

APEX HANDBOOK

2025-2026



Honors College
UMass Dartmouth

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1. Overview

The **APEX (Academic Project or Experience)** is the culmination of Honors education at UMass Dartmouth. Every student in the Honors College must complete an APEX to graduate as a Commonwealth Honors Scholar. The project may take the form of research, critical or philosophical analysis, computer program, performance, art exhibit, public service project, or other original work making a significant contribution to the field of study. Through the APEX, the student will demonstrate the ability to work independently and innovate in a chosen field—precisely the quality sought by all employers and graduate school admissions committees.

There are three “tracks” to complete the APEX, all of which are outlined in this handbook. Students are free to choose any track but should have a discussion with their APEX mentor and/or Honors academic advisor to choose the track that is most appropriate for the student’s project and career/education plans.

2. General Requirements

Regardless of track, there are several general guidelines for the APEX. Track-specific guidelines and rubrics will be discussed later in the handbook. All projects require the following:

- An individual and original creative/scholarly/experiential component. Students can work in groups, but each student needs to have a clear individual contribution.
- A UMass Dartmouth faculty member to serve as the APEX mentor. Students will work closely with their mentor in the design and completion of the project.
- Submission of several forms, including a proposal form, a progress report, and a final approval form. Additional details are included later in the handbook.
- Registering for a minimum of three APEX credits through the Honors College or through the major department (e.g., independent study credits, internship, etc.). Please consult with the Honors College to determine if the departmental course qualifies.
- A final written product that, at a minimum, provides an abstract, a comprehensive scholarly background, a detailed 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. The nature of the final written product may differ depending on APEX track (see section 2.4).
- A public presentation of the project (e.g., a poster presentation at the annual Honors College convocation, a publicly announced APEX defense, a presentation at a professional conference, etc.).

2.1 General APEX Learning Outcomes

The APEX has three primary learning outcomes, which are listed below. Because student work can vary depending on the track, the Honors College developed track-specific rubrics (see Appendix A), which are based on these general learning outcomes.

1. Develop rigorous scholarly inquiry skills
 - a. Use a systematic approach in assessing evidence, data, context, and interpretations.
 - b. Critically evaluate and critique the knowledge base within an area of inquiry.
 - c. Identify gaps in understanding.
 - d. Formulate and pursue original scholarly endeavors.
2. Promote creativity and divergent/convergent thinking skills
 - a. Synthesize findings, ideas, and/or theories in innovative ways.
 - b. Apply existing skills in different settings.
 - c. Formulate solutions to novel problems.
3. Hone oral and written communication skills
 - a. Clearly explain (orally and in writing) findings, thoughts, and ideas to experts and non-experts.
 - b. Respectfully and civilly debate positions with people who may disagree.

2.2 HON301: Research Across the Disciplines

The first step in the APEX is to determine which track to pursue and if the student needs to take HON301. For most students, HON301 will be a required course and is a valuable experience that helps them choose an APEX track, decide on a topic, and find a mentor. HON301 can be waived on the APEX Proposal Form for students who are:

- already working in a research lab or on a 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

Regardless of whether students take HON301, a proposal must be submitted (see section 4.1). If HON301 is waived, these credits must be substituted for 3 credits of an Honors elective **as the requirement of 21 course credits plus 3 APEX credits to graduate from Honors is unchanged by an HON301 substitution approval.**

Table 2.2: How to Decide about Taking HON301

TRACK	Choose this option if I...	Then I...	and I register for APEX credits in...
Faculty commitment secured (Research or Exposition /Creative)	am working on research or a creative project with a professor and want to continue the work for my APEX, or have defined such a project with a professor willing to work with me as an APEX mentor	submit an APEX Proposal form with my mentor by the last day of finals of the semester PRIOR to starting the APEX credits	HON490 or an independent research course offered by my major department
Capstone	am in a major that requires a senior capstone research project or thesis and intend to use that course for my APEX	submit an APEX Proposal Form with my capstone professor within the first 2 weeks of the semester. *Important: The APEX requires some independent work- please consult with the Honors College	the senior capstone course
Internship	intend to do an internship and use the internship track for the APEX	work with the Honors College Administrators to find an internship, identify a mentor, and explore APEX topic ideas. Students can also utilize the Career Center's Handshake platform to identify internship opportunities. Submit the APEX Proposal Form within the first two weeks of the internship	HON490

2.3 APEX Credits and Grading

Credits earned for work on the thesis/project cannot be counted toward the minimum 21 credits of Honors coursework required for graduation as a Commonwealth Honors Scholar. When enrolling for the first semester for which the student plans to earn APEX credit, they should confer with their Honors academic advisor to determine which course to take. Students can take three APEX credits if the work can be completed in one semester or six APEX credits if it will take two semesters. The decision of whether to take three or six credits should be made prior to taking the APEX credits. There should be a substantive reason to take six APEX credits. In other words, students should not take another semester of APEX credits if the work that was planned in the first semester was not completed.

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 unfinished work and the assignment of incomplete grades apply. Remember, 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, and rubrics should be made clear to students prior to the beginning of the work, and preferably in the APEX contract. Sample grading rubrics are available in Appendix A. APEX mentors for students enrolled in HON490/491 should email the Honors College Dean the final course grade

a minimum of one day before grades are due to the Registrar at the end of the semester. **To fulfill the APEX requirement, students MUST earn a B or better in their APEX credits.** If the student does not earn a B, the APEX credits must be retaken.

There are several methods for earning APEX credits:

2.3.1 HON490/491

If the student is undertaking an interdisciplinary project, or if one's major department does not have suitable thesis/project or independent study courses, one may register for HON490 (first semester) and HON491 (second semester, if needed). One must request a permission number from the Honors Dean to enroll. The Honors Dean serves as the formal instructor of record, but the APEX mentor supervises the work and determines the grade.

2.3.2 Department-Specific Independent Study Courses

Many departments have 400-level course numbers set aside for theses, projects, and/or independent study. Credits earned in this way may also count toward the student's departmental graduation requirements. The APEX mentor serves as the course instructor and assigns a grade at the end of each semester. It is important to note that departmental thesis/project and independent study courses are not normally listed in COIN until a student expresses the intention to take one of them and finds a faculty mentor willing to serve as instructor. Once an APEX mentor is identified, the mentor and department chair will ask the Registrar to create a section for the relevant semester.

2.3.3 Internship/Clinical Courses

Students can use an internship/clinical class to satisfy the APEX requirement if the experience includes an individual and original scholarly endeavor. For example, a nursing student can integrate the APEX into a clinical internship course, or a psychology student can use a counseling placement as part of the APEX. They need simply to do a project in their placement (qualitative or quantitative) or critical review based on that experience.

2.3.4 Capstone Courses

A capstone course can also provide a foundation for an APEX. For instance, students in an engineering capstone can add a component to the group capstone project that will be conducted alongside, or as part of, the group project (e.g., add additional functionality, do efficiency analyses, or user testing of the system). An English or Interior Architecture capstone course that requires the development and completion of a creative work could also count as the student's APEX.

If the capstone course does not fully meet the requirements of the APEX, the student could complete the work in an independent study course through the department or Honors (i.e., HON490). For example, if an illustration major completes a project for a capstone but the project does not fully meet the APEX requirements, the student could continue the work through an independent study or through HON490.

