



A FACULTY GUIDE TO CHAIRING AN HONORS COMMITTEE

<u>Contents:</u>	<u>2024-2025 Knox College Honors Program</u>
The Role of the Honors Committee Chair	2
Application and Review Guidelines	2
Discussing Honors with potential student candidates	2
Approving a student's application to the Honors program	2
Application deadlines for the 2024-2025 Knox College Honors	3
Program Registering for Honors credit	3
Special Conditions	3
GPA waiver request	3
Conducting Honors in the junior year	3
Honors credits requested	3
Probationary status	3
Discontinuing Honors	4
Other Considerations	4
Richter funding support	4
Additional printing costs	4
Seymour Library Honors offices	4
The Oral Defense	4
Outside examiners	4
Oral Defense Guidelines	5
Printing and Binding Guidelines	5
Number of copies and recipients	5
Printing and binding instructions	6
WHEN to print and bind the final project	6
Title pages	6
Honors Chair Checklists	6
Pre-award checklist	6
Fall Term (or first term of Honors) checklist	6
Winter Term (or second term of Honors) checklist	6
Spring Term (or final term of Honors) checklist	7
Other General Considerations for Faculty Chairs of Honors Committees	8
Sample Forms and Other Documents	8
Student Application Form and Application Guidelines	
Student Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)	
Training Verification Form and Guidelines	
Honors End-of-Term Progress Report	
Honors Title and Field Form	
Oral Defense Form	
Sample Letter to Outside Examiners	
Honors Recommendation Form	
Honors Grade Form	
Sample Cover Sheet	

The Role of the Honors Committee Chair:

The faculty chair of an Honors committee is expected to:

- Serve as the primary faculty mentor for the student conducting an Honors project
- Review and approve the project proposal submitted by the student to apply for College Honors
- Provide additional statements as required for the student applicant (see special conditions below)
- Meet regularly with the Honors candidate to review his/her progress
- Include other committee members as appropriate—at minimum convening the committee at least once each term (fall and winter) to formally review progress.
- Submit an end-of-term progress report each term (fall and winter).
- Set benchmarks and deadlines to ensure the student is making adequate progress
- Arrange for the outside examiner and oral examination/defense in the Spring Term.
- File the *Honors Recommendation Form* to the Associate Dean of the College Office, and a *Grade Report Form* to the Registrar.

Application and Review Guidelines:

Discussing Honors with potential candidates:

When students apply to conduct College Honors, they are requested to supply the names of the faculty members who have agreed to serve on their Honors committee. One must be designated as the CHAIR of the committee, and one must be designated as from outside the student's academic department.

Honors is intended to be a distinction and privilege for students who have demonstrated strong academic excellence and are best prepared to undertake significant independent projects. Please be candid with students if you have any hesitations or concerns about their potential to pursue College Honors. Some students may be better served by pursuing independent study, off-campus experiential learning opportunities, or additional coursework than by committing the time and effort required to complete an Honors Project.

Approving a student's application to the Honors program:

Review all of the student's application materials before submission. Honors applications can be submitted electronically. The student will enter the chair's name, which at the same time confirms the chair has agreed to serve as faculty chair and has reviewed and approved the student's project proposal.

If the student is applying under any special circumstances (please see *Special Circumstances* section below), you may need to prepare and submit separate statements to support the student's application to the Honors Program for consideration by the Academic Standing Committee.

The Associate Dean's Office may contact you and the other faculty listed on the student's application to confirm your commitment to serve on the committee. Please consider it a priority to respond quickly. Once all materials and confirmations are received, the Academic Standing Committee will review the proposals. The committee may get in touch with you if they have any questions about your student's application.

Students should submit a complete application package as instructed to the Associate Dean of the College Office. A complete application package will consist of:

1. A completed application form;
2. A written project proposal that has been approved by the faculty chair;
3. Any additional materials as required (see special conditions below.)

Application Deadlines for the 2024-2025 Knox College Honors Program:

General Deadline: **Monday, September 23, 2024:** ALL students who wish to pursue College Honors during the 2024-2025 academic year must submit a complete application package by this deadline.

Call for applications begin **Friday, May 31, 2024.** Students who meet the Honors GPA requirement of holding a 3.3 cumulative GPA or higher AND who have the full endorsement of their Honors chair and faculty committee may apply at any time. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis through the general deadline. *Summer applications are strongly encouraged.*

Registering for Honors credit:

Your student may enroll for Honors credit while his/her application is under review.

(1) In the first term in which the student is conducting Honors, you will need to sign and submit a completed Independent Study Form for a 400-level Honors credit in the student's discipline to the Office of the Registrar.

