



A Student Guide to Pursuing College Honors

2026-2027 KNOX COLLEGE HONORS PROGRAM

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Applying for College Honors

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); and
2. Are on target to complete all graduation requirements by their intended graduation date; and
3. Commit 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 2026-2027 Knox College Honors Program:

General Deadline: **Wednesday, March 25, 2026:** ALL students who wish to pursue College Honors during the 2026-2027 academic year must submit a complete application package by this deadline.

Call for applications opens **Friday, November 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 under this deadline. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis through the general deadline.

Winter applications are strongly encouraged.

Pre-application Guidelines:

1. Either in late fall or early winter term, the Office of the Associate Provost 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. Your Honors chair must 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 complete 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 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 three credits earned during 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 electronic version of the Honors application can be found at this link: [Honors Application](#)

The Office of the Associate Provost 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 Provost'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 usually takes around 2-3 weeks. You and your full committee will then receive an email 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

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 which will then approve your continuation in the Honors Program by submitting a report to the Office of the Associate Provost. 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 for your Honors 400-level course. This form is available on the My.Knox portal or from the Office of the Registrar. Submit the completed and signed form to the Office of the Registrar. You will need to complete this process each term you enroll in your Honors 400. You should register for your first term of Honors while your Honors application is pending review.

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

Richter funding support for Honors students: As an Honors student, you are eligible to apply for funds in support of direct costs associated with your project through the Richter grant program in the Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study. This requires a SEPARATE application submitted to the Richter Academic Year Projects grant application: <https://form.jotform.com/202604652473149>. 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.

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

Meeting with your Honors committee: You should meet with your full Honors committee at least once per term, as your Chair will be reporting on your progress.

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 progress on their projects—even if they have invested significant amounts of time and effort on their projects! An appendix to this guide provides best practice tips and advice from past Honors students. Review this and 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 before your Honors defense. The final term will be spent on multiple reviews and revisions by your Honors committee and outside examiner.

Discontinuing Honors: Should you choose to discontinue your Honors projects, your Honors chair will need to alert the Associate Provost's Office, which 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.

Completing College Honors

Outside examiners: By the end of the winter term, the Associate Provost'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 by the middle of the term before the last term of your project and your Honors defense. All arrangements for your outside examiner will be handled between the Associate Provost's Office and your faculty chair, beginning with submitting 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 before 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 before your defense.) It is highly recommended that you provide your final draft to your full committee in digital form for the oral defense and wait to print and bind your project until 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 before the oral defense. Use the [Academic Year Projects application](#) for this type of request.

Other considerations for the defense:

- **Your oral defense MUST be held by the end of classes, Thursday, May 25, 2027.**
- 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 are at a table with computers or tablets open. Either option is acceptable, however.
- After the defense, the committee and the outside examiner will sign two *Honors Recommendation Forms*. Both signed originals must be submitted to the Associate Provost's Office, which 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.
- 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 Provost's Office, which will post it on the Knox Calendar and aid in any other announcements.

Verifying information: In the spring, YOU will be asked to complete a form to verify the title of your project, the discipline(s) entailed, and your name as you would like it to be printed in the commencement program. Watch for an email from the Office of the Associate Provost.

After your Defense: Sharing your Honors Project:

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 printed copies.

Digital copies: You must provide a digital copy of your project for each of the following:

- Seymour Library (using the cover page template attached to this document)
- The Office of the Associate Provost - email PDF to allandon@knox.edu and mcrawfor@knox.edu .
- Honors committee members who prefer a digital copy of your project

Printed & bound copies: We will cover the cost to print and bind up to two copies of your project after your defense if desired. If you require more than two printed and bound copies, you must make arrangements PRIOR to beginning the printing process.

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 Provost's Office.

How to print and bind your final project: You must submit your final project in digital form at least 10 days prior to when you need the printed and bound copies. If you are leaving campus right after Commencement on Sunday, June 6, 2027, print requests must be received by Thursday, May 27, 2027. The Associate Provost'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.

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. The checklist is also available as a standalone document to use throughout the year.

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.
- 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 before 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 before 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.
- 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 and adhere to the academic year deadlines. Richter grant 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 of work to be accomplished during that term, schedule subsequent meetings for the term, and set benchmarks to be met during the term.
- 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.
- 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 confirm your continuation in the Honors program. Your committee will submit an end-of-term progress report.

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 of 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 confirm your continuation in the Honors program. Your committee will submit an end-of-term progress report.
- 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.
- 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 likely to be successful in completing and defending your Honors project.

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 Provost's 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 Provost's Office. If you are using video conferencing 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 before 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 Provost'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 Provost's Office. If you like, two 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, and 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 a caffeine addiction. 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 the 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 the 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 fall 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>

Who to Contact:

ANY questions regarding the Honors program may be directed to:

Mary Crawford, Associate Provost /
Senior Associate Dean of Academic Success
Old Main Room 105
Knox College Box K-146
mcrawfor@knox.edu
309-341-7214

Lorri Landon
Assistant to the Associate Provost
allandon@knox.edu
309-341-7272

Links to needed FORMS:

[Honors Application](#)

[Sample Cover Sheet \(for Seymour Library Archiving Purposes\)](#)

[Digital Repository Release.pdf](#)

COVER PAGE Template - Replace

TITLE OF YOUR HONORS PROJECT

By Your Name

Submitted in partial fulfillment for a Bachelor of _____ degree with College Honors in Major
at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois
Month Date, Year (*e.g. May 23, 2026*)

College Honors Committee:

FirstName Last Name (Committee Chair); Title, Knox College

FirstName Last Name, Title, Knox College

FirstName Last Name, Title, Knox College

FirstName Last Name (Outside Examiner); Title, School/Organization/Company