

University Honors Program Policy Guide
Revised Fall 2013

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4. University Studies - Honors

Admission

Any student wishing to enter the Texas A&M University Honors Program is encouraged to apply. Prospective freshmen apply between August 1 and December 1 the fall before they intend to enter Texas A&M. Continuing students apply between December 1 and February 1 for entry the following fall. Students do not need to be accepted to the University Honors Program to take Honors courses; any Texas A&M student with a 3.50 cumulative TAMU GPR may enroll in available seats in Honors courses, subject to published enrollment restrictions.

Prospective Freshman Application

To be eligible to [apply as a prospective freshman](#), a student must be applying to Texas A&M as a “first time in college” student. Prospective freshman applicants are evaluated on the basis of the highest standardized test score reported to Texas A&M as well as performance on the online application to Honors. To be considered complete, a prospective freshman applicant must also [apply for on-campus housing](#) before housing applications close, pay their deposit, select a preference for “hall over roommate” and select “Honors Housing Community” as their first choice. By applying to the University Honors Program, prospective freshman accept our policy of not honoring roommate requests.

Exceptions to the freshman housing requirement may be requested for the following reasons: 1) participation in the Corps of Cadets, 2) participation in a varsity sport that requires a different living arrangement (with supporting letter from the coach), 3) health issue that requires off-campus housing (with supporting letter from a physician), or 4) religious objection to housing arrangements (with supporting letter from clergy).

Continuing Student Application

To be eligible to [apply as a continuing student](#), a student must have a 3.50 cumulative TAMU GPR or be able to have a 3.50 cumulative TAMU GPR before the start of the entry term and have completed 60 hours or fewer at Texas A&M. The continuing student application consists of making a plan for completing Honors Fellows distinction requirements. Continuing student applicants are encouraged to meet with an Honors Advisor prior to application to ensure they understand these requirements. Acceptance will be based on a students’ ability to complete distinction requirements and evaluation of previous Honors engagement.

Transfer Student Application

Transfer students may apply to the University Honors Program as a continuing student during the prescribed application period. Transfer students are subject to the same requirements for applying as a continuing student.

Transfer students wishing to take an Honors course in their first semester at Texas A&M should schedule an appointment with an Honors Advisor to discuss their options. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis taking into account the student’s degree plan, intended Honors course, and academic performance at their previous institution.

Re-admission

Texas A&M students who have been terminated from the University Honors Program may re-apply as continuing students during the prescribed application period. Re-applying students are subject to the same requirements for applying as a continuing student.

Honors Student Requirements

To remain in the Honors Fellows curriculum, Honors Students must:

- Maintain a 3.50 cumulative GPR
- Maintain a 3.25 GPR in Honors course work
- Make progress toward curriculum requirements by taking at least twelve (12) Honors credits by the end of the second year.
- Meet minimum [co-curricular participation](#) requirements.
- Make an annual update to their [Honors E-Portfolio](#).

Honors Students who fail to meet any of these requirements will be given a semester of probation to correct any deficiencies. Probation is a one-time status and multiple probations will not be given for multiple reasons. Honors Students who fail to meet requirements after a semester of probation will be terminated from the program.

GPR Requirements

To maintain status, Honors Students must have a cumulative GPR of 3.50 or higher. Students (excluding first-year students) who do not have a 3.50 cumulative GPR at the end of the Fall semester will be placed on probation during the upcoming Spring semester. Students (excluding first-year students) who do not have a 3.50 cumulative GPR at the end of the Summer semester will be placed on probation during the upcoming Fall semester. The minimum 3.50 cumulative GPR and 3.25 cumulative Honors GPR (all Honors credit, not just courses fulfilling distinction requirements) are necessary to graduate with an Honors transcript distinction from Texas A&M University.

Students who graduate with a 3.50 cumulative GPR and meet the residency requirement of 60 passed hours at Texas A&M may also be recognized with a Latin Honors distinction from the Registrar. See <http://registrar.tamu.edu/current/gradhonors.aspx> for details on Latin Honors. Students who fall below the required 3.50 GPR will have one semester of probation to bring their GPR to the minimum or will be terminated from the program.

First-year students who do not have a 3.5 cumulative GPR at the end of the academic year will be placed on probation during the upcoming Fall semester.

Progress Toward Distinction

Honors Students are required to take a minimum of twelve (12) Honors credits in the first two years of the program to help ensure progress toward their distinction. Once the curricular requirements of the distinction have been met, a student is welcome to take as many Honors courses as they choose but is no longer required to take honors courses.

