



HONORS COLLEGE

Faculty Resource Guide

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Clemson University Honors College: Brief Overview

Honors College Mission

The Honors College strives to enrich the educational experience of highly motivated, academically talented students by providing opportunities for scholarship and research not always available to undergraduates. The purpose of Honors is to foster continued intellectual growth, to cultivate a lifelong respect for learning, and to prepare students for lives as leaders and change-agents.

Honors College Admissions and Continued Eligibility

The Honors College has its own admissions process, separate from that of the university. Prospective Clemson students may apply to the Honors College after they complete their Clemson application. The Honors College seeks to admit students who show evidence of intellectual curiosity, leadership, and depth and breadth in their interests and experiences. Admissions decisions are based on a holistic review of students' high school academic performance, standardized test scores, activities and awards, essay responses, and teacher and counselor recommendations.

Continuing Clemson students may also apply to the Honors College. Continuing students applying for General Honors must have a minimum Clemson cumulative GPA of 3.5 at the end of the semester the student applies to the Honors College and complete an application including three essays. Students pursuing Departmental Honors must have a cumulative 3.5 GPA at the end of the semester the student applies to the Honors College and receive the endorsement of the departmental representative.

In order to remain in the Honors College, students must maintain a 3.4 cumulative GPA and successfully complete at least one Honors course each semester. Students who do not meet those requirements are placed on probation for one semester, after which they either return to good standing or are removed from the Honors College. In the case of extenuating circumstances and with a detailed action plan, the probationary period may extend beyond one semester. Students whose cumulative GPA drops below 2.8 are automatically removed from the Honors College.

All Honors students are assigned an [Honors College advisor](#) who can provide guidance on Honors course selection, Honors eligibility and progress, and academic and professional goals. This advising complements but does not substitute for college and/or departmental advising.

Honors Curricula

Students may complete General Honors and/or Departmental or Interdisciplinary Honors.

General Honors

The main purpose of General Honors is to broaden the student's intellectual perspectives. To this end, students are encouraged to take Honors courses in as many different areas of study as possible. Most of the courses students will take for General Honors are 1000-2000 level courses that satisfy the university's General Education requirements or serve as introductory courses in a student's major, although it is permissible for 3000-4000 level courses to be taken for General Honors. Typically, students take most of their General Honors courses during the freshman and sophomore years, although many students enroll in General Honors courses as juniors and seniors.

To successfully complete General Honors, students must successfully complete (with a grade of A or B) a minimum of 18 hours from three of the following groups: Communication; Mathematical, Scientific and Technological Literacy & Engineering; Arts and Humanities; Social Science; Cross Cultural Awareness; Science and Technology in Society; and Other. In addition students must have: (1) at least three hours from three or more groups and (2) at least three hours in each of three or more subjects (e.g., ENGL, MATH). Full details and example course listings in each area appear in the Honors College [Student Handbook](#).

Departmental Honors

The purpose of Departmental Honors is to provide Honors students a unique opportunity to do advanced, in-depth study and research within their major academic disciplines. Specific requirements are set by the student's department; however, the Honors College recommends that all students, regardless of major, complete a thesis, portfolio of creative works, or major research project under the guidance of a faculty member or committee of faculty. Departmental Honors curricula, while set by departments, must be approved by the Clemson Honors College Committee before they can be implemented. Students should follow the curriculum in the Student Handbook for the year they began pursuing Departmental Honors, unless otherwise agreed-upon by the department and the Honors College.

Generally, Departmental Honors is completed during a student's junior and senior years. Normally, students achieve Departmental Honors in the academic discipline of their major. However, Departmental Honors can be earned in an area of study other than that of the student's major. Students may also complete Departmental Honors in two different disciplines. All courses taken for Departmental Honors must be Honors courses.

