



# **Student and Faculty Handbook**

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# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
PART OF A STATEWIDE PROGRAM.....	1
COLLEGE MISSION .....	1
BENEFITS OF HONORS.....	1
<b>HONORS COLLEGE CULTURE &amp; TRADITIONS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
CULTURE .....	3
TRADITIONS.....	3
COMMUNICATION.....	4
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
DEAN AND ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR.....	4
STUDENT SUPPORT DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR.....	5
HONORS FACULTY .....	5
ACADEMIC AFFILIATES .....	5
NON-ACADEMIC AFFILIATES .....	5
HONORS STUDENT COUNCIL & OFFICERS .....	5
HONORS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE.....	7
ADVISORY COUNCIL.....	7
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT .....	8
<b>REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
ADMISSION.....	8
<i>High School Students</i> .....	8
<i>Transfer Students from Other Campuses</i> .....	8
<i>Admission of Current UMass Dartmouth Students</i> .....	8
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS .....	9
PROBATION, DISMISSAL, AND WITHDRAWAL.....	9
<b>HONORS COURSES AND CURRICULUM .....</b>	<b>10</b>
OVERVIEW.....	10
WHAT MAKES A COURSE AN "HONORS" COURSE?.....	10
REQUIRED COURSES .....	11
RECOMMENDED COURSES .....	11
HONORS CONTRACTS .....	12
THE APEX: OVERVIEW .....	14
<b>ADVISING .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Introduction

*“Excellence is never an accident.” —Aristotle*

Welcome to the Honors College! The purpose of this handbook is to provide comprehensive information about the College and its curriculum, requirements, policies, and procedures. Please direct questions about anything not covered here to Honors College staff or faculty.

### Part of a Statewide Program

The University Honors College is part of the statewide Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP). CHP has programs on 25 campuses in Massachusetts including community colleges, state colleges and universities, and all UMass campuses. The Honors College is open to qualified undergraduate students from every college and academic department. It is a separate college that works alongside the other five colleges on campus.

### College Mission

The major goals of the UMassD Honors College are summarized in our mission statement:

*Through our flexible curriculum and close mentoring, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Honors College promotes curiosity, imagination, engagement, academic excellence, and original scholarly activities across diverse fields. Within a supportive and inclusive community, we empower high-achieving undergraduate students to widen their focus beyond the classroom and face the challenges of today and the future.*

### Benefits of Honors

Honors classes provide a richer, deeper academic experience than is typical of most courses. Moreover, graduating as a Commonwealth Honors Scholar is a prestigious honor that is recognized throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. It communicates multiple things about graduates to employers, graduate schools, family and, perhaps most importantly, to oneself. It demonstrates that the Scholar was recognized by UMass as one of the top students on campus. It also indicates that the Scholar did not merely complete the minimum required to earn the degree. Rather, they chose to be challenged and to distinguish themselves academically through advanced coursework and independent scholarship. Fewer than 5% of UMassD students graduate as a Commonwealth Honors Scholar, making this designation very meaningful.

Honors students at UMassD enjoy many other tangible benefits, including:

**Priority Registration.** Honors students are allowed to register before all students except seniors. This allows most students to obtain their first choice of classes.

**Honors Housing.** Honors students who live on campus can choose honors housing. Honors housing space is available to first year students in the Honors Living/Learning Community, located in the Spruce residence hall. In collaboration with Student Affairs, the Honors College provides enrichment, cultural, and entertainment events in the Honors residence. Additionally, honors students may move into upper class housing as sophomores, whereas the rest of the student population must wait until the junior year.

**Honors Annex and Meeting Room.** The Annex is located on the second floor of the library, room 228, adjacent to the Honors classrooms. It provides private workspaces and computers for Honors students to work alone or in small groups. Individual Honors faculty offices are also located in this suite. The Honors Meeting Room (LIB 227) provides separate space for a small group.

**Honors Scholarships.** UMass Dartmouth offers several scholarships available only to Honors Students. You may locate and apply to scholarships through [UMassD's scholarship portal](#).

**Leadership Opportunities.** There are 13 seats on the Student Council that provide students with leadership opportunities on campus. These positions sharpen leadership skills, look great on a resume, and provide a great way to be part of the college and larger campus.

**Free Museum Memberships.** Honors students enjoy free membership to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute of Contemporary Art. Stickers for your UMass Pass that allow free entry to these institutions are available in the Honors Office.

**Networking.** Honors students are part of the state's Commonwealth Honors Program, which makes graduates part of a statewide network of dynamic and talented professionals. The Honors College participates in networking events with alumni and current students from Dartmouth and the other UMass campuses, designed to help students make professional connections with their peers and potential mentors in the Commonwealth.