2.4 Written and Oral Requirements

Some APEX projects are entirely written, while others, such as those in the visual or performing arts, consist of both written and non-written components (**see Appendix B for past examples**). **However, all APEXes require a written component**, which demonstrates the track's learning objectives (**see Appendix A for rubrics**) and includes the following elements:

- An abstract summarizing the project's scholarly background, purpose, methodology or work done, results, and concluding discussion and/or implications on the wider field
- The purpose of the APEX, such as the question addressed, artistic goal, or purpose of the internship/experience
- A comprehensive scholarly review of what has been done before, such as the prior literature on a research topic, an analysis of previous artistic works and traditions that set the stage for the current APEX, or a detailed review and comparison of industry-wide practices relevant to the internship. Please refer to APEX examples for models of expected length, comprehensiveness, and format. Mentors can also recommend discipline-specific style and content resources (such as the APA Publication Manual)
- A detailed written description of the student's process, which may include illustrations or other visual materials for creative work, or a formal methods section for scientific investigations. In cases in which the APEX was a group project, the student must also clearly explain their individual contribution and work
- Results of the investigation for traditional research, or description of the outcome or product for other types of projects
- A discussion section that summarizes the outcomes of the work and contextualizes it with reference to the literature discussed in the background section. In the case of projects intended to provide policy recommendations, a detailed narrative describing the recommendation(s) and how they stem from the literature review and/or results of the APEX work is required. Students should discuss limitations of the project (e.g., methods, generalizability) and suggestions for future work
- An explanation and discussion of how the project represents a culmination of one's skills and contributes to the field at large. This component is required to prepare students to communicate skills and intellectual process to employers and graduate schools

All APEX projects must be presented at least once in an appropriate public venue. This can take the form of a traditional thesis defense before the student's committee, a public performance or display, and/or conference presentation. All students are encouraged to present their theses or projects in poster format at the annual Honors Convocation in April. The Convocation poster presentation alone is sufficient to meet the Honors College requirements, but the student's mentor may require an additional presentation. In practice, many Commonwealth Scholars present their work in more than one public venue prior to graduation.

2.5 The Faculty Mentor

The faculty mentor must be a member of the UMass Dartmouth faculty, and most often will be a member of the student's major department. Faculty members are not obligated to serve as an APEX mentor, and they are often more inclined to supervise an APEX when the project is related to their research interests or expertise. One approach to identifying a mentor is to research faculty in the major department to determine who is doing work that is of interest and ask if there is an ongoing research component the student can undertake for the APEX. Students should remain open-minded and be willing to modify the APEX topic in consultation with potential mentors.

2.6 Optional Committee Member(s)

Some projects may benefit from adding committee members to the project, who serve as consultants to the student in addition to the primary mentor. This can be especially helpful if the project is interdisciplinary or requires skills (such as statistical analysis, graphic design, or programming) that may be outside the mentor's primary areas of expertise. The addition of committee members is not required for the APEX project, but is recommended in some cases, and may be needed as a capstone requirement if this track is chosen (i.e. PSY 498/499).

3. APEX Tracks

3.1 Traditional Research

For this track, "research" is broadly defined and can include scientific experiments, critical literature evaluations, human subject research, etc. The scope and length of the written paper should reflect the norm for undergraduate theses in the major field, as long as it meets the requirements explained in section 2.4. It should be written in a professional or academic style characteristic of the subject matter or discipline of the thesis (e.g., APA or MLS style), and it should contain documentation that is appropriate to the field. The APEX mentor will help determine what is appropriate.

3.2 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. This track requires a written APEX paper that will vary in content depending on the nature of the work. For a performance or art piece, it might be a description of the problem space the work addresses, a review of work related to or that influenced the topic, and an explanation of the method and solution (in addition to submission of the work itself). It should be of sufficient scope and quality to demonstrate competence in the field.

3.3 Applied/Service/Internship

This track is for students who are doing work in an applied setting such as internships or community service. This track allows students to explore a question in the "real world" (e.g., the internship site). Depending on the placement location, the information gathering can be done in the archives of a museum, interviews with company staff, questionnaires to customers or employees, surveys to employees or executives within the relevant industry, outcomes of

work the student engaged in during the placement, or other activities. Another option is to research a topic sufficiently to develop a new course in the student's major. Such projects should produce a complete syllabus with learning outcomes, lesson plans, readings, assignments, and assessments. The methods in this track are flexible but must have some original scholarship to be written into an APEX paper. How the paper is structured (e.g., chapters addressing different learning outcomes, or an introduction, project description and outcomes) is up to the student and mentor as long as it meets the requirements explained in section 2.4.

Students who choose this track are required to meet with an Honors College administrator (either the Dean or the Faculty Director) as soon as the internship track is chosen. During this meeting, the following will be discussed:

- The student's interests in an internship or applied experience
- Potential faculty mentors and optional Committee Members (if not already identified)
- Goals and potential research questions for the placement (finalized with APEX mentor)
- Detailed plans
- Timeline of the internship and APEX work

4. The APEX Process

The completion of the APEX should not be overwhelming. The Honors team and your mentor are all here to support you. In this section, the process is broken down into several parts to guide students and help keep them on track. Many of these parts involve filling out an online form, all of which can be found on the Honors College APEX [website](#). There is also a table with the relevant due dates in section 4.6 of this guide.

4.1 APEX Proposal (Due dates vary, see Table 4.1)

The proposal provides a brief description of the proposed project, and the course(s) and semester(s) in which the work will be completed. The student's mentor must approve and electronically sign the proposal before submitting it to the Honors College. Specifically, the proposal should include the following:

1. A narrative containing

- Background information with citations and a bibliography
- Research question(s)/thesis statement/problem statement
- Objectives of the proposed project
- Description of the proposed work AND if the student believes it will take one or two semesters. If two semesters are required, indicate which part(s) of the work plan will occur in the first and second semesters
- Explanation of how the project represents a culmination of one's skills

The proposal is similar to the Office of Undergraduate Research grant application and the Honors APEX Funding application, making it easier to apply for funding if needed.

2. **A work timeline.** The online proposal form includes a template for a timeline, which should be modified to fit the project. Students should work closely with their APEX mentor to determine the goals and timeline. Although the template is not binding, it should be well thought out. Students also need to consider what training might be required. For example, for students doing human subject research, an IRB proposal must be submitted and CITI training is required. See the Additional Information section below for more details and Appendix B for timeline samples by College. Again, students should work with their mentor to determine what is required. The timeline should be consulted when completing the APEX Progress Report when enrolled in APEX credits (see section 4.2).
3. **A student/mentor responsibility agreement.** The online proposal form also contains a sample template for the responsibilities of the student and mentor. It is meant to be revised by each faculty/student team to fit the demands of the student's APEX project.

Table 4.1: APEX Proposal Due Dates.