Interdisciplinary Honors

The purpose of Interdisciplinary Honors is to provide Honors students a unique opportunity to do advanced, in-depth study and/or research that combines at least two academic disciplines. Specific requirements are determined by an agreement with a faculty member in one of the academic departments, who will serve as the Interdisciplinary Honors advisor, and approved by the Director of the Honors College.

Interdisciplinary Honors requires at least 14 credit hours divided as follows:

Three-Course Option. Three upper level courses of at least three credit hours each across at least two disciplines, each in conjunction with HON 4010 (1) for a total 12 credit hours, plus two hours of HON 4990

or

Thesis/Project Option. Two upper level courses of at least three credit hours each across two disciplines, each in conjunction with HON 4010, plus at least 6 hours of HON 4990

To be eligible for Interdisciplinary Honors the student must have reached an agreement with a faculty member, who will serve as their Interdisciplinary Honors advisor, by the end of their sophomore year on a series of proposed courses for their junior and senior years (students must have at least 4 semesters, excluding summers, left within their undergraduate curriculum; exceptions will be made only in unusual cases, and must have the approval of the Director of the Honors College). These courses must span at least two different subject areas. The agreement between the student and faculty member must be approved by an Interdisciplinary Honors Steering Committee before the start of the junior year, with an update and revision form submitted at the end of the junior year and as necessary afterwards. *Under no circumstances can courses be counted toward the requirements for Interdisciplinary Honors unless they are approved in advance by the*

Interdisciplinary Honors Steering Committee. The faculty advisor will sign a completion form at the end of the senior year.

The faculty advisor will be listed as faculty of record for the one credit hour HON 4010 companion course for the upper level courses the student will be completing. In addition, the same faculty member will be the instructor for HON 4990.

In HON 4010 the student will meet regularly with the faculty advisor to discuss additional readings or assignments related to the associated course, and how the course integrates with the student's proposed interdisciplinary topic. The student will be required to submit a final reflection essay as part of grade for each semester of HON 4010.

Students completing the thesis or major project option will take at least 6 hours of HON 4990 and prepare a substantial product (which must be described and approved in the form at the end of the junior year). Students taking the three course option will take two hours of HON 4990 as a capstone course to explore connections between their courses, culminating in a reflective essay pulling together their interdisciplinary experience.

Policies for Honors Curricula

Honors courses can be counted towards either General Honors or Departmental/Interdisciplinary Honors but not for both General and Departmental/Interdisciplinary Honors.

Students must earn a grade of an A or B in an Honors course in order to receive Honors credit for it. Students may earn course credit for a grade of a C or D, but not Honors credit.

Teaching Honors Courses

Although Honors courses vary in size and structure, they share the common feature of being *qualitatively different* than non-honors courses. In other words, they should be more challenging and demanding not by simply assigning more work, but by mining more educational value from the work that is assigned. When the Clemson Honors College Committee considers a proposal for a new Honors course, it wants to see concrete evidence on the sample syllabus that the course will be different in some, but not necessarily all, of the following ways:

- approaching the material from an interesting or unconventional thematic perspective;
- emphasizing written and oral communication skills;
- emphasizing discussion and other interactive teaching/learning techniques that are generally unsuitable for larger undergraduate classes;
- promoting learning outside the formal classroom setting (e.g., service projects);
- fostering teamwork and collaboration;
- applying principles learned in class to “real-life” problems and situations;
- exploring connections among various fields of study;
- providing opportunities for independent research;
- providing opportunities for publication or public presentation of work;
- developing assignments and exercises that require students to reconcile conflicting findings or to synthesize different points of view;

- emphasizing the use of original or primary sources, as opposed to traditional textbooks and secondary readings.

There are several different types of Honors courses, each described more fully below. Which of the above characteristics the course includes will vary based on course content and type.

