



A STUDENT GUIDE TO PURSUING COLLEGE HONORS

2025-2026 Knox College Honors Program

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The Knox College Honors Program:

Students may graduate with College Honors by completing a program of advanced independent study that culminates in a major piece of research, scholarship, or creative work.

Students may apply to undertake an Honors project as early as their junior year, though most students do so in their senior year. Applications are reviewed by the Academic Standing Committee. Applicants who are approved to pursue Honors are known as Honors Candidates until they complete their independent projects and are recommended for Honors by their faculty Honors committee. These students then graduate “with Honors.”

Eligibility:

Knox students may apply to pursue College Honors as early as their junior year provided they meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Hold a cumulative GPA of 3.3 (a waiver may be requested);
2. Are on target to complete all graduation requirements by their intended graduation date; and
3. Have the commitment of a faculty mentor and at least two other faculty members (one from outside of the student’s academic department) who will comprise their Honors committee.

Deadlines:

Application Deadlines for the 2025-2026 Knox College Honors Program:

General Deadline: **Monday, April 28, 2025:** ALL students who wish to pursue College Honors during the 2025-2026 academic year must submit a complete application package by this deadline.

Call for applications opens Friday, Feb 7, 2025. 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. ***Winter Term applications are strongly encouraged.***

Pre-application Guidelines:

1. Either in late winter or early spring term, the Office of the Associate Dean of the College will hold Honors Information Sessions. Students interested in applying for College Honors are **STRONGLY** encouraged to attend. Current Honors students will be in attendance to share their own experiences and advice with interested students.
2. Talk with the faculty member you would want to chair your Honors committee **BEFORE** you start the application process. It is important that your Honors chair be fully on board with all aspects of your application and project proposal. Your Honors chair should approve of your project description **BEFORE** you submit it with your Honors application.
3. Talk with your faculty chair about logistics. How many credits of Honors will you earn? In which terms? How often will you meet with your faculty chair? With your committee? What benchmarks will you periodically check to gauge your progress and ensure that you are on track to completing your Honors project? When will you want your project fully drafted/completed to permit your committee and an outside examiner enough time to review it before your defense? Make sure that you and your faculty chair are in full agreement about these and other logistical considerations.
4. Talk with the other faculty members you wish to serve on your Honors committee. Make sure that one of them is from a different discipline than your own. This ensures that your project is considered and benefits from a different but contributing perspective. Talk with your faculty chair about who will have the most to contribute

to your project from a different discipline. Submit a copy of your project proposal to your full committee BEFORE you submit it with your Honors application.

5. If you have special conditions that apply to your project, (requesting GPA requirement waiver, requesting fewer or more than 3 credits of Honors, requesting fewer or more than 1 credit of honors in any given term, conducting Honors work in your junior year, etc.) make sure that you provide any additional information or materials that may be required (see Special Conditions section below.)
6. Talk with your librarian liaison to discuss the types of primary and secondary sources needed for your project. The librarian will help you understand potential limitations on sources and acquire sources when possible.

Special Conditions

GPA waiver request: If your cumulative GPA falls below a 3.3, you must request a waiver to be considered for the Honors program. To request a waiver, you will need to submit two additional items:

- a) A statement from your faculty chair that clearly describes your academic qualifications and preparedness to pursue Honors despite the lower GPA, and offers any compelling evidence as to why the GPA requirement should be waived. This statement may be submitted as part of your application package, or submitted confidentially by your faculty mentor separately.
- b) A statement from yourself that explains what circumstances or conditions affected your overall GPA, as well as a description of what factors or indicators demonstrate your qualifications and preparedness to pursue Honors. This statement must be submitted as a separate document and as part of your application package.

