



HONORS COLLEGE

Frequently Asked Questions

Table of Contents

Elliott T. Bowers Honors College.....	1
Honors Advanced Registration.....	2
Honors Contracts.....	3
Honors Status.....	5
Scholarships.....	7
Honors Thesis.....	8

Elliott T. Bowers Honors College

FAQ

What is the Elliott T. Bowers Honors College?

The Honors College is a unique learning community that brings together academically talented students and outstanding teachers. Through special course offerings and limited enrollment, the college leads to an unusually broad educational experience, closer contact with faculty and other outstanding students, increased research opportunities, and enhanced co-curricular activities.

Are the Honors courses similar to my high school AP or Gifted and Talented classes?

Not really. Honors courses are designed to emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, and enhanced writing. Classes have limited enrollment and provide closer contact with professors and increased interaction among the students.

Who is eligible to apply to the Elliott T. Bowers College?

Entering freshman who are in the top 10% of their graduating class, or score a 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT, are encouraged to apply. Current students and transfer students must have a 3.4 cumulative GPA. Acceptance to the program is competitive and is determined by careful review of the application, transcript, letters of recommendation, and supporting documents.

How many Honors courses do I have to take?

Usually, students will take one Honors class per semester, cumulating 24 Honors hours, which count in your regular degree plan. Students may also choose to pursue the 6-hour Honors thesis in their senior year.

Will I have time to become involved in other University activities?

Yes, most of our students participate in numerous academic, social and athletic programs on campus. Current Honors students include the Student Government Association representatives, varsity basketball, golf, and baseball team members, student newspaper reporters, theatre and dance performers, and ROTC cadets.

What are the benefits of participating in the Honors College?

In addition to small classes and special course offerings, Honors students enjoy perks such as early registration, the Honors Computer Lab and Honors Lounge, the Honors Dorm, cultural outings and travel to regional and national Honors conferences. Honors students also receive consideration for numerous academic and national scholarships.

Do all of the Honors students live in Spivey Hall?

No. The Honors residence hall is optional. However, Spivey Hall is the only small house with a full kitchen and computer lab. Incoming freshman are encouraged to apply early to ensure placement in Spivey Hall. There are also small number of Honors rooms in Raven Village.

Honors Advance Registration FAQ

What do I have to do to be cleared for advance registration?

Only two things. (1) Get Honors advising and (2) document your community service from the last semester. Your scholarship status or your status in the program have nothing to do with your privilege of registering early.

Which semester of community service counts for advance registration?

The one before the semester you register (and a year before the classes you are signing up for). Here is how it works: You did your community service in the fall so that you can register in the spring for classes next fall. Your community service for this semester (due the last week of the semester) is so that you can register early next fall for the next Spring classes.

What if I did not do (or failed to document) my community service for last semester?

You will not be cleared to register early. It may be that you will not be able to register until your assigned time, though if you appeal to the Honors Director, it is possible to be cleared early in the week of registration.

What if I did not get advised this semester?

Same answer as above.

What is the difference between group advising and appointments?

Group advising is for students who know what Honors classes they are interested and don't have many specific questions. All incoming Honors students are required to be advised by one of the Honors advisors and can set up meetings during the semester of orientation. The schedules for Dr. Young, Maria Holmes, and Dr. Bell will be posted on the Honors office door.

I don't think I need Honors advising (for instance, you are a senior who is finished with your Honors requirements). Do I still have to be advised?

Not necessarily. We'd like all Honors students to be advised, but if you really do not need it, you can probably just drop by the Honors office and fill out an advising form. If we see problems, we will contact you. If not, we will clear you for advance registration.

I don't need (or care about) advance registration. Do I still have to be advised?

No. You just won't be cleared for advance registration. You will register at your scheduled time. We would prefer that you do get Honors advising, though.

Where can I find the Honors classes being offered?

The Honors College Office will have the list of Honors Courses offered for the next semester.

Does the advising cover registration for multiple semesters? (Summer and Fall or Spring and Summer)?

Yes.

When do we register?

Honors advance registration time and date can be found on the Registrars Website.

