

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY: HONORS COLLEGE
HONORS SCHOLARS PROGRAM
2026-2027
STUDENT HANDBOOK

“For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required.”

Luke 12:48



DeMoss 4062
1971 University Blvd #710018
Lynchburg, VA 24515
434-592-3304
www.liberty.edu/honorscollege/

1. THE HONORS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

1.1. MISSION STATEMENT

The Liberty University Honors Scholars Program is designed to provide gifted and talented students with the opportunity to achieve their highest intellectual and creative potential in a nurturing, Christian atmosphere with caring and credentialed Honors faculty.

1.2. MEMBERSHIPS

The Liberty University Honors Scholars Program holds memberships in the following professional organizations, and students regularly present papers and posters at their conferences:

☐	National Collegiate Honors Council	https://www.nchchonors.org/
	Southern Regional Honors Council	http://www.srhconline.org/
	Virginias Collegiate Honors Council	http://www.vchc.net/index.html

1.3. ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Samuel Smith	Interim Dean, Honors College	scsmith4@liberty.edu
Dr. Jim Nutter	Director, Honors Scholars Program	jhnutter@liberty.edu

1.4. TEACHING FACULTY

The Honors Scholars Program faculty is comprised of senior faculty members from across university disciplines. Almost all Honors professors possess a doctorate in their teaching discipline.

1.5. STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Students in the Honors Scholars Program should communicate with the Honors Scholars Director through phone, in person, or their Liberty University email account. Please read carefully all e-mail communication sent from The Honors office and respond to emails quickly.

General inquiries	honors-scholars@liberty.edu 434-592-3304
Office location	Honors College DeMoss 4062
Mailing address	Honors College Liberty University MSC Box #710018 1971 University Blvd. Lynchburg, VA 24515

2. Honors Scholars: Policies and Procedures

2.1 ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Students in the Honors Scholars Program are expected to maintain high academic standards. To be considered in good standing, students must maintain the following:

- Cumulative GPA of 3.50 or above
- Honors Scholars requirements completed each semester
- Full-time residential student status

2.1.1. GPA EXPECTATIONS

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.50 at the end of the fall semester will be put on probation; students will have a one-semester grace period to improve their GPA before their Honors Scholars Program scholarship is revoked.

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.50 at the end of the spring semester will be *dismissed* from the Honors Scholars Program and lose their scholarship.

Reinstatement: If students take Liberty University summer school coursework (resident or online) and raise their cumulative GPA above 3.50 before the start of the fall semester, they may appeal to be reinstated to the Honors Scholars Program. Requests for reinstatement will be considered based on availability of scholarship funds.

2.1.2. HONORS EXPECTATIONS

Honors Scholars must complete Honors requirements *each* semester in which they are enrolled in the Honors Scholars Program. Honors requirements include seminars, petitions, and events—as well as HONR 395 and HONR 495. Honors Scholars who fail to meet the requirements may face probation or dismissal, including loss of scholarship.

2.1.3. UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT

To receive scholarship, Honors Scholars must be full-time residential students at Liberty University enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours. Furthermore, Honors Scholars who break enrollment at the University must reapply to the Honors Scholars Program for reacceptance if they want to continue.

2.2. DISMISSAL FROM THE HONORS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Students who fail to meet the Honors Scholars Program's expectations will be dismissed. When students are dismissed from the program, they will be notified by email from the Honors Scholars Director. At the discretion of the Director, the Honors Scholars scholarship will be revoked during that semester or prior to the following semester.

2.2.1. APPEAL PROCESS: APPEAL TO THE HONORS SCHOLARS DIRECTOR

Letters of appeal, regarding dismissal, should be emailed to the Honors Scholars Program: honors-scholars@liberty.edu. The appeal should clearly explain the rationale for appeal.

2.2.2. APPEAL PROCESS: APPEAL TO THE DEAN

If new or extenuating circumstances surface, denied appeals may be submitted to the Dean's office by emailing the Dean of the Honors College who oversees the Honors Scholars program. The appeal should clearly explain the rationale for submitting the appeal and reference the new or extenuating circumstance that warrants this resubmission. This secondary appeal must be submitted within two weeks of a denied appeal or within two weeks of the new/extenuating circumstances being discovered.

2.3. TRANSFER STATUS

Dually-enrolled high school students who do not meet the minimum 1330 SAT or 28 ACT can apply to the Honors Scholars Program as a *transfer* or LU student if they have at least 12 hours with grades and at least a 3.50 college GPA, but no more than 60 total college credits (i.e., AP, dual enrollment, CLEP, ICE, and/or college coursework).

