

# University Honors College

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The University Honors College is an interdisciplinary program with courses and activities leading to a certificate of completion in University Honors.

The University Honors College offers special courses and activities designed to help qualified students realize their full intellectual potential and to provide them the best possible preparation for their major degree programs. It does so through a wide range of special classes and interdisciplinary seminars supported by departments and faculty across campus. University Honors is characterized by three dimensions: creating a sense of community; enhancing academic competency; and providing students with the opportunity to develop a unique and challenging program of study.

A student who completes all certificate requirements also receives recognition at Honors Day as well as at graduation ceremonies. In addition, the students receive a Certificate of University Honors and special notation on official university transcripts.

Admission into the Honors College is based on the following criteria: high school GPA, SAT/ACT scores, an application essay, and a letter of recommendation from a teacher or academic advisor. All applicants are expected to have a minimum high school GPA of 3.5. Current VSU students who achieve a 3.5 GPA or better may be considered. Special consideration is given to diverse and motivated students eager to engage in Honors level work. The admissions process is based on an incoming first-year cohort, and students are expected to take HONS 1990 in their first semester as part of their provisional acceptance. After successful completion of HONS 1990 and approval of an Honors committee, students will be considered for full admittance into the Honors College and qualified for funding and benefits such as support for travel and research. Incoming Honors students are expected to live and participate in the living learning community in Reade Hall, the designated Honors residence.

## Requirements for Graduation with the Certificate in University Honors

- 25-28 hours in the Honors Curriculum as designated below
- 3.5 or higher cumulative GPA, and a 3.0 or higher GPA in Honors curriculum courses. Students failing to meet the GPA requirement will have a one-semester probation period to continue their enrollment in the Honors College.

## Global Experience and Understanding Requirement

All students in the Honors College must complete the Global Experience and Understanding requirement with an approved research activity, service learning assignment, or field experience. The semester-long commitment fosters understanding of global and cultural issues. In the spirit of the Honors interdisciplinary approach, research, service, and minor program activities will be considered. These activities must be approved by the Honors College.

## Selected Educational Outcomes

1. Students will learn the arts of inquiry and conversation, culminating in structured research and creative endeavors, academic writing, oral presentations, and creative production.
2. Students will practice the organizational skills of collaboration, planning, and assessment, and the personal skills of self-discipline and task management, culminating in the capacity to guide or direct group-based work.
3. Students will understand the importance of civic involvement and giving back to the larger community, culminating in occasions of service that draw upon scholarship, creativity, and leadership capacities.
4. Students will incorporate an understanding of diverse global and cultural perspectives in their scholarly or creative inquiry, culminating in an international exchange of ideas and activities.
5. Students will incorporate an understanding of diverse disciplinary perspectives in their scholarly/creative inquiry, culminating in a collaborative, interdisciplinary project.

## Examples of Outcome Assessments

1. Students will provide evidence of their accomplishments related to each area of the five educational outcomes previously listed and present the evidence in a portfolio.
2. Students will participate in at least one research/creative endeavor forum to present their work.
3. Students will provide evidence of their understanding of global perspectives.
4. Students will provide documentation of and reflection on at least one sustained community service activity.
5. Students will complete a capstone project that will be presented at an interdisciplinary forum.

## Requirements for the Certificate in University Honors in Interdisciplinary Studies

| Code                                  | Title                            | Hours |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Honors Orientation</b>             |                                  |       |
| HONS 1990                             | Honors Introductory Seminar      | 2     |
| HONS 2000                             | Introduction to Honors Portfolio | 1     |
| <b>Honors Research</b>                |                                  |       |
| Honors Core Course                    |                                  | 3     |
| Honors Major Courses (2 required)     |                                  | 6     |
| HONS 3990                             | Honors Capstone Seminar          | 3     |
| or HONS 3999                          | Introduction to Honors Research  |       |
| Research Presentation                 |                                  | 3     |
| <b>Honors Experiential Learning</b>   |                                  |       |
| Honors Experiential Learning Activity |                                  | 3     |
| Honors Leadership Activity            |                                  | 3     |
| Honors Global Experience              |                                  | 3     |
| <b>Honors Portfolio</b>               |                                  |       |
| HONS 4990                             | Honors Senior Portfolio          | 1-3   |
| Total Points                          |                                  | 25-28 |

## Honors Experiential Learning Requirements

Students in the Honors College must complete Honors Experiential Learning activities with an approved research activity, a service-learning assignment, or a field experience. Experiential activities are a semester-long commitment that includes assignments and activities that engage students in problem-solving and real world situations. These activities must be approved by the Honors College.

Experiential learning requires a full semester commitment of at least 45 hours with specified outcomes, a timeline of deliverables, and structured reflection. The Honors College assists students with the process of establishing and formalizing structured experiential learning opportunities to complete Honors requirements in service, leadership, and global understanding. Honors experiential learning activities approved by the Honors College are listed as HONS 2990 on the official university transcript. Approved Honors College experiential activities include:

- Honors-sanctioned experiential groups
- Departmental experiential or service activities
- Faculty-supervised experiential or service activities
- Departmental supervised internships
- University or departmental leadership opportunities
- Study abroad, study away, and semester exchanges.

Academic units may also offer Honors tracks for Honors Certification with specific embedded departmental requirements in the Honors curriculum.

HONS 3990 and HONS 3999 may be taken to satisfy one of the Honors major requirements, with the approval of the major department and the Dean of the Honors College, and may satisfy elective credit for some majors. In addition, the Honors College offers a seminar and an independent study course (HONS 4000), which may satisfy elective credit or, in some cases, capstone requirements in a variety of major degree programs (must be approved by the Dean of the Honors College). All students in the Honors College must complete a capstone project that will be presented at an interdisciplinary forum.

Courses not listed as Honors may also be available for Honors credit through the Honors Option Contract. This option allows students to receive Honors credit while enrolled in regular courses by doing different types of assignments approved in advance by the instructor of the course and the Dean of the Honors College. Honors options must be approved no later than the last day of the second week of classes.

Students are required to complete HONS 4990 and submit a portfolio with evidence of learning for successful completion of the Honors certification. The portfolio also requires materials from experiential activities including evidence of learning, academic artifacts, and structured reflections. Honors certification requires a final review and approval of the senior portfolio by the Honors College.