Honors Contracts FAQ

What is an Honors contract?

An Honors contract is an agreement between you and a professor to do extra work in a regular (non-Honors) course with the purpose of receiving Honors hours for that course. For a fuller explanation, see page two of the contract proposal form.

Where do I get a contract proposal form?

The form is available online (both on Blackboard, under “Honors Documents” and on the Honors website). It is also available in the Honors Office.

What courses may be used for contracts?

Any 200-level or above course, not including regular Honors-only courses. Most students contract courses in their major or minor, but you may contract courses outside your major or minor.

How do I choose a course to contract, and how do I get the instructor to agree to the contract? Try to choose a course that you are interested in and one in which a contract will be a real benefit to you. Sometimes you will be able to contract ahead of time (perhaps with an instructor you have taken classes with previously), but sometimes you will need to size up the course and the instructor before asking about a contract. When you have a basic contract idea, approach your instructor and, if necessary, explain what a contract is. Do your best to design a contract topic that is interesting and useful for both you and your instructor. A contract should be a good experience for both of you. Page two of the contract proposal form explains for your instructor what a contract entails, but Dr. Young will be happy to discuss contracts further with your instructor.

How do I apply for a contract?

In consultation and discussion with your professor, you come to an agreement about what you will do for your contract. Then you complete the contract proposal form. Fill in the contract description in detail. Then you get the required signatures (from you, your instructor, your instructor’s department chair) and take the completed contract proposal to the Honors office.

What kind of extra work will I be doing?

It depends on the course, the topic, and the agreement you reach with your instructor. There are many different forms a contract can take. Some (perhaps most) will involve extra reading and extra writing, but you and your instructor should feel free to design the contract that will be the most interesting and the most beneficial to both of you. In the past, students have satisfied contracts in many different ways: teaching parts of the class, leading discussions, designing course or website documents, performing research tasks, tutoring, giving a performance, producing artistic or electronic products, and many others. There is no set-in-stone form that a contract must take.

How detailed does my contract proposal need to be?

Avoid overly general descriptions, such as “student will write an extra paper.” If your contract description is too general, it will probably be returned to you for revision.

What about the meeting requirements?

The contract proposal stipulates “at least bi-weekly” (every other week) meetings, but there is some flexibility in how meetings are conducted. For instance, it may be acceptable to “meet” with your instructor through e-mail, particularly later in the semester, when you are likely to be working more independently. The specific details and timing of your meetings are for you and your instructor to work out.

What is the deadline for submission of contract proposals?

The deadline is the 12th class day of each semester. It may be possible for you to have a contract approved after this deadline, but it is possible that your contract simply will not be approved. Do everything you can to get your contract proposal turned in by the deadline.

I missed the contract submission deadline. What do I do?

Contact Dr. Young. It is possible that your contract still may be approved, but it is also possible that it will not be.

What final form should the contract report take?

That is between you and your instructor, although Dr. Young is happy to consult with either or both of you. In some cases, there might not be a physical report at all, particularly if you did some alternative activity, such as tutoring.

How is the contract finalized?

Your instructor will need to complete the Contract Certification Form. You should make this form available to your instructor, who will complete it and mail it or bring it to the Honors office. It is preferable that your instructor complete this, but it is acceptable for you to get the signature and then deliver it to Honors yourself.

What if I do not complete a contract?

There is no penalty for not completing a contract. You may simply drop it, but you should at least discuss it with your professor. Also, please notify the Honors office staff that you have dropped the contract.

What is the deadline for turning in the contract certification?

Normally it is during the final week of classes.

What if I miss the deadline?

Turn it in anyway, even if it is the following semester. Obviously, it is best to complete your contracts before the semester is over, in time for them to appear on your transcript. Besides being to your advantage, this also enables the office staff to calculate your Honors hours accurately during the semester review.

Honors Status FAQ

What are the Honors Status levels and what do they mean?

There are three of them:

Status One means that you are on track with your Honors courses and that your grade point average for both the previous semester and overall are 3.25 or above.

