

COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE

HONORS

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The College of Letters & Science Honors Program provides a community for many of the university's most talented and engaged undergraduates. Students of all backgrounds and academic interests challenge and learn from each other while working closely with faculty members and completing Honors coursework. The Honors Program is home to around 1,500 motivated, curious students, all pursuing one of three degree tracks: Honors in the Liberal Arts, Honors in the Major, or Comprehensive Honors –the highest undergraduate degree awarded by the college. In addition to an enhanced curriculum that offers small, faculty-led courses, the program also offers academic advising services; grants, scholarships, and awards; and many professional development and co-curricular opportunities. Events, term-specific deadlines, funding opportunities and much more can be found on the L&S Honors Program website (<http://honors.ls.wisc.edu/>). We welcome inquiries via email at honors@honors.ls.wisc.edu. The L&S Honors Program is located in the historic Washburn Observatory at 1401 Observatory Drive in Madison, WI 53706.

HOW TO GET IN

Eligibility criteria and admissions procedures differ for the different Honors degrees. Any UW–Madison Honors credits earned before admission to the Honors Program may be applied toward Honors degree requirements.

Admission to Honors in the Liberal Arts (HLA)

To become a candidate for the Honors in the Liberal Arts degree, a student must apply directly to the L&S Honors Program. Students follow different application procedures based on whether they are an incoming (non-transfer) student newly admitted to the College of Letters & Science, on the one hand, or a transfer student or continuing L&S student, on the other.

All students admitted to the university and to the College of Letters & Science are invited to apply to the Honors Program to pursue Honors in the Liberal Arts. Interested incoming students can apply via an online application. L&S admitted students receive an invitation message by email that contains application instructions, and instructions are also on the Honors Program website. Admission to the program is competitive, and space is limited.

Continuing L&S undergraduates and incoming transfer students with a cumulative grade point average of 3.300 or above who are currently enrolled at UW–Madison or who are transferring to UW–Madison from another college or university may apply. Application instructions and decision timelines are available on the Honors Program website (<http://honors.ls.wisc.edu/>). While continuing or transfer students having 60 or more credits at the time of application to the Honors Program are eligible to pursue the Honors in the Liberal Arts (HLA) degree track, they are encouraged to consider whether Honors in the Major (HM) would be their preferred Honors track (see below), since they may find it difficult to prioritize and complete the HLA degree requirements. Meeting with

an Honors advisor can help interested students understand Honors requirements and possible paths forward.

Admission to Honors in the Major (HM)

Most majors in the College of Letters & Science offer students the option of pursuing Honors in the Major. Students interested in pursuing an Honors in the Major degree should consult the requirements for their major in Guide, follow major-specific procedures to declare the major, and speak with their assigned major advisor, who will explain any major-specific admissions procedures and Honors requirements. After receiving authorization from the department to declare Honors in the Major, students must complete the Honors in the Major Declaration Form (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/honors-in-the-major-declaration-form/>) on the Honors Program website.

Honors in the Major can be pursued independently from or alongside Honors in the Liberal Arts.

REQUIREMENTS

Honors may be earned in any L&S undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts; Bachelor of Science; Bachelor of Science–Applied Mathematics, Engineering, and Physics; Bachelor of Arts–Journalism or Bachelor of Science–Journalism; Bachelor of Landscape Architecture; Bachelor of Music; and Bachelor of Social Work). For students who complete the requirements, Honors will appear on diplomas and transcripts (for example, BA with Honors in the Liberal Arts or BS with Honors in the Major).

Honors in the Liberal Arts (HLA)

Honors in the Liberal Arts requires students earn Honors credits in a breadth of disciplines and is meant to enrich and enhance a student's academic experience outside of the major. Coursework toward Honors in the Liberal Arts should be started as soon as possible and spread throughout a student's undergraduate degree. Students who complete this curriculum build connections with faculty and peers and develop strong skills in communication, critical thinking and complex problem solving, which will serve them well regardless of career path. The specific requirements for the HLA degree are:

- completion of the L&S general degree requirements
- a University GPA of 3.300 or higher at the time of graduation
- completion of at least 24 credits in Honors courses with the Liberal Arts & Science (LAS) designation and with grades of B or better, of which:
 - at least 15 credits must be in courses with the Honors Only or Accelerated Honors designation
 - 6 credits must be courses designated as Humanities (may include Literature designation)
 - 6 credits must be courses designated as Social Science
 - 6 credits must be courses designated as Biological, Physical, or Natural Science

Honors in the Major (HM)

Honors in the Major is intended for students who are interested in original research and who want deeper undergraduate training in the discipline. Honors in the Major can prepare students with the research, writing, and critical thinking skills useful to a wide range of career choices and graduate programs.