**Small class size.** Full honors courses are capped 20 students or fewer. This allows honors students to engage with their fellow students and instructor and to immerse in interactive and engaging discussions

**Free or Reduced Cost Enrichment and Entertainment.** The Honors College offers its students the opportunity to engage in many activities outside the classroom. Past events have included local theater productions, spring break learning trips, and noted guest speakers. There are themed social events on Fridays in the Honors Office that provide snacks and activities such as meditation, therapy dogs, Superbowl "Sundaes," holiday celebrations, and more. The Student Council also puts on events such as apple picking, Candy Bar Bingo, scavenger hunts, movie night, game night, spring trip to Six Flags, and much more.

**Research and Scholarship.** As part of the Honors College, all students complete the APEX, a major project in the senior year. The APEX provides students with an opportunity to work

closely with a faculty mentor on a unique research project or creative work. Students often publish their work with faculty in peer-reviewed journals and/or present at professional conferences.

**Workshops.** Honors-only workshops are offered throughout the academic year on various topics from registration and internships to time management and well-being.

## Honors College Culture & Traditions

### Culture

We in the UMassD Honors College think of ourselves as a family. We offer support and community to like-minded students who find joy in learning and striving to achieve their “personal best.” And we like to have fun! We hope all members of our community will join us for talks, trips, movies, holiday celebrations, and other events throughout the academic year.



We believe workplace collaboration is vital for students, faculty, and administrators. Inside and outside the classroom, we encourage students to work together and assist one another as friends and colleagues, and we encourage students to maintain that work philosophy and practice long after graduation. The Honors College administration collaborates within our office every day to provide students with the best honors experience possible. We also collaborate with the Office of Faculty Development (OFD) to provide faculty with the best information and PD in honors teaching. We collaborate with the academic colleges, Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), Office of Economic Development, and Career Services to find opportunities and maximize funding for student research and internships.

### Traditions

**Pinning Ceremony.** Beginning in fall 2022, the Honors College holds a pinning ceremony in which first-year students are formally inducted into the College and celebrated as new members of the Honors community. Students receive lapel pins, which they will wear on their graduation stoles during commencement.

**Annual Poster Session.** Each spring, typically just prior to the Convocation and Awards Banquet, student present their APEX work in the form of a scholarly poster presentation. The Honors College has an oversized printer and prints posters free of charge for the event.

**Convocation and Awards Banquet.** Each spring, graduating seniors are invited to a semi-formal banquet in which Honors College awards and recognitions are bestowed. Students also receive

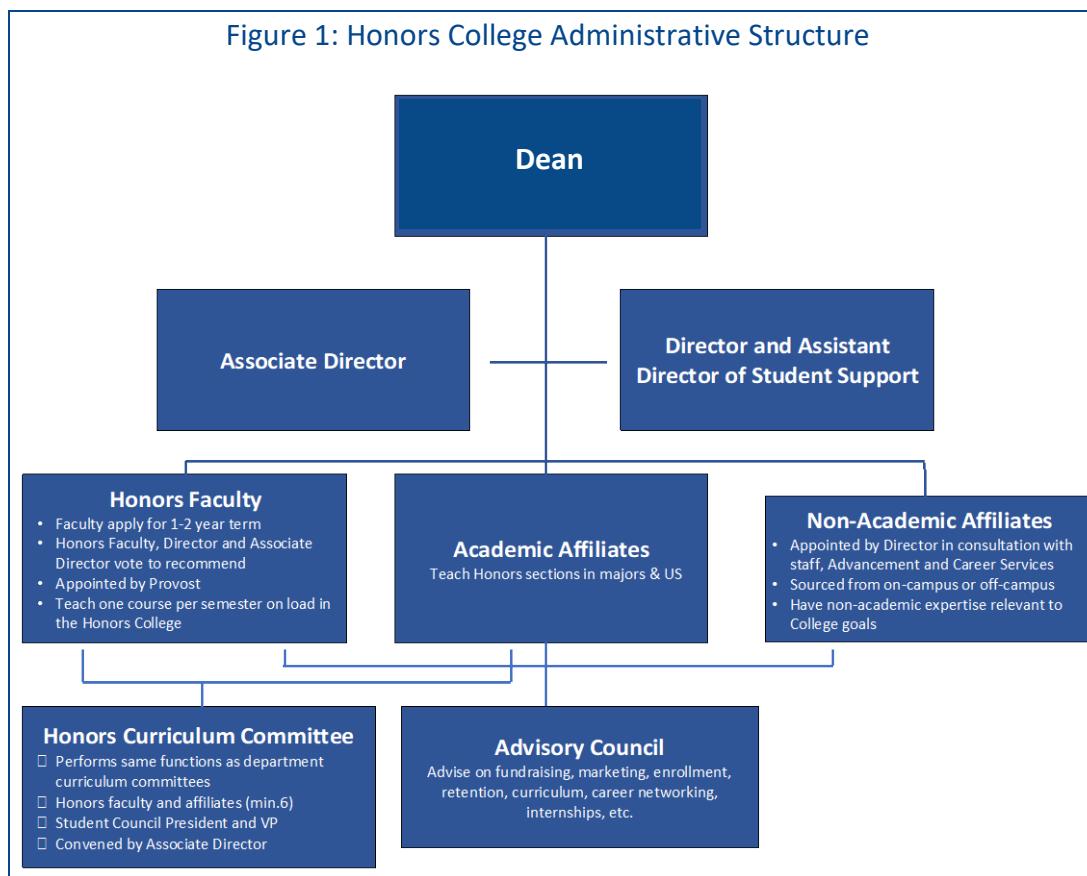
their graduation stoles, which are worn on top of graduation gowns at commencement, and certificates of completion as Commonwealth Honors Scholars.