2.4. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE HONORS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Honors Scholars who wish to withdraw from the program must complete an [Honors Withdrawal Form](#) stating the effective date. Coursework for final semester must be completed, or loss of scholarship for that semester will occur. Contact the Honors College for this form.

2.5. ADVISING

The Honors Scholars Program at Liberty University is a multi-disciplinary program and is open to all residential four-year majors. The Honors Scholars Director is available for advising questions related directly to the Honors Scholars Program (i.e., choosing Honors seminars). Incoming freshmen students are advised by Admissions. For class schedules and general advising, freshmen and sophomore students (0-47 credit hours complete) should refer to their CASAS Professional Advisors, and junior and senior students (48+ credits) should contact their faculty advisors within their degree programs.

1. HONORS SCHOLARS CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Honors Scholars must meet certain academic expectations each semester to remain in the Honors Scholars Program.

3.2. HONORS SEMINARS

Honors Seminars satisfy university General Education requirements, are only open to Honors Scholars, and are usually taught by senior faculty members. They feature smaller section sizes, emphasize critical thinking skills, and may focus on discussion, research, and field trips. Honors faculty members are expected to challenge their students. Most professors teaching Honors class sections will require a more extensive project, additional projects or presentations, and/or additional reading over and above the standard educational offerings. Honors students may enroll in more than one Honors Seminar per semester.

3.3. HONORS EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Honors Events & Activities are special functions for Honors Scholars including convocations, symposia, workshops, service projects, field trips, and international travel. Students must attend a minimum of four events each semester. There is no limit to participation. A list of events is published at the beginning of each semester and are categorized as academic, informational, social, and service events.

3.4. HONORS PETITIONS

Honors petitions are curricular requirements for upper-level Honors Scholars. Only upper-level courses in the student's major can be petitioned for Honors credit. Students often work with professors on a special project, and projects may be related to the Honors Thesis. An approved special project—such as a Fulbright application or HONR 395—may satisfy a petition requirement.

3.4.1. HONORS PETITION QUALIFICATIONS

Honors Scholars may not begin their Honors petitioned classes until they have completed their required number of Honors seminars. An Honors petition is a binding agreement between a faculty member and a student for the student to complete an extra project related to the class material. The student and the professor should discuss petition options before the student completes the form requiring approval by the professor, department chair, and Honors Scholars Director. Honors petitions are either deemed *satisfactory* (A or B quality work) or *unsatisfactory*. These petitions have no bearing on the course grade.

Honors petitions may contribute to a student's Senior Honors Thesis. Any type of preliminary research or literature review toward the thesis would benefit the Honors student looking toward thesis research. Examples of past petition projects include the following:

1. Attendance and/or participation at a local or regional lecture or conference.
2. Assistance in course instruction (tutoring, researching, guest lecturing and/or creating PowerPoint presentations).
3. Participation in a field trip related to course content.
4. Completion of essay examinations rather than objective tests (e.g., multiple choice).

5. Contribution to a research project in which a professor is currently involved.
6. Compilation of an annotated bibliography of primary or secondary sources.
7. Examination of assigned reading not normally given at the undergraduate level.

3.4.2. HONORS PETITION PROCESS

Students will identify a 3-credit, 300-400 level residential* course in their major (or on their DCP) to petition. (2-credit EDUC courses for education majors are also acceptable).

1. Students must complete Honors petitions as part of their program. Failure to do so will result in a loss of their Honors scholarship.
2. Students must request the petition of the professor.
3. Students complete the online petition form (<https://www.liberty.edu/honors-program/petition/>) and receive approvals from the professor, department chair, and Honors Director.

*Online courses may only be petitioned with prior written approval of the Honors Scholars Director.

3.5. HONR 395: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

Honors Scholars have the option of taking HONR 395, which is designed to help students understand or apply empirical research for their thesis, meaning data collection on human subjects or other analyses. This course, while equipping students toward their thesis, can count as an Honors petition (see 2.1.2). Specifically, this course will equip students for data collection, research, and analysis as they begin preparing for the Senior Honors Thesis (HONR 495). This course has helped students in every discipline to understand or apply any level of research and is best utilized when taken during the first semester of the junior year.

3.6. HONORS THESIS

Honors Scholars must complete an Honors thesis: this individually-designed thesis will be directed by a faculty member from the Honors Scholar's major department in consultation with the department chairperson and the Director of the Honors Scholars Program.