(2) In addition, and for EVERY term in which the student is conducting College Honors, the student will need to enroll for Honors credit at the 400-level through the College's online registration system.

Special Conditions:

GPA Waiver Request: If the student applicant has a cumulative GPA that falls below the 3.3 Honors requirement, both you and the student will need to submit separate statements requesting a waiver of the requirement. Your statement should clearly describe the academic preparedness of the student to conduct Honors-level work, and provide any evidence (GPA in major, grades earned in higher level coursework, etc.) that demonstrate the students' qualifications to pursue College Honors. You may give this statement to the student to submit with their application materials, or submit it directly to the Associate Dean's Office.

Conducting Honors in the Junior Year: Students may apply to conduct Honors as early as their junior year. However, to begin (or complete in full) work on an Honors project in the junior year, both you and the student must submit separate statements that describe the student's academic preparedness and qualifications to do Honors work in their senior year, as well as an explanation as to why the student is not seeking to conduct Honors solely in his/her senior year. You may give this statement to the student to submit with their application materials, or submit it directly to the Associate Dean's Office.

Honors Credits Requested: The standard allocation of Honors credits earned is one credit per term (fall, winter, spring) for a total of 3 credits earned in the senior year. If a student proposes another arrangement (fewer/more credits earned in any given term or fewer/more than 3 credits earned overall), the student will need to include a brief statement of explanation as a separate labeled section of their project proposal.

Probationary Status: The Academic Standing Committee (ASC) may approve a student to pursue College Honors on a probationary status, particularly if there are concerns about the student's academic preparedness or with the quality of the project proposal. The ASC will set provisions to be met by the student, and a deadline by which to meet them. Often the provision is to earn a GPA at the Honors-level (3.3) during the first term (excluding the Honors credit which will not be assigned a grade until the end of the year.) You may be asked to provide information regarding the student's progress for review of the probationary status by the ACS.

Discontinuing Honors: If your student chooses to drop College Honors, whether on their own, through consensus of the student's Honors committee, or as a result of a decision by the Academic Standing Committee, you will need

to send an e-mail or formal note to the Associate Dean to confirm that the student is dropping Honors. Honors credits will be converted to independent study credits at the 350-level in the student's discipline, and you will be asked to provide a grade for work completed (evaluated at the independent study-level) for these credits.

Other Considerations:

Richter funding support: Honors candidates are eligible to receive financial support of direct costs associated with their projects through the Richter Scholars Program. Students must submit a SEPARATE application to the Richter Scholars Program. They may use the same project proposal from their Honors application by adding an itemized budget and a Richter application form. Regular Richter applications apply. The Richter Scholars application should be submitted to the Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study.

Additional printing costs: Honors students are eligible to receive support in affording the copying and printing costs associated with their projects. Students may be asked to apply for Richter support if their costs exceed that which can be met by the Honors budget.

Seymour Library honors offices: Students can apply for an assigned Honors office in the Seymour Library by completing an online request form: <http://knox.libguides.com/gethelp/honors-students>. Honors offices are assigned on a competitive basis. Students will be notified the application process is open and are encouraged to submit a request as early as possible

The Oral Defense:

Outside Examiners: By the end of winter term, the Associate Dean's Office will send you information regarding the oral defense. You are expected to play a lead role in identifying and inviting a qualified outside examiner to participate in your Honors defense. Usually, outside examiners are faculty from other institutions who have expertise in the disciplinary area and topic covered in the Honors project. A specialist in the field but from outside of academia may also be considered, and may constitute a better choice for certain projects. Once you can confirm that someone has agreed to serve as the outside examiner, please do the following:

- Provide the Associate Dean's Office with the name and contact information of the outside examiner as soon as you can—there's no need to wait for a reminder or prompt. An informational letter to the examiner about the oral examination process will be sent.
- During winter term you will receive an *Honors Oral Defense Form* to let us know what arrangements will need to be made and costs will need to be covered for the final defense. Costs that can be covered include:
 - Transportation (airfare, mileage reimbursement, train fare) to and from Knox College.
 - ONE night of accommodations (standard). Two nights may be covered, but usually to accommodate cost savings for transportation.
 - A stipend of \$250 to be paid directly to the outside examiner.
 - A celebratory meal with the student for up to five (5) people at a rate of \$30 per person. (Note that institutional funds cannot be used for the purchase of alcohol.)

We will work directly with you and with the outside examiner to make all arrangements and process the stipend once you have submitted the *Oral Defense Form*. If you would like to handle arrangements differently, please let us know.