Honors Seminars

Honors seminars are small classes taught under the HON rubric. They may be taught at the 1000- (first-year seminars) or 2000-level and typically provide General Education credit. Available courses include:

HON 1900 - Freshman Colloquium: Arts and Humanities (Literature)
 HON 1910 - Freshman Colloquium: Arts and Humanities (Non-literature)
 HON 1920 - Freshman Colloquium: Social Science
 HON 1930 - Freshman Colloquium: Cross-Cultural Awareness
 HON 1940 - Freshman Colloquium: Science and Technology in Society
 HON 2010 - Structures and Society (Non-literature Humanities and STS)
 HON 2020 - Science, Culture, and Human Values (Social Science)
 HON 2030 - Society, Art, and Humanities (Non-literature Humanities)
 HON 2040 - Honors Study/Travel
 HON 2050 - Current Issues
 HON 2060 - Controversies in Science and Technology (STS)
 HON 2070 - Reasoning, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving
 HON 2090 - Border Crossings: Experiences in World Cultures (CCA)
 HON 2100 - Experiencing the Arts (Non-literature Humanities)
 HON 2101 - Experiencing the Arts Laboratory
 HON 2200 - Studies in Social Science
 HON 2210 - Studies in Literature
 HON 2220 - Studies in Arts and Humanities
 HON 2230 - Studies in Communications
 HON 2240 - Global Issues

Faculty members may propose an Honors seminar, under one of these rubrics, to the Honors College. Interested faculty members should submit a sample syllabus to [Sarah Winslow](#). Honors seminars are offered under the general existing course rubrics above; as such, they are approved by the Clemson Honors College Committee (CHCC) and do not need to be entered into Curriculog. Faculty members proposing a course will be invited to the CHCC meeting during which the course will be discussed to answer questions and provide/receive feedback. The decision to teach an Honors seminar – and how this fits into a faculty member’s workload—will be jointly agreed-upon by the department chair, faculty member, and Honors College Director (or designee).

Standalone Honors Courses (discipline-based)

Many academic departments regularly offer focused standalone honors sections of disciplinary courses with smaller enrollments (e.g., SOC 2010 HON taught as its own section independent of other SOC 2010 sections). These courses often allow faculty to explore topics in greater depth; to emphasize communication, critical thinking, and/or research skills in ways not possible in standard courses; and to provide more opportunities for discussion and application of course topics. Faculty members might, for example, assign a different type of project in an Honors section, require collaboration or presentation, and/or focus more on

primary source materials. As such, the principles listed above for Honors seminars can provide guidance for faculty members teaching standalone honors sections of disciplinary courses.

Many courses have already been approved to be taught with the Honors designation. This information can be found in the course description in the Undergraduate Announcements (it will say “Includes Honors sections”). Adding the Honors designation to an existing or new disciplinary course should be routed through the official university curriculum process. After the course is approved by the department and college curriculum committees, it will come to the Honors College before proceeding to the University Curriculum Committee. Please note the following important details about this curriculum approval process:

- It is important that the “includes Honors sections” box be checked at the time the course is created as it cannot be marked at a later step in the process.
- Please provide sufficient information about what will distinguish the Honors offering from the standard course. Importantly, whenever possible, Honors courses should offer *different learning opportunities, not more work*. For example, a faculty member might want Honors students to complete a different type of course project or complete critical thinking essays or exercises rather than quizzes.
- The Honors College Committee meets on the third Friday of every month. Courses must be received by Monday of that week in order to be on the agenda. Please allow sufficient time for the Honors College to review a course before it needs to be on the University Curriculum Committee agenda.

Embedded Honors Courses (discipline-based)

In cases where a standalone Honors section isn’t feasible, departments may offer an embedded Honors section in which a small number of students take a standard course for Honors credit. In these situations, an Honors section would run concurrently with a regular section. The coursework is typically enhanced for students in an embedded Honors course. For example, although the students would/might attend the same lectures, they might:

- take different exams (e.g., take-home essays exams rather than in-class multiple choice and short answer exams);
- complete a different, more enhanced course project;
- have alternative, more challenging problem sets or essay assignments;
- present their work in class or at a departmental or university event;
- attend discussion sessions or events outside of the normal class meeting.

