



Honors Program

Student Handbook

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Message from Honors Program Coordinator

Welcome to the Potomac State College Honors Program. The Honors Program is designed to provide intellectual challenges and enrichment opportunities to academically talented students. The program offers a variety of honors courses with specially selected instructors and smaller class sizes. As students journey through the honors program, many will find that they are taking classes they might not have ever considered. Most of those same students will later recall that those honors classes were among their most enjoyable and memorable of all college experiences. So be adventurous, open-minded, and enjoy your time with the Potomac State College Honors Program.

Dr. Vicki J. Huffman
Honors Program Coordinator

Benefits of the Honors Program

- Students successfully completing the Honors Program will receive **Honors Scholar** designation on their official transcripts and graduation diplomas. Honors Scholars also receive special recognition during the Commencement ceremony.
- Honors students may enroll in **Honors 199**, which fulfills the requirement for all new students to enroll in an orientation course, typically WVUe 191.
- Honors students may take one or more honors course each semester. These courses will satisfy general education (GEC) requirements at Potomac State College and West Virginia University. Students need to complete 9 honors credits to be designated an Honors Scholar.
- Students choosing to transfer to Morgantown after graduation from Potomac State may also transfer into the WVU Honors College.
- Honors students have a variety of opportunities to participate in Honors Program-sponsored social and cultural activities.
- All Honors students receive priority pre-registration for future semesters.
- Honors students have the option to live in a designated quiet area in Catamount Place.

Honors Program Policies & Requirements

Successful Completion

To be declared an Honors Scholar obtaining an Associate's Degree, students must complete a minimum of 9 credit hours of qualified honors courses and maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

To be declared an Honors Scholar obtaining a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Degree, students must complete a minimum of 18 credit hours of qualified honors courses, in which a minimum of 9 credit hours must be at the 300-400 level. In addition, students must complete an honors portfolio, complete an exit interview and maintain a 3.2 cumulative GPA.

Probation and Suspension from the Honors Program

Any freshman or sophomore level student who fails to maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA in a given semester will be placed on probation. Any junior or senior level student who fails to maintain a 3.2 cumulative GPA in a given semester will be placed on probation. Students on probation may be reinstated to good standing by raising their GPA to the required level. Continued failure to meet the minimum GPA will result in suspension from the Honors Program.

Any student who fails to complete at least 3 honors credits during the first three semesters of full-time attendance at PSC will be suspended from the program. Students who may be unable to complete three hours due to required major specific courses other degree requirements may request a waiver from the Program Coordinator in order to avoid suspension.

Honors program suspensions are not recorded on college transcripts but do include a loss of all privileges associated with being an Honors Program student. Students will be notified of all probations, reinstatements, and suspensions by the Program Coordinator.

Admission of New PSC Students

New Potomac State students must have a 3.0 high school GPA and 22 ACT or 1020 SAT (reading and math combined) score. Students meeting these requirements should receive a letter inviting them to join the Honors Program. Students who have met the requirements but have not received a letter should contact the Program Coordinator.

Admission of Current PSC Students and Transfer Students

Current Potomac State students and transfer students who have a 3.5 cumulative GPA may be eligible for admission into the Honors Program. Those students interested should contact the Program Coordinator.

Ways to Receive Honors Credit

Honors Courses

Most honors courses are special sections of general education courses with a reduced size and a specially selected faculty member. These classes typically are more focused on open discussion and interaction. Honors courses are offered only to members of the honors program.

Contract Courses

Students may also receive credit for a non-Honors course by contracting it as an honors class. By adding some extra requirements (usually through more intense reading requirements, a special paper, and/or a final project), students receive Honors credit for the non-honors course. In order to do this, students should contact the course professor before the semester begins to fill out a contract form, available on the honors program web page or from the Program Coordinator. The form, when completed, must be returned to the Program Coordinator. Only 200 level or higher courses taught by a full-time faculty member may be contracted. To be eligible to contract a course, a student must have attained sophomore status (completed 24 credit hours of college courses.) A maximum of 4 honors credit hours for either an Associate's or Bachelor's degree can be achieved by contracting a course.

300-400 Level Honors Courses – BAS degree students only

To receive honors credit for a 300-400 course, students must earn an A in any 300 or 400 level course offered at Potomac State College of WVU. In addition, students can complete a thesis to receive a maximum of 6 honors credits (max of 3 credit hours per semester) at this level.

Honors Thesis – BAS degree students only

An Honors Thesis requires greater depth than a typical course-related research paper. The greater depth is the natural outcome of choosing a topic in which a student already has a good deal of background, and is made possible by the student's commitment to spending a more extended period of time on background research, scholarly effort, and writing the paper or preparing the final product in the case of a creative arts or engineering project.

Students typically begin work on the thesis no later than the beginning of the semester prior to the semester of anticipated submission of the thesis and preferably even earlier. The student is encouraged to be thinking about a thesis topic and to be talking with potential advisors/instructors, once there is sufficient exposure to the discipline to know what issues and ideas are most engaging. In order to apply for credit, students must complete the Honors Thesis Contract, found on the Honors Program web site. This contract will be due during the first week of the semester that will start the thesis credit.

Students must receive an A or B in the thesis course to receive honors credit. For more information about the thesis option, please contact the Honors Program Coordinator.

Course Registration

Students in the Potomac State Honors Program receive the benefit of priority registration and are able to access the STAR database before the general student body. The STAR database, accessed through MIX, can be used to sign up for all courses EXCEPT Honors courses. To register for an Honors course, the student should contact their advisor, not the Program Coordinator. The advisor should then call or e-mail the Enrollment Services office with the name of the student and the CRN of the course they wish to take.

Honors Portfolio – BAS Degree Students ONLY

Students must complete an Honors Portfolio to graduate as an Honors Scholar from a BAS degree program from Potomac State College of WVU.

The portfolio must be submitted as a PDF document containing all their text files. Samples of completed work that cannot be converted to PDF, such as art files or music files, can be burned to a CD/DVD and submitted.

The Honors Portfolio must contain all of the following:

- Cover page (including name, major)
- A one-page reflection for **each** Honors course completed
- Resume
- Degree Plan
- A three-page reflection describing the student's overall Honors experience

Students are encouraged to include photos, samples of completed work, and other items that are relevant to their Honors Program experience, not to exceed 30 pages/250 MB.

Exit Interview – BAS Degree Students ONLY

Students must complete an exit interview to graduate as an Honors Scholar from a BAS degree program from Potomac State College of WVU. Students must schedule and attend an Exit Interview (not to exceed 30 minutes) with two to three members of the Honors Program Advisory Committee. The student's portfolio is due to the Honors Program Coordinator at least seven days before the interview. Exit interviews should be scheduled with the Honors Program Coordinator within 6 weeks of the end of the last planned semester before graduation. More information about preparing for the exit interview can be obtained from the Program Coordinator.

For More Information

More information about the Honors Program can be found on the Potomac State College web site. Go to www.potomacstatecollege.com, click on "Academics", then "Honors Program"

Students may also contact the Honors Program Coordinator, Dr. Vicki Huffman, at vicki.huffman@mail.wvu.edu or 304-788-6971.