- Determine with your student how the outside examiner will be involved in the project prior to the defense. Will you send the examiner an earlier draft of the project for review? When must the project be fully completed and ready to share with the examiner? Who will be responsible for sending a full copy of the Honors project to the

reviewer and by what date? It is HIGHLY recommended that the student provide a final draft of the project for the oral defense in digital format, saving a final printing and binding of the project till after the defense is complete and any final revisions are made.

Honors Oral Defense Guidelines:

- Decide with the student when and where to hold the defense. **The defense MUST be held by the end of classes, Thursday, May 29, 2025.**
- Decide if the defense will be open for others to see, and let us know so that the defense can be posted on the College's calendar of events.
- Be sure to include the name of the restaurant, date, and number of people participating in the celebratory meal on the *Honors Oral Defense Form*.
- The day before the defense, pick up your Honors defense packet from the Associate Dean's Office, OM 101. This packet will include a check to pay the examiner (or a W-9 form to be filled out by the examiner so that payment can be processed), a *Purchase Order* for the meal, *Honors Recommendation Forms*, and an *Honors Grade Form*.
- After the defense, have the committee and outside examiner sign two copies of the *Honors Recommendation Form* (see sample attached). Submit both to the Associate Dean's Office who will forward them on to the Academic Standing Committee for approval. Once approval is received, the student will be sent an original signed copy, an original will be kept on file, and the chair will be sent a copy.
- Submit the *Honors Grade Form* (sample attached) to the Registrar's Office no later than the senior grade deadline, 12:00pm (noon) on June 4, 2025—but preferably the day after the defense.

Printing and Binding Guidelines:

How many copies will be print and bound? Consider using digital versions for the Honors committee. We will cover the cost to print and bind up to four (4) copies of the project. A digital copy of the project should be made for each of the following:

- Seymour Library (using the cover page required for archiving of your project)
- The Office of Admission – digital copy
- Each member of your Honors committee, including the chair (chair can request a bound copy)
- We are mindful of sustainability efforts and therefore ask that Chairs consider whether hard or electronic copies should be used during the drafting process and, most importantly, during the exam itself. Chairs should consider the desirability of being 'green' alongside the possible distractions created when multiple people at a table with computers or tablets open. Either option is acceptable.

Printing and binding instructions: Students will be instructed to **submit their final project in digital form** as soon after their defense as possible. The Associate Dean's Office will arrange for printing and binding. We will notify the student to pick up when ready. IF the student requires MORE than 5 print and bound copies of his/her Honors project, arrangements must be made with the Associate Dean PRIOR to beginning the printing and binding process.

WHEN to print and bind the final project: It is HIGHLY recommended that the student wait to print and bind his/her final honors project till AFTER the oral defense. This allows the student to make any changes or revisions that may come up during the oral defense. Students will NOT be granted additional copies if they choose to print

and bind both before and after their defense (though they may choose to allocate a portion of their Honors Richter award to cover this additional expense.)

Title pages: Seymour Library requests that students use a provided template (sample attached) for generating a cover page for their projects for archiving purposes. However, students may also generate their own cover, and simply insert the library cover as a first page on the copy they bind for Seymour Library.

Honors Chair Checklists:

The following checklists are intended to help you efficiently navigate the process of chairing an Honors project:

Pre-award Checklist:

- Review and approve all application materials before submission. Sign the application form if paper version. Confirm the commitments of other faculty listed on the student's honors committee, including one from outside the student's department.
- Prepare and submit any additional statements needed for a GPA requirement waiver or for the student to conduct Honors work during his/her junior year.
- Sign the student's Richter application form (if applicable). Richter Scholars applications are submitted to the Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study.

Fall Term (or first term of Honors) Checklist:

- Complete online enrollment or sign an Independent Study Form for a 400-level credit in the student's discipline, and ensure the student enrolls for this credit through the online registration system.
- Meet with the student to discuss the scope of the project and the work to be completed during that term. Set specific benchmarks to be met and schedule follow up meetings to check on the student's progress.
- Convene the full committee to meet and review progress made by the end of each term. Ask the student to give a full update on their progress, and to provide all committee members with a full draft of work accomplished to date. If you plan to meet over lunch in Seymour Union, you may ask that we cover the cost of the faculty meals. Contact the office of the Associate Dean of the College to make arrangements.
- Complete a *Term Progress Report* and submit by the end of the term. This report verifies that the student has been approved to continue pursuing College Honors.

