

Elizabeth City State University

Honors Program Handbook



2023-2024

Elizabeth City, NC

Scholarship, Self-awareness, Service and Success

Elizabeth City State University Honors Program

A Message from the Director

Congratulations on your admission to Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) and the University Honors Program! I am excited you have chosen to be part of our community of scholars. I encourage you to engage and make the most of your University Honors Program experience. Over the years, ECSU has graduated more than Honors scholars that have proven themselves to be academically, personally and professionally exceptional.



The University Honors Program at ECSU focuses on the themes of scholarship, self-awareness, service, and success. The University Honors Program Handbook provides an overview of the program, including information about program requirements, policies, and rules. I encourage you to take the time to read the Handbook. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the University Honors Program via email at honors.program@ecsu.edu

Thank you for joining the ECSU Honors Program. I wish you success and I look forward to working with you as a member of the University Honors Program.

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Welcome to the ECSU Honors Program

I. Mission & Objectives

Mission

The Honors Program is designed to provide an enhanced and supportive learning environment for academically gifted undergraduate students. The mission will be accomplished through active involvement of faculty recognized for their excellence in teaching dynamic small class size of Honors Colloquia, opportunities for research and extracurricular learning experiences. Students who are accepted into the Honors Program join a diverse community of peers from various backgrounds to shape their own academic journey beyond the classroom.

Objectives

The Honors Program is designed to challenge students with high academic potential at an accelerated rate and to provide them with exposure to a wide variety of in-depth academic, social cultural and international experiences. The Honors Program is committed to fostering achievement at superior levels so that by graduation students will:

- Display exceptional proficiency in the command of both oral and written communication skills.
- Acquire a knowledge base which exceeds that of the average student by exploring diverse and tangential domains.
- Develop self-discipline and self-restraint both in character and in academic endeavors to the extent that counter-productive distractions will not be allowed to impede progress.
- Demonstrate motivation which is intrinsically induced to the extent that the student is stimulated to investigate, pursue, and continue to unravel various bodies of knowledge beyond average expectations.
- Obtain a psychological disposition that displays an independent and personal approach to the search for exceptional scholarship as opposed to a dependence on established patterns.
- Develop high levels of research, creative writing, technical writing, computational, and non-verbal skills so that a substantial level of proficiency will have been achieved by graduation.

II. The Honors Program @ ECSU: What Makes it Unique.

The Honors Living & Learning Community (aka Honors LLC): A supportive community of dedicated students with commitment to do great things and challenge one another.

Honors Scholars Trip: Opportunities to travel as a group to select destinations – conferences, workshops and network with industry, government, and nonprofit organizations.

Research Support: Financial support is available to assist students with their research and data collection for Honors Thesis. Request for support will be made by the Honors Thesis advisor by completing the “Request for Research Support” form.

Peer and Faculty Mentor: Mentoring advantage to build relationships with juniors, seniors and faculty members that will help and connect you with vital resources.

The Honors Thesis: Guided by a faculty advisor in the discipline or related area, conduct a research project of your topic of interest which will be listed on the commencement program the semester the student graduates.

Service Opportunities: Give back to your community through teamwork, and active engagement in service-learning.

Speakers & Seminars: Hear and interact with various speakers from different fields.

Honors Convocation Event: An opportunity for ECSU to celebrate and recognize the academic achievements of undergraduate students. All Honors program students will receive a certificate and each graduating senior will receive a custom-made blazer.

Honors Program Designation on official transcript & diploma: Students who meet all Honors Program requirements for graduation will have Honors Program designated on both their official transcript and their diploma.

III. Policies

A. Admission Requirements

First semester freshmen (high school seniors):

- Students who receive either the Chancellor's or Strada Scholarship will automatically be admitted into the program.
- All other high school seniors with a 3.50 grade-point average (un-weighted) must apply for admission to the Honors Program. Admission is not guaranteed. In addition to being accepted for admission into ECSU, high school seniors must also submit the following:
 - Honors Program Application
 - A 500-word essay explaining why you want to be a part of the ECSU Honors Program
 - A letter of recommendation from a teacher/counselor

Second semester freshmen or sophomores:

- Second semester freshmen or sophomores will be considered for admission to the program if they have at least a 3.25 cumulative GPA at the time of application and submit the following:
 - Honors Program Application
 - A 500-word essay explaining why you want to be a part of the ECSU Honors Program
 - A letter of recommendation from the Office of Student Success and Retention (OSSR) or a professor whose course you have successfully completed.

Transfer students:

Transfer students who were enrolled in an honors program prior to matriculation at ECSU will be considered for admission to the program if they have at **least a 3.25 cumulative GPA** at the time of application and submit the following:

- Transfer students Honors Program Application
- A 500-word essay explaining why you want to be part of the ECSU Honors Program
- A letter of recommendation from the director/coordinator of the Honors Program in which you participated.
- Additional information
 - Transfer students with less than 65 credit hours must transfer at least eight credit hours of honors courses to satisfy both the Honors colloquia (HON 110 & 120) and General Education requirement. If this requirement is not met,

students must satisfy the eight credits through Honors by Contract for /major disciplinary courses at 300 and/or 400 level.