TRACK	Proposal Due Date
Faculty commitment secured (Research or Exposition/Creative)	By the end of finals of the semester PRIOR to taking APEX credits
Capstone	By the end of the second week of the semester in which the capstone course is being taken
Internship	By the end of the second week of the internship
HON 301 (Research or Exposition/Creative)	By the end of the 13 th week of the semester

4.2 APEX Progress Report (Due on the Friday of the 8th week of the semester by 5pm)

The progress report is a way for the Honors College to help students stay on track. The progress report should include the following information (if relevant):

- Changes to the methods or planned final product
- Major timeline changes (refer to the timeline in the APEX proposal to make this determination)
- IRB submission/approval status (if relevant)
- Progress on data collection efforts
- Whether the completion date will be significantly changed from the proposal's projected completion date

4.3 APEX Final Approval Form (Due no later than the last day of final exams)

After the APEX has been written, presented, and approved by the APEX mentor and/or committee, the student must submit the final approval form. The student needs to report the date and place of the public presentation (often the Honors Convocation Poster Session), the APEX credits used to complete the project and when they were taken (e.g., HON490 in Spring 20xx), the signatures of the mentor and applicable committee members, and a copy of the final

paper (see section 2.4). The final approval form needs to be submitted to the Honors college by the last day of finals of the semester in which the student completes the project.

4.4 APEX Topic Revision Form (only if needed)

The APEX Revision Form only needs to be completed if there is a major change in the APEX topic. Submission is not required for relatively minor changes (e.g., modifying measures, slight changes in wording of research questions, etc.). To complete the revision form, a revised proposal and timeline need to be submitted. If there is any question whether a revision form is needed, please reach out to the Honors College for assistance.

Table 4.5: Summary of Required Forms and Due Dates

TRACK	Due Dates		
	Proposal	Progress Report	Final Approval
Faculty commitment secured (Research or Exposition/Creative)	By the end of finals of the semester PRIOR to taking APEX credits	8 th week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams
Capstone	By the end of the second week of the semester in which the capstone course is being taken	8 th week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams
Internship	By the end of the second week of the internship	8 th week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams
HON 301 (Research or Exposition/Creative)	By the end of the 13 th week of the semester	8 th week of the semester in which APEX credits are being taken	Last day of final exams

5. Additional Information

5.1 Institutional Review and Ethics Training Requirements

State and Federal law require that all human research using humans or animals undergo formal review by the institution's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and undergo University ethics training. To determine whether the APEX project requires IRB review, please consider the following guidance adapted from the DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services).

A human or animal subject means a human or living vertebrate animal about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research:

- (I) Obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or
- (II) Obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens.

Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

For a study to be exempt from IRB review and approval, it would have to be deemed either not human or vertebrate animal subjects or not research per DHHS. If it is considered human subjects research per the above definitions, the proposal requires IRB approval before the implementation of data collection and all personnel must complete [required CITI trainings](#).

5.2 Collaborative Projects

It is possible to collaborate with another student on an APEX project. This is encouraged if the projects are related in a fundamental way. For example, an engineering student who develops a new technology may partner with a business student, who might develop a funding pitch and business model to monetize the invention. Each student is still required to produce an independent APEX paper and presentation in such a case.

5.3 Potential Funding Opportunities

Some students might require funding for things such as special equipment or material, participant compensation, or access to certain resources. Two of the primary sources of funding are the Office of Undergraduate Research and the Honors APEX Support Grant. Please look at the APEX Funding Opportunities on the UMass Dartmouth Honors College website for more information. The APEX Support Grant application is online, but a copy that allows you to see what information is required is provided in Appendix C.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Rubrics - Final Paper

A.1 Traditional Research Track

1. Literature, background, and justification

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thesis presented within an academic framework• Comprehensive and relevant literature review included• Justification and background (e.g., historical and contemporary contexts, assumptions/biases, and/or ethical considerations are clear and sound• Clear articulation of the gap in current understanding/state of the field				
Comments:				

2. Research question or creative challenge

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unique research question/issue/creative challenge identified• Goals/objectives/hypotheses are explicit• Questions and hypotheses flow logically from literature review and background• Predictions can be tested using described methods				
Comments:				

3. Methodology/approach

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Methodology/approach is appropriate to disciplinary/interdisciplinary focus• Topic is contextualized among sources and materials cited• Demonstrates understanding of the content, tools, and structures in the field• Methods appropriately test predictions/hypotheses• Study design is appropriate to test predictions/hypotheses• Appropriate analytical approaches used (e.g., proper statistics are used)				
Comments:				

4. Results

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results are displayed in appropriate manner in both text and graphic form• Appropriate field-specific reporting guidelines are followed (e.g., APA style)• Results follow logically from background and methods• Analytical plan is clearly stated				
Comments:				

5. Conclusions, implications, and consequences

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclusions, qualifications, and consequences, including value of thesis, are presented• Significance of what was discovered, learned, or created is demonstrated• Assertions are qualified and well-supported• Demonstrates independent and critical thought• Critical analysis of evidence/results• Explain results and place them in the context of current understanding• Report on if results support/do not support hypotheses				
Comments:				

6. Writing

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas• Any errors in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and/or punctuation are minimal• Organization is clear and effective• Sources and citations are used correctly• Citations and references are in appropriate standard				
Comments:				

A.2 Creative/Expression Track

1. Literature, Background, and Justification

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project reflects familiarity with historical and contemporary texts and contexts, reflected in a thorough literature review• Literature review provides an evidence-based and critical evaluation of the works cited, in language appropriate to the discipline				
Comments:				

2. Research Question or Creative Challenge

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear statement about what questions the work explores• Clear statement about why the questions matter, within the context of the work explored in the literature review				
Comments:				

3. Methodology/approach: Development

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Methodology/approach is appropriate to thematic and disciplinary/interdisciplinary focus• Topic is contextualized among sources and materials cited• Multiple perspectives are considered• Demonstrates understanding of the content, tools, and structures in the field				
Comments:				

4. Methodology/approach: Implementation

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symbolic and/or quantitative tools are utilized effectively• Breadth and depth of the work are sufficient to address the research question• Demonstrates understanding of professional standards				
Comments:				

5. Conclusions, Implications, and Consequences

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclusions, qualifications, reflection on the creative process, and value of the thesis, are presented• Significance of what was discovered, learned, or created is discussed• Assertions are qualified and well supported• Demonstrates independent and critical thought				
Comments:				

6. Writing

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas• Any errors in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and/or punctuation are minimal• Organization is clear and effective• Sources and citations are used correctly• Citations and references are in appropriate standard				
Comments:				

A.3 Service/Internship Track

1. Literature, Background, and Justification

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thesis is framed within an academic framework• Comprehensive and relevant scholarly review of sources and materials included• Justification and background (e.g., historical and contemporary contexts, assumptions, biases, or ethical considerations) is clear and sound				
Comments:				

2. Scholarly Question or Challenge

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unique question or challenge identified• Goals/objectives are explicit• Questions or challenges are logically connected to the scholarly review and background				
Comments:				

3. Methodology/approach: Development

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Methodology/approach is appropriate to disciplinary/interdisciplinary focus and organizational context• Topic is contextualized among sources and materials cited• Multiple perspectives are considered• Demonstrates understanding of the content, tools, and structures in the field				
Comments:				

4. Outcomes

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative or summative outcomes are identified Outcomes reflect methodology Consideration of barriers, context, and demands Connect scholarly review with actual experiences 				
Comments:				

5. Conclusions, Implications, and Consequences

Poor		Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1		2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significance of what was discovered, learned, or created is demonstrated Assertions are qualified and well supported Demonstrates independent and critical thought Identifies key findings, potential collaborators, and stakeholders Future directions (e.g., what could the next student do to continue work, how could findings be implemented in a larger setting, etc.) Self-reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify successes and what the student would change if done again Identify any possible biases (systemic or personal) Identify any challenges in terms of processes, co-workers, or collaborators Consider how experience is relevant to the student's future and career 					
Comments:					

6. Writing

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas Any errors in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and/or punctuation are minimal Organization is clear and effective Sources and citations are used correctly Citations and references are in appropriate standard 				
Comments:				

APPENDIX B: Sample Proposals and Final Projects by Track

The full OneDrive folder with redacted samples of APEX Proposals (containing timelines and responsibility examples) and samples combined by track are available [here](#) to UMass Dartmouth accounts only. Paper samples are available on request.

