

THE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE HANDBOOK

Congratulations on your acceptance into the University Honors College! The Honors experience will provide you with a unique and challenging set of opportunities, both in and out of the classroom. This handbook is designed to answer basic questions about your responsibilities and privileges as an Honors student. If you have additional questions, the Honors staff will be happy to discuss them with you.

This handbook is updated every year, prior to the start of the Fall Semester. All Honors College students are responsible for reading through the handbook each year and following the policies and procedures as they are listed. In certain instances, a student may be “grandfathered” regarding a particular policy if that policy received a substantial change after the student’s first year in the Honors College.

Refer to this handbook each semester before advising to ensure you are aware of your responsibilities. Follow up with a staff member about any questions you have regarding Honors College requirements.

RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, BENEFITS, OPPORTUNITIES

Membership in good standing with the Honors College confers the following rights and privileges:

- Special and generally smaller classes,
- Increased access to and interaction with professors and administrators,
- Access to Honors staff members who take a personal interest in your campus experience and can provide information and assist you with advising and problem-solving,

- Exposure to an interdisciplinary approach to human knowledge and learning,
- Access to information about education, travel, scholarships, and intellectual opportunities across the nation and around the world,
- Advice and support for applications to competitive and prestigious national scholarship programs including: Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, Truman, Goldwater, Udall, and others,
- Eligibility for paid undergraduate research opportunities through the Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program,
- Access to specially designated Honors campus housing, as space is available,
- Special benefits at the University library, including extended borrowing privileges and access to special study areas,
- Access to the Student Forum at McClellan Hall, which includes a study area, computer lab, lounge with TV/VCR/DVD, and a small kitchen,
- When eligible, access to special programs and/or admission criteria at the TTU Medical School and Law School,
- Participation in various Honors-sponsored special and social events at little or no cost,
- First-day registration for classes to enable students to take advantage of academic opportunities, including Honors sections of courses,
- Ability to take a leave of absence from the College when studying abroad, completing internships, or participating in other activities that remove a student temporarily from the campus and that complement the Honors experience,
- Peer support through the First Year Experience (FYE) Mentor Program.

THE HONORS PHILOSOPHY

The Honors experience is a special one, offering both outstanding academic and extracurricular opportunities. These opportunities are designed for those students who are intellectually curious, capable, and interested in making the most of their time at the University. The members of the Honors College staff are

dedicated to assisting students in achieving their academic and personal goals.

By the same token, we anticipate that students who associate with the Honors College will embrace the opportunity to explore the world in which they live, to challenge themselves to develop their critical thinking skills, and to go beyond the acquisition of vocational skills to foster a true educational experience containing breadth as well as depth. It is in this spirit that we seek to form a partnership with each of our students, in which Honors faculty and staff members provide entrée to a world of opportunity. Honors students reciprocate by exploring, defining, and pursuing opportunity in a way that will maximize their academic and personal growth.

EXPECTATIONS OF HONORS STUDENTS

Our expectations of you stem from our philosophy and our desire to assist you in achieving your individual goals. General expectations we have for you include:

- Fulfilling (or exceeding) the requirements for Honors College membership and graduation
- Demonstrating maturity and behavior appropriate for an Honors student
- Taking responsibility for your educational success, personal success, and for your actions, including seeking help for problems sooner rather than later.

Specific expectations including: appropriate behavior, Honors advising, satisfactory progress in Honors coursework, requirements for graduation in Honors, Honors GPA requirements, and maintaining current contact information are all outlined below.

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

The perks and advantages you can anticipate from the College are numerous and are outlined more specifically below.

Responsibilities come with these benefits and from the special investment the University is making in you. We expect you will exhibit the intellectual curiosity, as well as the commitment to academic excellence, that distinguishes the better student. We also expect you will exhibit maturity, good judgment, and a sense of responsibility in your interactions with people and property, both on and off campus. Failure to do this could mean separation from the Honors College, in addition to any other disciplinary action the University might take.

