

Texas A & M University – Commerce

Honors Handbook

Revised June 2010

HONORS HANDBOOK

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Introduction

This handbook is intended for all students interested in or involved in the Honors College or University Honors Scholars Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Please read it carefully because not all the handbook applies to every student at every moment, but the handbook does contain specific information about what a student must do during various phases of his or her pursuit of an Honors degree. The handbook concludes with appendices on the most important materials associated with Honors at Texas A&M-Commerce.

This handbook will be divided into three main sections. Section One will focus on elements that are unique to The Honors College at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Section Two will focus on elements that are unique to the Honors Scholar Programs at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Section Three will focus on issues that are of concern to both Honors College and Honors Scholar students (e.g., Honors Theses and Proposals, Student Honors Council).

Section One: The Honors College

Admission: Each year The Honors College at Texas A&M University-Commerce will admit approximately 50 students. There are no cutoff scores for admission to The Honors College. However, we are looking for students who have demonstrated an ability to excel in school and those whose standardized test scores reflect an ability to continue to thrive in an academic environment. Thus, the selection committee considers both class rank and standardized test scores in its admission decisions. The typical Honors College student has the following characteristics: Class Rank – top 10% or better; SAT (combined math and critical reading) of 1200 or higher, ACT score of 27 or higher. It is important to emphasize that these are not cutoff scores – merely a portrait of the typical Honors College student. In addition to these criteria, the application essay will be rated by at least two readers. After a review of these criteria, some students will be invited to campus for an interview. Final decisions will include the quality of the interview and the match between student, university, and Honors College.

Students interested in applying can find the application for admission at <http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/specialPrograms/honorsCollege/default.aspx>. The application can be emailed to honorscollege@tamu-commerce.edu or faxed to 903-468-3008, or mailed to: The Honors College, PO Box 3011, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, TX 75429-3011. A copy of your high school transcript should be mailed or faxed to us at the same time as your application.

Benefits: The Honors College experience is designed to increase the educational opportunities for students while engaging them in a four-year college experience. The benefits of the Honors College include the following:

- Honors courses capped at an enrollment of 25.
- Students housed together in apartment style housing. Emphasis is placed on a housing experience that fosters a residential learning community.

- A fantastic scholarship package that includes the cost of tuition and fees, honors housing, a partial meal plan, and an allowance for textbook costs.
- A challenging curriculum that culminates in an Honors Thesis experience.

Curriculum: Honors College students should consult with The Dean of Honors to determine the particulars of their Honors degree plan. The typical Honors College student will complete 30 Honors credit in the process of completing their bachelor's degree. These credits fall into 3 groupings: (1) University Studies credits – Honors College students must complete a minimum of 21 Honors Credits out of the University Studies core. All students must take a writing course during their first semester. Honors College students who have completed ENG 101 and ENG 102 before attending TAMU-Commerce will receive Honors Credit for an upper division English class (ENG 333) that is focused on writing during that first semester. (2) Colloquia and Seminars – all Honors College students will take 3 1-credit courses toward their degree. The first, HC200, functions as the First Year Success Seminar for entering Honors College students. The second, HC300, will be a thesis preparation course. Finally, HC400, will look like a traditional senior seminar. Speakers will be brought in and readings will be assigned that are designed to help students synthesize what they have learned during their four years in college. (3) Honors Proposal and Thesis. In order to receive the Bachelors degree, all Honors College students must successfully complete an Honors Thesis. Students will receive 3 credits for the successful defense of their proposal, and three more for the successful defense of their thesis. See Section 3 for details about the Thesis process.

An example of the curriculum is inserted here. However, you must meet with your Honors Advisor to discuss substitutions and to insure that classes have been categorized correctly.