Conducting Honors work in the junior year: In exceptional cases, students may begin conducting work on their Honors project in their junior year. Whether you are planning to start your project in your junior year and complete it during your senior year, or whether you plan to complete your project in full during the junior year, you must apply by the general deadline in the fall term of your junior year. To apply to conduct Honors during your junior year, you will need to submit two additional items:

- a) A statement from your faculty chair that describes your academic preparedness and provides a rationale for you to conduct work on your Honors project in your junior year. This statement should be submitted as part of your application package.
- b) A statement from yourself that provides a rationale for pursuing Honors during your junior year, and your own explanation of your academic preparedness to conduct Honors during your junior year. This statement should be submitted as a separate document and as part of your application package.

Honors credits requested: The standard allocation of Honors credits to be earned is one credit per term (fall, winter, spring) for a total of 3 credits earned during the course of the senior year. If you are proposing another arrangement (fewer/more than 3 credits earned overall, more than 1 credit earned in any given term), please submit a brief explanation as a separate, labeled section of your project proposal.

Submission/Review Considerations:

Submission and review process:

The Associate Dean of the College Office will conduct a preliminary review of your materials to identify any special considerations that apply (GPA waiver, conducting work in the junior year, etc.) and to check your application package for completeness. The Associate Dean's Office will also contact each member of your faculty committee to confirm his/her commitment to serving on your Honors committee. Your materials will then be sent to the Academic Standing Committee, an appointed faculty committee, for review. This process takes around 2-3 weeks. You and your full committee will then receive an e-mail letting you know of the Committee's decision. You may register to earn Honors credit while your application is pending. (see instructions below)

Probationary status: In some cases, the Academic Standing Committee may provisionally approve a student to pursue College Honors on a probationary status, particularly if there are concerns with the academic preparedness of a student to pursue College Honors or with the quality of the student's project proposal. The Academic Standing Committee will define the terms of the probation for the student, and will set a date for a follow-up review of the student's progress and his/her ability to meet any conditions set by the Academic Standing Committee (for example, earning a 3.3 GPA in the fall term). Based on this review, the Academic Standing Committee will decide whether the student will continue with Honors, continue on a probationary status, or be dismissed from the Honors program.

Conducting College Honors:

Once you have been approved as a candidate for College Honors, please keep in mind the following:

Candidate for Honors: Being approved to pursue College Honors does not guarantee you will graduate with College Honors. Your progress will be reviewed at the end of each term by your Honors committee who will then approve your continuation in the Honors Program by submitting a report to the Associate Dean of the College Office. In the spring term, after the successful defense of your final project, your committee will assign a grade to your project and submit a recommendation to the Academic Standing Committee for you to graduate with College Honors.

Registering for Honors: Your Honors Chair will need to sign an Independent Study Form, available from the Registrar's Office, for an Honors 400-level course. This form is only needed for the first term in which you are pursuing College Honors, and should be submitted by the drop/add deadline for that term. IN ADDITION, you will need to enroll online for Honors 400 on the Registrar's website. Select your department and the 400-level course option. ONLINE ENROLLMENT FOR COLLEGE HONORS IS REQUIRED EACH TERM. You should register for your first term of Honors while your Honors application is pending review.

Discontinuing Honors: Should you choose to discontinue your Honors projects, your Honors chair will need to alert the Associate Dean's Office who will then forward that information on to the Registrar and the Academic Standing Committee. You will be expected to complete work on your project at the independent study level for that current term (unless you choose to drop that credit), and your Honors committee will assign a grade to the independent studies based on the quality of your work.

Richter funding support for Honors students: As an Honors student, you are eligible to receive funds in support of direct costs associated with your project through the Richter Scholars Program. This requires a SEPARATE application submitted to the Richter Scholars Program. You may use the same project proposal you use for your Honors application for your Richter request by adding an itemized budget and a Richter application cover sheet. Regular Richter application deadlines do apply. Submit Richter Scholars applications to the Vovis

Center for Research and Advanced Study.

Additional printing costs: Either as part of your Richter request or as a stand-alone request, you may request from the Associate Dean's Office a reimbursement to cover printing costs charged to your student account. Printing and copying requests should be submitted to the Associate Dean's Office.

Meeting with your Honors committee: You should plan to meet with your full Honors committee at least once per term. You may ask the Associate Dean's Office for the cost of meals for faculty or for yourself if you are not on the Knox College dining plan.