## Communication

**It is essential that students regularly read their UMassD email.** Important information about registration, events, finances, requirements, and opportunities are communicated to students throughout the year. Email is the only way the Honors College and the University have to reach students directly, outside the classroom.

## Administrative Structure

This section covers the general structure of the Honors Program and outlines the roles of our directors, student support specialists, student council officers, faculty, curriculum committee, and advisory council. The administrative structure is illustrated in Figure 1.



### Dean and Associate Director

The Honors College Dean is responsible for all academic and nonacademic functions of the College. She is assisted by the Associate Director.

### **Student Support Director and Assistant Director**

The Director and Assistant Director of Student Support provide quality advising and assist students in meeting their Honors College requirements in the most efficient manner. They design and offer workshops for students to assist with transition to university, navigating the honors requirements, and more. They also ensure that students are compliant with eligibility requirements to remain in the Honors College.

### **Honors Faculty**

Honors Faculty are appointed by the Provost for terms of one year, renewable for a second. They teach at least one course per semester for the Honors College. Courses offered directly by the Honors College include HON 101, 201, 202, 203, and 301, as well as courses in their areas of specialization. They are assigned offices in the Honors Annex. They serve on the Honors Curriculum Committee and the Advisory Committee.

### **Academic Affiliates**

Academic affiliates teach Honors courses on an *ad hoc* basis, either on-load or as additional course assignments. They may serve on the Honors Curriculum Committee and/or the Advisory Committee.

### **Non-Academic Affiliates**

The non-academic affiliates of the Honors College provide service and/or informal consultation to the College and its Director. They are appointed by the Director in consultation with College staff, the Office of Advancement, and Career Services. They may be employees of UMass or chosen from the larger community. These individuals may serve on the Advisory board.

### **Honors Student Council & Officers**

The Student Council meets weekly during the Fall and Spring semesters and encourages the entire Honors Community to attend and participate. All officers are elected for a one-year term, as described in the Honors Student Council by-laws. There are 13 formal seats on the council.

**President.** The role of the President is to build and support the Honors College community of students. They direct the student council in offering engaging and community-building activities throughout the year. The President has primary responsibility for proper allocation of the Council's annual budget. The President works directly with the Honors College administration in carrying out their role and represents Honors College students' needs to the College administration.

**Vice President.** The primary role of the Vice President of the Honors Student Council is to support the President to offer engaging and community-building activities to students in the Honors College.

**Secretary.** The role of the Honors Council Secretary is to document the events of all Honors Council meetings. They are required to take notes at every meeting, post condensed notes in a discussion board, and draft emails for the President's use.

**Treasurer.** The role of the Honors Council Treasurer is to keep track of budgeting for the Honors Council. They will be required to track the Council's spending throughout the semester. The holder of this position will stay in contact with anyone requesting funds for events, meetings, etc., to ensure that the Council does not go over budget at any point in the semester. They will also be responsible for drafting a budget request form at the end of each Spring Semester.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Representative.** The role of the DEI Representative is to promote and maintain the equality of the Honors College. It is the responsibility of the holder of this position to speak on anything that threatens the racial and sexual equality of the Honors College. They will also work to create new policies that will ensure equal opportunities for all members of the community.

**Events Coordinator.** The role of the Event Coordinator is to plan events that are run by the Honors Council. They are required to lead in hosting at least one event per month each semester. The Event Coordinator will work with the treasurer to order decorations and potential prizes and plan food/drink accommodations for each event.