HONORS COLLEGE CURRICULUM PLAN

Date: _____
Name: _____ **CWID:** _____
Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____
Telephone: (H) _____ **(W)** _____

University Studies Core (43 Semester Hours-a minimum of 21 credits must be in Honors Sections)

Course	Semester Completed	Substitution
Grade		
+ENG 101	_____	_____
+ENG 102	_____	_____
SPC 111 or 245 or 348	_____	_____
HIST 121	_____	_____
HIST 122	_____	_____
PSCI 211	_____	_____
PSCI 212	_____	_____
*SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES:	_____	_____
**HUMANITIES (3 SH)	_____	_____
***US VIS/PERF ARTS (3 SH)	_____	_____
****MATH 141,175,179	_____	_____
*****NATURAL SCIENCE (4 SH)	_____	_____
*****NATURAL SCIENCE (4 SH)	_____	_____
FRA (1 SH)	_____	_____
FRA (1 SH)	_____	_____

+ Students must take Honors ENG 101 or ENG 102 their first semester. If student has credit for these, ENG 333 will count as an Honors course.

* ANTH 114; ECO 231 or 232; PHIL 251; PSY 130 or 131 or 232; SOC 111 or 112 (3 SH)

** ENG 201, 202, 203; Hist 261, 262, 263, 264, 265; Jour 114; Phil 231, 331, 332, 360, 362; PSI 410, 411, 412; SPC 201(3SH)

*** Art 200, 202, 301, 304; Eng 432, 434; Mus 102, 110; The 210, 340, 440 (3SH)

**** THEA scores may require developmental math before college level math; an Honors section of 179 will be available

***** Select from approved list of University Studies courses/refer to catalog. Science majors will follow the suggested sciences listed in the catalog for that particular major.

Honors Courses (9 semester hours)

Course	Semester Completed	Grade
*HC 200: Introduction to Honors (1SCH)	_____	_____
**HC 491: Honors Reading (3SCH)	_____	_____
HC 490: Honors Thesis (3SCH)	_____	_____
***HC 300: Honors Colloquium (1SCH)	_____	_____
****HC 400: Honors Colloquium (1SCH)	_____	_____

* Will satisfy First-Year Success Seminar (FSS) requirement, Music majors will take CAS 111 for Music.

** Provides student time for thesis proposal

*** Optimally to be taken Junior year, will primarily consist of a thesis preparation workshop

****Optimally to be taken Senior year

Major Requirements (Discuss with your Major Department

Minor Requirements (Semester hours-defined by minor department; not all majors require a minor)

Upper Level Electives (as needed to meet university requirements for graduation)

Total Honors Hours Required: 30

Total Semester Hours Required: approximately 120 (depending upon major)

Requirements: In addition to curriculum requirements all Honors College students must adhere to the following guidelines.

Students must accept and receive this scholarship during their first semester of enrollment at Texas A&M University-Commerce to continue the scholarship in subsequent semesters.

Student must complete a minimum of fifteen (15) semester hours from Texas A&M University-Commerce each semester to receive and maintain this scholarship.

Honors College students are required to maintain a minimum 3.3 cumulative GPA. Students whose cumulative GPA falls between 3.0 and 3.29 will be assigned Honors Probationary status, which allows them to raise their GPA while continuing to enjoy the benefits of the Honors College. An exception is allowed for first-semester freshmen who may be assigned probationary status with a GPA between 2.7 and 3.29. Students may be on probation for a maximum of two consecutive semesters.

Honors College students must live in the Honors Residence Hall during their Freshmen year in order to receive the Honors College Scholarship. In order to receive the Housing component of the scholarship package in subsequent years they must live in the Honors Residence Hall.

The Honors College scholarship is awarded for eight academic year semesters (Fall and Spring) or until a baccalaureate is conferred, whichever comes first.

Honors College students must adhere to the university's Code of Student Conduct. The scholarship may be revoked for violations of this policy or for behavior that does not reflect the standards of The Honors College. Neither abusive behavior toward peers, faculty, and/or staff nor violations of academic conduct (e.g., cheating, plagiarism) will be permitted.

Honors College students must complete an Honors Thesis to graduate from the university with a bachelor's degree. Students who withdraw from the Honors College before enrolling for their fifth semester at Texas A&M University - Commerce will not be held to this requirement.

