

# Florida Atlantic University Honors Curriculum Manual

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## Section 1 University Honors Council

### Purpose

The Florida Atlantic University Honors Council (UHC) will function in two capacities.

1. As a subcommittee of the University Undergraduate Programs Committee, the UHC will advise the UUPC on *curricular matters related to honors education* at Florida Atlantic University, including whether:
  - a. courses proposed for honors credit meet appropriate institutional standards.
  - b. newly proposed upper-division honors programs meet the criteria established for such programs.
2. As a council within the Division of Academic Affairs, the UHC will:
  - a. promote the development of additional upper-division honors programs.
  - b. oversee the implementation of recommendations arising out of the August 18, 2011 report of the Honors Education Taskforce.
  - c. encourage cooperation and the exchange of ideas among all honors pathways at Florida Atlantic University.

### Membership

1. The Florida Atlantic University Honors Council will have eleven voting members, all chosen according to the appropriate policies in their colleges:
  - a. Two members each from colleges with traditionally high involvement in honors education at both the lower and upper divisions:
    - i. The Wilkes Honors College
    - ii. The Schmidt College of Arts and Letters
    - iii. The Schmidt College of Science
  - b. One member each from other colleges that participate significantly in undergraduate education:
    - i. The College of Business
    - ii. The College of Social Work and Criminal Justice
    - iii. The College of Education
    - iv. The College of Engineering and Computer Science
    - v. The Lynn College of NursingThe Graduate College and the College of Biomedical Science are not represented on the University Honors Council since this body deals exclusively with the undergraduate curriculum.
2. The Dean of the Wilkes Honors College, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Director of the University Honors Program, and the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Research will be *ex officio*, non-voting members of the UHC.
3. The presence of six of the Council's eleven voting members will be considered a quorum for the purposes of conducting business.
4. It is strongly recommended that individuals elected to membership on the University Honors Council by their colleges have experience in honors education at the faculty or administrative level either at Florida Atlantic University or at another institution.

### Operation

1. The chair of the University Honors Council will be elected from among the eleven voting members or one of the *ex officio* members.
2. The University Honors Council will have one regular meeting per month from September through April.
3. Additional meetings may be called by the chair of the UHC or by one of the *ex officio* members.

## Section 2

### Guidelines for Courses Receiving Honors Credit at Florida Atlantic University

Courses receiving “honors credit” at Florida Atlantic University are distinguished from other courses not simply by dealing with subject matter in a more challenging, detailed, and accelerated manner. Honors credit is assigned to courses that also encourage students to approach material from an advanced interdisciplinary perspective, emphasize critical and creative thinking, and develop highly improved skills of oral and written communication across the curriculum.

Courses receiving “honors credit” at Florida Atlantic University must:

1. have a significantly higher requirement for admission to the course than exists for other courses on similar topics at the University.
2. have lower student-to-faculty ratios than other courses dealing with similar topics. Close student-faculty interaction in honors courses helps promote more intense and reflective discussion, active learning by all students, and strong faculty-student mentoring.
3. offer students extensive access to original research and other primary sources of knowledge.
4. emphasize the process of discovery and interactive learning in addition to the mastery of information.

Courses receiving “honors credit” at Florida Atlantic University also differ qualitatively from other courses that may address similar topics. Honors courses should adhere to at least six of the distinctions outlined below. At Florida Atlantic University, honors courses should:

1. be taught by a faculty member with a terminal degree. While the vast majority of honors courses will be taught by faculty members holding a terminal degree, it is occasionally necessary for exceptions to be made. The administrator in charge of the course (usually a dean or director) should notify the Honors Council whenever an exception is made and provide a rationale for the exception.
2. emphasize written and oral communication skills. Written communication is developed through repeated and substantive writing in forms appropriate to the discipline; honors courses should thus adhere to the University’s Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) guidelines, where applicable. Oral communication skills are developed through formal presentations, debates, informed discussion, collaboration, poster presentations, and other types of oral communication suitable to the discipline and topic of the course.
3. emphasize critical and creative thinking through assignments, exercises, and examinations that require students to evaluate alternative perspectives critically, recognize the assumptions underlying a theory or approach, come to terms with their own preconceptions about a topic, and analyze or synthesize detailed information in ways that are appropriate to the topic of the course.
4. encourage students to approach topics from an interdisciplinary perspective by exploring the limitations of strictly disciplinary approaches and, whenever possible, developing new insights that may be possible only through connections between and across disciplines.
5. provide opportunities for independent research or help prepare students for independent research by fostering such skills as formulating, structuring, and developing arguments, conducting a thorough literature review, maintaining accurate records of data, thoroughly grasping the relationships among variables, understanding developments in their proper social and historical context, and appreciating the contributions to knowledge made by both quantitative and qualitative research.