**Social Media Director.** The Social Media Director is responsible for managing all UMass Dartmouth Honors Council social media. The holder of this position has access to a shared folder of pictures and all Social Media Account information. The term limit for this position is two semesters, or until the end of the current year's Spring semester, whichever is sooner. At the end of each Spring semester, the passwords for all social media accounts will be changed.

**Community Service Director.** The role of the Community Service Director is to plan community service opportunities for the Honors Council. The Community Service Director is responsible for planning at least two community service events per semester.

**Upperclassmen Representative.** The role of the Upperclassmen Representative is to represent the Honors College at promotional events. They are required to stay up-to-date with Honors by staying active in the community and participating in Honors Council meetings and events. Each Upperclassmen Representative is responsible for attending at least one promotional event per semester, being able to speak about their experience in Honors. This role is only available to current Juniors and Seniors.

**Underclassmen Representative.** The role of the Underclassmen Representative is to represent the Honors College at promotional events. They are required to stay up-to-date with Honors by staying active in the community and participating in Honors Council meetings and events. Each Underclassmen Representative is responsible for attending at least one promotional event per

semester, being able to speak about why they chose Honors and their experience thus far. This role is only available to current Freshmen and Sophomores.

**Photographer.** The role of the Photographer is to take pictures at Honors meetings and events. They are responsible for attending as many events as possible, including community service and promotional events. The pictures that the photographer takes will be uploaded to a shared google drive to be used for social media and promotional content.

### Honors Curriculum Committee

The Honors Curriculum Committee is structured in accordance with the by-laws of the UMass Dartmouth Faculty Senate, last revised in spring 2022:

*There shall be an Honors Curriculum Committee. The size of this Committee shall be determined by the Honors Faculty, but in no circumstances shall there be fewer than six (6) faculty members together with the President and Vice President of the Honors Student Council, who shall be voting members. The Associate Director of Honors shall serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Committee. The Committee shall elect its own Chairperson, who shall be a faculty member.*

*All Honors Faculty shall be eligible to vote in a secret ballot to elect the members of the Honors Curriculum Committee from among the Honors Faculty. Should the number of Honors Faculty elected be fewer than the number of positions to be filled, then there shall be a secret ballot to elect members of the Honors Affiliated Faculty to serve on the Committee.*

*The Honors Curriculum Committee shall review and make recommendations regarding the initial approval of Honors courses and shall conduct periodic review of all Honors courses. The Honors Curriculum Committee shall recommend requirements for meeting the curriculum standards of the Commonwealth Honors Program. Such recommendations shall be forwarded to the Dean of the Honors College for action then to the Provost then to the Chancellor. The recommendation shall take effect upon approval by the Chancellor. A copy of the recommendation shall be forwarded to the President of the Faculty Senate for informational purposes.*

### Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is comprised of the Honors faculty, academic affiliates, and non-academic affiliates. Its function is to offer the Director guidance on fundraising, marketing, enrollment, retention, curriculum, career networking, internships, and other topics relevant to student success and College administration.

## Administrative Support

The Administrative Assistant is the first point of contact in the Honors College. Additionally, the Administrative Assistant coordinates Honors College events, keeps all college records, and manages the College purchasing and budget.

## Requirements

### Admission

#### High School Students

High school applicants to UMass Dartmouth as are accepted into the Honors College as part of the overall UMD admissions process. There is not a separate application process. Space in the Honors College is extremely limited. For the most recent entering class of 160+ students, the average GPA was 4.04.

#### Transfer Students from Other Campuses

Transfer students who have participated successfully in the Commonwealth Honors Program at other colleges and universities in the Massachusetts public system of higher educations are automatically eligible for the UMass Dartmouth Honors College. The Honors College accepts up to 12 Honors transfer credits.

Transfer students who have not previously participated in the Commonwealth Honors Program may apply to join the UMass Dartmouth Honors College. Admission into the Honors College is normally limited to those students who have completed 60 or fewer university credits, including AP credits. The 60-credit limit may be waived in the case of transfer students who participated in Honors Programs at their previous institution. Students will be required to enroll in a minimum of 3 honors credits for the semester immediately following enrollment into the College

#### Admission of Current UMass Dartmouth Students

Students who have already begun their studies at UMass Dartmouth may apply to join the Honors College on the basis of their academic performance. Admission is normally limited to those students who have completed 60 or fewer university credits, including transfer and advanced placement test credits. Additionally, students must have earned a GPA of at least 3.5.