Honors College students who enter in the fall of 2010, or later, will be required to do 1 hour of community service each week beginning in their third semester on campus.

Section Two: The Honors Scholar Program

Note: The Honors Scholar program replaces the Honors Program beginning in the Spring of 2008 (However, students who are already in the program will be allowed to continue using the previous requirements for Honors Graduation).

The Honors Scholar Program provides students who are not in the Honors College with an opportunity to reap many of the benefits of the Honors experience and to graduate with an Honors designation. Student may enter the Honors Scholar program by many different avenues: including self-nomination, students nominated by their department, Phi Theta Kappa transfers, or students who come to Honors later in their college experience. There are no entrance criteria – only graduation requirements. To apply, students need to complete an application for Honors at The Honors Office on the first floor of Prairie Crossing. Each college has somewhat different criteria for graduation with the Honors Scholar designation. These requirements are outlined below:

College of Arts and Sciences

To graduate with the Honors Scholar designation, each student in the College of Arts and Sciences:

1. Must have at least a **cumulative 3.3 GPA** at the time of graduation.
2. Take at least **TWO Honors only classes (i.e., enrollment is restricted to Honors Students)**
A student must receive a B or higher to receive Honors credit for the course. These courses will be marked by with an H on the student's transcript. Occasionally, students may not be able to fit Honors only classes in their schedule. In this case, they may receive Honors credit by contract. The contract form is available at the end of this document.
3. Must take one semester of the **Honors Colloquium (HC400)** for one credit hour. The method of evaluation will be two reactions papers written on any two of the required Colloquia during a given semester. The Honors director will grade the reaction papers and determine the student's grade, which will also be based on attendance.
4. Must successfully complete **Honors Readings (491) and Honors Thesis (490)**.

a) Honors Readings (491)

- Students enroll in Honors Readings to prepare the Honors thesis proposal Students enroll in Honors Readings (491) in the department in which they are planning to research and write an Honors thesis. Each student works with an academic advisor. The advisor and Director of Honors must approve the Honors thesis proposal before it is submitted to the student's thesis committee. The Proposal Pre-Defense form must be signed before the defense date is set. The thesis committee will consist of the student's advisor, a second faculty member from the department (or an expert in the topic area), and a member of the University Honors Council. The University Honors Council member will be appointed by the Director of the Honors Program. Upon approval by the committee, the proposal must receive final approval from the

Director of the Honors Program. Each semester, the Honors office posts a key dates and deadlines handout with proposal submission deadlines.

- The Honors office will provide a handbook, *Guidelines for Writing the Honors Thesis Proposal*, to each student enrolled in Honors Readings and the student's advisor. It is the student's responsibility to come by the Honors office and obtain a copy of the guidelines.
- The student must submit the Honors thesis proposal to the Honors director in the Honors office. Please see the key dates and deadlines document for the format for submitting the proposal.
- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis Proposal.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing the Honors thesis proposal. If a student registers for Honors Readings 491, fails to submit the written proposal to the University Honors Committee Honors, and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

b) Honors Thesis (490)

- Once the Honors thesis proposal has been accepted by the University Honors Committee, the student, under the direction of his/her Honors advisor completes the Honors thesis. The student must successfully defend the Honors thesis prior to graduation.
- For December and May Honors graduates, the Honors thesis defense must take place prior to the last meeting of the University Honors Committee meeting in the fall and spring semesters, respectively. For August commencement, please see the Honors director for deadline defense dates. To schedule the Honors thesis defense, the student must meet with the Honors director who will work with the student and the advisor to set up a mutually agreed upon date and time. The Honors office will provide you with more details about the Honors thesis defense, binding your Honors thesis, and final preparations for graduation with Honors.
- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing Honors Thesis 490 even after the Honors thesis proposal has been approved. If a student registers for Honors Thesis 490 and fails to complete the Honors Thesis and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