If the Honors College receives information indicating one of its students may have behaved in an inappropriate way, the student may be asked to meet with a member of the Honors College staff to discuss the situation. Examples of inappropriate behavior range from less serious (giving an RSVP that you will be attending an Honors event and then not attending that event) to more serious (plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty or criminal offenses).

If a student's actions 1) negatively impact, or have the reasonable potential to negatively impact, the Honors College or its members, or 2) constitute a violation of the law or University policy in a way that relates to a right or privilege associated with enrollment in the Honors College, the student may be subject to loss or restriction of Honors rights and privileges or be separated from the Honors College. A student will have the opportunity to meet with a member of the Honors College staff before any action is taken.

In short, we expect that Honors students have the ability to exercise good decision-making practices and to be mindful of the corresponding responsibilities that accompany the benefits of being members of the Honors College. The vast majority of Honors students are successful both in and out of the classroom because they use good judgment in making their decisions,

including considering the consequences of decisions before acting upon them.

HONORS ADVISING

All Honors students are required to be advised by a staff member in the Honors College prior to registration each semester. This advisement is in addition to the advisement received from the department of your major. Generally, your Honors advising should occur after your departmental advising. Honors advisement helps ensure you are making progress toward completion of your Honors requirements, as well as helping to ensure you have access to the latest information about available courses and other opportunities. If you fail to follow your advisor's guidance and discover you are lacking requirements to graduate with an Honors designation, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain overrides or other exceptions.

COLLEGE'S REQUIREMENTS

To remain in the Honors College, members of the College must adhere to various requirements. These requirements are outlined in the sections which follow. Any student failing to adhere to the requirements and not having an applicable exception approved through the Honors office is subject to immediate removal from the College.

HONORS GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

All Honors students must maintain a minimum cumulative (not adjusted) 3.250 GPA in order to remain in the College. Only college work completed at Texas Tech University (or in a program under its auspices) is counted in computing your GPA. If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.250, you will be placed on Honors Probation for the next long semester (fall or spring). While on probation, you retain most rights and privileges associated with membership in the College, although you are not eligible to participate in programs or activities requiring students to be in **good standing** with the Honors College.

While on probation, if each subsequent semester's work is above 3.250, you may remain in the College on probation, even if your cumulative GPA is below 3.250. If your grades fall below 3.250 in a semester's work while you are on probation, you will be separated from the College.

Some students' grades may fall below the required 3.250 GPA in a particular semester, but as long as a student's **cumulative** GPA is 3.250 or above, the student may continue in the College without probation. Any student whose grades fall below a 2.250 cumulative GPA will be separated from the College immediately, without a probationary period.

Any student separated from the College as a result of inadequate GPA may petition the Associate Dean responsible for student concerns to remain in the College **or to re-enter once the GPA has returned to the minimum requirement**. The Associate Dean will decide if circumstances warrant the student's continuation in the College and may impose specific conditions for the student's continuation. A student failing to adhere to the conditions set by the Associate Dean will be separated from the College.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN HONORS COURSEWORK

Students entering the College as a new, first-semester Texas Tech student must:

- Complete the Honors College First-Year Experience (FYE) Program during the first semester, which includes a specially designed three-hour credit Honors course and its corresponding Learning Community Group (LCG). **Entering transfer students must also complete the FYE program. Current Texas Tech students entering the college as an upperclassman may substitute one additional Honors seminar in place of the FYE**

program. One seminar must be taken in the first or second semester after acceptance to the Honors College.

- Complete 3 hours of Honors credit in the following semester (in addition to First-Year Experience Program requirements);
- Continue to make steady progress towards the 24-credit requirement for graduation with an Honors College designation. The following checkpoints apply:
 - Complete at least 12 hours of Honors credit within 4 semesters
 - Complete at least 18 hours of Honors credit within 6 semesters.

Requests for exceptions should be discussed with an Honors advisor.

Transfer students, or current Texas Tech students entering the College *after* their first semester at Texas Tech should discuss their requirements carefully with an Honors advisor.