If the included link cannot be used, please scan the QR code below.



APPENDIX C: APEX Forms, Templates, and Presentation Guidelines

All Honors Forms must be submitted electronically via DocuSign. Links are posted on the Honors College website, and below for your convenience. For reference, a copy of each form is included on the following pages. **Do not print and submit paper copies.**

Proposal, Progress, and Final Approval Forms:

- [APEX Proposal, Responsibilities Contract, and Timeline Form](#)
 - [Template: APEX Contract](#)
 - [Template: APEX Timeline](#)
- [APEX Progress Report](#)
- [APEX Final Approval Form](#)

APEX Modifications *(if needed)*:

- [APEX Revision Form](#)

APEX Funding Opportunities:

- [APEX Support Grant](#)
- [Student Travel Grant](#)

Presenting your APEX

For detailed information regarding your APEX Poster Presentation, please see our [APEX Poster Design Guidelines](#) and the [APEX Poster Template](#).

Part 1: STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____

Year of Graduation: _____

Student ID: _____

Major: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Part 2: DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Project Title

APEX Track

Please place an X next to appropriate track. This CAN be changed at a later date if needed.

☐ Traditional Research☐ Service/Internship☐ Presentation/Exhibition

HON 301

☐ I completed HON 301.**If yes, please provide:**

Semester & Year: _____

HON 301 Professor's Name: _____

☐ I am requesting a substitution for HON 301.

I understand that I will need to replace HON 301 with another Honors Elective, and **the total number of required Honors credits (24) will be unchanged by this substitution.**

APEX Credits (minimum three credits)

A minimum of 3 credits is required for the APEX project. In some cases, a second semester (an additional 3 credits) is needed to complete the APEX. Below, please indicate the semester(s) in which you will take APEX credits, and course(s) used to take them. If you anticipate that you only need three credits, you should leave the second course information blank. Also note that you must complete the first course before beginning the second (e.g., complete work outlined in HON 490 before signing up for HON 491). Some departments offer courses in which the APEX credits can be completed. Please talk to your HON 301 instructor, major advisor and/or Honors advisor to determine the best course(s) for your APEX. A list of department-offered courses that may be taken in lieu of HON 490 is available on the last page of this form to assist you and your advisors with that decision.

1. Required

Semester & Year _____

Course _____

2. Optional

Semester & Year _____

Course _____

Proposal Narrative

Please attach a detailed explanation of your proposed APEX. It should follow the format of the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) grant application, which includes the following:

1. Background information with citations and a bibliography
2. Research question(s)/thesis statement/problem statement
3. Objectives of the proposed project
4. Description of the proposed work AND if you believe it will take one or two semesters. If two semesters are required, indicate which part(s) of the work plan will occur in the first and second semesters.
5. Explanation of how the project represents a culmination of one's skills

For students wishing to apply for the OUR grant, please see the OUR website for additional information regarding requirements: <http://www.umassd.edu/our/fundingyourresearch/>

Part 3:

APEX RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINE

Overview and Responsibilities

Completion of the APEX is a requirement for graduating as a Commonwealth Scholar. Although much of the onus of the APEX is on the student, the APEX mentor plays a critical role in each stage of the process. Below are general guidelines outlining the general responsibilities of the student and mentor. There is also a template that can be used to develop a timeline. Remember, before you start your APEX, make sure to register for your APEX credits (at least three)!

Please Note: This is a template. It can and should be edited by the student and advisor so it is appropriate for the project.

Topic	Student's Responsibilities	APEX Mentor's Responsibilities
Topic Development and Methodology	Develop a focused, feasible, and worthwhile topic. This will involve several iterations and require the student to be flexible.	The advisor's primary responsibility is to make sure the topic is feasible and that the project can be completed in a reasonable timeframe (usually 1 year). The advisor should assist in developing the theoretical framework and the methodological approach.
Choosing Committee	Do some preliminary work identifying potential committee members. This is most easily done by looking at the department website and exploring faculty interests.	Offer advice and recommendations for committee members. May be from within or outside of department (note that department rules may vary).
Creating and Adhering to a Timeline	Adhere to all deadlines. If the student cannot meet a deadline, the advisor should be notified in advance. The student need not seek perfection on early drafts!	Set deadlines for various components of the project (e.g., annotated bibliography, draft of lit review, etc). Make sure to keep in touch with the student to ensure deadlines are realistic.
Meetings	Be on time to all meetings with the advisor and the committee. The student should come prepared with questions, any drafts, and concerns. Let the advisor know in advance if you will be travelling or cannot meet.	Schedule regular meetings with your student (at least once every other week). Assist in setting up committee meetings and booking rooms. Give guidance in terms of how you want him or her to prepare for the next meeting.
Advising/ Communication	Use the advisor's expertise. Ask your advisor about methodology, theoretical frameworks, and germinal work you should be citing. Respond to questions from your advisor promptly.	Respond to student questions in a timely manner! If you do not hear from your student, please make sure to reach out to make sure everything is still on track.
Drafts/ Feedback	Submit sections or chapters as they are completed (on or before the deadline). Although the drafts will not be perfect, the student should spellcheck and re-read the document before submitting to catch any obvious errors. Include comments and/or specific questions that you have right in the document.	Provide written and/or verbal feedback on student drafts. Feedback should be critical but supportive. Try to return drafts in a timely manner (e.g., 1 week).

Timeline Template

Students and APEX mentors can use this template to develop a project timeline. Please feel free to change the goals to correspond to the specific project (e.g., not all projects will require IRB approval).

GOAL	MONTH									
	Sum	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Project conception										
Background reading										
Annotated bibliography										
Literature review										
Research methods planning										
Draft of methods										
PROPOSAL										
Submit IRB (if necessary)										
Data collection										
Data analysis										
Discuss findings										
Draft of results/discussion										
Further drafts										
FINAL MEETING										
Final draft										
Public Presentation										

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Will this project require IRB review?

If yes, are you CITI certified?

Student:

APEX Mentor:

More information regarding IRB and CITI can be found within the [UMassD IRB User Guide](#).

Required Signatures

****Be sure to read the comments box below after Dr. Shapiro's review. This box will contain Dr. Shapiro's feedback, potential revision requests, and/or your permission number for HON 490.**

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the APEX requirements in the [APEX Handbook](#) and I understand that a Final APEX Paper is required.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and approve the attached APEX Proposal, Responsibilities grid, and Timeline chart. I understand that the student must submit a Final APEX Paper and additional APEX information can be found in the [APEX Handbook](#).