6. apply theories and principles to “real-life” problems and situations whenever possible.
7. foster teamwork and collaboration both through assignments that students complete in groups and through the development of cohorts, clusters of student peers who learn to work together more effectively by taking several classes together.
8. promote learning outside the formal classroom setting through such approaches as service learning, internships, extended and substantive educational experiences abroad, and the like.
9. provide opportunities for publication or the public presentation of student work in formats where it may be reviewed and evaluated by other scholars.
10. where appropriate, require students to demonstrate their advanced mastery of the subject matter through established national or international exams or other means of assessment.

It is specifically recognized that honors courses offered by individual disciplines (for example, courses that support an upper-division honors program) may meet requirements different from or in addition to those outlined above. In such cases, the criteria and recommendations outlined above should be regarded as general guidelines.

### Section 3

## Guidelines for Upper Division Programs at Florida Atlantic University

**Purposes:** To ensure that all honors tracks or upper-division honors programs at Florida Atlantic University achieve a high level of standards and expectations; to assist the University Undergraduate Programs Committee as it considers new proposals for upper-division honors programs; to provide guidance and encouragement to colleges and academic departments as they consider developing new upper-division honors programs.

**Note:** The term “upper-division honors program,” also sometimes known as an “Honors-in-the-Major program” is used in this document to refer to any upper-division honors opportunity that is located in a college or center other than the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College. It is recognized that, in certain colleges or centers, honors programs may span several areas rather than be tied to specific majors. For this reason and for the purpose of brevity, the term “upper-division honors program” is used in this document for all such programs, whether discipline-specific, college-wide, or located in an interdisciplinary center.

1. Upper-division honors programs at Florida Atlantic University should consist of at least four components:
  - a. **Entry requirements** that are more stringent than those of the major itself.
  - b. **Standards** outlining what students must do in order to remain in good standing with the program.
  - c. **Honors-level enrichment** that may take the form of honors coursework, honors compacts, or other types of enhancements to a student’s academic program.
  - d. A **capstone requirement** that helps students see connections among their honors experience and to document for others their honors-level achievement.
  
2. **Entry requirements** should be appropriate to the academic mission of the program.
  - a. While most programs will adopt entry requirements based on a student’s grade point average (either cumulative or in the major), other types of entry requirements are possible.
  - b. Examples of alternative entry requirements include but are not limited to auditions, interviews, portfolio appraisals, evaluation of entrance essays and other written work, and nomination or election by faculty members.
  - c. Programs are encouraged to ensure that their honors programs are truly selective. In most cases, no more than approximately 20% of majors should be admitted to an Honors-in-the-Major program.
  
3. **Standards** for maintaining active status in the program should encourage students to continue their academic work at an appropriately high level.
  - a. Most programs will adopt standards based on the maintenance of a certain grade point average either overall or in the major.
  - b. Programs may, however, establish other standards appropriate to the discipline, including but not limited to:
    - i. Completion of required courses or course sequences in a timely manner.
    - ii. Avoidance of Academic Irregularities (as defined by §4.001 of the Florida Atlantic University Honor Code) to a degree more stringent than that required of the student body as a whole.
    - iii. Adherence to other codes of conduct appropriate to the academic discipline.
    - iv. Attendance at or participation in events required by the program.

4. **Honors-level enrichment** should provide students, not merely with more challenging coursework, but with a meaningfully richer academic experience.
  - a. For instance, an upper-division honors program might expose its students to a central theme in greater depth than is possible for students not in the program. The theme of the honors track might be:
    - i. Interdisciplinarity and connections among academic fields
    - ii. Research and access to direct sources of knowledge
    - iii. Leadership
    - iv. Service learning
    - v. Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship
    - vi. Civic engagement
    - vii. Collaboration
    - viii. The unique setting of southeastern Florida
    - ix. Other topics appropriate to the individual discipline
  - b. For programs providing honors-level enrichment through coursework, it is recommended (but not required) that the program consist of no fewer than three (3) three-credit courses or their equivalent.
  