Whenever possible, we encourage instructors to craft an Honors section that involves qualitatively different, rather than just extra, work. We understand that this is more difficult in an embedded Honors section.

In cases where Honors students are assigned a research or creative project not assigned to students enrolled in the standard section, the instructor has the prerogative of assigning a numerical or letter grade to the student’s work for the Honors project and incorporating that grade into the grade for the course. Alternatively, the instructor may wish to grade the Honors project on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis separately from the regular course requirements. If the student fails to complete the assignment or submits

a project deemed by the instructor to be unworthy of Honors credit, the instructor has the prerogative of recording a course grade of “C” or lower.

Honors Contracts

On a limited basis, students may earn Honors credit for a 3000- or 4000-level course by means of an [Honors Contract](#) (in exceptional cases contracts for 1000 and 2000-level classes may be approved). The purpose of such contracts is to enable students to experience the educational enrichment that typifies Honors courses, and to explore topics in greater depth than is normally possible in a regular undergraduate course.

Honors contracts can only be offered in association with a non-Honors course in which the student is concurrently enrolled. *Contracts should be pursued when a course has not been approved for Honors sections through the university curriculum process. If the Honors designation exists for a course, departments should offer an embedded Honors section for a student/students (see above) rather than pursuing an Honors contract.*

Honors contracts are the product of mutual agreement between the student and the instructor and entail a commitment by both parties to a learning experience above and beyond normal course requirements. It is expected that such an experience will involve close and regular interaction between the student and the instructor. Work required should be the equivalent of at least one semester hour of academic credit. However, the terms of the contract should emphasize quality of experience over quantity of work. Faculty members are encouraged to read the guidelines for standalone and embedded Honors courses above for suggested modifications for Honors courses and contracts. *Please note: Faculty members are not required to agree to requests for Honors contracts.*

To create such a course, students enroll in a non-Honors course, then work out an agreement with the instructor to make additions or modifications to the course syllabus and requirements. Students must then submit the Honors Contract Proposal form available on the Honors College’s website by the last day of classes in the preceding semester (fall for spring courses and spring for fall courses). Once a student does so, the professor listed on the contract will be asked to review and submit the final proposal to the Honors College. All contracts must be approved by the Honors College. Once approved, the faculty member will become the instructor of record for the HON 4000 section assigned to the course. At the end of the contract period (semester or summer term), the instructor must submit a grade of P (pass) or NP (no-pass) in the iROAR system for HON 4000, as well as a letter grade for the discipline-based class.

General Policies and Guidelines for Honors Courses

- With the exception of adding an Honors contract to a disciplinary course, a course may not be taught or taken for Honors credit unless it has been approved as an Honors course by the appropriate curriculum committees and by the Clemson Honors College Committee.
- Courses approved to be taught as an Honors course have “Includes Honors sections” in their *Undergraduate Announcements* descriptions.
- Honors courses should also be indicated by having (HON or Honors) in the title of the course in iROAR and associated documents.
- With the approval of the appropriate departmental undergraduate and graduate coordinators and the Honors Director, certain 6000- and/or 8000-level courses may be substituted for Honors courses.
- Grading

- Grades in Honors courses carry the same number of grade points as grades earned in non-Honors courses.
- Faculty are advised to grade Honors students according to the quality of their work, not on the basis of a “curve” nor with expectations that are extraordinary relative to those the faculty member might otherwise have for students.
- Grading policies for Honors students should be clearly stated in the course syllabus.