3.6.1. HONR 495: SENIOR HONORS THESIS

In the semester that Honors Scholars anticipate completing the thesis, they must enroll in HONR 495. Successful completion of HONR 495 is *required* to graduate from the Honors Scholars Program and earn the distinction of Honors Scholar. HONR 495 is a required 3-credit class and receives a letter grade. The grade for this course is determined by both the HONR 495 professor and the thesis chair and reader: one-half of the grade (500 points) is determined by the 495 professor while the chair's (250 points) and reader's evaluation (250 points) will each constitute one-quarter of the final grade.

3.6.2. THESIS PROCESS

The expectations and goals of the Honors thesis are to produce a serious piece of scholarly writing in the student's major field of study. It should also follow the following guidelines. The paper length is to be at least 25 pages. There are two types of theses:

1. **Traditional Thesis** is the more common approach. It represents research that is an *empirical* study or an *interpretive* study (or an extension of a previous research paper) using scholarly sources.
2. **Creative Thesis** has two components—a *creative* piece as well as an *analytical* section. The creative part can be writing a play or a short novel or producing a short film. These options are for students in programs related to Theatre Arts, English, Cinematic Arts, Studio Arts, Communications, and other creative fields.

3.6.3. THESIS PROPOSAL

The [Honors Thesis Proposal Form](#) is due a full year before students intend to graduate. Students graduating in the spring must submit a signed hard copy proposal form to the Honors office by April 1 of their junior year; students graduating in the fall must submit the form by October 1 of their junior year.

After the Honors Scholars Director approves the thesis proposal, students begin preliminary research and writing for their theses. In their final semester before graduation, students must register and complete HONR 495. Students must have significant work toward their thesis completed at the beginning of this course as the first draft is due three weeks into the semester.

3.6.4. THESIS COMMITTEE SELECTION

Most Honors Scholars are responsible for recruiting a thesis committee to oversee their research proposal and project. The Honors thesis committee consists of two members: a thesis chair and one reader. Both committee members should be within the student's major or department, and they must be full-time, residential faculty members who have a doctorate or terminal degree (MFA). Certain schools, such as Business and Nursing, select the chair and committee members for their Honors students.

3.6.5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE THESIS CHAIR

A thesis chair has the responsibility to read at least three separate drafts of a student's thesis. Based on these readings, the chair will require edits and/or revision until the project is ready for a grade. During the students' final semester, the thesis chair will be actively engaged in helping the students with their thesis. At this point, the HONR 495 professor will take a more active role in helping toward completion with special focus on formatting and style.

3.6.6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE THESIS READER

The thesis reader serves in support of the thesis chair. Ultimately, the final approval of the thesis is up to the chair. After the chair reviews a first draft of the thesis, the reader is invited to review the thesis. The role of reader is not to perfect the thesis in grammar or research, but to point out potential issues or problems which will then be addressed by the chair. After providing feedback to the chair and reader, the student will, in accordance with guidance from the HONR 495 professor, complete the thesis and submit it to the Honors Scholars Program. Before it is completed, the thesis chair and reader sign off on the title/signature page of the thesis. By signing the signature page, the chair and reader are willing to *approve* the thesis and assign it a grade.

3.6.7. THESIS FORMAT

Honors Scholars must use the format specific to their major (APA, MLA, Turabian, Bluebook, AMA, etc.).

3.6.8. HONORS THESIS VS. CAPSTONE PROJECT

Various colleges, programs, and departments require capstone projects for graduation within their programs. The following outlines the policy for students who want to complete an overlapping honors thesis/capstone project:

1. Honors theses and capstone projects may be based on similar topics and use similar research; some written portions of both documents may overlap.
2. Honors theses and capstone projects are not allowed to be identical in their entirety.
3. Should students wish to have overlapping capstone and thesis projects, they should seek approval, and, if available, provide a copy of the capstone project to their instructor in HONR 495 – Senior Honors Thesis.

3.6.9. CREATIVE PROJECT TO SATISFY THESIS REQUIREMENT

Honors Scholars in a degree program emphasizing the creative arts may use a creative project to satisfy the Honors thesis requirements. For a creative project to qualify, students must consider the following: A creative project must comprise the following elements:

1. Abstract/Summary of the project not to exceed 250 words.
2. Written documentation of the Creative Project. The creative project must include at least 15 pages of written documentation with a minimum of 12 scholarly sources that undergirds the creative project with scholarly research. The creative project may be based on visual and performing arts, film, or other projects, but it must be supported by written documentation with relevant research and analysis that describes the theory and methodology that drive the project's production, defines its targeted audience, and argues for its stylistic effectiveness and competitive edge.
3. For formatting, students should follow the *Thesis Guidelines* published in the HONR 495 course in Canvas.
4. Scholarly Introduction
The creative project should include the following documentation regarding the process behind your creative project: A) creative theory specific to your discipline supported by scholarly research, B) creative technique, strategy, and/or methodology supported by scholarly research, C) analysis of style/methodology/contributions, and D) an analysis of the targeted market for the project.
5. Description/Presentation of the Creative Project
The following are best practices for types of creative projects:
 - For projects that include photos, video, or audio, these can be hyperlinked to the digital publishing of the project on [Scholars Crossing](#).
 - A novella should include a chapter-by-chapter synopsis (3-5 sentences each) and a sample chapter(s) not to exceed 20 pages unless by permission of the thesis chair and director.
 - A Play/Script/Film/Musical should include act and scene synopses (3-5 sentences each) and a sample act or scene not to exceed 20 pages unless by permission of the thesis chair and director.
 - A Marketing Plan should include relevant visual aids as needed.
 - A collection of poetry and/or short stories is not to exceed 20 pages unless by permission of the thesis chair and HONR 495 professor.

- For other creative projects, the student should work closely with his or her chair while keeping the HONR 495 professor apprised of the direction of the project.
6. Conclusion
For creative projects, students should clearly present the contributions that this project will make to their field.
 7. Bibliography
Creative projects require research. Students are expected to use at least 20 scholarly sources in their research leading up to the production of the project or in his or her analysis of the contributions of the project.

3.6.10. THESIS APPROVALS

Students pursuing research using human subjects must complete an [*Institutional Review Board*](#) (IRB) application prior to beginning their research. Research must be conducted under the supervision of a faculty mentor and in accordance with IRB guidelines. Students pursuing research using live vertebrate animals must be listed as a co-investigator on an approved [*Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee*](#) (IACUC) protocol. Only faculty members can be listed as the Principal Investigator (PI), so students must work with a faculty mentor in order to obtain IACUC approval. In either case, students must complete the appropriate online research training. Students working in related fields must appropriate approvals from the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). Questions about research training or approvals can be directed to the [*Research Ethics Office*](#).

4. HONORS SCHOLARS CURRICULUM

4.1. HONORS CURRICULUM

4.1. HONORS SCHOLARS TRANSITION

Requirements for Honors Scholars commenced with the launch of the Honors College in July 2024. Students previously enrolled in the Honors Program may continue under previous requirements without interruption.

4.2. MATRICULATION TRACKS

Student requirements are based on the number of credit hours students have when accepted into the Honors Scholars Program.

TRACK 1: 0-23 hours

TRACK 2: 24-59 hours

TRACK 3: 60 hours

TRACK 4: see 4.2.4

4.2.1. TRACK 1

Track 1 applies to incoming *freshmen* with 0-23 credit hours (4-year plan).

Track 1: 4 Years		
	Fall	Spring
Freshman	1 Honors seminar 4 Honors activities	1 Honors seminar 4 Honors activities
Sophomore	1 Honors seminar 4 Honors activities	1 Honors seminar 4 Honors activities
Junior	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities Thesis Proposal due April 1
Senior	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities	4 Honors activities HONR 495

4.2.2. TRACK 2

Track 2 applies to *sophomores*, with fewer than 59 credit hours, and graduating in 3 years (6 semesters).

Track 2: 3 years		
	Fall	Spring
Sophomore	1 Honors Seminar 4 Honors activities	1 Honors Seminar 4 Honors activities
Junior	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities Thesis Proposal due April 1
Senior	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities	4 Honors activities HONR 495

4.2.3. TRACK 3

Track 3 applies to *juniors*, with 60 credit hours, and plan to graduate in 2 years (4 semesters), they would follow Track 3 to complete their Honors curricular requirements.

Track 3: 2 years		
	Fall	Spring
Junior	1 Honors Seminar 4 Honors activities	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities Thesis Proposal due April 1
Senior	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities HONR 495

4.2.4. TRACK 4

If students enter the Honors Scholars Program with 24+ credit hours but plan to be here 4 years (8 semesters), they would follow Track 4 to complete their Honors curricular requirements.

Track 4: 4 years and 24+ credits		
	Fall	Spring
Freshman	1 Honors seminar 4 Honors activities	1 Honors seminar 4 Honors activities
Sophomore	1 Honors seminar OR 1 petition 4 Honors activities	1 Honors seminar OR 1 petition 4 Honors activities
Junior	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities Thesis Proposal due April 1
Senior	1 Honors Petition 4 Honors activities	4 Honors activities HONR 495

5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR HONORS SCHOLARS

5.1. HONORS SCHOLARS HOUSING

Honors Scholars may have the opportunity to live in Honors housing. The eighth floor of Commons 1 has been designated as an Honors floor with separate male and female wings. Living on the Honors floor is optional, and space is limited. Housing assignments for the Honors floor should be made early during Financial Check-In. Any housing questions should be directed to the Office of Resident Life: residencelife@liberty.edu.