Students wishing to join the Honors College based on their UMass Dartmouth grades should complete the application form (<https://www.umassd.edu/honors/admission/>) and submit it to the Honors Office by the appropriate deadline. Decisions will be made shortly after grades are posted at the end of the semester. Notification will be by email. Students will be required to enroll in a minimum of 3 honors credits for the semester immediately following enrollment into the College

## Graduation Requirements

To graduate as a Commonwealth Honors Scholar, students must complete the following:

- Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or better
- Obtain a grade of “B” or better in all Honors Courses. Students are not able to utilize a Pass/Fail option for any honors course.
- Completion of 24 honors credits as specified below (see the sections on required and recommended courses for more specific information about each course):
  - Complete 21 credits of Honors coursework.
    - Students in the Colleges of Arts & Science, Business, and Visual & Performing Arts are required to take HON 101 and a 200 level HON course as part of this requirement.
    - HON 301 (Research Across the Disciplines; 3 credits) is required of all Honors students.
    - With prior approval from the Honors Director, up to three graduate courses (numbered 500+) can be used to fulfill nine credits of Honors electives.
  - Complete the Honors APEX (3-6 credits)
  - A public presentation of your APEX work. This can be accomplished via many avenues such as a public defense, attendance at a professional conference where you display your work, or the Honors Convocation poster session.

Students can find honors curriculum guides for their specific college/major on the Honors website at [www.umassd.edu/honors/requirements/](http://www.umassd.edu/honors/requirements/). Generally speaking, students should plan to take at least one Honors course per semester to meet the 24-credit requirement (courses plus APEX) by graduation. Students are encouraged to meet with their Honors advisor to discuss routes to completion.

## Probation, Dismissal, and Withdrawal

### Probation and Dismissal

If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.2, the student will be placed on Honors probation for one semester. Probation may also be extended to students who fail to earn a B in at least one Honors course per year. Honors probation is not reflected on the student's transcript. If, at the end of the probationary semester, the student meets the minimum standards for good standing, the student will be released from probation. If, at the end of the probationary semester, the student still falls below the minimum standards for good standing, the student will be dismissed from the Honors College.

Students are required to enroll in at least one Honors course in their first semester in the Honors College. Students who have not taken any Honors courses for more than one semester are subject to dismissal.

Dismissal from the Honors College is not reflected on the student's transcript.

### Withdrawal

Students may withdraw from the Honors College. An exit interview with the Director of Student Support and completion of the Honors College Discontinuation form is required. Withdrawal from the Honors College is not reflected on the student's transcript.

## Honors Courses and Curriculum

### Overview

Honors courses are open only to students in the Honors College and most sections are capped at 20 students. Honors courses carry the same number of credit hours as non-Honors courses and are graded according to the same 4-point scale. This is different from common practice at the high school level, where Honors courses often "count more" towards a student's GPA.

Each Honors course carries the notation "Honors" in the student's transcript. Honors courses all have either the "HON" prefix, or "H" after the section number. Some Honors courses are offered as "carve-outs." These are sections with an H section number that meet at the same time and location as a non-honors section of the course. In these cases, students in the Honors section will attend the same lectures as those in the non-honors section, but will have a different syllabus, assignments, tests, and/or activities that distinguish their section as an Honors course. It should be noted that these carve-outs do not necessarily involve more work, but they do often require examining course material in more depth or perhaps finding different applications of the material.

If a course is not offered as an Honors course, a student may ask a professor to "honorize" the course by creating a course contract, essentially creating an individual carve-out for the student. Details on this process are provided below.

### What makes a course an "Honors" course?

Honors courses are more **interactive**. In addition to their smaller size and higher standards for enrollment, Honors courses **encourage discussion, debate, and student leadership**. Of course, not every class can be dedicated to freewheeling discussion, and not all courses are equally amenable to a discussion-and-debate format. Nevertheless, to the fullest extent possible, Honors courses encourage students to actively participate in the learning process.

To the extent possible, Honors faculty expose students to **more advanced material**. The small class size also allows them to **assess student learning in more interesting ways**. Honors students often report that their honors courses allow them to take a **deeper dive** into the material they are studying than in their non-honors courses, making them more interesting.

Honors courses involve special activities. Ideally, every Honors course should incorporate opportunities for learning that would not be practical in larger courses. Honors courses routinely involve **field trips, special experiments, group activities, and guest speakers**.

## Required Courses

**HON 101 (Reasoning and Communication across the Disciplines)** is required for students entering as first-time students in the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Visual and Performing Arts. New students in the College of Engineering may take HON 101 to fulfill a university studies requirement on a space-available basis. Engineering students should take an Honors section of **EGR 111** in the first year, and Nursing students should take Honors **NUR 102**. HON 101 fulfills University Studies areas 1E and 4A.