Setting reasonable benchmarks and ensuring adequate progress: One of the primary reasons that students drop Honors late in the winter term or early spring term is that they haven't made adequate progress on their projects—even if they have invested significant amounts of time and effort on their projects! An appendix to this guide provides some best practice tips and advice from past Honors students. Review this, and also be sure to talk with your chair regularly about your progress. In general, it is highly recommended that you complete a FULL DRAFT of your project by the end of the term prior to your Honors defense. The final term will be spent in multiple reviews and revisions by your Honors committee and outside examiner.

Seymour Library Honors offices: In late September, the library director will email all students confirmed in the honors program with the application for a honors office in Seymour library. This is a competitive process.

Completing College Honors:

Outside examiners: By the end of winter term, the Associate Dean's Office will send a package of information regarding outside examiners to all faculty chairs of Honors committees. Your faculty chair is expected to play a lead role in identifying and inviting a qualified outside examiner to participate in your Honors defense. However, it is highly recommended that you talk with your faculty advisor about the defense and about who will serve as your outside examiner at least by the middle of the term prior to the last term of your project and your Honors defense. All arrangements for your outside examiner will be handled between the Associate Dean's Office and your faculty chair, beginning with submitting electronically information for the *Final Plans for Honors Projects* by your faculty chair.

Preparing for the oral defense: Talk with your faculty chair about how the outside examiner will be involved prior to the defense. Will you send the examiner an early draft of the project for review and comments? When will you send the examiner a final draft of your project? Who will be responsible (you or your chair) for sending the final draft to your examiner and by what date? (You must submit a final draft no later than two weeks prior to your defense). It is highly recommended that you provide your final draft to your full committee in digital form (PDF attachment, .ZIP file, dropbox, googledocs, moodle, USB drive, etc.) for the oral defense waiting to print and bind your project till after you have made any revisions or changes that come up during the defense. You may request Richter funds to go and visit your outside examiner for a preliminary review prior to the oral defense.

Other considerations for the defense:

- **Your oral defense MUST be held by the end of classes, Thursday, May 28, 2026**
- After the defense, the committee and the outside examiner will sign the *Honors Recommendation Forms*. Both signed originals must be submitted to the Associate Dean's Office who will forward them on to the Academic Standing Committee for approval. Once approved and signed, an original will be sent to you to keep, one original will be kept on file, and a copy will be sent to your faculty chair. The *Honors Grade Form* must be submitted to the Registrar's office no later than the senior grade deadline.

- In the spring, YOU will be asked to verify the title of your project, the discipline(s) entailed, and your name as you would like it printed in the commencement program.
- You may choose to have your defense be open or closed to the public. If you wish it to be open to the public, notify the Associate Dean's Office who will post it on the Knox Calendar and aid in any other announcements.

Printing your Honors Project:

How many copies will you print and bind? We will cover the cost to print and bind up to four (4) copies of your project. But consider if you need bound copies or if digital versions work as well. You must provide a copy of your project for each of the following:

- Seymour Library (using the cover page template attached to this document) – digital copy only
- The Office of Admission – digital copy
- Each member of your Honors committee, including the chair – can be digital or bound If you require more than 4 print and bound copies, you must make arrangements PRIOR to beginning the printing process. Again, 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. You will be asked how many bound copies you want for distribution.

How to print and bind your final project: You must submit your final project in digital form at least one week prior to when you need the printed and bound copies. The Associate Dean's Office will submit an order to have them printed, bound, and delivered. When they are received, you will be notified so that you can come and pick them up.

When to Print and Bind your Final Project: It is HIGHLY recommended that you wait to formally print and bind your Honors project till AFTER your oral defense. You may have changes or revisions to make after the defense based on the feedback of your committee and outside examiner. You will not be granted additional copies paid for by the Associate Dean's Office. If you have to print and bind both before and after your defense unless you request Richter support to cover the cost of the additional copies.