APEX Mentor Name

APEX Mentor Signature

Date

Honors Dean Name

Honors Dean Signature

Date

Comments:

APEX Courses by College and Major

Arts & Sciences		APEX
1 Biology	HON 490	or BIO 440
2 Chemistry	HON 490	or CHM 499
3 Communication	HON 490	
4 Crime & Justice Studies	HON 490	CJS 495
5 Economics	HON 490	
6 Economics Healthcare Services Admin	HON 490	
7 English	HON 490	
8 French	HON 490	
9 Health & Society	HON 490	
10 History	HON 490	
11 Liberal Arts	HON 490	
12 Mathematics (BA or BS)	HON 490	
13 Philosophy	HON 490	
14 Political Science	HON 490	
15 Public Administration (BA or BS)	HON 490	
16 Portuguese	HON 490	
17 Psychology	HON 490	PSY 495
18 Sociology and Anthropology	HON 490	SOA 492
19 Spanish	HON 490	
20 Women's & Gender Studies	HON 490	

Nursing & Health Sciences		APEX
1 Nursing	HON 490	
2 Medical Laboratory Science	HON 490	or MLS 450

Visual & Performing Arts		APEX
1 Animation & Game Arts	HON 490	
2 Art Education	HON 490	
3 Art History	HON 490	
4 Drawing	HON 490	
5 Fashion Design	HON 490	
6 Graphic Design	HON 490	
7 Illustration	HON 490	
8 Integrated Studio Arts	HON 490	
9 Interior Architecture & Design	HON 490	
10 Music	HON 490	
11 Music Education	HON 490	
12 Painting	HON 490	
13 Photography	HON 490	
14 Printmaking	HON 490	
15 Sculpture	HON 490	

Engineering		APEX
1 Bioengineering		BNG 497H & 498H
2 Civil Engineering	HON 490	
3 Computer Science	HON 490	CIS 498H & 499H
4 Data Science		DSC 498H & 499H
5 Electrical & Computer Engineering	HON 490	
6 Mechanical Engineering	HON 490	MNE 497H & 498H
7 Physics		PHY 490H

Business		APEX
1 Accounting	HON 490	
2 Finance	HON 490	
3 General Business Administration	HON 490	
4 Management Information Systems	HON 490	
5 Management	HON 490	
6 Marketing	HON 490	
7 Operations Management	HON 490	

*** Please Note: Students may select an alternate course to satisfy their APEX requirement with permission from their Department and the Honors College.

APEX RESPONSIBILITIES CONTRACT

Commonwealth Honors Project

(Sample Form)

Overview and Responsibilities

Completion of the APEX is a requirement for graduating as a Commonwealth Scholar. Although much of the onus of the APEX is on the student, the advisor plays a critical role in each stage of the process. Below are general guidelines outlining the general responsibilities of the student and advisor. There is also a template that can be used to develop a timeline. Remember, before you start your APEX, make sure to register for your APEX credits (at least three)!

Please Note: This is a template. It can and should be edited by the student and advisor so it is appropriate for the project.

Topic	Student's Responsibilities	Advisor's Responsibilities
Topic Development and Methodology	Develop a focused, feasible, and worthwhile topic. This will involve several iterations and require the student to be flexible.	The advisor's primary responsibility is to make sure the topic is feasible and that the project can be completed in a reasonable timeframe (usually 1 year). The advisor should assist in developing the theoretical framework and the methodological approach.
Choosing Committee	Do some preliminary work identifying potential committee members. This is most easily done by looking at the department website and exploring faculty interests.	Offer advice and recommendations for committee members. May be from within or outside of department (note that department rules may vary).
Creating and Adhering to a Timeline	Adhere to all deadlines. If the student cannot meet a deadline, the advisor should be notified in advance. The student need not seek perfection on early drafts!	Set deadlines for various components of the project (e.g., annotated bibliography, draft of lit review, etc). Make sure to keep in touch with the student to ensure deadlines are realistic.
Meetings	Be on time to all meetings with the advisor and the committee. The student should come prepared with questions, any drafts, and concerns. Let the advisor know in advance if you will be travelling or cannot meet.	Schedule regular meetings with your student (at least once every other week). Assist in setting up committee meetings and booking rooms. Give guidance in terms of how you want him or her to prepare for the next meeting.
Advising/ Communication	Use the advisor's expertise. Ask your advisor about methodology, theoretical frameworks, and germinal work you should be citing. Respond to questions from your advisor promptly.	Respond to student questions in a timely manner! If you do not hear from your student, please make sure to reach out to make sure everything is still on track.
Drafts/ Feedback	Submit sections or chapters as they are completed (on or before the deadline). Although the drafts will not be perfect, the student should spellcheck and re-read the document before submitting to catch any obvious errors. Include comments and/or specific questions that you have right in the document.	Provide written and/or verbal feedback on student drafts. Feedback should be critical but supportive. Try to return drafts in a timely manner (e.g., 1 week).

APEX Mentor Email

Completion of the APEX is a requirement for graduating as a Commonwealth Scholar. Although much of the onus of the APEX is on the student, the advisor plays a critical role in each stage of the process. Below are general guidelines outlining the general responsibilities of the student and advisor. There is also a template that can be used to develop a timeline. Remember, before you start your APEX, make sure to register for your APEX credits (at least three)!

[illegible]

Commonwealth Honors Project

(Sample Form)

Timeline Template

Following is a template that the student and advisor can use to develop a timeline for the thesis project. Please feel free to change the goals to correspond to the specific project (e.g., not all projects will require data collection).

[illegible]

Student Name

APEX Mentor Name

Following is a template that the student and advisor can use to develop a timeline for the thesis project. Please feel free to change the goals to correspond to the specific project (e.g., not all projects will require data collection).

[illegible]

APEX PROGRESS REPORT

Commonwealth Honors Project

Student Name: _____ Year of Graduation: _____

Student ID: _____ Major: _____

Email: _____

Project Title: _____

Progress Report Details

Please describe your progress since the submission of your APEX Proposal, and refer to your APEX Timeline. You should include the following information (if relevant):

- If you have received IRB approval (if necessary)
- Progress on participant recruitment (if relevant)
- Data/materials collection progress

Please note:

If significant changes have occurred to your initial APEX proposal (e.g. track, topic, methods, procedure, timeline, APEX Mentor, etc.), please complete the APEX Revision Form.

Submission Deadline

Your progress report is due on the Friday of the 8th week of each semester, by 5:00pm.

After review, be sure to check the Comments box below for the Dean's feedback/requests.

Required Signatures

Student: _____

APEX Mentor: _____

Honors Dean: _____

Comments:

Student Name: _____ Year of Graduation: _____

Student ID: _____ Major: _____

Personal Email: _____ Phone: _____
(Not UMassD Email, please)**Project Title:** _____**APEX Affirmation**

This Commonwealth Honors APEX has been submitted, defended, and approved in accordance with the policies of the Commonwealth Honors Program and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Honors College. **A copy of the Final APEX Paper is attached.**

Required Public Presentation**Venue of public presentation** (*Example: Honors Convocation Poster Session*) **Date****APEX Course(s)****Course and Semester** (*Example: HON 490, Spring 20##*) **Final Grade****Second Course and Semester, if applicable** **Final Grade****Permission to Share**

I give the Honors College permission to share my APEX with future Honors students.

Student: _____
Name Sign Date**Approvals**

Please remember that committee members' signatures are required, if applicable.