**HON 301 (Research across Disciplines)** is required of most Honors students and is typically taken in late sophomore or in junior year. This is a 3-credit seminar that meets once per week. The credits earned in HON 301 (if completed with a grade of B or better) count toward the minimum requirement of 21 credits of Honors coursework. In this seminar, students will explore the different APEX tracks, work toward their APEX proposal, and identify a faculty advisor for their APEX. There are situations, however, where HON 301 is not a useful course. Specifically, taking HON 301 can be waived for students who are:

- Already working in a research lab or on a larger project and have the commitment of a faculty mentor
- Planning to complete the APEX as part of a major capstone course
- Planning to pursue the internship/service track

Regardless of whether or not students take HON 301, a proposal must be submitted.

## Recommended Courses

**HON 201, 202, 203:** One course from this group is **required** for students in the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Visual and Performing Arts. One course from this group is **recommended** for students in the Colleges of Nursing and Health Sciences and Engineering. HON 201, 202, and 203 fulfill University Studies are 4A, 4B, and 4C, respectively. For students in the College of Arts and Sciences, these courses may also fill a humanities or social science college distribution requirement. The Honors College website will indicate the distinction.

**Major Courses and Honors Electives:** To complete the 21-credit course requirement, students will need to take Honors sections in their major, University Studies requirements, and/or Honors electives. Many majors offer Honors sections of required courses, and the Honors College offers numerous Honors “electives” each semester. The Honors Student Support specialists will meet with you each semester to make sure you are taking the right courses and staying on track to graduate. The Honors College also provides a tracking sheet for each college/major, that provides a guide to meeting requirements within each. The Honors College updates its website each semester with offerings for the upcoming semester ([www.umassd.edu/honors/courses](http://www.umassd.edu/honors/courses)). Students can also search for discipline-specific Honors sections in COIN by selecting *Honors* in the course attributes pull-down menus. HON classes can also be searched using the HON prefix.

## Honors Contracts

An Honors contract is a negotiated agreement between a student, a course instructor, and the Honors Director that enables the student to take a non-Honors course for Honors credit. The Honors contract is a useful alternative to regular Honors courses for students with particularly inflexible schedules and/or few elective courses. The contract also enables the student to undertake more advanced study than the constraints of the course normally allow.

A course contracted for Honors credit carries the same number of credit hours as the non-Honors version of the course. However, "Honors" appears on the transcript, and all credits earned count toward graduation as a Commonwealth Scholar, provided that the final course grade is B or better.

The work assigned as a result of the contract does not determine the final course grade. Final grades reflect the quality and content of the regular assigned work in the course. The Honors work is what allows the Honors designation to appear on the transcript for the course.

*The following restrictions apply:*

- No more than six credits of Honors contract coursework may be counted toward the required 21 hours of Honors coursework. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the Honors Director.
- 100-level courses cannot be contracted for Honors credit. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the Honors Director.
- Contracted courses must be taken for a letter grade. Like all Honors courses, courses contracted for Honors credit must be completed with a grade of B or better in order to remain in good standing in the Honors Program.
- The consequences for failure to complete the work to the satisfaction of the instructor must be clearly stated in the contract. Typically, it means the course will not receive the Honors designation on the transcript and will not count toward Honors requirements for graduation.

The Honors contract process involves four stages:

- Negotiation of an individualized syllabus with the course instructor.
- Submitting the contract for approval by the Honors Director.
- Completion of the agreed-upon assignments and activities.
- Submission of the completed work and Honors Contract completion form.

### Stage One: Negotiating the Honors Contract

The Honors Contract is a mutual commitment to a learning experience above and beyond normal course requirements. The Honors Contract is a product of negotiation, and **instructors are under no obligation to supervise Honors Contracts**. This undertaking involves regular interaction between the student and the instructor. While the details of contracted assignments and activities vary greatly, possible course enhancements include:

- Collaboration with the instructor on a joint research project.

- An analytical, research, or policy paper, in addition to or more sophisticated than those assigned in the "regular" syllabus, and/or more reliant on primary or original source material.
- A service-learning experience or internship related to the course focus.
- An audio/video project, performance, or artistic work related to the course focus.
- Curriculum development projects, such as assisting the professor with the development and implementation of new teaching tools or class activities.

The Honors contract is intended to enrich the quality of education rather than simply increasing the workload. Nevertheless, it may involve more hours of student work, especially since regular meetings with the instructor to discuss the Honors work will be necessary outside of class.

The student and instructor must also agree on the criteria for evaluating the project. This includes agreement on the criteria by which it will be judged satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and the consequences for unsatisfactory work.