Students may obtain permission to be temporarily exempted from the 12-hour rule by producing a plan to complete the required 30 hours of Honors course work by the time they graduate. The University Honors appeals committee will determine acceptable progress and students should submit an appeal for this consideration. The appeal should be submitted as soon as a student knows they will not be completing 12 hours of Honors coursework on time. Appeals will not be accepted retroactively. The committee will consider the number of classes completed in relation to the required credit hours of the student's distinction and take into account the student's classification.

When requesting the exception students should indicate:

- Why they need the exception.
- How they plan to complete the distinction from that point forward.

Note: A desire to avoid taking a difficult or challenging honors course will not be considered a viable reason to request the exception.

Honors Fellows

Students who are accepted into the University Honors Program must pursue the Honors Fellows distinction. To complete distinction requirements, an undergraduate student must:

- Earn a total of 30 honors credit hours, distributed as follows:
 - 9 hours must meet Core Curriculum requirements as specified in the student's catalog
 - 12 hours must be in upper-division (300/400-level) courses
 - Additional honors courses to bring the total to 30 hours
- Complete an Honors Capstone experience (see [Honors Capstone](#))
- Graduate with a minimum 3.5 cumulative Texas A&M University GPR.
- Graduate with a minimum 3.25 cumulative Honors GPR.

Options for Honors Credit: Honors Students are afforded several avenues to earn honors credit in addition to regularly-offered honors courses. Honors Students may contract for honors credit, engage in honors independent study, or take graduate courses that count toward undergraduate degree requirements. Honors Students should consult with University Honors Program advisors about these opportunities.

Transfer Credit: The Honors Fellows distinction requires 30 hours of Honors credit from Texas A&M University. Special consideration may be given for Honors credit earned while a student is enrolled at Texas A&M but is participating in a study abroad experience. Please discuss this option with your Honors Advisor.

Honors credit earned before transferring to Texas A&M and credit by exam (e.g. AP or IB) will not be applied to Honors Fellows requirements.

Honors Capstone: A capstone is a culminating experience that allows a student to bring the learning and experience of their undergraduate education together to address an issue or question that interests them. While capstone experiences are required for Honors Students, any undergraduate at Texas A&M may apply to these programs.

The purpose of a capstone is to demonstrate mastery of an academic discipline, so Honors Students must complete a capstone in their discipline to satisfy distinction requirements. We encourage students to pursue avocational interests for personal development.

To meet Honors requirements, a capstone should:

- Have a proposal process that demonstrates synthesis of the background and theory of the field,
- Result in a scholarly product appropriate for the field,
- Include a public presentation (*n.b.* if a departmental capstone is used, the public presentation must be someplace more public than the class for which the project was completed), and
- Be completed under the guidance of a faculty mentor.

Students should consult with a University Honors Program advisor in the planning stages to seek approval for their capstone experience.

Currently, Honors Students can select from the following capstone options:

[Undergraduate Research Scholars](#)

[Undergraduate Teacher Scholars](#)

Undergraduate Service Scholars (in development)

Undergraduate Leadership Scholars (in development)

National Fellowship Scholars (in development)

Departmental capstone (see your departmental/major advisor)

Co-curricular Participation

This requirement is in place to help Honors Students establish and maintain a sense of community. First-year Honors Students meet this requirement by participation with the Freshman Living-Learning Requirement. Continuing Honors Students meet this requirement by attending at least one eligible event designated by Honors Student Council each semester. Failure to meet this requirement will prompt a notice from the student's Honors Advisor indicating that s/he is on probation. Students away from campus for study abroad, internship, etc., may arrange in advance with their Honors Advisor to meet this requirement in absentia by making an additional journal entry and photo about their experience geared toward sharing that experience with the Honors community.

Freshmen Living-Learning Requirement

First-year Honors Students are required to live and learn in the Honors Housing Community (HHC).

The Learning Community Seminar (LCS) is designed to challenge Honors Students with activities, provide opportunities to meet students in other majors, and foster critical thinking about oneself and their educational decisions.

One goal of the LCS is to help create smaller, academically supportive groups within the larger A&M community. It is also the hope of the LCS that students will discover the value of seeking opportunities to advance their own knowledge and skills outside of the classroom so students will continue to engage in co-curricular activities beyond their first year. The LCS is meant to push students to think and develop beyond their academic curriculum.