APEX Mentor: _____
Name Sign DateCommittee Member: _____
Name Sign DateCommittee Member: _____
Name Sign DateHonors Dean: _____
Name Sign Date

NON-EXCLUSIVE DISSERTATION/THESIS DISTRIBUTION LICENSE
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH

I am submitting my manuscript for inclusion in the Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Collection at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

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I represent that I have fulfilled any right of review or other obligation required by contract or agreement with any agency or organization that has sponsored or supported my research.

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Claire T. Carney Library will make the submission available to the public using a Creative Commons Attribution / Non-commercial / No derivative works license accompanied by a copyright statement indicating the author's continuing rights. Claire T. Carney Library will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the author's name remains clearly associated with the submission and that no alterations of the content are made.

In addition, I would like my work made available:

- ☐ As soon as possible.
- ☐ Six months after my degree date (no justification required).
- ☐ One year after my degree date (the reason for the request must be sent to the Department Chairperson who will then forward his/her recommendation to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies for final approval).

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Part 1: STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____

Year of Graduation: _____

Student ID: _____

Major: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Part 2: DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Original Project Title

Original APEX Track

☐ Traditional Research

☐ Service/Internship

☐ Presentation/Exhibition

Project Changes:

Has your APEX Track and/or Topic changed?
☐
If yes, please attach a new narrative, contract, & timeline using the respective paper clip buttons below.
☐ My APEX Track has changed:

☐

If yes, my new APEX Track is:

☐
☐ My APEX Topic has changed:

☐

If yes, my new APEX Topic is:

☐
My APEX Track & Topic are the same, but changes have occurred.
☐
I have attached a summary of these changes using the paper clip button to the left.

APEX Credits (minimum three credits)

A minimum of 3 credits is required for the APEX project. In some cases, a second semester (an additional 3 credits) is needed to complete the APEX. Below, please indicate the semester(s) in which you will take APEX credits, and course(s) used to take them. If you anticipate that you only need three credits, you should leave the second course information blank. Also note that you must complete the first course before beginning the second (e.g., complete work outlined in HON 490 before signing up for HON 491). Some departments offer courses in which the APEX credits can be completed. Please talk to your HON 301 instructor, major advisor and/or Honors advisor to determine the best course(s) for your APEX. A list of department-offered courses that may be taken in lieu of HON 490 is available on the last page of this form to assist you and your advisors with that decision.

1. Required

Semester & Year _____

Course _____

2. Optional

Semester & Year _____

Course _____

Proposal Narrative

Please attach a detailed explanation of your proposed APEX. It should follow the format of the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) grant application, which includes the following:

1. Background information
2. Research question(s)/thesis statement/problem statement
3. Objectives of the proposed project
4. Description of the proposed work AND if you believe it will take one or two semesters. If two semesters are required, indicate which part(s) of the work plan will occur in the first and second semesters.
5. Explanation of how the project represents a culmination of one's skills.

For students wishing to apply for the OUR grant, please see the OUR website for additional information regarding requirements: <http://www.umassd.edu/our/fundingyourresearch/>

Part 3:

APEX RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINE

Overview and Responsibilities

Completion of the APEX is a requirement for graduating as a Commonwealth Scholar. Although much of the onus of the APEX is on the student, the APEX mentor plays a critical role in each stage of the process. Below are general guidelines outlining the general responsibilities of the student and mentor. There is also a template that can be used to develop a timeline. Remember, before you start your APEX, make sure to register for your APEX credits (at least three)!

Please Note: This is a template. It can and should be edited by the student and advisor so it is appropriate for the project.

Topic	Student's Responsibilities	APEX Mentor's Responsibilities
Topic Development and Methodology	Develop a focused, feasible, and worthwhile topic. This will involve several iterations and require the student to be flexible.	The advisor's primary responsibility is to make sure the topic is feasible and that the project can be completed in a reasonable timeframe (usually 1 year). The advisor should assist in developing the theoretical framework and the methodological approach.
Choosing Committee	Do some preliminary work identifying potential committee members. This is most easily done by looking at the department website and exploring faculty interests.	Offer advice and recommendations for committee members. May be from within or outside of department (note that department rules may vary).
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Meetings	Be on time to all meetings with the advisor and the committee. The student should come prepared with questions, any drafts, and concerns. Let the advisor know in advance if you will be travelling or cannot meet.	Schedule regular meetings with your student (at least once every other week). Assist in setting up committee meetings and booking rooms. Give guidance in terms of how you want him or her to prepare for the next meeting.
Advising/ Communication	Use the advisor's expertise. Ask your advisor about methodology, theoretical frameworks, and germinal work you should be citing. Respond to questions from your advisor promptly.	Respond to student questions in a timely manner! If you do not hear from your student, please make sure to reach out to make sure everything is still on track.
Drafts/ Feedback	Submit sections or chapters as they are completed (on or before the deadline). Although the drafts will not be perfect, the student should spellcheck and re-read the document before submitting to catch any obvious errors. Include comments and/or specific questions that you have right in the document.	Provide written and/or verbal feedback on student drafts. Feedback should be critical but supportive. Try to return drafts in a timely manner (e.g., 1 week).

Timeline Template

Following is a template that the student and APEX mentor can use to develop a timeline for the thesis project. Please feel free to change the goals to correspond to the specific project (e.g., not all projects will require data collection).

GOAL	MONTH									
	Sum	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Project conception										
Background reading										
Annotated bibliography										
Literature review										
Research methods planning										
Draft of methods										
PROPOSAL										
Submit IRB (if necessary)										
Data collection										
Data analysis										
Discuss findings										
Draft of results/discussion										
Further drafts										
FINAL MEETING										
Final draft										
Public Presentation										

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Will this project require IRB review?

If yes, are you CITI certified?

Student:

Faculty Advisor:

More information regarding IRB and CITI can be found within the [UMassD IRB User Guide](#).

Required Signatures

****Be sure to read the comments box below after Dr. Shapiro's review. This box will contain Dr. Shapiro's feedback, potential revision requests, and/or your permission number for HON 490.**

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the APEX requirements in the [APEX Handbook](#) and I understand that a Final APEX Paper is required.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and approve the attached Summary of Changes or Proposal Narrative, Responsibilities grid, and Timeline chart (as applicable). I understand that the student must submit a Final APEX Paper and additional APEX information can be found in the [APEX Handbook](#).