College of Business and Technology

There are two Honors tracks available to students in the College of Business and Technology. The first track is available to students intending to graduate with majors in Accounting, Business Administration, Economics, Finance Management, Marketing, or Management Information Systems. To graduate with the Honors Scholar designation, students in this track

1. Must have at least a **cumulative 3.3 GPA** at the time of graduation.

2. Take the following sequence of courses in Honors Only (i.e., enrollment is restricted to Honors Students) sections MGT 305, BA303, MGT308, and ECO309. A student must receive a B or higher to receive Honors credit for the course. These courses will be marked by with an H on the student's transcript. Occasionally, students may not be able to fit these specific classes in their schedule. In this case, they may receive Honors credit by contract. The contract form is available at the end of this document.
3. Must successfully complete **Honors Readings (491) and Honors Thesis (490)**.

a. Honors Readings (491)

- Students enroll in Honors Readings to prepare the Honors thesis proposal. Students enroll in Honors Readings (491) in the department in which they are planning to research and write an Honors thesis. Each student works with an academic advisor. The advisor and Director of Honors must approve the Honors thesis proposal before it is submitted to the student's thesis committee. The Proposal Pre-Defense form must be signed before the defense date is set. The thesis committee will consist of the student's advisor, a second faculty member from the department (or an expert in the topic area), and a member of the University Honors Council. The University Honors Council member will be appointed by the Director of the Honors Program. Upon approval by the committee, the proposal must receive final approval from the Director of the Honors Program. Each semester, the Honors office posts a key dates and deadlines handout with proposal submission deadlines.
- The Honors office will provide a handbook, *Guidelines for Writing the Honors Thesis Proposal*, to each student enrolled in Honors Readings and the student's advisor. It is the student's responsibility to come by the Honors office and obtain a copy of the guidelines.
- The student must submit the Honors thesis proposal to the Honors director in the Honors office. Please see the key dates and deadlines document for the format for submitting the proposal.
- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis Proposal.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing the Honors thesis proposal. If a student registers for Honors Readings 491, fails to submit the written proposal to the University Honors Committee Honors, and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

b. Honors Thesis (490)

- Once the Honors thesis proposal has been accepted by the University Honors Committee, the student, under the direction of his/her Honors advisor completes the Honors thesis. The student must successfully defend the Honors thesis prior to graduation.

- For December and May Honors graduates, the Honors thesis defense must take place prior to the last meeting of the University Honors Committee meeting in the fall and spring semesters, respectively. For August commencement, please see the Honors director for deadline defense dates. To schedule the Honors thesis defense, the student must meet with the Honors director who will work with the student and the advisor to set up a mutually agreed upon date and time. The Honors office will provide you with more details about the Honors thesis defense, binding your Honors thesis, and final preparations for graduation with Honors.
- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing Honors Thesis 490 even after the Honors thesis proposal has been approved. If a student registers for Honors Thesis 490 and fails to complete the Honors Thesis and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

The second track is available to students in the College of Business and Technology who are majoring in Industrial Engineering and Technology. In order to graduate with the Honors Scholar designation these students

1. Must have at least a **cumulative 3.3 GPA** at the time of graduation.
2. Take two Honors Only (i.e., enrollment is restricted to Honors Students) business courses. Please see the director of Honors to discuss what courses count toward this Honors degree. A student must receive a B or higher to receive Honors credit for the course. These courses will be marked by with an H on the student's transcript. Occasionally, students may not be able to fit Honors only classes in their schedule. In this case, they may receive Honors credit by contract. The contract form is available at the end of this document.
3. Must successfully complete **Honors Readings (491) and Honors Thesis (490)**.
 - a. **Honors Readings (491)**
 - Students enroll in Honors Readings to prepare the Honors thesis proposal Students enroll in Honors Readings (491) in the department in which they are planning to research and write an Honors thesis. Each student works with an academic advisor. The advisor and Director of Honors must approve the Honors thesis proposal before it is submitted to the student's thesis committee. The Proposal Pre-Defense form must be signed before the defense date is set. The thesis committee will consist of the student's advisor, a second faculty member from the department (or an expert in the topic area), and a member of the University Honors Council. The University Honors Council member will be appointed by the Director of the Honors Program. Upon approval by the committee, the proposal must receive final approval from the Director of the Honors Program. Each semester, the Honors office posts a key dates and deadlines handout with proposal submission deadlines.
 - The Honors office will provide a handbook, *Guidelines for Writing the Honors Thesis Proposal*, to each student enrolled in Honors Readings and the student's advisor. It is

the student's responsibility to come by the Honors office and obtain a copy of the guidelines.