#### Stage Two: Submission of the Contract

The Honors contract consists of three parts: (a) the cover sheet, which must be filled out completely and signed by both the student and the instructor; (b) a copy of the original course syllabus; and (c) a brief (one to two page) description of your proposed project. All Honors contract proposals must be submitted **no later than the end of the third week of classes**, counting forward from the first day of the semester.

The following information should be included in your proposal.

- State precisely how your project differs from the regular work of the class.
- Make very clear *what* you're doing, *why* you're doing it, *how* you're doing it, *when* you're doing it, and what the *outcome* (or final product) of your project will be. It may help to think of your proposal as a question or problem that you wish to answer or solve, or at least to shed more light upon.
- Include an explicit timetable for meetings with the course instructor, submission of the components or drafts of the project, and submission of the final product. The final deadline can be no later than the scheduled final exam period for the course.
- Include an explicit statement of the criteria that will be used to evaluate the contracted work. What are the minimum requirements that must be met in order to be judged acceptable?
- **Very important!** It is vital that the criteria by which your work will be evaluated is stated clearly and explicitly. Also, the following wording must be included in your proposal: "The Honors portion of the work will be assessed as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory by the instructor. A rating of Satisfactory will result in the student receiving Honors credit for the course. A rating of Unsatisfactory will result in no Honors credit being awarded for the course. Performance on the Honors Contract work will not affect the final grade in any circumstance." *This is for your own protection.*

The Honors Director may approve your proposal as written, reject it, or request more information before making a decision. Once your proposal is approved, the Honors Director will sign it and send a copy to both the student and the instructor.

#### Stage Three: Completion of the Contracted Work

Once the contract is approved, work will proceed according to the timetable established in the contract. Like all creative work, your project will change and grow as you work on it and learn more about the subject and the resources available to you. This is entirely normal, and few completed projects wind up exactly as envisaged in the proposal.

In some cases, there may come a point at which you and the instructor agree to alter your project so substantially that the approved proposal is no longer an adequate guide for the completion and evaluation of your work. If so, you should submit an amended Honors contract proposal describing the new criteria for completion and assessment. Both you and the course instructor should sign the amended proposal before submitting to the Honors Dean. If you are unsure whether you need to file an amended proposal, discuss the matter with the Honors Dean.

#### Stage Four: Submission of the Completed Work and Contract Completion Form

If a presentation or performance is part of your proposal, invite the Honors Director to attend. As soon as the contracted work is complete and approved by the instructor, you must submit a copy of the work and the Honors Contract Completion Form to the Honors College ([honors@umassd.edu](mailto:honors@umassd.edu)). These must be submitted no later than 3:00 PM on the last day of the final examination period. The instructor will submit the grade to the Registrar and sign the contract completion form. The Honors College will then notify the Registrar to note the course as Honors on the student's transcript.

### **The APEX: Overview**

The APEX (Academic Project or Experience) is the culmination of your Honors education. Every student in the Honors College must complete an APEX project in order to graduate as a Commonwealth Scholar. Your project may take the form of a research project, a critical or philosophical analysis, a computer program, a performance, an art exhibit, a public service project, or any other original work that makes a significant contribution to your field of study. By undertaking and completing the APEX, you will demonstrate your ability to work independently in your chosen field—precisely the quality sought by all employers and graduate school admissions committees. Detailed information on all aspects of this project can be found in the [APEX Handbook](#), located on the Honors College website.

### **Advising**

Students in the Honors College are assigned an honors advisor, which will be one of the Student Support Directors. They will assist you in navigating your honors requirements alongside your major requirements, ensuring you complete the Honors requirements within the program.

requirements for your major. Students should request an honors advisement meeting with their advisor prior to registration each semester. Since honors students receive priority registration, it's imperative to meet early in the registration process. Students should also identify themselves as honors students to their major advisor.

The Student Support Directors will also connect with students regarding their status in the Honors College. For students who fall below a 3.2 GPA, they will reach out to discuss probation status within the Honors College and strategies to reach good academic standing within the college. Outreach from Student Support will also include information about course offerings for each semester, workshops, and opportunities offered to honors students from other resources on campus.

## Resources for Students

**Honors College Annex and Meeting Room:** The Honors College Annex, located in LIB 228, is a space available only to Honors Students. This quiet study space houses six computers available to Honors Students to use at their convenience. The Annex also has faculty offices allowing students convenient access their honors faculty. The Honors Meeting Room (LIB 227) is available to students for small group meetings.

**The Honors Classrooms:** The Honors College classrooms in Library 225 and 226 are classrooms dedicated to honors instruction. They are also available to Honors students for additional quiet study when a class is not in progress.