Expectations:

Our LCS has both online and in-person participation requirements in order to remain in good standing as a first-year Honors Student.

- Students are expected to respond to journal prompts; formulating ideas of potential careers and the education they need. Their responses will culminate into a Personal Statement assignment that students can submit via eCampus and should be included in their ePortfolio.
- Students are expected to participate in weekly small group meetings and attend speakers and events throughout their first year.

Minimum participation requirements are similar to any pass/fail course. First-year students are expected to complete at least 70% written participation and have no more than 3 absences to remain in good standing after the Fall semester. First-year students are expected to complete at least 70% written participation, have no more than 3 absences, complete the personal statement assignment, and achieve a 3.5 cumulative GPR in order to remain in good standing after the Spring semester.

Honors Student Council Participation

Continuing Honors Students (sophomore-senior) are expected to attend at least one event each semester designated by Honors Student Council (HSC) as a qualifying event. HSC will coordinate with the Honors Advisors to advertise these events by direct email, through eCampus, in the weekly HUR Bulletin, and on the lobby slideshow. HSC will also keep an up-to-date listing of events on the HSC web calendar and HSC website.

HSC will work with its various constituencies including representatives from the various college and departmental Honors tracks, Honors Housing Community, and University Scholars to offer a broad range of intellectually-stimulating and community-building options. HSC will take attendance or arrange to have attendance taken at these events and forward this information to Honors Advisors.

E-Portfolio

The ePortfolio is an online comprehensive collection of information about a person. Students can

keep track of work experience, groups they participate in, and awards they have won, but also what research they are working on, study-abroad photos, a reflective journal, and anything else they have put effort into that they would like to document and share. Students can describe courses they have taken and make note of professors they connected with. Often jobs or graduate programs require samples of work and, with their ePortfolio, Honors Students will already have begun their repertoire and will have gained experience organizing and presenting their work. The ePortfolio is a multi-dimensional resume that is individualized by the student which they will be responsible for updating annually.

See the HSC ePortfolio template at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/tamuhonorseresumetemplate/>

Probation

Honors probation is a one-semester grace period for students who fail to meet the minimum program requirements of the University Honors Program. If a student has not corrected the deficiencies on their record by the end of the probationary semester, they will be terminated from the program. Probation is a one-time status and multiple probations will not be given for different reasons.

Probation Restrictions

Students on probation in the University Honors program will face the following restrictions:

- Loss of Honors Priority Registration
- Inability to register for Honors courses (if below 3.5 cumulative GPR)

Honors Students on probation will continue to have access to Honors Course Contracts, Honors Independent Study, Honors Advising, National Fellowships Advising, Honors Student Council, and Honor Housing Community privileges.

Appeals

Honors Students have the ability to submit an appeal regarding any University Honors Program requirement. Submission of an appeal does not guarantee the requirement will be waived for the student.

Examples of appeals include:

- Students can submit an appeal to the committee to have a non-Core Curriculum Honors course count towards the required 9 hours in the Core Curriculum with sufficient evidence the non-Core course meets the expectations of the category as defined by the Catalog.
- Students can submit an appeal regarding the requirement to take 12 hours of Honors course work by the end of the second year by providing a plan for completing 30 credits by graduation.

Appeals may be submitted by hard copy or in writing to any Honors Advisor. Students are encouraged to keep a copy of their appeal for their own records. The University Honors Program Appeal Committee meets regularly to consider appeals and results of appeals will be communicated back to students in writing via the Sundial advising system at <http://sundial.tamu.edu/honors>.

Honors Community

The University Honors Community consists of several overlapping groups of students: the Honors Housing Community, Honors Student Council, and University Scholars.

Honors Housing Community

The Honors Housing Community provides a living-learning community for students who are committed to Honors study at Texas A&M. The community consists of participating students in McFadden|Lechner Freshman Honors Halls and Clements Honors Hall. The community is served by the Honors Housing Community Student Leaders (HHCSL), a recognized student organization, and their respective Hall Councils which are organized through the Residence Hall Association in the Department of Residence Life. The cooperative relationship between the University Honors Program and the Department of Residence Life is governed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) updated on an annual basis.

HHC Program Objectives:

- Promote academic excellence, research, internships, study abroad, and advanced degrees.
- Utilize TAMU campus resources, events, athletics, arts, student organizations, and community services.
- Participate in events that facilitate interaction with students, faculty, and staff.
- Develop student leaders to serve the Honors Housing Community and the Texas A&M community at large.
- Contribute to the understanding that not all student development occurs in the classroom or through organized activities.