- Transfer students with more than 65 credit hours must transfer at least nine credit hours of honors courses to satisfy both the Honors colloquia (HON 110, 120 & 210) and General Education requirement. If these requirements are not met, students must satisfy the nine credits through Honors by Contract for major/disciplinary courses at 300 and/or 400 level.

Transfer students may apply to ECSU Honors Program immediately after they have been accepted to ECSU or during their first semester at ECSU.

B. Retention in the Honors Program

To remain in the University Honors Program, the students must meet the following criteria:

1. **Cumulative GPA:** Students must maintain a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.25 after the first semester of enrollment at ECSU. The University Honors Program monitors the cumulative GPA of each Honors student every semester. Students who do not meet the cumulative GPA requirement at the conclusion of the first semester will receive a probation letter from the Honors Program director. At the end of the academic year, students who do not meet the cumulative GPA of 3.25 will be dismissed from the Honors Program.
2. **Courses:** Honors students must complete English Composition and Grammar I – Honors (ENGL 102H) and English Composition and Grammar II – Honors (ENGL 103H) in General Education, all five Honors colloquium courses, and the Honors version of additional courses in the major/discipline to meet a total of 22 Honors credit hours. Additional courses can be fulfilled by contracting a regular course as an Honors course. Information on how to contract an Honors course can be found in the “Honors by Contract” section of the handbook.
3. **Completion of the Honors Thesis:** All students in the Honors Program must complete the Honors Thesis (HON 410) to graduate with the “Honors Program” designation on both the official transcript and the diploma.
4. **Attendance in Honors Program-sponsored/supported events:** All Honors Program students are expected to attend cultural events both on and off-campus. These events should be culturally uplifting and enriching for the mind and spirit of the attendees. All Honors Program students are expected to attend meetings, debates and receptions sponsored or supported by the Honors Program.

5. **Co-curricular or Volunteer Activities:** All Honors students must complete a total of 25 service-learning hours per semester. Co-curricular activities are incorporated into all Honors Colloquia courses. These activities can be in the form of tutoring, reading to pre-school or elementary school children, working in a homeless shelter, assisting the Red Cross, mentoring, or any other activity that provides service to those less fortunate.
6. **Attendance at Honors Thesis Defenses:** Except for students enrolled in their last year at ECSU, all Honors Program students must attend at least one Honors Thesis Defense each academic year. Attendance at the Honors Thesis Defense will give Honors Program students an opportunity to witness an oral defense and given them ideas of how to prepare for their own defenses in the future.

C. Honors Program Probation and Reinstatement

A student will be placed on probation if their cumulative GPA falls below 3.25. If the student's cumulative GPA improves to the acceptable level by the end of the probationary semester, the student would continue to be a part of the University Honors Program.

However, students who do not improve their grades during the semester while on probation will be dismissed from the University Honors Program. Students dismissed from the Honors Program may apply for reinstatement. Student requests will be considered by the Director and the Honors Council.

D. Dismissal from the Honors Program

An Honors student can be dismissed from the program for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Low cumulative GPA:** Cumulative GPA less than 3.25 for two consecutive semesters.
- **Lack of progress with Honors coursework:** Lack of enrollment and successful completion of Honors courses for two consecutive semesters without an approved written arrangement with the University Honors Program.
- **Failure to submit Honors thesis documentation:** Not submitting the completed Honors Thesis Agreement form by the end of the first semester of the junior year.
- **Violation of any ECSU academic or conduct policy as outlined in the ECSU Student Handbook.**

In addition to the above conditions, Honors students will be asked to meet with the Director before an official dismissal letter is sent to the student and the chair of the academic department.

E. Graduation Requirements

Students who graduate from the Honors Program must complete a total of 22 credit hours of general education, Honors and major courses as shown below. In addition, the student must complete and defend the Honors Thesis in order to graduate with “Honors Program” designation on both the official transcript and diploma.

- Honors Colloquia – 7 credit hours
 - HON 110 Honors Colloquium I (FR year-fall; 1 credit hour)
 - HON 120 Honors Colloquium II (FR year-spring; 1 credit hour)
 - HON 210 Honors Colloquium III (SO year; 1 credit hour)
 - HON 310 Honors Colloquium IV (JR year; 1 credit hour)
 - HON 410 Senior Honors Thesis/Defense (SR year; 3 credit hours) *

- General Education Courses – 6 credit hours
 - ENGL 102H English Composition & Vocabulary I Honors (3 credit hours)
 - ENGL 103H English Composition & Vocabulary II Honors (3 credit hours)

- Honors by Contract for Major Courses (300 and/or 400-level) – 6 credit hours

- Additional Honors by Contract Course – 3 Credit Hours
(Choose **one** of the following or an extra course in the major)
 - COM 200 Interpersonal Communication (3 credit hours)
 - COM 201 Intercultural Communication (3 credit hours)
 - SPCH 200 Public Speaking (3 CRH)

*** Student may take 2 semesters to complete the Senior Honors Thesis/Defense with an IP (In Progress) grade for first semester.**

Upon completion of degree requirements, the cumulative grade point average must be 3.25. Honors Program graduates must make no less than a B in all Honors courses.

