



HONORS PROGRAM

STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2009 - 2010

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Cleveland State University
Honors Program
Student Handbook

I. Welcome From The Director

Welcome to the Cleveland State University Honors Program. We have prepared this handbook to help you navigate the requirements for completing your degree with Honors at Cleveland State University. This handbook is written for students who are members of the Honors Program. About 200 students out of a student body of 16,000 belong to the Honors Program. As a member of this distinguished group, you receive benefits unique to students belonging to the Honors Program.

The University community also has a higher set of expectations for you. Cleveland State University has made a great commitment to the Honors Program. Honors scholarships are financed from donated funds and from the tuition paid by other students. In exchange for the investment that the Cleveland State University community has made in the Honors Program, we expect honors students to actively participate in the life of the University and to help to make the University a better learning environment for all students.

II. Mission Statement

The central and foundational mission of the Honors Program is to better serve the educational needs of academically talented and highly motivated students at the University. The program encourages the participation of the broadest possible range of talented students. We serve students from most major ethnic groups and a variety of nations. We seek graduates from a variety of secondary schools, including graduates from small Christian academies, large public high schools, and elite private schools. Transfer students from two- and four-year colleges are also welcomed to the Program.

The Honors Program will achieve its goals by providing students admitted to the program with the following: (1) a challenging enriched, and interdisciplinary curricular module during their first two years, (2) a specially tailored honors course of study during their final two years, and (3) substantial scholarship support during all four years enrolled in the Program.

III. Rights and Responsibilities

A. Rights

- Honors scholarships to cover tuition, books and academic fees.
- Honors classes taught by faculty selected for their teaching excellence. These are low enrollment courses (typically 15-25 students) with greater breadth or depth than non-honors courses.

- University Honor Experience courses that bring together honors students from different cohorts and majors in activities designed to build community among the students in the program.
- Honors advising.
- Early registration for classes.
- Honors course work in the majors. This varies with the academic program, but typically gives students the opportunity to work closely with faculty and engage in a research experience in their discipline.
- Extended borrowing privileges at the library.
- Participation in Program governance through representation on Honors Council.
- Honors floor in the residence hall.
- Access to the Honors Program lounge in MC 412.

B. Rights and Responsibilities. Requirements of All Honors Students

1. Academic Integrity:

The Cleveland State University Honors Program values honesty and integrity and holds its members to high standards of ethical conduct. As the Honors Program wishes to promote intellectual excellence, and as such excellence requires the free and honest exchange of ideas, the Honors Program views academic dishonesty as contrary to its ideals and goals. Academic dishonesty is, therefore, unacceptable, and students must be prepared to accept the appropriate sanctions for any dishonest academic behavior. Please refer to the Cleveland State University Code of Student Conduct:

<http://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/StudentCodeOfConduct.pdf>

The Honors Program applies stricter standards than those found in the Code of Student Conduct. If a student has been found guilty of academic dishonesty, irrespective of whether it is a “major” or “minor” infraction according to the Code, the student shall be expelled from the Honors Program.

2. Academic Progress:

All students in the Honors Program must be making satisfactory progress toward graduation with Honors. These are our criteria for satisfactory academic progress:

- Successful completion of required honors coursework,
- Existence of an academic plan approved by the student's faculty advisor and the Honors Director,
- A rate of credit-hour completion sufficient to lead to graduation in a reasonable period of time (usually four academic years), and
- A Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.5 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 the Honors Program. An upper-division student is either a student admitted directly to the upper-division or a student who has completed lower-division requirements and has junior or senior standing in the university. The remainder of this section is divided into four parts, providing a more detailed explanation of the bulleted points above.

a. Required Honors Coursework:

Universal Honors Experience: All students in the Honors Program must participate in (and pass) a Universal Honors Experience course each semester. These courses are designed to build community among honors students, to provide learning opportunities not available in regular academic classes, and to be enjoyable. An array of Honors experiences will be available every term. Some of these options will be for academic credit, while others will not bear credit. Honors students are required to complete at least one credit hour of universal honors experience credit for each year in the program.

First year students enrolled in HON 101, students participating in student teaching, students engaged in a semester abroad, students participating in National Student Exchange, and students doing a co-op semester who are not enrolled in classes at Cleveland State are not required to take a Universal or Honors Experience course. Students who believe that they should be exempt from the Universal Honors Experience for a term must verify this exemption with their Honors Advisor before the term begins.