- The student must submit the Honors thesis proposal to the Honors director in the Honors office. Please see the key dates and deadlines document for the format for submitting the proposal.
- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis Proposal.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing the Honors thesis proposal. If a student registers for Honors Readings 491, fails to submit the written proposal to the University Honors Committee Honors, and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

b. Honors Thesis (490)

- Once the Honors thesis proposal has been accepted by the University Honors Committee, the student, under the direction of his/her Honors advisor completes the Honors thesis. The student must successfully defend the Honors thesis prior to graduation.
- For December and May Honors graduates, the Honors thesis defense must take place prior to the last meeting of the University Honors Committee meeting in the fall and spring semesters, respectively. For August commencement, please see the Honors director for deadline defense dates. To schedule the Honors thesis defense, the student must meet with the Honors director who will work with the student and the advisor to set up a mutually agreed upon date and time. The Honors office will provide you with more details about the Honors thesis defense, binding your Honors thesis, and final preparations for graduation with Honors.
- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing Honors Thesis 490 even after the Honors thesis proposal has been approved. If a student registers for Honors Thesis 490 and fails to complete the Honors Thesis and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

College of Education and Human Services

To graduate with the Honors Scholar designation, each student in the College of Education and Human Services:

1. Must have at least a **cumulative 3.3 GPA** at the time of graduation.
2. Take at least **TWO Honors only classes (i.e., enrollment is restricted to Honors Students)** A student must receive a B or higher to receive Honors credit for the course. These courses will be marked by with an H on the student's transcript. See the director of Honors for details on what courses will count toward this degree. Occasionally,

students may not be able to fit Honors only classes in their schedule. In this case, they may receive Honors credit by contract. The contract form is available at the end of this document.

3. Must successfully complete **Honors Readings (491) and Honors Thesis (490)**.

a. Honors Readings (491)

- Students enroll in Honors Readings to prepare the Honors thesis proposal. Students enroll in Honors Readings (491) in the department in which they are planning to research and write an Honors thesis. Each student works with an academic advisor. The advisor and Director of Honors must approve the Honors thesis proposal before it is submitted to the student's thesis committee. The Proposal Pre-Defense form must be signed before the defense date is set. The thesis committee will consist of the student's advisor, a second faculty member from the department (or an expert in the topic area), and a member of the University Honors Council. The University Honors Council member will be appointed by the Director of the Honors Program. Upon approval by the committee, the proposal must receive final approval from the Director of the Honors Program. Each semester, the Honors office posts a key dates and deadlines handout with proposal submission deadlines.
- The Honors office will provide a handbook, *Guidelines for Writing the Honors Thesis Proposal*, to each student enrolled in Honors Readings and the student's advisor. It is the student's responsibility to come by the Honors office and obtain a copy of the guidelines.
- The student must submit the Honors thesis proposal to the Honors director in the Honors office. Please see the key dates and deadlines document for the format for submitting the proposal.
- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis Proposal.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing the Honors thesis proposal. If a student registers for Honors Readings 491, fails to submit the written proposal to the University Honors Committee Honors, and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

b. Honors Thesis (490)

- Once the Honors thesis proposal has been accepted by the University Honors Committee, the student, under the direction of his/her Honors advisor completes the Honors thesis. The student must successfully defend the Honors thesis prior to graduation.
- For December and May Honors graduates, the Honors thesis defense must take place prior to the last meeting of the University Honors Committee meeting in the fall and spring semesters, respectively. For August commencement, please see the Honors director for deadline defense dates. To schedule the Honors thesis defense, the student must meet with the Honors director who will work with the student and the advisor to

set up a mutually agreed upon date and time. The Honors office will provide you with more details about the Honors thesis defense, binding your Honors thesis, and final preparations for graduation with Honors.