5. **Capstone requirements** should draw together the student's entire honors experience to the greatest degree possible.
  - a. In most cases, the program's capstone requirement will take the form of a thesis. Whenever possible, the thesis should be:
    - i. The product of significantly greater originality and scholarship than is traditionally required for a research paper in other courses.
    - ii. Of appropriate length and depth to warrant its acceptance as honors-level work.
    - iii. Reviewed by more than one faculty member.
    - iv. Discussed orally or "defended" by the student.
    - v. Relevant to the theme or focus of the honors track, where applicable.
  - b. Where a thesis is not required, an alternative capstone experience (such as completion of graduate-level coursework, a solo exhibition or recital, a performance, extended internship, or project) should be developed that is appropriate to the discipline and the theme or focus of the honors track, where applicable.
  - c. Upon completion of the capstone project\*, the project's advisor will collect a capstone e-file and capstone consent to e-archive form from the student and will submit both files electronically to the University Honors Director when semester grades are due. The University Honors Director will send copies of these e-files to the Digital Library by the beginning of the following semester.

\* For the purposes of the e-archiving documents, the "capstone project" is referred to as the "honors project."
  
6. Departments that wish to develop a new upper-division honors program should:
  - a. Have a complete proposal approved by the regular curriculum approval processes of both the department and college. A complete proposal consists of:
    - i. A program summary and justification that addresses the four required components of an upper-division honors program discussed above (see §3.1-5).
    - ii. An indication of the program's budget and source of funding. Even if the proposed honors program will not involve additional expenditures for materials, supplies, research, travel, and related areas, the proposal should indicate how



the discipline will address any decrease in student credit hour production that would result from substituting smaller honors sections for larger course sections.

- b. Submit the approved proposal to the University Honors Council for review.
  - i. The proposal will be reviewed by the University Honors Council in light of the guidelines above (see §3.1-5).
  - ii. If the University Honors Council votes that the proposal meets these guidelines, it will submit the proposal to the University Undergraduate Programs Committee with its endorsement.
  - iii. If the University Honors Council votes that the proposal does not meet these guidelines, the program sponsoring the proposal may:
    1. Revise and resubmit the proposal.
    2. Choose to have the proposal reviewed by the University Undergraduate Programs Committee without the endorsement of the University Honors Council.
  - iv. Following review by the University Undergraduate Programs Committee, the proposal is then submitted to the University Faculty Senate for approval.

# College of \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_

## Release Form for e-Archiving an Honors Project in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ in the College of \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that in releasing my honors project to Florida Atlantic University, I consent to making it available to the university community and general public as part of the collection owned by FAU Libraries. I hereby authorize the Libraries to disseminate the honors project in electronic format(s). I understand that I retain the copyright of my project. I also understand that e-archiving my honors project requires the approval of my honors advisor.

Title of the Honors Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

If you would like an email address to be included in the online publication of the honors project, please provide an email address that you check regularly: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide 5-6 keywords for your honors project. These are the words that someone would use in a search engine to find your honors project.

Please provide an abstract (150-200 words) of your honors project:

\*\*\*\*\*

**TO BE SIGNED BY YOUR ADVISOR:**

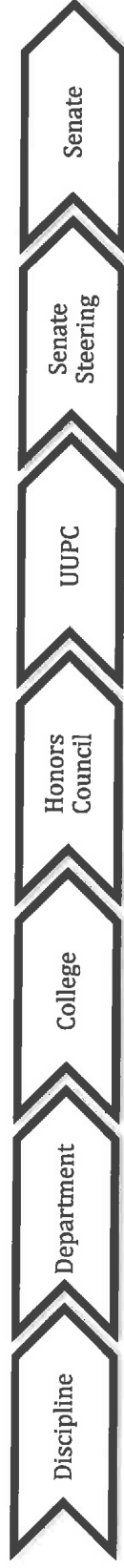
I recommend that the above honors project be e-archived in the FAU Libraries in electronic form.

Honors Project Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Honors Project Director \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

Submit to: [digital@fau.edu](mailto:digital@fau.edu)

*Section 4. Work Flow for Upper-Division Honors Program Proposals*



## Section 5 Guidelines for Honors Compacts at Florida Atlantic University

**Purpose:** To provide a mechanism for students to receive honors credit in a course for which enrollment in a designated honors section is not possible.

**Who Is Eligible:** An honors compact is only available to students enrolled in an honors program having a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher, as well as a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher in the major itself.

**Who Is Eligible to Offer Honors Compact Courses?** Honors compacts should be offered by full-time instructors and faculty members in the student's major.

**Definition:** An honors compact is an agreement between a student and an instructor that, under the instructor's guidance, the student will complete an enhancement of a course that significantly enriches his or her educational experience in a manner consistent with other courses that receive honors credit at Florida Atlantic University.