HON 101, HON 200, HON 201 and HON 301 will all count toward the Universal Honors Experience requirement.

Students admitted to the lower-division Honors Program.

Lower-division honors students are required to take at least four lower-division [general education honors courses](#). These courses are designated by the letter “**H**” after the course number (e.g. MTH 181H). Honors courses offer students the opportunity to participate in courses with greater depth or breadth than standard general education courses. Enrollments for honors classes are kept small (15-25 students) and the courses are generally more challenging than non-honors courses. Faculty members are selected for their teaching excellence. In most cases, lower-division honors students will enroll in one honors course each semester for their first four semesters. Students wishing to defer taking an honors course during a semester must have the approval of the Honors Advisor and a plan as to when the honors courses will be taken.

b. [Honors Academic Plan:](#)

Students with sophomore standing or higher will work with their faculty advisor to develop an academic plan that leads to graduation with Honors. Students with fewer than thirty credit hours completed since graduation from high school are not required to have an academic plan until their second year in the Program. Lower-division students who have accumulated 60 credit hours of college credit will not be allowed to register for their next semester until they have submitted an approved academic plan. Upper-level honors students (i.e., those admitted as juniors) must submit an approved academic plan prior to registering for their initial semester in the program.

Guidelines for Honors Academic Plans for Upper-Division Students:

The student, working with the Departmental Liaison, faculty mentor, or another appropriate faculty member in his or her department, will be responsible for developing an Academic plan, describing a set of courses which will meet both the requirements for the major and the student’s goals. This is a non-binding contract open to re-formulation. All Honors Academic Plans and re-formulated Plans must be approved by the Program Director and will be kept on file in the Honors Office.

Depending on the major(s) and goals of the student, the Honors Academic Plan might include additional honors work in established courses, enrollment in graduate courses, participation in a faculty member's research project or laboratory, an independent research project, a service learning project, and/or an internship, job, or co-op experience. If appropriate, students will also be encouraged to attend professional meetings. For each upper-division honors student, the Program Director is responsible for keeping a record of each student's Honors Academic Plan, monitoring the student's progress, and intervening when appropriate.

c. Rate of credit hour completion:

The honors scholarship will cover the [cost of tuition](#) for honors students until graduation. Normally, students are expected to graduate in four years; however, extensions are possible for programmatic or legitimate academic reasons. It is not feasible for the Program to pay tuition costs indefinitely; therefore the expectation is that the typical course-load per semester will be 16 credit hours (or more). There will be cases when this credit hour load is not appropriate; students need to obtain approval from the Honors Advisor and their faculty advisor for lighter course-loads or for course overloads (more than 18 hours). They must also make sure that their course-load each semester is consistent with their Honors Academic Plan (see 2.b. above).

d. Grade Point Average (GPA):¹

Honors students are required to maintain a **3.5 GPA** to continue in the program. Students whose cumulative GPA drops below a 3.5 will be placed on probation. A student on probation will be notified, in writing that they have been placed on probation and will be immediately required to meet with their honors academic advisor to develop a written plan for improving their performance. Probation rules will be different for lower-division and upper-division students:

Lower-Division Students:

Students entering the university with true freshman status (students who enter with no college credits and/or whose college credits were earned while they were still high school students – PSEOP/AP, etc) will be placed on probation (and required to meet

¹ Students admitted to the Honors Program [as of fall 2009](#) will follow the above version of the GPA rules. Students admitted to earlier terms will need to consult with their Honors Advisor to determine whether the rules applying to them are different.

with their advisor prior to registering for the next semester) if their GPA is below 3.5 at the end of their first semester. They must have a cumulative GPA of 3.25 by the end of the summer of their first year, or they will be ineligible to continue in the program. Students who achieve a 3.25 by the end of their first year in the program, but who still are below the 3.5 threshold, will remain on probation and must raise their GPA to 3.5 by the end of the summer of their second year in the program or they will be ineligible to continue in the program.