Each academic department and program in the college, with approval of the Faculty Honors Committee, establishes its own requirements for the Honors in the Major degree.

Although many of the specific requirements for HM vary by department, all students pursuing Honors in the Major must:

- complete the L&S general degree requirements, if an L&S degree candidate¹;
- complete the regular major requirements, including any declared named option requirements;
- obtain a University grade point average of at least 3.300;
- earn a grade of B or better in all courses counting towards Honors in the Major requirements; and
- successfully complete a capstone experience during their senior year, typically a Senior Honors Thesis (see below for more information).

¹ Non-L&S degree candidates may pursue Honors in the Major, but will not receive an L&S degree.

In addition to these collegewide requirements, Honors in the Major students may be required to complete additional upper-level, Honors coursework; participate in department research colloquia; and meet a minimum grade point average in all classes in the major (typically between 3.300 and 3.500).

Senior Honors Thesis

Most departments require a Senior Honors Thesis as the culmination of their Honors in the Major curriculum. In departments for which a research thesis is not the most appropriate capstone, an alternative such as a performance, a professional practicum, or a major piece of creative writing may be required. The two-semester Senior Honors Thesis or capstone project is often the most challenging part of the Honors in the Major experience, and for most students it also proves to be the most rewarding.

The Senior Honors Thesis is a two-semester (or summer and semester) effort; students first enroll in Senior Honors Thesis 681, followed the next term by Senior Honors Thesis 682 (some departments may use different numeric designations for Senior Honors Thesis courses). These two courses may not be taken concurrently. The final grade for the entire thesis is assigned after 682 has been completed. The thesis advisor will assign the thesis writer a P grade at the end of 681, signifying "progress," if progress has been made on the Senior Honors Thesis. When a 682 grade is posted, the Registrar's Office will update the "P" grade from 681 to match the assigned grade from 682.

A Senior Honors Thesis may not count toward Honors in the Major requirements in more than one major unless the student has received Dual Thesis Authorization from the L&S Honors Program. Dual Thesis Authorization (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/dual-thesis-authorization/>) allows the student to write one interdisciplinary thesis under the guidance of two thesis mentors, one representing each major, and have the thesis count toward Honors in the Major for both majors. Students interested in Dual Thesis Authorization should consult the Honors Program's Dual Thesis Authorization information. The L&S Honors Program strongly recommends that students seeking Dual Thesis Authorization submit required application materials the semester before they will be in a first-semester thesis course (typically 681).

A student may not enroll in senior Honors thesis credits for an L&S major (typically 681 and 682) while studying abroad unless they have received prior authorization from the L&S Honors Program. Such authorization is rarely granted, and the student would still need their thesis mentorship to be through UW-Madison. L&S Honors students interested in completing any thesis credits while abroad should consult with the L&S Honors

Associate Director of Advising and Curriculum and also make a plan for thesis completion while on campus in Madison.

Comprehensive Honors

Students who complete the requirements for both Honors in the Liberal Arts and Honors in the Major in at least one department or program earn Comprehensive Honors, the highest undergraduate degree awarded by the College.

HOW TO EARN HONORS CREDIT

There are three unique Honors course designations, each described below. Students should always verify the Honors designation available for the particular section in which they wish to enroll.

- "Honors Only" courses are reserved for Honors candidates. They are generally small classes, led by a faculty member and designed for substantive engagement, or discussion sections or labs reserved for Honors students in larger non-Honors lecture courses. The enrollment system will automatically assign Honors credit to all enrolled students.
- "Accelerated Honors" are open to all students. Honors credit is awarded in recognition of the rigor and pace of the course. These Honors courses are often conducted at a faster pace than the non-Honors course counterparts or are upper-level capstone courses in a major that require significant engagement with the course material. As with "Honors Only" designated courses, the enrollment system will automatically assign Honors credit to all enrolled students.
- "Honors Optional" designates courses for which Honors is available through an optional component of the course curriculum. These courses are open to all students for enrollment. Opting into the Honors component of the course is done through the enrollment process. Students who have selected the "Honors Option" are advised to consult with the instructor during the first three weeks of the term to confirm the Honors requirements for the course. Instructors either have pre-established Honors Optional expectations or students may be encouraged to develop a project idea of their own.