An honors compact is an achievement that is noted on the student's transcript.

**Mission:** The student and the instructor will work together collaboratively in order to ensure that the student has a significantly enriched honors experience in a non-honors section of a course. The result of this collaboration will culminate in a specific "product" that can be evaluated.

**Requirements:** The student and the instructor agree to 1) meet three times outside of class time during the semester to discuss the development of the "product"; 2) that it should constitute no less than 10% of the course's grade; 3) that the compact's project meets the learning objectives of the course; 4) that it will culminate in a specific "product" that can be evaluated.

**An honors compact is:**

- intended primarily to serve as part of an approved honors program, either the University Honors Program or an upper-division honors program.
- a method by which a student's educational experience in a course is enhanced through substantive work that reflects one of the following honors themes:
  - Interdisciplinarity and/or establish connections among academic fields
  - Research and access to direct sources of knowledge
  - Leadership
  - Service learning
  - Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship

- Civic engagement
- Collaboration
- The unique setting of southeastern Florida
- Other topics appropriate to the individual discipline

### Procedure

1. As soon as possible, and **ideally** no later than the third week of the semester, the student will submit to the University Honors Director: a) a copy of the course syllabus (with the potential meeting dates highlighted); and b) a completed Honors Compact Proposal and Approval form, which both the student and the instructor of the course have signed.
2. The University Honors Director will review the application and the student's GPA as soon as possible and will notify the student and the instructor whether the honors compact has been approved or must be revised.
3. The instructor will then notify the University Honors Director whether or not an honors compact has been successfully completed no later than the **last official day of final examinations** for any term.
4. The University Honors Director or for the UHP students, the Undergraduate Studies Dean's designee will provide the registrar with a list of all successfully completed honors compacts no later than **the day that grades are due in the registrar's office**.
5. Any appeals involving an honors compact should follow the appeals procedure (as detailed in the Code of Academic Integrity) although the Chair of the University Honors Council may be consulted during the process. Normal university deadlines for all grade changes still apply.



## HONORS COMPACT PROPOSAL AND APPROVAL FORM

Must be completed by the student and submitted to the University Honors Director **no later than** the third week of the term in which the Honors Compact will be completed.  
**\*\*\* Attach a copy of the course syllabus with dates of meetings highlighted.**

**Student Information:**

Name (last, first, middle)	Z Number:	e-mail:	Cell phone number:
Course Prefix and name	Semester / Year	Cumulative GPA	GPA in major (if applicable)
Declared or intended major			

**Instructor Information:**

Instructor's Name	Instructor's Title
Instructor's Phone	Instructor's e-mail

**Questions for the Instructor:**

1. Describe what the student will do in order to fulfill this Honors Compact.

2. Describe the tangible and gradable "project" that will be produced as part of this Honors Compact. This description should include the 3 meeting times and how the grade for this project will be weighed in with the course's grading—at least 10%.

3. Describe how this Honors Compact leads to a learning experience that is substantially different from and richer than what the student would otherwise experience in this course given the course's Learning Objectives.

This Honors Compact may best be described as reflecting the following honors theme(s) (check all that apply):

- Interdisciplinary and/or establishes connections among academic fields
- Research and access to direct sources of knowledge
- Leadership
- Service learning

- Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship
- Civic engagement
- Collaboration
- The unique setting of southeastern Florida
- Other (please specify):

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT (BEFORE COMPACT BEGINS)**

I agree to complete all of my responsibilities for this project and to submit all required work to the instructor **no later than the last day of the final exam period**. I agree to meet with the instructor outside of class **at least three times during this term** to discuss my work on this Honors Compact and my progress towards its completion. My cumulative GPA is 3.00 or higher, and I have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25 in my major.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INSTRUCTOR (BEFORE COMPACT BEGINS)**

I agree to inform the University Honors Coordinator whether the student has successfully completed this Honors Compact **no later than the last day of the final exam period**. I agree to meet with the student outside of class **at least three times during this term** to discuss his or her work on this Honors Compact and his or her progress towards its completion.

Instructor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Instructor's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE UNIVERSITY HONORS DIRECTOR (BEFORE COMPACT BEGINS)**

In my judgment, this project fully meets the University Honors Council's guidelines for an Honors Compact.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INSTRUCTOR (AFTER THE DUE DATE FOR THE COMPACT HAS BEEN REACHED)**

The student  has  has not successfully completed this Honors Compact by the date on which all requirements were due.

Instructor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Instructor's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_