Lower-division admits with transfer college credits earned after high school: A student in this status whose CSU cumulative GPA falls below a 3.25 (excluding transfer hours) after they have completed 30 hours (including the transfer hours) will not be eligible to continue in the program. Students with a cumulative CSU GPA of between 3.25 and 3.5 will be placed on probation, required to meet with their advisor to develop a written plan for improving their performance, and remain on probation until their cumulative CSU GPA reaches 3.5. They must raise their cumulative CSU GPA to 3.5 by the end of the semester in which they have completed 64 hours of college coursework.

Upper Division Students

Upper-division students whose GPA falls below 3.5 but above 3.25 will have one semester to correct the deficiency. They will be placed on probation and required to meet with their advisor prior to registering for the next semester to develop a written plan to improve their performance. Upper-division students who have a cumulative GPA below 3.0 in any one semester will be dismissed from the program.

e. Dismissal:

Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 or who fail to meet the terms of their probation are subject to dismissal from the program. Once dismissed, a student may **not** be reinstated into the program. However, students may appeal their dismissal to an Honors Appeals Board (see Sec XIII). Such appeals must be filed prior to the beginning of the next semester to ensure that the student's scholarship can still be reinstated.

VI. Formal Recognition of Honors Students

A student who graduates having fulfilled the requirements of the University Honors Program will have the following designation appearing on both the diploma and the transcript: "University Honors: *program name*".

V. Curriculum

Each semester a selection of Honors courses and Universal Honors Experience courses will be offered. Information about upcoming Honors courses is available on the Honors web site, usually two weeks prior to the beginning of the registration period.

VI. Honors within the Discipline

Honors requirements vary from one department to another as appropriate to the discipline. To learn about the requirements for Honors within each discipline, students should consult with the department in which they intend to major. Information can also be obtained on-line from the Honors home page (see link for "[Upper Division Program](#)" under "Current Students".)

The student's Honors Academic Plan developed in conjunction with his or her faculty advisor and the Honors Advisor will assure compliance with these requirements.

A. Taking Graduate Courses.

The upper-division honors requirements within some disciplines permit 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 the completed and authorized form to the Honors Advisor prior to registration. Students who are on honors probation may not be eligible to enroll in graduate courses; eligibility will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

VII. Advising

There are two types of advisors in the Honors Program: Honors Advisors and faculty advisors. The Honors Advisor is a good resource for exploring opportunities in [general education](#) and academic enrichment. The Honors Advisor is also the primary advisor for students who have not officially declared a major as well as a supplemental advisor for all honors students.

- A. The Honors Advisor attempts to give each student personal attention and assistance with his or her problems and concerns. Students, however, are expected to take the initiative to seek any necessary assistance.

B. Each honors 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, honors thesis, and internship experience) with degree or major requirements. During the second semester of the sophomore year, the student and faculty advisor will work together to develop an Honors Academic Plan for the student (see III B 2.b.).

1. Declaration of major:

Students are advised to declare a major before completing **forty-five (45) credit-hours**.

2. Registration:

Registration is designated each semester to allow the student and his or her advisor to meet and review the student's records and plan a program for the following semester. All students enrolled in the Honors Program are expected to register during the period designated for this purpose. Finally, the student should also use this opportunity to discuss academic problems with the advisor.

VIII. Summer Registration

Honors students may, with the Program's permission, register for summer courses at CSU and receive scholarship support. Students should have a legitimate reason for taking summer courses beyond simply wanting to take "extra" courses or to lighten their load in the regular academic year. Students wishing to take summer courses should meet with their Honors Advisor **before** the beginning of the first six-week session to get the required approvals.

IX. Honors General Education Alternative

Normally, Honor students will complete the regular university general education requirements. However, some students may be eligible to consider the Honors General Education Alternative.

The General Education Alternative is intended to serve the needs of students who arrive as first-year students at CSU already having completed a broad general education as high school students. For these students, introductory-level general education courses often repeat material they have already covered in high school. Rather than requiring them to take redundant courses, the Honors General Education Alternative allows them to seek a broader education by exploring, more deeply, two subject areas outside of their major field.