Any student failing to make steady progress toward the applicable coursework requirements, that is, to complete six Honors credit hours within the space of one year, will be put on probationary status. Any student put on probation for lack of progress must see an Honors Advisor to discuss future progress, complete an Honors seminar or junior/senior level Honors course in the upcoming semester, and submit a program completion plan to an Honors Advisor. Any student who does not comply with these requirements in the semester after probationary status begins will lose benefits associated with Honors membership, such as early registration privileges and Honors housing. A student who fails to progress after losing privileges will be separated from the College. A student separated from the College for failure to complete coursework requirements may petition the Associate Dean responsible for student concerns to remain in the College. The Associate Dean will decide if circumstances warrant the student's continuation in the College, and the Associate Dean may impose specific conditions for the student's continuation. A student

failing to adhere to the conditions set by the Associate Dean will be separated from the College.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION WITH HONORS DESIGNATIONS

One of two special designations is awarded to Honors College students through the Honors College upon graduation from Texas Tech (see specific requirements below). The two designations are “Honors College with Honors” and “Honors College with Highest Honors.” A student must be in good standing with the Honors College to graduate with either designation. Upon graduation from Texas Tech University, a student who successfully completes all Honors requirements for one of these designations will receive the appropriate designation on the commencement program and transcript, and the notation “*In Honors Studies*” on his or her baccalaureate diploma.

Upon graduation from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, a student earning a **baccalaureate** degree who successfully completes all Honors requirements will receive the appropriate designation on his or her diploma and transcript. A student earning an entry-level Master’s degree who successfully completes all Honors requirements will receive the designation on his or her transcript. The diplomas and transcripts of students earning other Health Science Center graduate or professional degrees who successfully complete all Honors requirements will not bear an Honors designation, but the Honors College will supply a letter on Honors letterhead, upon request from a student, indicating the student completed the Honors College curriculum.

“Honors College with Honors”

To graduate with the transcript designation “Honors College with Honors,” a student must achieve a cumulative (not adjusted) GPA of 3.250 or higher in the semester of graduation, be in good standing with the Honors College, and complete at least 24 hours of Honors credit. These 24 hours must include:

- At least 6 hours of upper-level Honors seminars [one lower-level course designated for seminar credit may be substituted], AND
- At least 6 additional hours of upper-level Honors credit.

Current Texas Tech students entering the Honors College with more than one year of college experience may be required to complete one additional Honors seminar as a substitution for the First-Year Experience (FYE) Program. This would bring the total required Honors seminars to three (3) and the total required Honors hours to 27 (a grade of “B-” or better in all hours). One seminar must be taken in the first or second semester after acceptance to the Honors College.

“Honors College with Highest Honors”

To graduate with the transcript designation “Honors College with Highest Honors,” a student must complete two more requirements in addition to the requirements for graduating “Honors College with Honors.” These requirements are:

- Six additional hours of Honors coursework (for a total of 30 hours),
- An Honors Senior Thesis.

The 30 hours can consist of the 24 hours of Honors coursework required to earn the “Honors College with Honors” designation, plus an additional six hours obtained in one of three ways:

- 1) Research credit for the Honors Senior Thesis through the courses of HONS 3300 and HONS 4300,
- 2) Upper-level research credit in the department of the student’s Honors Senior Thesis Mentor,
- 3) Thirty hours of Honors coursework and a completed Honors Senior Thesis, without any credits of research coursework.

In each case, a student wishing to graduate with the designation “Honors College with Highest Honors” must fulfill the requirements for **both** “Honors College with Honors” and “Honors College with Highest Honors” designations.

The Honors Senior Thesis is typically completed in the student’s area of specialization during the senior year, although some students begin the work prior to their senior year. Students must make an appointment with the Honors Senior Thesis Advisor to discuss the thesis and receive an application. Students should have this consultation in the semester before they intend to start work on the thesis. Honors Senior Theses generally take two long semesters to complete.

AWARD OF HONORS CREDIT

In general, Honors credit is only given when a student earns a B- or better in an Honors-designated class. Honors credit is generally not given for any class in which a student earns a “C,” although a student may petition for Honors credit through the Honors College’s Associate Dean for student concerns. If, in the opinion of the Associate Dean, circumstances warrant the award of credit, Honors credit will be given. No Honors credit is given in any Honors class in which a student earns a grade of “D.” If a student is not awarded Honors credit due to a grade of “C” or “D,” he or she will still be awarded general University credit as specified in the *Undergraduate Catalog*.