- **Failure to Complete the Honors Thesis.** Occasionally, personal or professional commitments prevent the student from completing Honors Thesis 490 even after the Honors thesis proposal has been approved. If a student registers for Honors Thesis 490 and fails to complete the Honors Thesis and does not withdraw from the course, a grade of **I (incomplete)** will be entered on the transcript and will remain unchanged.

Section Three: General Honors Information

I. A Non-exhaustive Timeline for the Thesis Process

The following is not meant to be a complete description of everything that you need to know about the thesis process. Instead, its purpose is to lay out the basic steps that you will undertake and to get you thinking about what you need to do.

Step 1: Choose a major. Your thesis ***does not*** have to be done in your major. However, most people do the thesis in their major area for obvious reasons (e.g., familiarity with and interest in material).

Step 2: Choose an advisor. This is the single most important step in the process. There are numerous things to consider in making this choice. Is the person knowledgeable in the area that you want to pursue? Is their personality a good match with yours? Does their working style complement yours? Do they have the time to commit to the thesis process?

Step 3: Enroll in 491 and write your proposal. See separate sheet for thoughts on writing the proposal. Your advisor and the Dean of Honors must approve your proposal before moving on to...

Step 4: Form your committee and defend your proposal. The thesis committee will consist of the student's advisor, a second faculty member from the department (or an expert in the topic area), and a member of the University Honors Council. The University Honors Council member will be appointed by the Director of the Honors Program. Upon approval by the committee, the proposal must receive final approval from the Director of the Honors Program. The defense generally consists of a 10 minute presentation followed up by questions and suggestions from your committee.

Step 5: Enroll in 490 and write your thesis.

Step 6: Defend your thesis. At a minimum, students should aim to defend their thesis in the Fall of their Senior year. The thesis process ***will*** take longer than you expect. Do not aim to finish at the very end of your senior year. You may find that you need to enroll for one more semester (Remember: You can not receive your bachelor's degree until you have successfully defended your thesis project).

II. A Shortened Guide to Honors Proposals, Theses, and Defenses

Although a thesis is a large process that requires attention to detail, many of the most important points can be boiled down to a few key ideas. I will try to provide these highlights below.

Thesis Proposals

- Should not be lengthy. The best proposals tend to be in the 6-10 page range (not including references, appendices, etc.). You are providing a "roadmap" to your project - not writing a term paper.
- Although an exhaustive review of the literature should occur before any project is undertaken, the student should only provide a brief review of the relevant literature in their proposal. This summary of the literature should clearly lead the reader to the proposed project.
- Methodology should be as detailed as possible.
- Proposals will be defended in front of a committee that includes an outside member who is unlikely to be an "expert" in the proposed field. Thus, proposals should be written so that "non-experts" can understand them.
- Grammar and syntax matter. The expectation exists that Honors graduates should demonstrate above average writing ability.

Theses

- Grammar and syntax matter (see above ☺)
- There is no single correct format for the thesis. That is, the dictates of your field should guide the presentation. If you are training your students to write in the style prevalent in journal articles - the thesis can be formatted as such. If the "book chapter" format is more common in your field, then use that format.
- Choose the style manual most relevant to your field of study and then use it assiduously.
- Assume that you will make changes before the thesis is bound.
- Certain projects may benefit from different thesis formats. For example, a process journal (in conjunction with a gallery show) may be a more appropriate written document than a thesis for a photography student. If you and your advisor believe that this may be the case please contact the Director of the Honors College to discuss the matter.

Proposal and Thesis Defenses

- Oral defenses are an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to talk intelligently in an academic setting.
- Students should provide a brief (10-15 minute) overview of their project. Then the floor will be opened for questions.
- Although questions will generally focus on the research project, students may be asked to assimilate other relevant information (e.g., relation of their research to the "real world") into the defense.