A. Requirements:

The Honors General Education Alternative is appropriate for students who:

1. Are in good standing in the honors program; and
2. Have completed Eng 101/Eng 102 or equivalents; and
3. Place into MTH 181 or higher level mathematics courses; and
4. Have completed at least 3 years of one foreign language in high school; and
5. Have completed at least 3 years of science in high school (including one year of Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

B. Students who qualify may choose to complete two courses clusters in a subject area outside of their major. Cluster requirements:

1. Minimum of 15 credit hours.
2. All courses should be in the same department (with permission of that department, one course may be in a cognate discipline).
3. At least one course in each cluster must be at the 300 level.
4. Students must secure the approval of the departmental chair of the discipline selected for the cluster.
5. Breadth requirement:
 - a. COS majors must choose one cluster from the Arts and Humanities and one from the Social Sciences or Urban Studies.
 - b. Social Sciences majors must choose at least one cluster from the College of Science and one from the Humanities.
 - c. Humanities/Arts majors must choose at least one cluster from the College of Science and one from the Social Sciences or Urban Studies.
 - d. Urban Studies majors must choose one cluster from the College of Science and one from the Humanities.
 - e. College of Education majors must choose one cluster from the College of Science and one from CLASS.
 - f. Students NOT majoring in a foreign language may choose a cluster consisting of foreign language courses (all in the same language). All courses must be taken at the college level (college-level credits earned in High School will not count). A foreign language cluster is considered to be in the Humanities

C. Additional requirements:

1. All students completing clusters still must complete three Writing across the Curriculum (or 2 WAC and one SPAC) courses. These may be part of the clusters or separate from them.
2. All students must complete one Human Diversity and one African-American Experience course. These may be part of the clusters or separate from them.
3. All students must complete at least one course focused on a society (or societies) in Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Middle East. These courses must be selected from the list of approved General Education courses on these societies. The course selected may be part of a cluster.
4. All students must still complete the Honors course requirements (4 designated “H” courses and the various Universal Honors Experience requirements).

X. Honors Contract Courses

Although honors 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 an honors student to receive honors credit for a non-honors course. Some programs require students to complete contract courses as part of their honors curriculum. In exceptional cases, students may be granted permission to substitute a contract course for an Honors General Education course.

The [Honors Contract Course](#):

- Extends the course selection for honors 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 honors students into the larger community of the university.

Procedures:

Students interested in registering for a contract course must notify their Honors 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 beginning of the semester in which the course is to be taken.

The Honors Course Contract is written by the student and the 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 honors 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 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.

Guidelines for using a Contract Course for Honors General Education Credit:

Of the 4 honors courses needed to complete requirements for the lower-division Honors Program, only one may be an Honors Contract Course (of no more than four credit hours). Students wishing to use a contract course to satisfy a lower-division requirement must contract in a 300 or 400-level course. The number of Honors Contract Courses that may be included as part of the upper-division Honors Program is determined on a department-by-department basis.

XI. Book Policy

One of the privileges of being accepted into the Honors Program is that the Honors Program pays for students' books that are on the course syllabus as reading requirements. The Honors Program will not pay for "***recommended***" reading materials. Financial Aid award letters indicate a monetary amount as a book scholarship. If a student's books exceed this amount, the Honors Program will pay the excess. If the student's books are less than indicated amount, the student is not entitled to the difference. Students are encouraged to donate their unwanted books at the end of the semester to the Honors Program where the books will be made available to other students.

Students must purchase books from the University Bookstore. If this is not possible, students must seek permission from the Director prior to purchasing the book from another vendor.

In order to have the Honors Program pay for books, the student must inform the bookstore cashier that he or she is an honors student and present his or her CSU ID and current course schedule. (For fall semester only, if a first-year student or transfer student does not yet have a Cleveland State University ID, the student must present documentation showing his or her CSU ID number and photo identification. All continuing CSU students must present their CSU ID, no exceptions.) Students may purchase other merchandise from the bookstore at their own expense.

Students must be present to pick up books; no one other than the student may take a book(s) from the bookstore for another student.

If a class for which books have already been purchased is dropped, the student is required to return the book(s) to the bookstore. The student must inform the cashier of his or her honors status and is not permitted to accept anything of value (including money or gift cards), for the books returned. The student is permitted to pick up the book(s) for a class that is added. Again, the student must present Cleveland State University ID and a current class schedule.

Please see your Honors Advisor for all other book issues.

A. Deadlines for book scholarship:

One week before classes begin, students will be able to go to the bookstore and pick up their books.

Students must receive all books by September 30th for fall semester and

February 21st for spring semester. If the deadline date falls on a day the bookstore is closed, the following day the bookstore is open will serve as the final day to receive books. After this time, the Honors Program will not pay for students' books. The only exception to receiving books after the deadline is if the book is not available in the bookstore.