PASS-FAIL CREDIT

Honors credit may be awarded for Honors classes taken on a pass/fail basis if a student earns a B- or better for the final course grade in the class, as submitted by the professor to the Registrar on the final course roll. (See the *Undergraduate Catalog* for information about the pass/fail election.)

TRANSFER CREDIT

Evidence of Honors credit at another post-secondary accredited institution as shown on an official transcript will be considered for

Honors credit in this College. Generally, no more than 12 hours of Honors credit may be transferred into the Honors College, and such credit will be awarded as lower-level credit. As with TTU Honors classes, a grade of B- or better must be achieved to be eligible for credit.

UPPER-LEVEL HONORS CREDIT REQUIREMENT

Honors students are required to take at least 12 hours of upper-level Honors credit. This credit typically is earned by taking 3000 or 4000-level Honors courses. Of these 12 hours, at least 6 must be earned by taking Honors upper-level seminars.

HONORS SEMINAR REQUIREMENT

Honors students are required to take at least 6 hours of upper-level Honors seminars. These seminars are offered exclusively through the Honors College. **Honors seminar credit can only be awarded through Honors College seminar courses.** Seminar credit is not awarded for general study abroad, internships, or other special opportunities or experiences, whether Honors or non-Honors. The Honors College's summer international study, in which Honors professors teach Honors seminar courses abroad for seminar credit, is the only method by which Honors seminar credit can be earned for a study abroad experience. Although students cannot earn Honors seminar credits for general study abroad, they may seek a waiver for upper-level Honors hours as outlined below in the following section.

UPPER-LEVEL HONORS CREDIT SUBSTITUTIONS

Students are permitted to substitute up to 6 credits of upper-level Honors coursework, and there are four methods available to students for attempting to obtain these credits. These are discussed below. A student interested in any upper-level credit substitution should consult with an Honors advisor. **Student may not substitute for Honors Seminars.**

Substitution method #1 - Contracting

Honors Contracting allows an Honors student to receive Honors credit for a non-Honors course by completing work above and

beyond what is required of students in the course. Only 3000 and 4000-level courses that meet face-to-face are eligible to be contracted. No independent study or research hours may be contracted. To receive Honors credit for a contracted course, a student must receive a grade of B- or better in the course and satisfactorily complete work in addition to what is already required in the course. There are 3 essential components of this additional work:

A substantial paper or project (15-20 page research paper OR a project of equivalent time/effort),

Sharing the knowledge/skills/experiences gained through part 1 with some audience,

Regular contact with the faculty member outside of class to discuss the student's progress and answer questions regarding the paper/project.

Substitution Method #2 - Graduate Courses

See an Honors advisor for specific details.

Substitution Method #3 - Cross-listed Courses

These are courses which have a mix of undergraduate students and graduate students enrolled. See an Honors advisor for specific details.

Substitution Method #4 - Study Abroad Waiver

A waiver is available to cover some required Honors hours for students who study abroad with a non-Honors related study abroad program. This process requires formal approval by an Honors advisor prior to departure, as well as the completion of additional written projects completed the first long semester after studying abroad. Through this process, students may earn a waiver for up to three hours of Honors non-seminar credit for a summer session, full summer, fall or spring semester abroad. Students who study for two semesters abroad (full summer, fall or spring) may earn a waiver for up to six hours of Honors non-seminar credit. Honors seminars may not be waived for this process. Students abroad in

their last semester are ineligible for the Study Abroad Waiver. For specific details, see an Honors advisor.

HONORS SCIENCE REQUIREMENT

Students with non-science majors admitted to the Honors College **are required to take at least one Honors science course.** Students may choose from a number of Honors science courses, including Honors Integrated Science courses, which are designed specifically for non-science majors. These courses offer an integrated approach to several scientific disciplines and are designed to strengthen scientific understanding among non-science majors in a continually evolving, highly technical world.