Preparing a cover for your Honors project: Seymour Library requests that you use the provided template for generating a cover page for your Honors project for archiving purposes. However, you may generate your own cover for your project, and simply insert the archiving cover page in the copy you give to the Admission office.

Appendix A: Honors Checklist

The following checklist will help you track your progress and avoid complications in completing your Honors project and graduating with College Honors:

Application Checklist:

- ☐ Meet with and ask a faculty mentor to serve as your Honors Chair BEFORE you start your application. Decide with your chair when you will apply for Honors (early or general deadline), when you will conduct Honors (terms and number of credits earned), and who might also serve on your Honors committee.
- ☐ Ask other faculty members to serve on your Honors committee, including one from outside of your department/disciplinary area.
- ☐ Confer with a librarian about acquiring appropriate sources.
- ☐ Carefully review the application guidelines, and identify any special considerations that will need to be addressed through the submission of additional materials.
- ☐ Complete a full draft of your application and submit it for review and comments by your faculty chair (and possibly your full faculty committee) at least two weeks prior to the Honors application deadline.
- ☐ If additional statements from your faculty are required (GPA waiver request, request to conduct Honors in your junior year) be sure to talk with your faculty member about these requirements at least two weeks prior to the Honors application deadline.
- ☐ If you are applying for Honors in the same term you are planning to start work on your Honors project, enroll for College Honors by having your chair complete an Independent Study Form for a 400-level Honors credit, and by enrolling through the online registration system.
- ☐ Secure the signature of your chair, and submit all materials (Application form, Project Proposal, Additional Statements as necessary) by the Honors application deadline.
- ☐ If you plan to request Richter support for your project, submit a SEPARATE application for funding support to the Richter Scholars Program. Richter Scholars applications are submitted to the Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study.

Fall Term (or the first term of Honors):

- ☐ Enroll for Honors credit by the drop/add deadline by submitting both the Independent Study Form and registering online.
- ☐ Meet with your faculty chair to discuss the scope work to be accomplished during that term, schedule subsequent meetings for the term, and set benchmarks to be met during the term.
- ☐ Meet with your full Honors committee near the end of the term to review your progress, discuss any difficulties or concerns encountered, identify new opportunities or directions for your work, and to confirm your continuation in the Honors program. Your committee will submit an end-of-term progress report.
- ☐ Attend a scheduled Library Session to learn about submitting your final thesis to Knox's Institutional Repository. Information on the timing of the session will be provided after you have been accepted into the Honors program.

Winter Term (or the second term of Honors):

- ☐ Register for Honors online by the drop/add deadline.

- ☐ Meet with your faculty chair to discuss the scope work to be accomplished during that term, schedule subsequent meetings for the term, and to set benchmarks to be met during the term.
- ☐ Meet with your full Honors committee near the end of the term to review your progress, discuss any difficulties or concerns encountered, identify new opportunities or directions for your work, and to confirm your continuation in the Honors program. Your committee will submit an end-of-term progress report.
- ☐ By the end of this term discuss plans for your oral defense with your faculty chair. Decide when a full and final draft must be completed. Decide how your outside examiner will be involved in the final stages.
- ☐ By the end of this term, your project should be far enough along in draft form to assure you and your committee that you are very likely to be successful in completing and defending your Honors project.
- ☐ Meet with your advisor and a librarian about the Digital Repository form and consider whether you want to embargo your thesis and what access level is required.

Spring Term (or the final term of Honors, and the term of your Oral Defense):

- ☐ Confirm with your chair that an outside examiner has been found and that arrangements are secured through the Associate Dean of the College Office.
- ☐ Confirm with your chair the date, time, and location of your oral defense. If you wish your defense to be open to the public, notify the Associate Dean's Office. If you are using video conferencing (SKYPE, WebEx meeting) for your defense, ensure all arrangements have been made (my office can help with this.)
- ☐ Complete your final draft of your project and disseminate it, preferably in digital form, to your full Honors committee (including the outside examiner) at least two weeks prior to your oral defense.
- ☐ After your defense (the same day), ensure that your committee has signed the two recommendation forms to be submitted to the Associate Dean's Office, and ask your faculty chair to submit the *Honors Grade Form* to the Registrar no later than the deadline for senior grades.
- ☐ Submit a digital copy of your project to the Associate Dean of the College Office. Up to four copies of your Honors project will be printed and bound—Submit a digital copy of your project to the library along with the [Digital Repository Release Form](#) (attached below)
- ☐ **Celebrate!** You did it! Congratulations.