F. Honors by Contract

- **Definition and Purpose:**

An Honors contract is a mutual agreement between the Honors student and a faculty member on a project or activity that will allow the Honors student to earn Honors credit for a non-Honors course.

The purpose of contracting Honors courses is to create an opportunity for students to

focus on increasing their knowledge and experience in a particular topic of course material for personal and professional development.

- **Eligibility:**

Only sophomores, juniors, and seniors are eligible to contract non-Honors courses. Freshmen are not eligible. Only full-time faculty members are eligible to sponsor Honors contract courses, however, adjunct instructors may volunteer to contract non-Honors courses.

- **Honors Contract Process**

Step 1: Review the Honors by Contract guidelines above to understand the process of contracting a class. In addition, choose the course for the Honors Contract.

Step 2: Make an appointment with the Director of the Honors Program to discuss your intention to contract a course.

Step 3: Make an appointment to meet with the course professor to ask if they can do an Honors Contract and discuss the rationale for how the course will meet the Honors contract criteria.

Step 4: Complete the Honors by Contract form with your course professor (Appendix A).

Step 5: Once your course professor has attached the projects/activities to be completed for the course contract, your contract will be sent by the course professor to the Honors Program Director for approval. Once approved, you will receive an email from the University Honors Program to notify you that it has been approved. To receive credit for the contracted course, you must complete the activities described in the contract.

Step 6: With your course professor, submit a progress report between 4-6 weeks after the semester has started to honors.program@ecsu.edu.

Step 7: At the end of the semester, if you have satisfied the requirements of the Honors contract, your course professor and Honors Program Director will sign off on your contract completion and the University Honors Program will award Honors credit for the course.

G. The Honors Thesis

The Honors Thesis is guided research involving either data from primary sources, a laboratory investigation, or field research resulting in a creative presentation or an individual report with annotated bibliography and other features normally incorporated into an advanced level report.

Final reports or presentations are to be evaluated by the Honors Thesis committee members of not less than three members. ***See Honors Thesis Guidelines for more information.***

IV. The University Honors Program Governance

The Program is headed by the Honors Program Director, who works in conjunction with the Associate Director and the University Honors Council. The Program is a member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), The Southern Regional Honors Council (SRHC), the National Association of African American Honors Programs (NAAHP) and the North Carolina Honors Association (NCHA) the Program also has a Student Honors Council, one member of which serves on the University Honors Council.

A. The Student Honors Council

The Student Honors Council shall be composed of eight undergraduate students active in the Honors Program – two student representatives elected from each classification. Members shall serve one calendar year term beginning in the fall semester, and they may be reappointed. The Student Honors Council shall elect its own chairperson at the first meeting of the fall semester. To serve on the Student Honors Council, a student must have:

- A cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25, and
- Continue to be active in the Honors Program.

The Student Honors Council shall:

- Represent the interests and concerns of Honors Program students in the member's respective department.
- Meet, as appropriate, in joint session with the University Honors Council.
- Provide two of its members to serve with the Honors Council as a committee to which students may appeal.

- Recommend and plan special events as relate to professional development, community service, social events and peer mentoring for Honors Program students; and
- Make recommendations to the Director on any other matters concerning the Honors Program.

B. The University Honors Council

The University Honors Council shall be composed of the Director of the Honors Program (ex officio chair of the Council) and faculty and staff members who have a demonstrated interest in the Honors Program. The University Honors Council is appointed by the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs upon recommendations from the Director of the Honors Program.

The University Honors Council is chaired by the Director of the Honors Program and shall:

- Recommend to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs policies concerning course requirements and other criteria for Honors Program students.
- Represent the interests and concerns of faculty in the members' respective areas related to the Honors Program.
- Represent the Honors Program to the faculty and staff of the members' respective departments/programs and serve as points of contact for faculty and staff.
- Provide recommendations to the Director on any special situations concerning admission, status, etc., which may be referred to by the Director.
- Review faculty proposals for Honors Seminars and other special Honors courses that are to be supported through the Honors Program
- Encourage and support faculty members seeking external funding through grants and contracts related to Honors Program development.

v. Student Conduct

All Honors Program students are governed by the *Elizabeth City State University Student Handbook*, published each academic year, that contains guidelines for student conduct. Furthermore, it is expected that Honors Program students will conduct themselves in an honest, respectful manner both inside and outside the classroom.

Each student is expected to attend class regularly; provide advance notice of expected absences; assist other Honors Program students; perform and present research at local, regional, national and international conferences; and attend/participate in Honors Program-sponsored events, meetings, cultural events, debates, forums, workshops, and all other academically challenging activities.

Honors Program students are expected to behave in a collegial manner towards each other, faculty members, staff, and administrators. Proper procedures and policies are to be followed when addressing academic or student affairs concerns.