APEX Mentor Name

APEX Mentor Signature

Date

Honors Dean Name

Honors Dean Signature

Date

Comments:

APEX Courses by College and Major

Arts & Sciences		APEX
1 Biology	HON 490	or BIO 440
2 Chemistry	HON 490	or CHM 499
3 Communication	HON 490	
4 Crime & Justice Studies	HON 490	CJS 495
5 Economics	HON 490	
6 Economics Healthcare Services Admin	HON 490	
7 English	HON 490	
8 French	HON 490	
9 Health & Society	HON 490	
10 History	HON 490	
11 Liberal Arts	HON 490	
12 Mathematics (BA or BS)	HON 490	
13 Philosophy	HON 490	
14 Political Science	HON 490	
15 Public Administration (BA or BS)	HON 490	
16 Portuguese	HON 490	
17 Psychology	HON 490	PSY 495
18 Sociology and Anthropology	HON 490	SOA 492
19 Spanish	HON 490	
20 Women's & Gender Studies	HON 490	

Nursing & Health Sciences		APEX
1 Nursing	HON 490	
2 Medical Laboratory Science	HON 490	or MLS 450

Visual & Performing Arts		APEX
1 Animation & Game Arts	HON 490	
2 Art Education	HON 490	
3 Art History	HON 490	
4 Drawing	HON 490	
5 Fashion Design	HON 490	
6 Graphic Design	HON 490	
7 Illustration	HON 490	
8 Integrated Studio Arts	HON 490	
9 Interior Architecture & Design	HON 490	
10 Music	HON 490	
11 Music Education	HON 490	
12 Painting	HON 490	
13 Photography	HON 490	
14 Printmaking	HON 490	
15 Sculpture	HON 490	

Engineering		APEX
1 Bioengineering		BNG 497H & 498H
2 Civil Engineering	HON 490	
3 Computer Science	HON 490	CIS 498H & 499H
4 Data Science		DSC 498H & 499H
5 Electrical & Computer Engineering	HON 490	
6 Mechanical Engineering		MNE 497H & 498H
7 Physics		PHY 490H

Business		APEX
1 Accounting	HON 490	
2 Finance	HON 490	
3 General Business Administration	HON 490	
4 Management Information Systems	HON 490	
5 Management	HON 490	
6 Marketing	HON 490	
7 Operations Management	HON 490	

*** Please Note: Students may select an alternate course to satisfy their APEX requirement with permission from their Department and the Honors College.



Request for Proposals APEX Support Grant

The Honors College is pleased to invite proposals for the APEX Support Grant (referred to in this document as the *APEX Grant*). The APEX Grant is an internal funding opportunity aimed at augmenting OUR funding in support of APEX work. The program is designed to support research among Honors students working with mentors who do not have available funding to cover expenses necessary for the completion of the APEX. The program will offer awards of up to \$500. Funding availability and the total amount of award requests will determine the number of APEX Grants awarded each year. Applications are rolling during the academic year and will be awarded based on merit until the year's funding is fully distributed. Questions about the application or funding may be directed to Dean Shapiro (ashapiro@umassd.edu).

Deadlines and Project Eligibility

To be eligible, the applicant must be a current Honors student in good standing, the request must be made in support of APEX work, and the student must be registered for APEX credit at the time the work will commence. The APEX project must already be approved by the Dean and the project should be at a sufficiently advanced stage of planning to allow the applicant to create a list of necessary expenses that can be itemized.

This grant program is meant to supplement funding already available for undergraduate research by the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). OUR offers funding in each semester and summer to support undergraduate research. Preference will be given to applicants who have also applied for OUR funding. [Information about OUR funding](#) is available on the OUR website.

There are no specific deadlines for the APEX Grant, as applications are rolling. Applicants are encouraged to apply for APEX Grant funding as early in the academic year as possible, as funding is anticipated to run out before the end of the academic year. Students are also encouraged to begin preparation of the application well in advance of when funds are needed to ensure sufficient time to collaborate with the APEX mentor on the application, for internal review by the College, and for dispersal of funds.

Eligible Expenses

The Honors College recognizes that APEX needs will vary a great deal between and even within disciplines. As such, the type of expenses eligible for funding will vary widely depending on the project being undertaken. Allowable expenses are those that stem directly from the APEX project and are required to carry it out.

Examples of eligible expenses may include (but are not limited to) laboratory chemicals, supplies or samples; fees to external labs for analysis; payment to human subjects; studio supplies; or travel to data collection sites or specialized archives. Living expenses, commuting costs, tuition and fees, conference travel, and other such expenses not directly related to carrying out the research will not be funded. Also ineligible are requests for items or services already available on campus such as statistical software, survey software, and computers.

How to Apply

Applications should be prepared by students, in collaboration with the APEX mentor. It is expected that the mentor will have read and approved the application and can confirm that of the mentor's external funding is available for the APEX work. The application should include:

- A completed cover page (last page of this document)
- A 2-page (maximum) project description with 1-inch margins and 12-point font, uploaded with the application through the portal. The approved APEX proposal can be revised to meet this requirement. The description should have 5 sections:
 - Brief **problem statement/motivation**
 - Abbreviated **background information**
 - Clear, detailed **goals and objectives**
 - Detailed information about **approach/methodology**
 - Clear statement of **anticipated outcomes**
- A **reference page** is also required, and is not included in the 2-page project description maximum.
- An **itemized budget and budget justification** for the APEX support (up to \$500) on a separate page. This page should have three sections:
 - **Budget request table.** Information about how to format the budget is provided below.
 - **Budget justification.** This section should explain why each item is necessary for completion of the work, and should make sense in the context of the methodology described in the proposal.
 - **Other financial support.** A list of other possible sources of support for the work, such as funds from OUR, the faculty mentor, or department should also be included on the budget page. If other funding was received, an explanation should be provided for why additional funding from the Honors College is needed. If an OUR application was made, this section should include the date of the application, details of the OUR budget request, and amount of funding received. If no other forms of support are available, this should be stated clearly.

How to Create an Itemized Budget for Research Support

Even if the project requires a single item, all requests should be itemized in a table, as shown in the examples below. An itemized budget should show a breakdown of the requested materials, with an estimate of their cost.

Example 1:

Item	Quantity	Cost	Total
Paint quarts for mural	18	\$20	\$360
TOTAL			\$360
OUR funds awarded			\$0
Mentor funds			\$0
Major Department Funds			\$-100
Total funding request to Honors College			\$260

Example 2:

Item	Quantity	Cost	Total
Cotton Swabs	2 packages (250 count)	\$4	\$8
Petri Dishes	50	\$2	\$100
Growth medium	500 ml	\$200	\$200
Pipettes	1 package of 50	\$50	\$50
DNA Purification Kit	1	\$250	\$250
TOTAL			\$608
OUR funds awarded			\$-300
Mentor funds			\$0
Total funding request to Honors College			\$308

Please submit applications via the web portal. The portal will require the faculty mentor's approval before consideration by the Honors College.

Two important things to note about budgets:

- Changes to the budget after an award is made will require submission of a revised budget, revision of the proposal, and a written explanation of the reason(s) for the alteration to the proposal before any expenses are approved by the Dean's office. Funding of the award will be contingent on approval of the revisions and is not guaranteed.
- The University has changed the regulations for monetary compensation (including cash and gift cards) to human participants. If your proposal includes payment to human subjects, please contact the Office of Research Development to learn about requirements before submitting a funding proposal.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by the Dean and Faculty Director of the Honors College using the following criteria:

- Prior approval of the APEX project by the Dean
- Relevance of the proposal to the goals of the APEX project
- Relevance and appropriateness of the requested budget items to the goals of the APEX project
- Quality, completeness, and clarity of the APEX Grant proposal
- Endorsement of the APEX mentor
- Attempt to gain OUR and other funding
- Availability of APEX Grant funds
- Availability of other funds for the APEX work

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH
HONORS COLLEGE
APEX SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION**

Student name:	Phone:	
E-mail:	Student ID#	
APEX mentor:	Department:	Mentor e-mail:

APEX title:

Is the work described in the required narrative intended to be part of the student's APEX?

Will the student be enrolled for APEX credit at the time this work is conducted?

Has the student previously been funded by APEX Support funding?

Has the student applied for funding from the Office of Undergraduate Research?

Has the student requested funding from the major department and APEX advisor?

