (first two years of a four year program) or the upper-division (final two years) of their academic program. An upper-division student is a student admitted directly to the upper-division as a junior, or a student who has completed lower-division requirements and has junior or senior standing in the university. The remainder of this section provides a more detailed explanation of the bulleted points above. Students should plan for how many semesters it will take to complete the requirements, depending on full- or part-time status.

- **Required Honors Coursework:**

Students admitted as freshmen: Students admitted to the University Scholars Program with freshman standing (fewer than 30 credit hours) are required to take at least two lower-division Honors-designated general education courses. Honors courses offer students the opportunity to participate in courses with greater depth or breadth than standard general education courses. They are also generally more challenging than non-Honors courses. Given these circumstances, Scholars students may wish to distribute the two Honors courses throughout the first two years of the curriculum. Scholars students are permitted to take more than two Honors courses in the first two years if they so choose. Scholars students must request permission from a Scholars advisor to take Honors courses, and will be admitted on a space-available basis. Upon achieving junior status, students who remain in the University Scholars Program will be required to satisfy their major's upper-division honors requirements (see below).

Other opportunities for enhanced coursework exist in the form of Learning Communities for Scholars students and "Reacting to the Past" courses in English and History. "Reacting to the Past" is a teaching and learning style that involves role play as a major component of the course.

Scholars who matriculate into the university as entering freshman are required to take ASC 101, *Introduction to University Life*, or its equivalent. The University Scholars Program offers sections of ASC 101 reserved for entering Scholars students, who are encouraged to register for one of these sections. (This requirement is waived for students majoring in Engineering since they are required to take ESC 100 *New Student Orientation*). ASC 101 is waived for transfer students who are thus exempt from this requirement.

Students admitted as sophomores: Students admitted to the University Scholars Program with sophomore standing (30-59 credit hours) are required to take one Honors-designated course.

Students admitted as upper-division participants: Students can also apply to the University Scholars Program at any point before earning 60 credit hours, at which time the student achieves junior status and must satisfy upper-division requirements. Scholars will be expected to satisfy their department University Scholars major requirements; in many cases, this may be the same as what is required for students in the Honors Program.

Note that if the departmental University Scholars requirements are more stringent, students seeking University Scholars degrees will be expected to fulfill the more stringent departmental requirements. (If the major department does not have upper-division requirements established for Scholars, students should contact their Scholars advisor to devise an appropriate course of study.) Contact the University Scholars Program or your major advisor for more detailed information on the Scholars upper-division requirements.

▪ **Grade Point Average (GPA):**

To remain in good standing in the University Scholars Program, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or above.

Lower-division (freshman/sophomore) students with a GPA below 3.25 will be placed on Scholars probation and must reach certain benchmarks to avoid dismissal from the program. Those benchmarks are listed below:

- 3.00 by the end of freshman year (first two semesters)
- 3.25 by the end of sophomore year (first four semesters)

The student will remain on probation until he/she reaches a cumulative GPA of 3.25.

A maximum of two probation periods are allowed within the University Scholars Program.

An upper-division student whose cumulative GPA drops below a 3.25 will be placed on probation and have *one semester* to restore his/her GPA to the 3.25 level or he/she will be subject to dismissal from the program. A student may be on probation only *once* while an upper-division student.

Any student whose cumulative GPA is less than 2.50 will be dismissed from the University Scholars Program.

Students who are dismissed may appeal their dismissal to the Honors Appeals Board.

IV. Formal Recognition of University Scholars Students

A student who graduates having fulfilled the requirements of the University Scholars Program will have the designation

“Major” University Scholar

appear on both the diploma and the transcript.

V. Curriculum

Scholars will have access to certain Honors courses each semester; their eligibility will depend on permission of instructor and class capacity. Information about upcoming Honors courses is available on the Honors web site, usually two weeks prior to the beginning of the registration period.