Science majors, or students whose degree plans as specified by their department and college require two or more specific lab science courses, are exempt from the above requirement. However, they are encouraged to take the Honors sections of the courses offered in their disciplines. Students with college-level credit for 8 hours of laboratory science **prior to** entry into the Honors College are exempt from the Honors science requirement. **If you are uncertain about your science requirements with regard to the Honors College, please visit with one of our advisors.**

HONORS FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE (FYE) REQUIREMENT

All incoming freshman, and other students having completed one year or less of college (typically current TTU students recently admitted to the Honors College and transfer students), who are admitted to the Honors College, are required to participate in and complete the Honors College First-Year Experience (FYE) Program. To fulfill this requirement, students must complete an FYE class, an Honors section of an introductory-level class designated specifically for first-year students, and a Learning Community Group (LCG). These courses are taught by some of our best faculty members. Each FYE faculty member has one or two Honors Student Mentors who sit in on the class and meet with the class once a week for ninety minutes in a Learning Community

Group meeting. LCG meetings are a chance to get to know your peers, to learn how to be successful at TTU and in Honors from your Mentors, and to become acquainted with the people and opportunities that make the Honors College a unique place to learn. Students must pass the LCG portion to stay in the Honors College.

Current TTU students recently admitted to the Honors College who have completed more than one year of college, will be required to complete one additional Honors seminar as a substitution for the First Year Experience Program. This would bring the total required Honors seminars to three (3) and the total required Honors hours to 27 (a grade of “B-“ or better in all hours). **One seminar must be taken in the first or second semester after acceptance to the Honors College.**

HONORS RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

To be eligible to graduate with an Honors designation, a student should be an active member of the Honors College for no fewer than three long semesters prior to graduation.

NON-HONORS STUDENTS TAKING HONORS CLASSES

Non-Honors students at Texas Tech are permitted to enroll in Honors classes (as space is available) if they meet the following criteria:

- Student’s cumulative GPA at Texas Tech is 3.000 or higher
- All course prerequisites are met by the student
- Student understands he/she cannot graduate with an Honors College designation by taking Honors courses as a non-Honors student
- Student agrees to maintain the high personal standard of academic excellence and academic integrity the Honors College expects of its students.

MAINTAINING CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION

You must inform the University whenever **your address, your phone number, or your email address** changes. Always promptly update your contact information via the Tech website for students (TechSIS Web for Students, <http://techsis.admin.ttu.edu/student/>). The Honors College uses your University contact information to reach you, so it is vital you maintain current contact information on TechSIS. This ensures your receipt of timely information about activities, deadlines, opportunities, and policies applying to Honors students. Failure to maintain current contact information could also bar you from registration. The Honors College will send pertinent information to the most recent contact information listed on TechSIS, and **you will be responsible for the information contained in those mailings.**

Often the Honors College has time-sensitive information to distribute to students, and e-mail is often the best method to use for distributing that information. It is crucial that students regularly check their Texas Tech e-mail accounts, even when classes are not in session. **All correspondence the Honors College sends to students via e-mail will be sent to Texas Tech e-mail addresses only. If a student prefers to use a different e-mail service, the student will need to have his/her Texas Tech e-mail messages forwarded to that service. Even if a student has non-Texas Tech e-mail addresses listed in TechSIS, the Honors College will only send messages to the Texas Tech e-mail account.**

EVALUATION

The Honors College's administration actively seeks input from students, faculty, and staff to improve the Honors experience. The Honors College Advisory Council, composed of faculty and student members who are HON officers, gives counsel regarding Honors activities, programs, and issues to Honors administrators through monthly meetings during the academic year. Honors students have an opportunity to evaluate every Honors class at the

end of each long semester, and a number of Honors programs have separate evaluations for participants. Honors administrators and staff encourage students and others to provide feedback about their Honors experiences and are available for individual meetings.

27 August 2008 Revision: Staff and Faculty list removed.

4 September 2008 Revision: FYE & Study Abroad Waiver sections updated

Feb 2009 Revision update Study Abroad Waiver.