**Office of Undergraduate Research:** The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) "promotes original undergraduate research and helps students share it with the world". They also offer funding opportunities for the APEX and independent study projects. You can find more information here: <https://www.umassd.edu/our/>

## Glossary

**APEX:** Academic Project or Experience. The APEX is your Honors College final project. See the section on the APEX in this handbook for detailed information

**Carve-Out:** Courses in which faculty have “carved out” seats so that honors students can take them as honors courses.

**Contracts or Honors Contracts:** Courses in which a student and a professor “contract” to make a non-honors course an honors course. See above for information on honors contracts.

**Convocation:** The year-end celebration of graduating students who display their research projects.

**Distribution Requirements.** This term is used for the College of Arts and Sciences to describe requirements needed to be met by all students in the College.

**Honors College Listserv:** Students will be connected to the Honors email distribution list allowing for quick communication from the Honors College staff.

**Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR):** Assists students wishing to undertake undergraduate research.

## Appendix

### Honors College Forms and Deadlines

All Honors Forms must be submitted electronically via DocuSign. These 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.

- [Application to Join the Honors College \(for current UMassD students\)](#)
  - **Submission Deadline:** The last day of classes in the Fall or Spring semester.
- [Contract to Honorize a Course](#)
  - **Submission Deadline:** Within three weeks (21 days) of the first day of classes.
- [Honorized Course Completion Form](#)
  - **Submission Deadline:** The last day of final exams.



## APPLICATION TO JOIN THE HONORS COLLEGE

This application is for current UMass Dartmouth students who wish to apply to join the UMass Dartmouth Honors College. Applications are accepted from students with a minimum GPA of 3.5 and who will have earned 60 or fewer university credits by the end of the current semester, including transfer credits, AP test credits, and courses in progress. Admission decisions are made based upon academic achievement at UMass Dartmouth, as well as writing quality and evidence of ambition, engaged learning, creativity, and grit in the personal statement. Space in the Honors College is limited, so we will be able to accept only those applicants with the strongest credentials. Decisions will be made shortly after grades are posted at the end of the semester. Notification will be sent by email.

If accepted, you should speak with an Honors College academic advisor to discuss how to include one or more Honors courses in your next semester schedule. This can be done by replacing one or two of the courses in which you are enrolled with Honors courses that meet equivalent college, university, or major requirements. Once accepted into the Honors college, you are granted access to Honors courses, so this won't be difficult to arrange.

### Personal Statement

Please include a one-page personal statement explaining what skills or experiences you have that make you a good fit for the Honors College besides your grades.

### Prior Honors Coursework

Please list university Honors courses taken, if any. Include the course name, number, and section. Do not include high school Honors courses. Transfer students *should* include Honors courses taken at another college or university.

### Application Submission and Decision

**Applications are due NO LATER than the last day of classes for the semester (that is, the day before study day).**

Decisions will be made on the basis of UMassD grades in conjunction with the writing quality and content of your personal statement. Decisions will be emailed prior to the start of the following semester.

For questions regarding your application, please contact Suzanne Melloni, Director of Student Support, at 508.999.9299 or [smelloni@umassd.edu](mailto:smelloni@umassd.edu).

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Name

Major

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Student ID

E-mail

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Student Signature

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Date

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## CONTRACT TO HONORIZE A COURSE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Term/Year: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Intersession \_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTENTION: 100-level courses CANNOT be contracted without prior approval from the Honors Director.**

Course Department, Number, and Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Contract Description

Describe your project in consultation with your course instructor. *The project description must contain the information outlined on Page 13 of the Honors Student Handbook.*

The following wording must be included in your proposal: "**The Honors portion of the work will be assessed as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory by the instructor. A rating of Satisfactory will result in the student receiving Honors credit for the course. A rating of Unsatisfactory will result in no Honors credit being awarded for the course. Performance on the Honors Contract work will not affect the final grade in any circumstance.**"

### Syllabus and Submission Deadline

Upload a copy of the course syllabus with this proposal. **All materials must be submitted within three weeks (21 days) of the first day of classes.**

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Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Instructor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Dean Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

(revised 09/23)



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## HONORIZED COURSE **COMPLETION FORM**

### Section One: To be completed by the student.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Term/Year: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Intersession \_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_

Course Department, Number, and Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section Two: To be completed by the instructor.

The quality of work submitted for this Honors Contract was:

Satisfactory. Student has earned a course grade of B or higher and is eligible to receive Honors credit for this course.

Not Satisfactory. Student has earned less than a B in this course and/or the quality of work submitted for this Honors Contract was not satisfactory.

Course Instructor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Submission Deadline

This signed form must be submitted by the last day of final exams. Please consult the University's Academic Calendar for official date.