Status Two means that you have not satisfied one or more of the criteria for Status One. Status Three means (generally) that you have been below Status One for more than one semester.

If I am on Status Two or Three, do I still have Honors College privileges? Yes.

Even if you are on Status Three, you are a full-fledged member of the college, with all rights and responsibilities, except for the Bowers Scholarship (and in certain cases, residency in Honors housing).

How does my Honors College status affect my Bowers Scholarship?

Only students on Status One for the semester will receive the Bowers Scholarship. As soon as you restore your Status One (for instance, you raise your GPA above 3.25 the next semester), you go back on scholarship.

I have received my status letter, but there are extenuating circumstances.

Can I appeal?

Absolutely. Many factors affect Honors status, and Dr. Young may change a student's status based on fuller information. For instance, if you are, say, three hours short of the hours you need, a promise to do a contract (or take a seminar) the next semester might cause your status to be changed. It never hurts to ask.

I was not able to register for a seminar for the upcoming semester, and this has dropped me to a lower status. What can I do?

Contact Dr. Young. It is sometimes possible to find room for you in a seminar. If not, it is possible that you will be restored to Status One based on your promise to sign up for a seminar the following semester. Usually, Dr. Young will try to guarantee seminars to students with high priority.

What are the guidelines for staying on track with Honors hours?

There are three of them based on the total number of hours you have. Your classification is listed at the top of your transcript. Here are the minimum requirements by classification:

- Sophomore classification (32 semester hours)—at least one Honors course
- Junior classification (64 semester hours)—nine Honors hours, including one seminar
- Senior classification (94 semester hours)—eighteen hours and at least one seminar

Do these guidelines apply the same for transfer students or students who began the program late?

No, they do not. Transfer students or SHSU students who came into the program later, have more latitude with the completion guidelines. You should accelerate your rate of getting Honors requirements, but you have a semester or two of grace in which to get caught up.

Do transfer grades count in the Honors GPA?

No. Your SHSU GPA is the one used to determine your Honors status.

My semester GPA fell just below 3.25. Is it possible for me to stay on Status One?

Yes, depending on how far below and upon other factors, such as your overall GPA. For instance, if your grade point is just a few hundredths below 3.25 and your overall grade point is well above, you will probably be kept on status. If your semester grade point falls well below 3.25, you will not be kept on Status One, no matter what your overall GPA is.

My overall GPA is just short of 3.25. Is it possible for me to stay on Status One?

No. The overall grade point minimum is much stricter than the semester grade point. Even if your overall is only a few hundredths below 3.25, you will fall below Status One.

I did not do my community service and/or get advised. Will this affect my Honors status?

No. Community service and mandatory advisement have only to do with advance registration privileges.

How many hours do I need in a semester to stay on Honors status?

You need to complete a minimum of 12 hours. It is possible that you will be granted a leave of absence (for international study or an internship) and return to the college when you return. It is also possible that you may be retained in the college even if you fall below twelve hours. Contact Dr. Young.

Scholarships FAQ

Do I need to submit my FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aide) before applying for scholarships?

Yes. It is recommended to complete the FAFSA prior to completing the ScholarX application. The financial aid process is located at www.shsu.edu/~fao www/.

How do I apply for scholarships?

Applying for scholarships has never been easier! Sam Houston's ScholarX application at www.shsu.edu/scholarships is a virtual clearinghouse for many SHSU scholarships. Complete one application and apply for many SHSU scholarships. The priority deadline on **SHSU scholarships is February 1st.**

Do I have to be accepted to Sam Houston State University in order to be considered for scholarships?

Yes. An Applicant must be accepted or currently enrolled at SHSU by the deadline in order to be considered for scholarships.

Where do I find help if I have a problem with the online application?

If you have a problem creating an account, or simply have a question related to the application, please use the "Contact Us" link on the side menu bar. Provide the information requested and give a clear explanation of your problem or question. The Scholarship office personnel will answer your questions.

How will I know if I have received a scholarship?

Scholarship award letters will be mailed to the student's permanent address on file with SHSU. Beginning in July, Scholarship Award Letters are available by logging in to **Banner**, with your SAM ID and PIN.