5.2. EARLY COURSE REGISTRATION

Honors registration applies to current residential students only. New students will register by classification the first semester. (A list of Honors Seminars will be circulated in advance of registration each semester.)

5.3. QUIZ BOWL

Often called “the varsity sport of the mind,” Quiz Bowl is an Honors College academic team that completes regionally and nationally against other colleges and answers questions on topics such as literature, history, geography, the sciences, math, art, pop culture, and sports. All university students are eligible to participate with Quiz Bowl. Quiz Bowl participants may be eligible for a \$2,000 scholarship per year. For more information: <https://www.liberty.edu/honors/quiz-bowl/>

5.4. STUDY ABROAD

Honors students are encouraged to consider [study abroad](#), especially through funded *Signature Programs* of LU Send:

Students should consult with the Honors Scholars Director concerning scholarships related to study abroad. Students are responsible for meeting all Honors requirements.

5.5. FULBRIGHT

Petition credit will be given to students completing a Fulbright application. A petition form must be completed, submitted, and signed by the professor and the LU Fulbright Program advisor, Dr. Edna Udobong. For more information, email internationalscholarships@liberty.edu. To learn more, see <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/>.

5.6. CONFERENCES

Honors Scholars often present papers or posters at Honors conferences and research conferences. University funding for these conferences is provided by the [Office of Sponsored Programs and Research](#) and may include the cost for registration fees, transportation, lodging, and meals.

5.7. HONORS PUBLICATIONS

The Kabod is an official scholarly research journal of LU Honors College. It accepts papers from Honors students for consideration for publication. The most recent volume is published [here](#).

5.8. FELLOWSHIPS

Honors students may do internships at the [Washington Fellowship](#). However, to receive an Honors scholarship, students must complete Honors requirements while they are away from campus and enrolled in the fellowship.

5.9. GRADUATING AS AN HONORS SCHOLAR

Students successfully completing all Honors Scholars Program requirements will graduate as an *Honors Scholar*, noted on the diploma. Students will also receive the Honors medallion and certificate after successful completion of HONR 495—Senior Honors Thesis.

5.10. GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Honors Scholars Program alumni have been accepted into seven of the eight Ivy League graduate schools, as well as top-tier private, public, and international graduate schools (see Appendix).

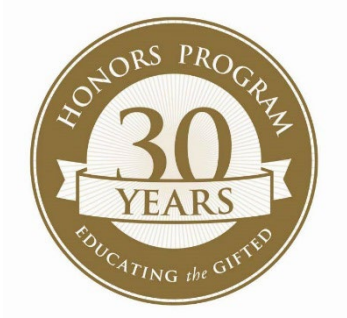
6. Honors Scholars FYIs AND FAQs

6.1. SCHOLARSHIPS

Honors Scholars qualify for academic scholarships at Liberty University. Information about Honors College scholarships (National Merit & Honors) may be found here:

- <https://www.liberty.edu/student-financial-services/scholarships/>
 - National Merit **Finalist** scholarship
 - National Merit **Semifinalist** scholarship
 - National Merit **Commended** scholarship
 - Honors Scholars scholarship
 - Quiz Bowl scholarship (\$2,000)

When you finish your Honors thesis and graduate from our Honors College, we trust you will say, like Paul, **“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”** (2 Timothy 4:7).



<https://www.liberty.edu/honors/honors-scholars/>



Appendix: Graduate Schools

Honors Program alumni have been accepted into the following graduate schools, among others:

Ivy League

- Harvard
- Yale
- Columbia
- Cornell
- Dartmouth
- Brown
- UPenn

International

- Oxford
- Cambridge
- Edinburgh
- Liverpool
- Queensland (Australia)
- National (Singapore)
- Wydział (Poland)

Top-Tier Public & Private

- Virginia
- William & Mary
- Johns Hopkins
- Chicago
- Vanderbilt
- Notre Dame
- Duke
- Georgetown
- Wheaton
- Michigan
- North Carolina
- Tennessee
- Georgia
- Florida State
- Purdue
- Texas A&M
- Arizona State
- Michigan State
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Virginia Tech
- N. Carolina State
- Northwestern
- Wake Forrest
- Pepperdine
- Boston
- Baylor
- Villanova
- American
- George Washington
- Washington & Lee
- Fordham