Winter Term (or second term of Honors) Checklist:

- Ensure the student enrolls for Honors credit at the 400-level through the online registration system.
- Meet with the student to discuss the scope of the project and the work to be completed during that term. Set specific benchmarks to be met and schedule follow up meetings to check on the student's progress.
- Convene the full committee to meet and review progress made by the end of each term. Ask the student to give a full update on their progress, and to provide all committee members with a full

draft of work accomplished to date. If you plan to meet over lunch in Seymour Union, you may ask that we cover the cost of the faculty meals. Contact the office of the Associate Dean of the College to make arrangements. It is HIGHLY recommended that the student be in the final stages of completing a full rough draft by this point, even if there are sections with blank spaces waiting for results and analyses.

- Complete a *Term Progress Report* and submit by the end the term. This report verifies that the student has been approved to continue pursuing College Honors. At this point, there should be very little doubt that the student will be able to successfully complete and defend his/her project.
- Identify an outside examiner and begin making arrangements for the oral defense.

Spring Term (or Final Term of Honors) Checklist:

- Make sure that all arrangements are made for the oral defense and for the outside examiner. If you are connecting with the outside examiner through technology (SKYPE, WebEx, other teleconferencing), make sure arrangements have been made with audio/visual services. (we can aid in these arrangements.)
- The day before the defense, pick up an Honors Defense Packet from the Associate Dean's Office, OM 105. The packet will include a check to pay the examiner (or a W-9 form to be filled out by the examiner so that payment can be processed), a *Purchase Order* for the meal, two *Honors Recommendation Forms*, and an *Honors Grade Form*.
- Ensure that the student disseminates a final draft of his/her project to all committee members and the outside examiner at least TWO WEEKS PRIOR to the date of the oral defense. It is highly recommended that this draft be disseminated in digital form to save on printing costs. It is important that the final copy of the student's project acknowledges any support received (Richter or ASSET Fellowship support, etc.) as well as any contributors or resources that have been provided (access to archives, contributions from experts, etc.)
- Ensure that your student has submitted a completed *Honors Title and Verification Form*.
- After the defense and before committee members are dismissed, have all members and the outside examiner sign the two *Honors Recommendation Forms*. Submit both signed originals to the Associate Dean of the College Office. Complete the *Honors Grade Form* and submit it to the Registrar no later than the deadline for senior grades, but preferably the day of or the day after the defense.
- Make sure you submit receipts for the Honors celebratory meal. College funds may not be used for the purchase of alcohol. If you have more than five (5) people attending the meal, or if you anticipate spending more than \$30 per person on the meal, you must make prior arrangements with our office. (Exceptions to the 5 person/\$30 per person limit are determined on a case-by-case basis and only for clearly justified reasons.)
- Have the student submit a DIGITAL copy of their project to the Associate Dean of the College Office. Up to eight copies of students' Honors projects will be printed and bound. **Members can choose to receive a digital version if preferred.** Two bound copies will be kept to be given to the Seymour Library and Office of Admission.

Other General Considerations for Chairs of Honors Committees:

- It is best to be upfront and candid with your Honors student about your expectations for Honors-level work. It is always in the student's best interest to know as early as possible if their work is lacking in some way that may prevent them from completing the project at the Honors level. This gives them time to either remedy the situation, or to discontinue Honors and complete the project on a smaller scale as an independent study.
- Especially early on, it is advisable to meet with your student on a regular basis (biweekly) to ensure they are progressing with their project and have a clear sense of where they need to be by the end of the term.
- By the start of spring term, there should be very little doubt that the project will be completed and awarded College Honors. The majority of the work needed to pursue the project should be completed by this point.
- Projects should be completed and submitted for final review by the committee and outside examiner a full two weeks prior to the scheduled examination date.
- It is important that projects acknowledge any support or assistance received for the project. Students must acknowledge any departmental, Richter, McNair, or ASSET Fellowship support received, as well as the use of any technology, equipment, workspace, specialized expertise, or other resources above and beyond what is generally available to the student body.

Sample Forms and Other Documents

Included with this guide are sample forms and other documents relevant to the Honors Program. Please note these are samples. Many of them will be provided to Honors Chairs at appropriate times, and others are only for use by the Associate Dean's Office as noted on the forms. If at any time you have questions about the forms or about the Honors program in general, please contact Mary Crawford, Associate Dean of the College.

Mary Crawford
 Associate Dean of the College
 309-341-7214
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Sample documents:

Honors Application Form
 Honors Application Guidelines
 Student Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)
 Training Verification Form for NSF Grants, form and guidelines
 Honors End-of-Term Progress Report
 Oral Defense Form
 Sample Letter to Outside Examiners
 Honors Recommendation Form
 Honors Grade Form
 Sample Cover Sheet