When the Schedule of Classes is published for the upcoming term, students can use the Enroll App to identify which course sections are being offered for Honors and with which designation. A course or course section being offered for Honors in a past term in no way guarantees that it will be offered for Honors in a future term.

Honors candidates may also earn Honors credit through the following methods:

- Complete an approved "Green Sheet" project. The Green Sheet proposal process allows a student to design an additional project for a course that is not otherwise offered for Honors credit in the given term. Green Sheets require consent of the instructor and approval of the L&S Honors Program. Green Sheet proposals must be submitted to the Honors Program no later than sixth week of a fall or spring semester or the third week of an eight-week summer term. Additional information and the online proposal form are available on the Green Sheet Information page (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/green-sheet-information/>) of the Honors Program website.
- Participate in an Honors-affiliated Study Abroad Program. Honors credit for some or all of the courses taken through these programs is awarded automatically through the study abroad equivalency process. More information about current Honors-affiliated study abroad programs can be found on the Study Abroad page (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/study-abroad-3/>) of the Honors Program website.

- Complete a study abroad petition. Through this process, a student may petition to have one course from an eligible study abroad term count toward unmet Honors requirements for Honors in the Liberal Arts. More information can be found on the Study Abroad Petition Information (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/study-abroad-petition-information/>) page of the Honors Program website.

In all cases, to receive Honors credit in a course, students must earn a final grade of B or higher in that course. If a grade of BC or lower is earned in an Honors course, the Honors notation remains on the student's record, but the course does not count toward Honors degree requirements. If the course is retaken for Honors, regardless of the grade earned during this second attempt, the course cannot satisfy an Honors degree requirement.

Students may not receive Honors credit in courses carried on a pass/fail basis.

ADVISING AND CAREERS

The L&S Honors Program has a team of dedicated academic advisors who accompany and support Honors candidates from the time the students join the Honors Program through their graduation. Advisors help individual students as they navigate a large, complex university, explore diverse educational and co-curricular experiences, and develop and pursue long-term goals. Advising occurs through a variety of formats including small group workshops, individual appointments, drop-in hours, and email. Additional information is available on the Honors Program website (<http://honors.ls.wisc.edu/>).

The L&S Honors Program encourages our students to begin working on their career exploration and preparation soon after arriving on campus. We partner with the L&S SuccessWorks office to help students leverage the academic skills learned in the major(s) and liberal arts degree, explore and try out different career paths, participate in internships, prepare for the job search and/or graduate school applications, and network with professionals in the field (alumni and employers).

PEOPLE

Please visit the L&S Honors website (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/meet-the-honors-team-members/>) to view Honors Team Members, including the Director, Associate Directors, Program Administrator, and Academic Advisors.

We welcome inquiries via email at honors@honors.ls.wisc.edu. Current students can connect with Honors advising via Starfish or by emailing advisor@honors.ls.wisc.edu.

POLICIES

Honors Progression

Students must obtain a University grade point average of 3.300 or higher to be eligible to graduate with an Honors in the Liberal Arts, Honors in the Major, or Comprehensive Honors. As such, we encourage students to strive for at least this GPA each academic term. The Honors Program advising team will reach out to students and offer their support in developing an improvement plan should their GPA drop below 3.300.

Students who leave the College of Letters & Science or who have not made progress toward meeting Honors in the Liberal Arts coursework or GPA requirements may be administratively withdrawn to facilitate timely graduation with a non-Honors degree.

Because each department sets its own criteria for the HM degree program, students are encouraged to work closely with departmental advisors to stay on track towards successful completion of HM.

Students may withdraw from HLA and/or HM at any time by submitting an Honors Withdrawal Form (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/honors-withdrawal-form/>), available on the Honors Program website.

Honors Transfer Credit

Honors credit earned at other institutions is not accepted towards L&S Honors degree requirements.