

Honors Program

The Honors Program at UK serves an important function in the University's commitment to excellence in undergraduate education. Through its special curriculum and related academic activities, the Program provides an unusual course of instruction for outstanding, highly motivated students.

Selection of Honors Students

Because the Honors Program seeks students of demonstrated high academic promise, admission to Honors is competitive. A student must complete the application form for the Honors Program. Entering students ideally have an outstanding high school grade-point average (3.5 unweighted GPA or better, as demonstrated by transcript of through at least the first half of senior year) and a documented composite score of 28 or above on the ACT or 1250 or above on the SAT. The Admissions Committee considers all aspects of an applicant's record; a student's test scores and GPA are only two of the factors considered. The Admissions Committee also considers the academic rigor of high school courses the applicant has taken. In addition, the Admissions Committee places great weight on the strength of the application essays, as well as the evidence they provide of motivation to accept the challenges of Honors and contribute to the program.

Students whose academic performance may vary (high GPA and lower test scores, for example) or who have talents and motivation that are not reflected in standardized testing procedures are invited to make their best case for admission to the Honors Program and to solicit recommendations from supportive teachers or supervisors.

Upper-division students at UK or transfer students with one semester or more of academic study at a college or university may apply to the Honors Program. They submit a copy of their college transcripts along with the materials requested of first-year students. All applicants must demonstrate strong academic performance at the college level (3.0 GPA or better).

The Honors Curriculum

The Honors curriculum is designed to acquaint students with major ideas and intellectual developments which have shaped the world around them. The five multi-disciplinary tracks allow students the opportunity to intellectually explore everything from Plato's *Republic* to the problem of hunger to the ethical issues raised by the use of nanotechnology to the nature of violence.

The colloquia are taught as interdisciplinary, small-format seminars. Faculty emphasize class discussion, special projects, and regular writing (free-writing, quizzes, essays, exams, and journals) to develop students' critical thinking and written and oral communication skills and encourage participatory learning styles.

Honors students are expected to maintain good academic standing to continue in the program; normally this is a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better. In circumstances when academic performance drops below this level, the Academic Coordinator of the Honors Program will consult with the student to determine whether and by what means the student may restore performance to an acceptable level and may institute a period of probation and review.

During the junior or senior years students complete an independent project – a work of research or artistic expression, in collaboration with a faculty scholar/researcher – affording them the chance to identify a challenging topic and to design, carry out, and present their individual work. Upperclass students may also enroll in a highly specialized colloquium called a proseminar, which is taught by award-winning UK faculty in a variety of disciplines.

University Studies Requirements

The Honors colloquia offer a special means of meeting the University Writing Requirement and University Studies Program Requirements. Students who complete two colloquia satisfy the USP Writing Requirement. Students who complete a third colloquium satisfy the Graduation Writing Requirement. Each Honors course also fulfills a USP humanities, social science, natural science, or inference credit requirement, which depend on the particular course and section.

Graduating with Honors in the Program

To graduate with a Certificate of Honors in the Honors Program and have this designation on the final UK transcript and diploma, students must complete fifteen credit hours of Honors courses, completing one of the tracks and, as needed, one or two upper-division courses from HON 301, 395, 398, a department or college honors track, the Gaines Program, the Undergraduate Research Program or another independent research project or independent study. Students must also maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better.

Special Opportunities

Students in the Honors Program have many opportunities, both in and out of the classroom, to develop and demonstrate academic excellence.

The small class size and method of instruction in the colloquia foster active learning. Informal conferences, special speakers, trips, and workshops allow students to explore topics and issues not regularly considered within University departmental offerings.

Students in the program may elect to live in Patterson Hall, a study and community oriented, co-ed Honors residence hall equipped with seminar rooms and library.

Other social, service, and cultural activities organized by and for Honors students include the Honors Program Student Advisory Council or HPSC (social and service activities), and *JAR*, the campus literary magazine published by Honors Program students. Students may also participate in the Journal Project, for which they keep a journal during their undergraduate career, sharing the journal with a staff member, administrator, or faculty member who volunteers as an advisor.

Honors students in good standing are eligible for a number of special grants and scholarships during and at the conclusion of their undergraduate career. These include scholarships based on financial need, grants to support independent research conducted in the U.S. or abroad, scholarships to support study-travel for members of the Journal Project, the Diachun Award for students continuing studies in graduate school, and several other literary, service, and book awards.

Benefits

The greatest benefits Honors Program students enjoy are intensified intellectual development and a heightened personal awareness of the individual's place in his or her culture. A high percentage of graduates of the Honors Program enter graduate or professional schools, and move on to successful careers.

How To Apply

For an application, contact:

Director, Honors Program
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Lexington, KY 40506-0027
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The application deadline is January 15. Contact the Honors Program for more information.