Can I receive more than one scholarship?

Yes! The ScholarX application matches students to all scholarships based on their qualifications.

How do I submit letters of recommendation?

The ScholarX application has a section for Letters of Recommendation. The student needs to provide an email address and the software does the rest. An email notification is sent requesting the "recommender" to submit a letter of recommendation. A unique "link" is provided to the recommender with instructions on how to complete the letter. Once the letter is finished, the recommender hits submit and the letter is electronically attached to the students application.

Honors Thesis FAQ

Do the honors thesis hours count toward my regular honors graduation requirement?

No, they do not. The honors thesis is six hours above and beyond your regular honors graduation requirements.

How many semesters does the thesis require?

The thesis is a two-semester project, usually the final two consecutive semesters before graduation.

When should I begin the thesis?

While you are not required to begin actual work until the first semester of the thesis, you are much better off to have chosen a topic and a thesis faculty (and to have at least discussed your topic, methodology, and timeline with your thesis faculty) prior to the beginning of your first thesis semester.

Can the thesis be done during the summer?

Not entirely. You may complete the thesis in one long semester plus one summer term, but not in just two summer terms.

Must the thesis be done in my major?

No. The student's academic major is almost always the location of the thesis, but this is not absolutely required. A faculty member in a department other than the student's major may supervise the thesis.

What paperwork is necessary for the honors thesis?

The thesis proposal at the beginning and the thesis binding form at the end. (See details above.)

When are the forms due?

The thesis proposal is due by the 12th class day of the first semester of the thesis. The thesis binding form is usually due the last class day of the semester.

What exceptions are available to the requirement to register for two semesters of HONR 4375?

Two exceptions are available. (1) The McNair thesis may function as one half of the honors thesis. (2) A senior-level individual study course (usually numbered 4375) may be used in place of the first semester of HONR 4375.

What is the role of the Honors Director in the honors thesis?

The Honors Director reads and approves all thesis proposals and will read the final thesis but otherwise has no part in the conduct of the thesis. The conduct of the thesis is up to the student as guided by the thesis faculty. However, the Honors Director is available for questions or consultation with both the student and the thesis faculty at any time.

How long should the written thesis be?

The final length of the thesis depends on the subject and treatment. Usually theses in certain disciplines, such as English, History, or Political Science, are long, perhaps as long as 50-60 pages. Theses in certain other disciplines are often much shorter. Some past honors theses have had brief main bodies but lengthy supplemental materials (such as appendices containing computer codes, experiment results, or statistical tables and computations). At a minimum, the thesis will include the written text described above. This usually comes to fifteen-twenty pages or more.

What style guide should I use for my thesis?

Although exceptions are possible, you should generally use the style guide most appropriate to your discipline or major. Your thesis faculty will help, but the honors director is available for consultation.

What if I want to do something different than stated in these guidelines?

Different approaches are possible. Consult with the Honors Director.

Is there a formal thesis defense?

No. The final approval of the thesis is entirely up to the thesis faculty.

How are the thesis grades reported?

The Honors Director is the instructor of record. The grade for the first thesis semester is reported as "IP" (In Progress). Toward the end of the second thesis semester, the Honors Director will contact the thesis faculty for a final overall grade, which the Honors Director will then report for both semesters. (While the grade decision is up to the thesis faculty, history suggests that you will receive six hours of "A" for your honors thesis.)

Is there any special recognition for thesis students?

Yes. At the Bowers Medallion Ceremony, thesis students are announced as graduating with "highest honors," and the thesis titles and faculty are announced. At commencement, the honors thesis graduate will be announced as graduating "with highest honors."

Will I receive a bound copy of the thesis?

Yes. One bound copy will remain in the Honors College thesis library, and you will receive one copy courtesy of the Honors College. (You may purchase additional copies if you wish.)

What if problems or questions arise?

The Honors director is always willing to talk with you and/or your thesis faculty about any problems, at any point of your thesis.

**NOTE: If your question is not answered by this FAQ, contact Dr. Young.
young@shsu.edu**