- Defenses typically last between 45-60 minutes.
- Committee members should include: the student's advisor, a member of the Honors Council (chosen by the Honors Director), and a faculty member chosen by the student. This faculty member chosen by the student should, optimally, be well versed in the topic being defended. The Director of the Honors College may participate in the defense, but is a non-voting member unless invited unto the committee.
- If a student has technical requirements (e.g., power point, DVD player) for the defense, the Director should be notified as early as possible.
- Certain majors and disciplines may benefit from different defense formats (e.g., music, photography). If you and your advisor believe that this may be the case please contact the Director of the Honors College to discuss the matter.

III. Honors Thesis Proposal Pre-Defense Form

Honors Thesis Proposal Pre-Defense Form
--

Name:

SID#:

Degree:

Address:

E-mail:

Title of thesis:

By signing this form the major advisor and the Director of the Honors program are acknowledging that the Honors Thesis Proposal is suitable for public defense.

Specifically, the major advisor confirms that the content from the area of his/her specialty is accurate and that the overall project is worth pursuing. The Honors Director confirms that the thesis meets the standards of the Honors Program in terms of depth, breadth, challenge, and formatting.

The following signatures are required.

Major Advisor: _____

Honors Director: _____

IV. Honors Proposal Defenses

This is a new process, so I thought I'd share my thoughts on it. My goal is for this to be a very positive process for the student. I believe they stand to learn a lot about the scholarly process by hearing 3 or 4 academics "thinking out loud" about a project. I want the defense process to help the student create a better project – I don't want it to be an arbitrary barrier defending the walls of the ivory tower.

The way I see it, here are your options for the outcome of the proposal defense:

Accept with no revisions: this will undoubtedly occur very rarely.

Accept with revisions: I believe that this should be the most common outcome. I also think that there are a range of sub-options here. (1) Committee signs document, but asks student to show revisions to Advisor before sending to Honors Director for final approval; (2) Committee signs document, but asks that student send revisions to full committee before sending to Honors Director for final approval; (3) Committee does not sign document until receiving and approving revisions.

Reject: This should be a very rare outcome that only occurs in cases where the original proposal is fatally flawed. Unlike the Accept with revisions option, a second proposal defense would be required for the student to continue.

In an attempt to instill one more level of "quality control" the Honors Council has suggested that no Honors Proposal be accepted until I have signed off on it (much like the process for theses and dissertations in The Graduate School).

Finally, because this is a new process, I hope that you'll provide feedback that will help us produce stronger theses and better educated students. Thank you.

V. Honors Organizations

There are many Honors organizations at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Generally speaking, each academic department or specialized area has an affiliation with an Honors organization at the national level. For example, Sigma Tau Delta is the international Honors Society for English Majors and Minors, and Psi Chi is the national Psychology Honors Society.

However, these and other specialized honors societies are not technically part of the Honors Program.

1. **Student Organizations:** Two Honors organizations come under the supervision of the director of the Honors Program:

a) **Student Honors Council (SHC).** Application for membership is open to any student who is *currently or has been actively involved in some phase of the Honors Program; or someone who has completed an Honors course, or a person who is taking or has taken Honors Colloquium, or a student who is actively engaged in some phase of the Honors Thesis.* The SHC can accommodate up to 17 members (one or more of whom may be a member of the Society of Alpha Chi which is described below). Members elect a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary, historian, and special events chair for each academic year. Duties of the SHC include:

- Proposing changes or modification to the Honors Program.
- Publicizing the Honors Program through flyers, visits to Honors classes, etc.
- Selecting the Honors Professor of the Year.
- Recognizing contributions made by faculty and staff involved in the Honors Program.
- Assisting with Honors Day.
- Providing suggestions for programming including speakers, films, and field trips.

b) **The Society of Alpha Chi (AX).** **Alpha Chi is the largest and most significant** Honors organization at Texas A&M University-Commerce. In the fall semester, the Honors office conducts an induction of new members at a formal ceremony in the Memorial Student Center. The local Texas Lambda Chapter is affiliated with the National organization at Harding University, Searcy, AR. Each fall, the Honors director will send a letter to eligible students inviting them to join Alpha Chi.