If you plan on donating your books to the Honors Program, please do so by the Friday after Finals Week.

A. Consequences for violations of the book policy:

Each semester the Honors Program will conduct an audit of student book purchases. Students who purchase books other than those that are required or recommended reading on the course syllabus will be dismissed from the Honors Program. A student may appeal his/her dismissal from the Honor's program. In addition, all students in violation of this policy will be turned over to the CSU Judicial Board for possible disciplinary action.

XII. Course Withdrawal Policy

The University regulations stating procedures and deadlines for registration and withdrawal from courses apply to all students. In addition, students admitted to the Honors Program are also subject to the following rules:

- A.** Students may withdraw from a maximum of 3 courses (regardless of their number of credits) during their undergraduate career. Students should avoid overloading their course schedule, as overloads frequently lead to unnecessary withdrawals. Always consult with your Honors Advisor before withdrawing from a course.
- B.** If a student withdraws from additional courses as permitted by the university's withdrawal policy, additional withdrawals will be treated as a grade of "F" for purposes of computing the cumulative grade point average for retention in the Honors Program unless the student has obtained the approval of the Honors Program Petitions Committee. Withdrawing from any course is discouraged due to the negative impact on the timely manner in which academic progress is expected to occur for honors students.
- C.** In the event of extraordinary circumstances, the student may request from the Honors Program Petitions Committee a withdrawal from all or some of their classes without penalty to their cumulative grade point average. Such waivers do not count against the three course maximum over the undergraduate career. The following are some examples of circumstances that can be considered for extraordinary withdrawal with the appropriate documentation:
 - 1.** Severe illness, injury or psychological condition with a prognosis of slow recovery.

2. Traumatic events beyond the control of the student that affect academic work.
 3. Call to active duty for military personnel (as dictated by university policy).
 4. Prolonged jury duty.
- D.** A petition for withdrawal must be filed in a timely manner with the Honors Program Petitions Committee. The petition should be complete and thorough. It must include the student's personal statement and relevant supporting documentation, such as an official letter from a medical provider explaining the problem and its impact in the student's performance, hospital admission papers, police reports, military call orders, etc. The student is encouraged to consult with their advisor and/or the Program Director in preparing the petition.
- E.** Retroactive permission for withdrawing from courses completed in previous semesters cannot be considered under any circumstances.
- F.** An increased or more stressful workload is not considered a valid reason to request a withdrawal.

XIII. Honors Council

To assure faculty participation in the operation of the Cleveland State University Honors Program, an [Honors Council](#) has been established. The Honors Council's major responsibility is to institute and monitor policies under which the Honors Program will operate; it has the power to create standing and ad hoc committees to effectuate those policies and goals.

The Honors Council consists of seven full-time elected faculty members with three-year, renewable, staggered terms; three appointed "teaching" faculty members with one-year, renewable terms; two honors students; and the Program Director as an ex-officio member. One member each will be elected by faculties of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Science, the Fenn College of Engineering, the College of Education and Human Services, the James J. Nance College of Business Administration, the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, and the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.

The elected members of the Honors Council will appoint three "teaching" faculty representatives each year for one-year, renewable terms from faculty members who are scheduled to teach honors courses and who are not already members of the Honors Council. Two of the teaching faculty members will be those teaching lower-division courses and the third will be teaching in part of the upper-division Honors Program. Finally, honors students will elect two honors students each year

to serve on the Honors Council, one from the lower-division and one from the upper-division of the program.

XIV. Honors Appeals Board:

The purpose of the Honors Appeals Board is to receive and act on petitions for waiver of Honors Program requirements and to receive and act on petitions resulting from disputes specific to the requirements of the Honors Program.

The Appeals Board is composed of three faculty members of the Honors Council. Members of the Appeals Board are selected by the Honors Council.

Decisions of the Appeals Board may be appealed to the full Honors Council, which decides whether to hear the appeal at its own discretion.

Decisions of the Honors Council may be appealed to the University Admissions and Standards Committee on the issue of whether or not due process has been followed. Appeal to the University Admissions and Standards Committee is as the last available resolution for the dispute

Approved:
Honors Council Committee
December 2005
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