

University Honors Program

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Established in 1983, the University Honors Program (UHP) fosters academic excellence in undergraduate education by offering a stimulating course of study and the advantages of an enriched learning community for students from all colleges and majors.

The program's diverse curriculum serves a variety of student needs and interests. Through honors core courses in general education and innovative seminars, honors faculty work to enhance each student's knowledge, initiative, and creativity. Most honors classes are small, so that honors students benefit from close intellectual contact and discussion with their instructors and fellow students. As part of a dynamic, broad-based education, members are encouraged to participate in domestic or international exchange programs; appropriate credit is determined within the honors curriculum for academic work completed while on exchange so that students may apply three or four credits per semester (maximum of seven credits total over two semesters) toward the Honors Certificate requirements. Students also are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to engage in laboratory or field-based research programs as well as internships and other forms of cooperative education. The program director, associate director, and program advisor act as supplemental academic advisors to all students who qualify for honors study.

Beyond the classroom, the program's extracurricular opportunities include concerts, plays, films, lectures, and other excursions that support cultural enrichment, friendship, and learning. The great majority of the approximately 500 students active in the program are able to participate without adding to the total number of credits needed for graduation.

Admission Process. Admission to the University Honors Program is selective. Initial application criteria for prospective freshmen are based on a correlation between the student's high school GPA and an ACT composite score or the SAT Reasoning scores for Critical Reading and Math. For example, students who have received a 28 ACT composite score, or a 1260 SAT combined Critical Reading and Math score, and a 3.77 high school GPA meet the initial minimum criteria. The correlation is based on a sliding scale: students with test scores higher than those noted may have GPAs below 3.77 and still meet the minimum criteria; students with higher GPAs may have test scores lower than the examples offered above. Students applying from high school also submit a two-page essay as part of the application. Each student admitted to the program receives specific comments on the admission essay from the UHP director and the associate director. The directors evaluate all applications to determine admission.

Students who do not meet the initial admission criteria, including those who may not be able to provide a GPA from an accredited high school, those who are home schooled, or those who do not have SAT or ACT scores, are encouraged to write to the honors director to express their interest in seeking admission to the program. Two former teachers also must send letters of recommendation to the director; students may then be asked to proceed with writing the admission essay. Current students who achieve a minimum 3.5 GPA at the University of Idaho (UI) also may apply for admission. Transfer students with a 3.5 GPA are considered for admission on a case-by-case basis. Students in good standing in an honors program at their previous school are considered for admission based on a review of their previous honors course work. Their transcripts are evaluated and appropriate credit given toward courses in the honors curriculum.

Participation Requirements. A member in good standing of the University Honors Program must be registered at the UI, maintain a 3.3 cumulative GPA, and complete a minimum of three graded honors credits in the first semester, and at least six graded honors credits by the end of the second semester; thereafter, students must complete, on average, one honors course every second semester. Students in the program who have averaged at least one graded honors course each semester and have a cumulative institutional GPA of 3.3 (credits earned at the UI) are allowed to register with the first group of seniors.

Students may use Honors sections of UI General Core Studies (GCS) courses to count toward satisfying university core requirements in general education. Depending on which courses students select, as many as 26 honors credits satisfy university core requirements in the humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences. At present, honors seminars do not carry designated GCS Humanities or Social Science credits.

University Honors Program Core Award requirements: Three honors humanities credits, three honors social science credits, three honors science credits; additional credits, including up to two UHP volunteer service points, to total 19 credits/points: the 19 credits/points must include at least 16 credits with the HON course designation, with an average GPA of 3.0 or above in honors coursework completed, and an institutional cumulative GPA of 3.3 or above.

University Honors Program Certificate requirements: Within the requirements listed below, students must complete six upper division honors credits, and complete courses from at least three different disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. Either or both semesters of a Core Discovery sequence may count toward the three discipline requirement.

Requirements:

Three honors humanities credits;

Three honors social science credits;

Three honors science credits;

Three credits in analytical and quantitative reasoning, satisfied by honors Math 315, or via Honors Elective

Agreement used in conjunction with Philosophy 202, Statistics 251, or Statistics 301;

Additional elective credits, including up to three UHP volunteer service points, to total 27 credits/points: the 27 credits/points must include at least 20 credits with the HON course designation, with an average GPA of 3.0 or above in honors coursework completed, and an institutional cumulative GPA of 3.3.

Members of the program may take honors courses even if they decide not to work for a certificate or core award. Most honors courses are designated with an "HON" on the transcript to indicate that the course work is of a special nature. Students who receive the "Honors Core Award" or the "University Honors Program Certificate" have these distinctions noted on their official UI transcripts.

Scholarship Availability. Each year scholarships are offered to a select number of students in the program—these awards are applied to resident fees. No additional application form is required. Likewise, a select number of UHP out-of-state tuition waivers are offered to non-Idaho residents. The awards are renewable, contingent on satisfactory progress toward and completion of specified course and credit requirements while maintaining an overall institutional GPA of 3.3. In addition, members of the University Honors Program have been successful in taking advantage of mentorship and advice regarding prestigious national scholarship opportunities.

Learning Outcomes. University Honors Program expectations for learning outcomes are aligned with the following University-Level Learning Outcomes affirmed by Faculty Council October 3, 2006. University level learning outcomes broadly describe expected and desired consequences of learning through integrated curricular and co-curricular experiences. The outcomes become an expression of the desired attributes of an educated person and guide coherent, integrated and intentional educational experiences. They provide the university with a basis for ongoing assessment to continuously improve teaching and learning.

1. Learn and integrate - Through independent learning and collaborative study, attain, use and develop knowledge in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences, with disciplinary specialization and the ability to integrate information across disciplines.
2. Think and create - Use multiple thinking strategies to examine real-world issues, explore creative avenues of expression, solve problems, and make consequential decisions.
3. Communicate – Acquire, articulate, create and convey intended meaning using verbal and non-verbal methods of communication that demonstrate respect and understanding in a complex society.
4. Clarify purpose and perspective – Explore one's life purpose and meaning through transformational experiences that foster an understanding of self, relationships, and diverse global perspectives.
5. Practice citizenship – Apply principles of ethical leadership, collaborative engagement, socially responsible behavior, respect for diversity in an interdependent world, and a service-oriented commitment to advance and sustain local and global communities.