HHC Program Outcomes:

- Interact with the Honors Housing Community.
- Integrate into the Texas A&M University community-at-large.
- Utilize Texas A&M University campus resources.
- Discuss socio-cultural topics and global issues.
- Demonstrate navigation through exploration, engagement, analysis, and adaptation.
- Embrace appropriate risk and learn from failure.

Entering Honors Housing

Students admitted to the University Honors Program as freshmen are required to live in the Honors Housing Community (with a few exceptions).

All students who wish to reside in the Honors Housing Community must complete the Department of Residence Life process--which includes applying, completing a contract,

submitting a deposit and record of Bacterial Meningitis vaccination--by the deadlines established in that office. For general information about on-campus housing, consult the [Department of Residence Life](#) website.

Honors Student Council

The Honors Student Council (HSC) promotes participation in the University Honors Program by providing an avenue for student input and interaction. One of the leading objectives of HSC is to provide informal interchange between students and faculty outside the classroom. HSC sponsors a number of events throughout the year to promote involvement in the University Honors Programs and the achievements of its students, faculty, and staff.

HSC is a recognized student organization and has the following mission:

The purpose of the organization shall be (a) to provide programming for its members and other Honors students; (b) to represent Honors students at Texas A&M; (c) to serve as a liaison between Honors students and the Office of Honors Programs, Honors faculty, the university administration, Student Government, and other appropriate bodies; (d) to increase visibility, involvement, and the overall sense of community within the Honors Program; and (e) to build student leaders. Vision for 2011-2012 To involve more honors students and honors organizations, to increase the sense of community, and to inform students of and adapt to the changes in honors.

HSC has an executive structure that includes elected officers and appointed representatives for various Honors constituencies including the college and department Honors tracks (one each), Honors Housing Community (three total; one each from the Hall Councils and one HHCSL), and University Scholars.

See the HSC website at <http://hscweb.tamu.edu>.

University Scholars

The University Scholars program identifies students who embody academic leadership and enhances the personal and professional development of these students. The intention of the program is to not only identify the most innovative, curious, and motivated Honors students, but to also challenge them to use their talents to the full.

Each spring semester, eligible students are invited to apply for the University Scholar program. The application process involves an extensive written application, and, for the approximately 40 students selected as semi-finalists, an in-depth interview. In the end, 10-12 students are invited to join the program.

University Scholars receive a scholarship stipend for the remainder of their undergraduate career and participate in a number of development activities, including Honors Faculty Mentoring Groups, intimate discussion-based seminars on a wide variety of topics. Additionally, University

Scholars serve as ambassadors for Honors and Undergraduate Research and Texas A&M University, representing the office at outreach events and in our publicity materials.

University Scholars typically occupy key leadership positions throughout campus and the community, are involved in significant undergraduate research projects, and go on to win major scholarships such as the Marshall, Goldwater, Truman, and Udall, among others. University Scholars are also frequently accepted into their preferred professional programs or top-tier graduate programs. Overall, University Scholars represent the core values and mission of Honors & Undergraduate Research at Texas A&M University.

Eligibility

To be invited to apply for the University Scholars program, students must...

1. Be a first-time college student in the second semester of their first year at Texas A&M University
2. Have established a cumulative GPR of 3.5 or better OR have a cumulative GPR of 3.2 or better and be in the University Honors Program

Selection Criteria

Students selected as University Scholars generally exhibit the following traits:

- High esteem for scholarship, intellection, and learning
- A commitment to the betterment of one's community
- Demonstrated proclivity for adaptability, curiosity, and self-awareness
- Excellent communication skills, and overall poise, maturity, and comportment

The deadline for application is set each spring, after which time the written applications are reviewed by a committee comprised of Honors Faculty, Honors Advisors, current University Scholars, and members of the Honors Programs Advisory Committee. From this pool, approximately 40 applicants are then invited to participate in selection interviews, which take place in early April. Scholars are announced once final grades for the spring semester have posted. The application will be available on the [Forms & Downloads](#) page in late January.

Program Requirements

To maintain eligibility for the program, students must maintain a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPR throughout their undergraduate career.

University Scholars are expected to remain in the program for three years, or six semesters. For each semester, they must enroll in an Honors Faculty Mentor Group, which are one-credit hour, S/U courses. Groups are centered on a specific topic of discussion for the semester; they are led by Honors faculty and consist of five to eight students. Meeting times are often flexible.