Serving as Departmental or Interdisciplinary Honors Faculty Advisor

Departmental Honors Faculty Advisor

Faculty across majors serve as advisors for Honors students conducting Departmental Honors research. This may involve serving as the instructor of record for required research hours as stipulated in a department’s Departmental Honors requirements (available in the Honors College’s [Student Handbook](#)). Departmental Honors faculty advisors are encouraged to note the following:

- Departmental Honors curricula are established by departments and approved by the Honors College. Ultimate authority for guidelines and requirements lies with the departments.
- The Honors College has no specific requirements for if, when, or how a formal thesis (or proposal) defense occurs. We defer to departments on those and related matters.
- The Honors College awards Departmental Honors if and when a student successfully completes the requirements for Departmental Honors as stipulated in the Student Handbook.
 - The Honors College uses a grade of A or B in required courses, including research hours, as indication of successful completion.
 - There is no formal requirement for depositing theses or completing paperwork with the Honors College to certify that a student has successfully met the requirements for Departmental Honors.

Interdisciplinary Honors Faculty Advisor

Faculty members may also serve as an Interdisciplinary Honors faculty advisor. Interdisciplinary Honors, described more fully at the beginning of this resource guide, is specifically for students who wish to combine at least two academic disciplines into one cohesive project.

Students will work with their faculty advisor to outline their course and research plan and then document this plan in the Interdisciplinary Course Proposal Form, to be completed second semester of their sophomore year (and revised at the end of their second semester of their junior year) and submitted to the Honors College for approval by the Interdisciplinary Honors Steering Committee. The Honors College recommends that faculty members and students develop clear expectations for their coursework and research experience including a separate syllabus or syllabus addendum for the associated courses.

The faculty advisor will be listed as the instructor for the one credit hour HON 4010 companion course for the upper level courses the student will be completing (two or three courses, depending on the option the student chooses). In HON 4010 the student will meet regularly with the faculty advisor to discuss additional readings or assignments related to the associated course, and how the course integrates with the student’s proposed interdisciplinary topic. The student will be required to submit a final reflection essay to the faculty advisor as part of the grade for each semester of HON 4010. In addition, the same faculty member will be the instructor for HON 4990, the student’s research hours. *Faculty members should be aware that serving as an Interdisciplinary Honors advisor is a two-year commitment to working closely with a student.*

Honors College Service and Engagement Opportunities

EUREKA!

Before they officially begin their Clemson careers, many Honors students participate in EUREKA!, a mentored research program in which eligible faculty are paired with incoming freshmen for a five-week summer research experience. Interested faculty are encouraged to complete the faculty proposal form, which asks for a brief project description; a summary of the work the student will complete, any necessary skills and knowledge, and expected outcomes; and opportunities available to students after the EUREKA! experience. Each year, a significant portion of EUREKA! students continue work on the same projects and/or in the same lab once the academic semester begins. For more information, visit the [EUREKA!](#) website.

Dixon Fellows Program

The [Dixon Fellows Program](#) brings together some of Clemson University's best students and faculty to form a unique community dedicated to intellectual, cultural, and personal learning and growth. At the heart of the Dixon Fellows experience is the mentor group, a small number of students (the junior fellows) meeting together with a professor (senior fellow) who acts as role-model, mentor, and guide. These small groups meet regularly throughout the semester to engage in a variety of formal and informal programs and events, each designed to encourage discussion and conversation, and to enable the junior fellows to learn from the senior fellows, from invited guests, and from each other.

Honors College Application Reviewer

Faculty members across the university serve as Honors College application reviewers, reading and evaluating the nearly 2000 new student applications the Honors College receives each year. Faculty members are selected for this opportunity due to their commitment to the Honors College and expertise in identifying and developing high-achieving students. Faculty members who read applications in the priority round can expect to complete their reviews in December and January, faculty reviewing in the non-priority round complete reviews in February and March, and those assisting with the appeal process complete reviews in March. If you are interested in participating, contact [Sarah Winslow](#).

Clemson Honors College Committee

The Clemson Honors College Committee formulates and recommends policies and procedures for Clemson Honors College to the Council on Undergraduate Studies. The faculty members on the committee serve as the curriculum committee for the Honors College, reviewing and approving all Honors seminars and Honors designations for discipline-based courses. Each disciplinary college and the libraries elects a member of the committee to serve a three-year term; the Faculty Senate appoints a member for a one-year term; and two additional faculty members are appointed to one-year terms by the Executive Director of the Honors College. Three undergraduate students—two representatives from the Honors Student Advisory Board and one student appointed by the Executive Director—are also voting members of the committee. The Executive Director serves as the chair of the committee and Honors staff members and a representation from the Office of Admissions serve as non-voting members.