Expected graduation year and semester:	Fall	Spring	Summer
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Academic year in which the APEX work will be conducted (e.g., 2023-2024): _____

Semester in which the work will be conducted (check all that apply): *Fall* *Spring* *Summer*

Estimated APEX completion date: ____/____/____

	Month	Year
Blanket approval of the application for a permit to conduct a market investigation		

Please attach your project description, reference page, itemized budget, and budget justification here:

Student Agreement

I certify that I meet all eligibility requirements, as outlined in the RFP. I agree to acknowledge "a UMass Dartmouth APEX Support Grant awarded by the Honors College" in my publication(s). I agree that submission of financial documents and accounting for the grant is my responsibility. I agree to notify the Dean of the Honors College if any significant changes are made to my APEX work plan.

Signature of Student

Date

APEX Mentor Endorsement

By signing below, the APEX mentor certifies that (1) the mentor has approved the accuracy of this application, (2) the mentor does not

currently hold sufficient grant or startup funds that may be used to fully support the APEX project, (3) the mentor approves the budget justification included with this application, (4) the work described in the narrative is part of the student's APEX, and (5) the student will be

registered for APEX credit during the requested grant period.

Signature of APEX Mentor _____ Date _____

H. _____ G. _____ R. _____

Honors College Dean	
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<i>Signature of Honors College Dean</i>	<i>Date</i>
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Request for Proposals Honors Student Travel Grant

The Honors College is pleased to invite proposals for the Honors Student Travel Grant. The Travel Grant is an internal funding opportunity aimed at augmenting Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) travel funding. The program is designed to provide funding for travel to professional conferences at which the student is presenting research. Students in need of funds to travel to conduct APEX research (e.g., archives or a field site), should apply for the APEX Support Grant. The Travel Grant program will offer awards of up to \$500. Funding availability and the total amount of award requests will determine the number of Travel Grants awarded each year. Applications are rolling during the academic year and will be awarded based on merit until the year's funding is fully distributed. Questions about the application or funding may be directed to Dean Shapiro (ashapiro@umassd.edu).

Eligibility, Requirements, and Deadlines

To be eligible, the applicant must be a current Honors student in good standing. The student must be an author on a presentation that has been accepted by a professional conference prior to applying for funds. Students must provide evidence that the poster or talk was accepted to the conference (e.g., an email or conference proceedings) as part of the application. This grant program is meant to supplement funding already available for undergraduate travel by the OUR, which offers funding in each semester to support undergraduate travel related to conference presentations and research. Preference will be given to applicants who have also applied for OUR funding. [Information about OUR funding](#) is available on the OUR website.

IMPORTANT: All University-related travel requires compliance with the campus travel policies. This includes submission of the Domestic Student Travel Form. This form and information about all requirements are [available on the University website](#). Also, to prevent students being taxed on their travel award, funds are provided only as reimbursement for travel expenses. To receive reimbursement, students are responsible for submitting valid, original receipts in compliance with campus policy.

There are no specific deadlines for the Travel Grant, as applications are rolling. Applicants are encouraged to apply for Travel Grant funding as early in the academic year as possible, as funding is anticipated to run out before the end of the academic year. Students are also encouraged to begin preparation of the application well in advance of when funds are needed to ensure sufficient time to collaborate with the faculty mentor on the application, for internal review by the College, and for dispersal of funds.

Allowable expenses include but are not limited to:

- Airfare or ground transportation expenses to a research site or conference where student is presenting work
- Lodging while at a research site or conference where student is presenting work
- Meals
- Conference registration fees

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted via the web portal. The link is available at <https://www.umassd.edu/honors/apex/>. Applications should be prepared by students, in collaboration with the research mentor. It is expected that the mentor will have read and approved the application, and can confirm that the mentor's external funding is unable to cover all travel expenses. The application should include:

- A completed **cover page** (last page of this document)

- **Evidence that the work has been accepted** to the conference, uploaded as part of the application
- An **itemized budget and budget justification** for the travel request (up to \$500) in a document uploaded with the application. This page should have three sections:
 - **Budget request table.** Information about how to format the budget is provided below.
 - **Budget justification.** This section should explain each expense.
 - **Other financial support.** A list of other possible sources of support for the work, such as funds from OUR, the faculty mentor, or department should also be included on the budget page. If an OUR application was made, this section should include the date of the application, details of the OUR budget request, and amount of funding received. If no other forms of support are available, this should be stated clearly.

How to Create an Itemized Budget for Travel Funding

All requests should be itemized in a table, as shown in the example below. An itemized budget should show a breakdown of the requested amount, with actual or estimated costs. Any other funds received should be listed in the table.

Budget Example:

Item	Cost	Estimate or Actual
Airfare	\$550	estimate
Hotel	\$420	estimate
Conference registration fee	\$250	actual
TOTAL travel expense	\$1220	
OUR travel funds awarded	\$-500	
Mentor funds	\$-400	
Total funding request to Honors College	\$320	

Changes to the budget after an award is made will require submission of a revised budget, revision of the proposal, and a written explanation of the reason(s) for the alteration to the proposal before any expenses are approved by the Dean's office. Funding of the award will be contingent on approval of the revisions and is not guaranteed.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by the Dean and Faculty Director of the Honors College using the following criteria:

- Student's role in the work to be presented
- Quality of the professional conference
- Relevance of the request to the student's major, coursework, and/or APEX
- Relevance and appropriateness of the requested budget items to travel
- Endorsement of the faculty mentor
- Attempt to gain OUR funding
- Availability of Travel Grant funds
- Availability of other funds

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH
HONORS COLLEGE
HONORS STUDENT TRAVEL GRANT APPLICATION**

Student name:	Phone:	E-mail:
Faculty mentor:	Department:	Mentor e-mail:

Conference presentation title:

List of all paper/poster authors, in order they will appear in conference proceedings:

Conference name and URL:

What was the student's role in the research to be presented?
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<p>Was the work described in the work part of the student's APEX?</p> <p>Has the student previously received Honors Student Travel Grant funds?</p> <p>Has the student applied for funding from the Office of Undergraduate Research?</p> <p>Has the student requested funding from the major department and faculty mentor?</p>
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Expected graduation year and semester: _____ *Fall* *Spring* *Summer*
Year

Expected dates of travel: _____ / _____ to _____ / _____ / _____
Month / Day *Month / Day / Year*

Please attach your evidence that the work has been accepted, itemized budget, and budget justification here:

Student Agreement

I certify that I meet all eligibility requirements, as outlined in the RFP. I agree to acknowledge "a UMass Dartmouth Honors Student Travel Grant awarded by the Honors College" in my presentation. I agree that production of fiscal documents and accounting for the grant is my responsibility, as is submission of all travel forms required by the University. I agree to notify the Dean of the Honors if any significant changes are made to my travel plans.

Signature of Student

Date

Research Mentor Endorsement

By signing below, the mentor certifies that (1) the mentor has approved the accuracy of this funding proposal, (2) the mentor does not currently hold sufficient grant or startup funds that may be used to support the student's travel in full, (3) the mentor approves the budget justification included with this application, (4) the research has been accepted to the conference cited in this proposal, and (5) the mentor will accompany the student to the conference.

Signature of Research Mentor

Date _____

Honors College Dean	
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Signature of Honors College Dean

Date