

Proposed Curriculum for the Purdue University Honors College
Honors Faculty Governance Committee
Updated January 24, 2013

The proposed curriculum stresses both scholarly depth and breadth of study with the goal of helping students attain knowledge not only of their own particular field but also a broad purchase on the uses and value of that knowledge across disciplines.

The honors curriculum is designed to complement and enhance a student's major degree; the majority of its 24 credits may be double counted towards that degree and many of its credits will come from required work in the foundational core. The honors curriculum will therefore add value but not time to a student's degree.

Honors Curriculum

- 24 credits of honors coursework
- A thesis or scholarly activity determined at the college level

Required credits

24 honors credits, of which 5 are specific HONR courses and 19 are elective honors courses, as detailed:

1. Specific Honors courses (5 credits)

- A. 2 credits of HONR 199: 1st-year honors course. 1 credit during each semester of the 1st year
- B. 3 credits of additional HONR course(s)

2. Elective Honors courses (19 credits)

The following courses qualify as honors electives:

- HONR courses other than those used to meet requirement 1, above
- Courses or course sections with an H designation
- Courses taken with an H contract
- Graduate-level courses that are not required for the student's major(s)
- Research courses (e.g., undergraduate research, directed study, independent research) towards completion of the student's thesis or scholarly activity

The following stipulations apply:

- At least 9 credits must be taken after the 1st year of college enrollment
- Up to 9 credits may be specified by individual colleges

Thesis or Scholarly Activity

Honors students must fulfill the requirements of their college for graduation "with thesis" by completing research or similar scholarly activity that leads to a thesis or qualifying scholarly activity, which is assessed by their college or department. (Students majoring in more than one college will choose the thesis requirements of one.)

The thesis should:

- Demonstrate that a student is functioning as a scholar in his or her field
- Consist of research, design, analysis, or capstone activity allowed by the college or department
- Be presented in a public forum, such as publication, presentation, display, or performance

Additional Expectations (non-credit bearing)

- Community-Building Activities

In each semester of the first year, HC students will be expected to attend at least 3 Honors College events

- Service and Leadership Activities

The 1st-year HONR course will introduce students to service and leadership through co-curricular events, and in subsequent years students will receive mentoring on how to engage in, reflect upon, and document service and leadership activities

FAQ about the Proposed Curriculum for the Purdue University Honors College

Q: Why are 24 credits required to graduate with honors?

A: 24 credits represent a significant investment of time and intellectual energy in honors coursework. The number of credits—which amounts to an average of a single 3-cr. honors course per semester for 8 semesters—is high enough to distinguish the honors degree and low enough to allow for the completion of that degree within 4 years. This number is also consistent with the current 24-credit requirements of the University Honors Program and college honors programs in Engineering and Liberal Arts.

Q: Why are HONR courses required?

A: The 5 credits of required HONR courses specify a minimally enhanced breadth of study, which can be further enhanced through elective Honors courses. HONR courses also build community and identity among honors students across the disciplines.

Q: Why must 9 credits of honors electives be taken after the 1st year of college enrollment?

A: To ensure that some of the additional breadth and depth is not just at the introductory level. This requirement is also intended to keep the Honors College students involved in honors activities during the time between their 1st year and the beginning of their thesis research.

Q: Why are up to 9 credits specifiable by individual colleges?

A: To allow this curriculum to comply with the accreditation requirements of some colleges while not extending the major curriculum significantly beyond 120 credits.

Q: Why is a thesis or scholarly activity required?

A: The thesis requirement specifies a minimally enhanced depth of study, which can be further enhanced through elective Honors courses. The thesis demonstrates that a student has distinguished himself or herself in the chosen field of study and can help prepare a student for professional or scholarly life after graduation.

Q: Is the thesis requirement different from college to college?

A: Yes. The implementation of the thesis requirement is left to the colleges—with the option to delegate this to departments—which both simplifies its administration and leaves the experts within each college or department to judge the quality and appropriateness of student work.

Q: Will new honors courses need to be developed?

A: Yes. To accomplish this curriculum, new HONR and H courses will need to be developed. The Provost has provided funds to create new honors service courses across the university. Foundational courses and courses required by many majors will be the first ones developed.

Q: Will students in every college be able to participate in the new curriculum?

A: Yes. It is designed to allow students from every college across the university to be able to follow—and to graduate within normative time.

Q: Will students also be able to pursue honors within their home departments?

A: Yes. There are no plans to change existing departmental honors programs, which are distinct from the Honors College. A student may pursue either or both types of honors.