



## APEX Handbook Highlights

### Overall APEX Requirements [See section 2]

- An individual and original **creative/scholarly/experiential** component
- A UMass Dartmouth faculty member serving as an **APEX mentor**
  - Meetings are required at least once every two weeks
- **Submission** of proposal form (including HON301 options), progress report, and final approval form
- **A minimum of 3 APEX credits** through the Honors College (HON 490/491) or through the student's major department (e.g., independent study, internship, etc.)
- **A final written product** that, at a minimum, provides an abstract, a scholarly background, a summary and critical evaluation of the project, and how the project represents a culmination of one's skills and contributes to the field at large
- **An oral presentation** of the project (e.g., a poster presentation at the annual Honors College convocation, a publicly announced APEX defense, a professional conference, etc.)

[Full Handbook Here](#)

### APEX Tracks [See section 3]

- **Traditional Research:** For this track, "research" is broadly defined and can include scientific experiments, critical literature evaluations, human subject research, etc.
- **Creative Work/Performance/Expression:** This track is often appropriate for creative endeavors such as public art installations, musical performances, art exhibits, screenplays, poetry, and fiction writing. Marketing or business plans are also appropriate.
- **Applied/Service/Internship:** This track is for students who are doing work in the community or other applied setting including internships, volunteer work, or other work in a "real-world" setting. The APEX paper will focus on a project completed as part of the placement or alongside it.

*\*All APEXes regardless of topic/scope/length must meet the requirements outlined in section 2.4.*

### HON301: Research Across the Disciplines [See section 2.2]

Most students will take HON301, as it is a required course that helps them choose an APEX track, decide on a topic, and find a mentor. **If HON301 is waived, these credits must be substituted for 3 credits of an Honors elective.** HON301 can be waived on the APEX Proposal Form for students who are:

- already working in a research lab/larger project with faculty mentor commitment
- planning to complete the APEX as part of a major capstone course
- planning to pursue the internship/service track

### What forms are required for the APEX? [See section 4]

- **APEX Proposal Form:** Submitted at the end of HON301, or with the faculty mentor (e.g., capstone instructor or researcher). The form identifies the APEX title and advisor and describes the methodology and expected product(s). Proposals must contain:
  - Background information with citations and a bibliography
  - Research question(s)/thesis statement/problem statement
  - Objectives of the proposed project
  - Description of the proposed work. If two semesters are required, indicate a timeline
  - Explanation of how the project represents a culmination of one's skills
- **APEX Contract:** Provides an APEX **timeline** and serves as an **agreement** between the student and advisor. This form is required to enroll in HON490 (or equivalent APEX credit course).
- **APEX Midsemester Progress Form:** Due in the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. Student and advisor signatures are required.

- **APEX Final Approval Form:** This form is used to indicate that the student has completed the APEX requirements, including **final paper submission** and **public oral presentation** of the work. This is required for certification to graduate as a Commonwealth Honors Scholar.
  - **The written component will include:** an abstract, the APEX’s purpose/question, a scholarly background via literature and/or field review, description of the student’s individual process, an evaluation of results, a discussion of outcomes within background context alongside limitations and future work, and an explanation of how the project exemplifies the student’s culmination of skills. **See section 2.4 for full requirements and Appendix B for past examples.**

**Summary of Required Forms and Due Dates [See Table 4.5]** \*In the semester the APEX course is taken.

TRACK	Due Dates			
	HON301 Waiver Form	Proposal	Progress Report	Final Approval
Faculty commitment secured (Research or Exposition/Creative)	No later than December 10 <sup>th</sup> of the student’s Junior year	By the end of finals of the semester PRIOR to taking APEX credits	8 <sup>th</sup> week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams*
Capstone	No later than December 10 <sup>th</sup> of the student’s Junior year	By the end of the second week of the semester in which the capstone course is being taken	8 <sup>th</sup> week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams*
Internship	No later than December 10 <sup>th</sup> of the student’s Junior year	By the end of the second week of the internship	8 <sup>th</sup> week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams*
HON 301 (Research or Exposition/Creative)	No later than December 10 <sup>th</sup> of the student’s Junior year	By the end of the 13 <sup>th</sup> week of the semester	8 <sup>th</sup> week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams*

**HON 490, 491, and APEX Credits/Grading [See section 2.3]**

- **HON 490** does not have a standard grading rubric as each project and discipline has its own expectations. The student and faculty mentor should discuss expectations as part of the planning process. The student’s departmental independent study or research methods assessment practices may be referenced. Sample grading rubrics are available in **Appendix A**. If the work planned for HON 490 (or an equivalent APEX credit course) is incomplete at the end of the semester, the student should receive a grade of incomplete until the work is completed. All University policies on incomplete work and grading apply.
- Taking **HON 491** is appropriate if a second semester of work was indicated on a student’s APEX proposal or if the project scope was expanded to an extent that warrants another 3 credits on the student’s transcript. **\*These 3 credits will not count towards the 21 credits of Honors coursework.** HON 491 (or equivalent) may not be taken to complete unfinished work from HON 490 (or equivalent). If taking APEX credits within a course other than HON 490/491, the grading will follow the approved policy for that course.
- **Grades for APEX work** are determined by the APEX mentor. Grading policies, expectations, rubrics or other information should be made clear to students prior to the beginning of the work, and preferably in the APEX contract.
  - APEX mentors for students enrolled in **HON490/491** should email Dean Shapiro the final course grade.
  - To fulfill the APEX requirement, students **MUST earn a B or better in their APEX credits.** Otherwise, the APEX credits must be retaken.