Appendix B: Best Practices—Tips and Advice from Past Honors Students:

- Be prepared to make this commitment. You are going to be investing a SIGNIFICANT amount of your time and energy into this project.
- Start WRITING early! Don't wait till you have all your data collected.
- Schedule time for different tasks, and stick to it! Schedule time each week for reviewing literature, for collecting data, for analyzing results, for WRITING (even if you'll be redrafting everything later). It will feel like you're doing everything all at once instead of in order, but it works.
- Schedule time to get organized. Each week, take time to organize references, notes, data, etc. In general, take time to clean up! It will help you assess what you have accomplished and what needs to come next.
- Stay healthy. (Sleep. Eat. Exercise. Meet with friends). The goal here is not to make you sick with sleep deprivation and an addiction to caffeine. The goal is to use a good work ethic to be productive while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. If you can't manage this project without severe stress, how will you function well and be successful in graduate school? In your future career?
- Talk with your Honors chair often. When in doubt, ask! Don't assume that all is well because you haven't heard from your chair. It is up to you to make sure you are in good communication and on the same page with your Honors chair.
- Talk about any frustrations that come up right away. Keep WRITING and working on other parts of your project while you try and solve the problem. If you wait, either to let others know of the complication, or to continue work on your project while you solve the problem, you'll get too far behind to complete Honors.
- Start work RIGHT AWAY. The temptation is to start your first term thinking there's plenty of time to do this work. Procrastinating may mean you have to drop Honors later because you are too far behind to catch up.
- Set deadlines for yourself and meet them. Work backwards. When do you want to hold your defense? The deadline for submitting your final draft is two weeks before that. The deadline for submitting your first full draft is at least two weeks before that. Now you're in winter term and you'll have to decide when you have to be done completing drafts of certain sections, analyzing data, gathering data, and reviewing literature. Next thing you know, you will have real WRITING deadlines to meet in fall term, and that's a good thing.
- Be your own boss. Don't wait for your chair to set deadlines, ask for updates and drafts, or tell you how you are doing. Hold yourself accountable for making good progress on your project, and for providing evidence of that progress to your chair even if they don't ask for it. Make their job easy by taking care of yourself.
- Don't wait for your chair or committee members to finish a review of drafts before you keep going. KEEP WORKING AND WRITING! Even if you change a lot of your work while they're still reviewing an earlier draft, you'll be able to use their comments and suggestions in your work, and this way you won't get behind.
- KEEP WRITING! DO NOT WAIT TO START DRAFTING YOUR FINAL PROJECT! The more rough drafts you have, the more reviews by others, the more revisions you go through, the better the final product.

Appendix C: Honors Resources and Forms

Web Resources:

Honors information:

<http://www.knox.edu/academics/research-and-creative-work/college-honors>

Richter information:

<http://www.knox.edu/academics/research-and-creative-work/student-research-grants/richter-awards>

Seymour Library support for Honors students: The library director will email out an application for honors offices in September. Your subject librarian will also be in touch to see what research support you need, and all librarians are available for research support:

<https://knox.libcal.com/appointments>

Who to Contact:

ANY questions regarding the Honors program may be directed to:

Mary Crawford, Associate Dean of the College

Old Main Room 105

Knox College Box K-146

mcrawfor@knox.edu

309-341-7214

She will reply to you directly, or forward your question or concern on to the appropriate persons at Knox.

FORMS included in the following pages:

Honors Application Guidelines

Sample Cover Sheet (for Seymour Library Archiving Purposes)

 Digital Repository Release (2).pdf