The requirements for membership are a **composite 3.5 GPA or higher who have completed 60 hours of credit, 24 of which are from TAMU-C.** Additionally, the actual number of students who are invited to join will not exceed 10% of the entire junior class and 10% of the entire senior class. The local chapter does not have formal meetings, but the Texas Lambda Chapter does participate in Honors service activities. Membership in Alpha Chi is a valuable addition to any student's résumé. In addition, scholarships are available from the National office <http://www.harding.edu/alphachi/scholarships.htm>. Graduating seniors who belong to Alpha Chi are listed in a separate section in the commencement program, and each student receives an Alpha Chi seal on his or her diploma. For graduating seniors, the Honors office handles the traditional Alpha Chi honors cords. Cords are available for purchase **after** the Honors office receives the list of graduating seniors from the Registrar's office.

2. **Faculty Organization:** The supervisory body for the Honors Program is the University Honors Council which consists of faculty members from across the university. The University Honors Committee is appointed by and serves at the discretion of the President and CEO of the University. The Honors Director chairs the University Honors Committee. The duties of the committee include:
 - a) Providing a representative to act as an outside committee member for all Thesis proposals defenses.
 - b) Approving or disapproving initiatives forwarded by the SHC.
 - c) Instituting changes or modifications in the Honors Program.
 - d) Providing assistance in the interviewing and selection of Honors College applicants.

VI. OVERVIEW and FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why Should I Enroll in Honors?

It sets you apart from the average undergraduate. Even if you take only one Honors course, it is listed on your transcript with an H designation. If you pursue and acquire an Honors degree, you stand apart from the ordinary Texas A & M University-Commerce graduate, and you are immediately attractive to a graduate school or potential employer.

2. Who Is Eligible to Take Honors Courses?

Registration for all Honors courses at the university are by permit only. Students in the Honors College are automatically permitted to enroll in these courses. Students in the Honors Scholar program should contact the Director of Honors to receive their permit to enter an Honors section. In addition, individual departments can “nominate” students for an Honors section. These nominations should be sent to the Director of Honors so that information concerning Honors can be sent to the student. (Please check the Schedule of Classes for a given semester to see which Honors classes are offered.)

3. What Are Some of the Benefits Involved in Being Part of the Honors Program?

- a) **Small classes.** Each Honors course is usually limited to 20-25 students. The course is taught by a seasoned, full-time faculty member. Students can thus expect a letter of recommendation in the future because the instructor will remember the student.
- b) **Mentoring.** Students who elect to pursue graduation with Honors have the unique opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty member while completing their Honors thesis. Undergraduates are rarely afforded access to the excitement and personal fulfillment generated by such scholarly endeavors.

4. What Will Graduation with Honors Do for Me?

All students who graduate with Honors have their names, thesis titles, and advisors listed in the commencement program, and each Honors graduate receives a blue and gold *fourragere*

from his or her advisor during the commencement ceremony. More importantly, an Honors degree follows a student for the rest of his or her life. Recent Honors graduates have confirmed that they had an advantage in getting a job, winning a scholarship, being hired in an ISD, etc., because they graduated with Honors.

5. What Can I Do for the Honors Program?

Promote the Honors Program up on campus. All the advertising in the world does not match word-of-mouth praise for an instructor or a valuable Honors experience.

Other Information

It is important that you keep the Honors office informed of your current contact information and your progress as you complete the Honors Program.

Dr. Raymond J. Green, Dean
University Honors Program
Raymond_Green@tamu-commerce.edu

Dr. Eric Gruver
Honors Advisor
Eric_gruver@tamu-commerce.edu

Mrs. Kay Hatfield
Assistant to the Director
Kay_hatfield@tamu-commerce.edu