VI. Coursework within the Discipline

To understand the needs for satisfying Scholars requirements within the discipline, students must consult both:

- The University Catalog; and
- The requirements for Scholars students within the major

Taking Graduate Courses: The upper-division requirements for some disciplines allow students to enroll in graduate courses as an undergraduate. To take advantage of this opportunity, students must complete the Undergraduate Request for Graduate Course form, obtain the signature of their faculty advisor and submit it to their Scholars advisor prior to registration. Students who are on probation might not be eligible to enroll in graduate courses and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

VII. Honors Contract Courses

Although Scholars education means more than simply completing additional or more difficult work, the experienced honors teacher and the exceptionally motivated student may contractually agree to supplement an existing catalog course in creative and substantive ways that allow the student to receive honors credit for the course. An Honors Contract Course is used to allow a Scholars student to receive honors credit for a non-honors course. Some programs require students to complete contract courses as part of their Scholars curriculum.

A. The Honors Contract Course:

- Extends the course selection for Scholars students
- Provides opportunity for more independent, self-directed research
- Augments the student's participation in determining the course work/agenda for the course (working in conjunction with the faculty member)
- Benefits the non-honors classroom by promoting the integration of Scholars students into the larger community of the university.

Procedures:

Students interested in registering for a contract course must notify their Scholars Program Advisor **in writing** prior to the end of the previous semester of their intention. The full petition for the Honors Contract Course should be submitted prior to the end of the first week of classes of the semester in which the course is to be taken.

The Honors Contract is written by the student and faculty member. It should provide answers to questions such as the following:

- How does the contract modify the non-honors version of the course? What additional and/or different work will the student perform? (Please be as specific as possible).
- How will the outcomes deepen or extend the student's learning beyond what would be achieved in the non-honors version of the course? (Please be as specific as possible).

- How will assessment of the Scholars student differ from assessment of typical students? What portion of the course grade will be accounted for by the honors component of the course?
 - The student and the faculty member should collaboratively complete and sign the Honors Contract Course form. On the form, the student and the faculty member should agree on the issues described in the questions listed above.
- The advisor, instructor, and Director of Honors must approve the Honors Contract Course.
- Upon completion of the student's Honors Contract Course, the faculty member will assign the student's grade based on his or her performance in the Contract Course.

VIII. Academic Advising

There are two types of advisors in the University Scholars Program: Scholars advisors and faculty advisors.

- A. The **Scholars Advisor** is the primary advisor for incoming freshmen Scholars students and for Scholars students who have not yet selected a major. All Scholars students are required to meet with their Scholars Advisor prior to the beginning of each semester to discuss plans for registration. First-semester freshmen are required to meet with their Scholars Advisor at mid-semester to discuss their academic progress. If a student is considering changing majors, withdrawing from or adding a class, or making other academic changes, they should always consult their Scholars Advisor before making the changes to be sure that they have obtained necessary permissions and that the Scholars Program has accurate records regarding their academic progress. Finally, students beginning their senior year in the program should contact their Scholars Advisor to initiate their graduation application.

The Scholars Advisor is a good resource for exploring opportunities in general education, selecting an academic major, and for information about opportunities for academic enrichment. Students interested in study abroad, service learning and national scholarship competitions should consult with their Scholars Advisor about these opportunities.

Scholars students who experience problems or who have questions or concerns about their program should contact their Scholars Advisor for assistance. The Scholars Advisor attempts to give each student personal attention and to help resolve problems as they arise. However, students are expected to take the initiative in seeking necessary assistance.

B. Each Scholars student will be assigned a **Faculty Advisor** in the department in which they plan to major. The Faculty Advisor assists students in the development of meaningful educational plans. The Faculty Advisor will work with the student to help define the student's educational goals, design an appropriate path for achieving them, and help coordinate upper-division honors courses (including undergraduate research, thesis, and internship experience) with degree or major requirements.

1. Declaration of major:

Students are advised to declare a major before completing **45** semester hours.

2. Registration:

Registration appointments are scheduled each semester to allow the student and his or her advisor to review the student's records and plan a program for the next semester. At this time, the student has an opportunity to discuss academic issues with his or her advisor. Registration appointments help to ensure that the courses requested by the student will be appropriate for the following semester. Any student who participates in the University Scholars Program during the registration period is expected to register during the period designated for this purpose.

IX. Applying for Honors

University Scholars students who are sophomores and have a cumulative g.p.a. of 3.5 or better may wish to consider applying for the Honors Program. Deadline for applications is February 28. Since the Honors Program is limited to a small number of students, success in the Scholars Program does not guarantee admission to the Honors Program. See your Scholars Advisor or the Director of the Honors Program for more information on how to apply.

Approved:

Honors Council Committee

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