Faculty members who have experience with Honors College teaching and service, as well as those who are particularly interested in working with high-achieving students, are especially encouraged to seek nomination or appointment to the committee.

Departmental Honors Contact

Academic departments appoint or elect a departmental Honors contact. This person serves as a liaison between the Honors College and the academic department. Although specific duties may vary by departmental needs and structure, this faculty member typically serves as the point of contact for all students planning to pursue or currently pursuing departmental Honors and will be asked to provide departmental endorsement for students applying to the Honors College to pursue Departmental Honors. The departmental contact may also participate in or lead Honors advising, curriculum, and engagement for the department and thus should be familiar with the information provided in this resource guide. Questions about serving as a departmental Honors contact can be directed to [Sarah Winslow](#).

Student Research Grants

Educational Enrichment Travel Grants

Honors students may apply for an [Educational Enrichment Travel Grant \(EETG\)](#) to support life-changing educational experiences outside the classroom and away from the Clemson campus. These experiences may be internships, foreign study, public service projects, or other significant endeavors consistent with the student's educational, career and life goals. These awards are highly competitive.

Each year, a committee of faculty members reviews applications for EETGs and recommends funding awards. Each faculty member reviews 30 – 40 applications and attends one training meeting and one final selection meeting with other reviewers. Faculty contributions to this important endeavor are critical to the Honors College's support for global learning. Faculty members interested in serving on the EETG review committee should contact [Melissa Hawkins](#).

Each EETG application also requires a recommendation letter. Faculty members may be asked to provide these endorsements for Honors students. In their letters, faculty members should indicate their relationship with the student, their assessment of his/her academic performance and intellectual curiosity, and, to the extent possible, how they foresee this experience contributing to the student's academic and professional development.

Conference Travel Grants

The [Conference Travel Fund](#) is intended to provide financial support to students in the Honors College planning to attend conferences related to their academic interests. Students can apply for funding for conference registration fees, lodging, food and transportation. Applications require faculty endorsement of the legitimacy of the experience and its potential impact on the student's academic and professional development. For more information, contact [Melissa Hawkins](#).

Departmental Honors Research Grants

At the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, Honors students may apply for funds to support their Departmental Honors research projects. These competitive grants may be used to fund such needs as equipment, supplies, and travel to professional meetings or research facilities, or other items that are beyond the capacity of the student's department to provide. Full details about Departmental Honors Research Grants can be found [here](#); questions should be directed to [Susan Falendysz](#).

An online endorsement form completed by the student's principal research advisor must be submitted in support of all student grant applications. The Faculty Endorsement Form requires a 23-digit account number as well as the name and email address of the department accountant for financial transactions. This information is necessary to transfer grant funds to the academic department upon approval of grant funding. Grant requests accompanied by a faculty endorsement providing an invalid or incorrect CUBS account information will be automatically disqualified for funding consideration.

In situations where the research project requires Institutional Review Board approval the applicant/student will be asked to submit an IRB Approval Information form. Students will need knowledge of/access to the following information to complete the IRB Approval Information form: IRB approval status, IRB approval date (or, if not approved, requested and anticipated date), and IRB approval number (can be left blank if approval has not yet been received). When IRB approval is received the applicant/student is also asked to submit a digital copy of the IRB approval notification. In most instances research grant funding will not be released to the academic department until the IRB Approval Information form has been submitted and the digital copy of the IRB approval notification has been uploaded. IRB approval documentation must be received in the same semester as the grant application. IRB approval documentation that is received after the end of the award semester will not be considered, and the student shall be required to re-apply for funding in a future semester.