

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, 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 be considered for admission to the Honors Program to pursue the Honors in the Liberal Arts degree. 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 Honors in the Major (HM) as an option (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)

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 officially declaring the major and receiving authorization from the department to declare Honors in the Major, students must complete the Honors in the Major Declaration Form on the Honors Program website.

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 of the credits must be courses designated as Humanities (may include Literature designation)
 - 6 of the credits must be courses designated as Social Science
 - 6 of the credits must be courses designated as Biological, Physical, or Natural Science

Honors in the Major (HM)

Most majors in the College of Letters & Science offer students the option of pursuing Honors in the Major. A student may formally declare their intent to earn Honors in the Major, if available, after declaring the major. Honors in the Major requirements can be completed independently from Honors in the Liberal Arts; they may also be completed in conjunction with Honors in the Liberal Arts (which would result in a Comprehensive Honors degree). 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. 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.

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

1. complete the L&S general degree requirements, if an L&S degree candidate¹;
2. complete the regular major requirements;
3. obtain an overall cumulative grade point average of at least 3.300;
4. earn a grade of B or better in all courses counting towards Honors in the Major requirements; and
5. 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).

As mentioned above, 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 instead. The two-semester 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.

Students who intend to complete Honors in the Major and write a Senior Honors Thesis should consult with department advisors as early as possible. They are also strongly encouraged to begin working with a faculty advisor no later than the beginning of the junior year in order to formulate a research topic, which will enhance the student's potential for success in research grant funding cycles for their senior year. Some departments offer special courses designed to facilitate the organization, planning, and execution of Honors thesis projects. Other departments encourage (and some require) students to take a directed study or tutorial course with the thesis advisor sometime during the junior year. Students who receive funding from the L&S Honors Program for their thesis research should submit an unbound copy of their thesis to the Honors Program Office.

Students pursuing Honors in the Major in two majors may apply for Dual Thesis Authorization, which will allow them to write one interdisciplinary thesis to satisfy both major capstone requirements. Please see the Honors Program to learn more about the application process prior to enrolling in the 681 course.

Prior authorization is needed when students intend to complete either 681 or 682 while away from UW–Madison. Consult with the Honors Program Associate Director of Advising and Curriculum if this is your intention.

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 Honors 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 enrolled in an "Honors Optional" course are advised to consult with the instructor during the first weeks of the term to determine the Honors curriculum if it is not outlined on the syllabus. 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:

- Designing and successfully completing an additional Honors project for a course not carrying any of the Honors designations above in the given term. This option requires consent of the instructor and approval of the L&S Honors Program. To request permission from the Honors Program, students must submit a completed Green Sheet proposal form and all supporting documentation to the Honors Program no later than the sixth week of a regular semester, or the third week of an eight-week summer term. Green Sheets are available on the Honors Program website (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/>). Supporting documentation includes a written plan and timeline for the additional Honors project and a Course Change Request Form. Additional Green Sheet information and the proposal form are available on the Honors Program website (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/>).
- Students who study abroad on a non-Honors study abroad program may petition to have one course per semester abroad count toward Honors requirements. Upon returning from abroad, students are asked to write a petition in which they are required to reflect on the nature of the course taken abroad and explain why the course meets the desired criteria for general Honors credit, Honors breadth credit and/or Automatic Honors credit. For more details about the petition process for Honors in the Liberal Arts, please consult the Honors Program website (<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/>).
- Studying abroad in an Honors Study Abroad Program. (Currently programs are available in Ecuador and Utrecht, Netherlands.) Students may earn up to 16 Honors credits. Students receive Honors credit in

these cases through the study abroad equivalency process upon their return from abroad.

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

Criteria for Remaining in Good Standing in HLA

Students must obtain a grade point average of 3.300 or higher to be eligible to graduate with an Honors in the Liberal Arts degree. As such, we encourage students to strive for at least this GPA each academic term. The Honors Program advising team will work with students on an improvement plan should their GPA drop below 3.300. Students must also make satisfactory progress toward degree requirements, meaning:

1. successfully complete (grade of B or higher) at least one Honors course (any designation) by the end of the third semester on campus and
2. successfully complete (grade of B or higher) at least two Automatic Honors courses by the end of the fifth semester on campus.

Students may withdraw from HLA at any time by submitting an Honors Withdrawal Form, available on the Honors Program website.

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.

Criteria for Remaining in Good Standing in HM

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. In addition to the criteria established by individual departments, all students must obtain a cumulative grade point average of 3.300 or higher in UW-Madison coursework to be eligible to graduate with the Honors in the Major degree. Students may withdraw from HM at any time by submitting an Honors Withdrawal Form, available on the Honors Program website.

Honors in the Individual Major

To complete the Individual Major with Honors, the student must earn Honors credit in at least 20 of the 36 or more credits comprising the Individual Major and must complete a Senior Honors Thesis of 6–8 credits.

Students wishing to complete an Honors in the Major degree with an Individual Major should append to their Individual Major proposal a specific outline of how the Honors in the Major requirements would be met, including appropriate Honors-caliber courses, upper-level seminars, and a two-semester capstone project, typically a Senior Honors Thesis. The proposal for Honors in the Individual Major will be reviewed by the Honors Program Associate Director of Advising and Curriculum. This individual is authorized to determine whether requests for exceptions to the approved HM requirements will be approved.

Honors Transfer Credit

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

GRANTS AND AWARDS

The L&S Honors Program strives to support Honors students as they pursue original research, study abroad, attend academic conferences, and pursue other endeavors that complement their learning and growth. Please see the L&S Honors Program website (<http://honors.ls.wisc.edu/>) for an overview of funding opportunities, specific information about each grant, and application processes and deadlines.