HONORS COLLEGE

HONORS COLLEGE DIPLOMA STRUCTURE & ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
What students should know about the new diplomas

As we become an Honors College, we are transitioning from six diploma options to two: the Honors Laureate: Self-Directed Diploma and the Honors Laureate: [Destination Area/Strategic Growth Area] Diploma. These new diplomas are just as flexible as the old ones but with new credit options that better support Virginia Tech’s new goals for the 21st century student.

All students entering Honors in Fall 2017 or later will pursue one of the new diplomas. All students who entered prior to Fall 2017 may pursue an old or new diploma.

The Honors Laureate Diploma Structure
The Four Elements of an Honors Education make up an Honors Laureate diploma. Much like our current system, students can individualize their honors education by choosing opportunities from these Elements:

1) Honors College Curriculum
2) Disciplinary Depth
3) Transdisciplinary Capabilities
4) Undergraduate Research & Guided Experiential Learning

To earn an Honors Laureate diploma, students need to complete at least six credits in each Element for a total of at least 30 honors credits. These credits can be organized in one of two ways:

Honors Laureate: Self-Directed Diploma
The self-directed diploma enables students to fully customize their honors diploma. To discover the ways to earn honors credit within each Element, see the “Honors Laureate: Self-Directed” section on the “Earning an Honors Laureate Diploma” page of the website.

Honors Laureate: [Destination Area/Strategic Growth Area] (DA/SGA)
The DA/SGA diploma enables students to pursue an honors-enhanced disciplinary curriculum. To review check sheets for every available DA/SGA diploma, see the “Honors Laureate: [Destination Area/Strategic Growth Area]” section on the “Earning an Honors Laureate Diploma” page of the website.

The Four Elements of an Honors Education
Below is the complete list of honors credit opportunities sorted by Element along with descriptions of changes.

Honors College Curriculum
Students must earn at least 6 credits in this Element. These courses can be added from the Timetable of Classes on Hokie Spa.

- UH 1054 Honors College First-Year Seminar
- UH 1604 Honors Undergraduate Research Practices
- UH 2054 Honors College Second-Year Seminar
- UH 2604 Honors Undergraduate Transdisciplinary Research
- UH 2124 Honors Reading Seminar
- UH 4004 Honors Tutorial
- UH 4104 Honors Peer Education Practicum
- UH 4204 Honors Peer Advising Practicum
- UH 4304 Peer Research Mentoring Practicum
- UH 4404 Honors Portfolio Preparation
- UH 4504 Honors Discovery and Innovation Studios
- Connectivity Modules
What Changed?
Most of these courses are new; some are being revised and others have not yet been created. The honors portfolio (UH 4404) replaces the honors thesis as our way of showcasing a student’s best academic accomplishments. In this repeatable course, students compile their best work of almost any form: presentations, student teaching evaluations, a Senior Capstone project, a thesis, video projects, published works, musical performances, or any other similar accomplishment. Unlike the old thesis, portfolios are always voluntary.

UH 4504 replaces UH 3004, Topics in Honors Colloquia, as our new method of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Disciplinary Depth
Students must earn at least 6 credits in this Element. All credits must be within a student’s primary major.

- Departmental Honors Course
- Faculty–Student Agreement
- Independent Study
- Graduate-level Course

What Changed?
Nothing yet, but we plan to help departments expand their honors course offerings. (“Departmental Honors Course” still refers to the courses taught from the disciplinary departments with course numbers that end with an “H”.) A form will still be required to request honors credit for a Faculty–Student Agreement.

Transdisciplinary Capabilities
Students must earn at least 6 credits in this Element. All credits must be outside a student’s primary major, but they can now be inside a minor or secondary major.

- Departmental Honors Course
- Faculty–Student Agreement
- Independent Study
- Graduate-level Course
- Destination Area/Strategic Growth Area Course

What Changed?
By allowing credits from minors or secondary majors, we are making this category more attainable for students pursuing complex courses of study. We also added DA/SGA course offerings in which honors students can participate in cutting-edge, innovative coursework that better prepares them to solve real-world problems. A form will still be required to request honors credit for a Faculty–Student Agreement.

Undergraduate Research & Guided Experiential Learning
Students must earn at least 6 credits in this Element. Some of these experiences must be documented with the new Guided Experiential Learning form, which combines several old forms.

- Undergraduate Research
- UH 3204 Honors Service Learning
- Study Abroad/Study Away
- Innovation Hubs
- Internship or Co-Op
- Field Study
- Partners in the Parks
- Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Leadership Experiences

What Changed?
Students can now earn credit by participating in one of the University’s new Innovation Hubs.
NEW HONORS ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

We recognize that pursuing an honors education involves risk as well as reward. Real academic challenges do not guarantee success. We would like to free honors students to take the academic risks that could become some of their most educational experiences.

Going forward, honors students will no longer have to maintain a specific GPA throughout their time in Honors. Instead, students must earn an initial GPA and a concluding GPA—the time in the middle will not be monitored. As long as students progress toward an honors diploma, they will have the freedom to remain in Honors without worrying about the risk of significant academic challenges.

Transition Details for Specific Groups

Current Honors students who entered Honors in Spring 2016 or earlier immediately begin the GPA flex period, in which their GPA will not be monitored. They can choose to complete an old or new honors diploma.

Current Honors students who entered Honors in Fall 2016 or Spring 2017 must earn a 3.50 cumulative GPA by the end of Spring 2017. Those who do will begin the GPA flex period. Those who do not will be removed from Honors but can request reinstatement later under the new system (3.60 or better cumulative GPA required). All students in this category may choose to complete an old or new honors diploma.

All students who will enter Honors in Fall 2017 or later must achieve a 3.60 or better cumulative GPA after two traditional semesters in Honors. Current VT students may apply to the Honors College in either the fall or spring semester if they have a 3.6 cumulative and must again achieve a 3.6 or better cumulative after two semesters in Honors. Those who do not will be removed from Honors but can request reinstatement later under the new system (3.60 or better cumulative GPA required). All students in this category must complete a new honors diploma.
Given the new GPA flex period, students no longer have to earn a “B” or better in order to count a course toward an honors diploma. The honors academic requirements for these students are:

**Minimum GPA**
Students in their first or second semester of honors must achieve a cumulative 3.50 or better GPA by the end of Spring 2017. All other current honors students can immediately take advantage of the new GPA flex period. To graduate in Honors, achieve at least a cumulative 3.30 or better GPA and complete honors diploma requirements.

**Honors Diploma Progress**
Earn honors credit in two or more of the four categories of honors credit. Earn credit at least once every twelve months and complete the yearly Progress Survey.

**Credit Limit**
You may count up to six credits from any one way to earn honors credit toward your honors diploma. After six credits, any additional credit will no longer count toward your honors diploma.

**Grading Scale**
Take courses as A–F unless P/F is the only option.

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**Honors Academic Requirements**

*for students working toward a new Honors Laureate diploma*

**Minimum GPA**
Achieve a cumulative 3.60 or better GPA after two traditional semesters in Honors. After that time, a student will not be removed based on their GPA. To graduate in Honors, achieve a cumulative 3.30 or better GPA and complete honors diploma requirements.

**Honors Diploma Progress**
Complete at least six credits in each of the Four Elements of an Honors Education for a total of at least 30 honors credits. Earn credit at least once every twelve months and complete the yearly Progress Survey.

**Grading Scale**
Take courses as A–F unless P/F is the only option.