University Scholars are also expected to be available for recruiting and publicity events as needed, including events organized by the Prospective Student Center, the Scholarships & Financial Aid office, one's own academic college or department, and Honors & Undergraduate Research.

University Scholars are expected to follow the guidelines as set forth in the policy manual and to make steady and continuous progress towards the completion of the University Honors distinction. Scholars are also required to meet with the University Scholars program coordinator at least once each semester to discuss curricular and career goals.

University Scholars are expected to contribute to the ongoing development of Honors & Undergraduate Research by serving (as needed and when able) on an executive committee that will advise the office on proposed changes to policies and procedures, community events, and faculty-student relations.

University Studies – Honors

The University Studies - Honors (USHN) degree is an innovative degree that provides motivated Texas A&M students the flexibility to combine multiple areas of interest into a single degree plan, thereby allowing students with unique intellectual interests to create a curriculum that best suits their needs.

The University Studies - Honors degree provides the opportunity for a unique educational experience. Rather than focusing their course of study on an academic field, USHN students select a range of course work that defines an "area of concentration," in combination to two established minor fields of study.

The University Studies - Honors curriculum is distinguished by the following components:

- A flexible area of concentration tailored to each student
- A network of faculty, staff, and high-achieving students committed to interdisciplinary education
- An emphasis on "problems-based," experiential education
- Access to enrichment opportunities offered through the Honors Programs
- An inquiry capstone experience through the Honors Research Fellows Program

To declare a University Studies - Honors major, students must complete the [University Studies application](#), develop an Area of Concentration curriculum, and assemble an Interdisciplinary Advisory Committee. For further guidance, [contact the Honors Programs office](#).

Procedure to Declare USHN

Because the University Studies - Honors degree plan allows for a remarkable amount of flexibility, the procedure for declaring the major is quite involved.

Eligibility - A student applying for admission to University Studies - Honors must meet the following criteria:

- Be Honors Eligible
- Be seeking an interdisciplinary undergraduate education that transcends the boundaries of the undergraduate majors at Texas A&M University

- Have conceived a curriculum that does not replicate any other area of concentration in the University Studies degree

Application Materials - To apply for admission to the Honors Area of Concentration in the University Studies degree, students must submit the following to the Office of University Studies, 3rd floor Hotard Hall:

- Completed application form
- Completed University Studies Degree Plan
- Typed Essay
- Alternate Minor Form (if necessary)
- Endorsement by the University Honors Program office
- Endorsement by the academic college that has agreed to provide the academic “home” for the student while he or she completes the University Studies degree with the Honors Area of Concentration.

Notification of Acceptance - Students will receive notification of acceptance or denial via their TAMU e-mail account.

Advising - Honors and Undergraduate Research will provide academic advising to students pursuing a University Studies degree with the Honors Area of Concentration and will coordinate with the academic college that has agreed to administer the student’s degree plan.

USHN Degree Plan

The University Studies - Honors degree plan must include a minimum of 120 semester hours of accredited college level work, which must include:

An Area of Concentration (24 hours) - The combination of courses that comprises the Area of Concentration will be selected by the student and must be conceptually linked. The total must also include at least 18 Honors credit hours. The Honors credit hours will include one to six credit hours of Honors Independent Study, completed as part of the Honors Research Fellows program.

Two minors (15-18 hours each) - As part of the overall degree plan, the student must also select two established minor fields of study. At least one of the two minors must be offered from outside the college offering the honors area of concentration. A list of approved minors offered in each of the academic colleges at Texas A&M University is available at:

<http://unst.tamu.edu/minors.aspx>.

Additional Requirements - The degree plan must also satisfy the general degree requirements at Texas A&M:

- Two courses in the area of concentration and/or in the minors must be approved as writing-intensive (W) classes. The list of W-courses is available online at <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/content/view/404/226/>.
- University Core Curriculum (43 hours).
- Electives (17-23 hours).
- Within the 120 credits in this degree, the student must have at least 33 credit hours of Honors course work and 36 credits hours of 300-400 level coursework at Texas A&M University.
- The student must graduate with:
 - A Texas A&M University cumulative GPR of at least 3.5
 - An Honors GPR of at least 3.25, and
 - No honors class grade on his/her transcript that is lower than a C.

Honors credits are normally limited to Texas A&M University classes designated as Honors. However, with approval, students may complete Honors Course Contracts, complete an Honors Independent Study, or enroll in graduate courses for undergraduate credit.