



# Honors Program

## Student Handbook

## Table of Contents

Message from Coordinator	3
Benefits of the Honors Program	3
Honors Program Policies & Requirements	4
Ways to Receive Honors Credit	5
Priority Course Registration	7
Exit Interview	7
Honors Portfolio	7
More Information	8

## Message from Honors Program Coordinator

Welcome to the Potomac State College Honors Program. The Honors Program is designed to provide intellectual challenges and enrichment opportunities to academically talented students. The program offers a variety of honors courses with specially selected instructors and smaller class sizes. As students journey through the Honors Program, many will find that they are taking classes they might not have ever considered. Most of those same students will later recall that those honors classes were among their most enjoyable and memorable of all college experiences. So be adventurous, open-minded, and enjoy your time with the Potomac State College Honors Program.

Dr. Vicki J. Huffman  
Honors Program Coordinator

## Benefits of the Honors Program

- Students successfully completing the Honors Program will receive **Honors Scholar** designation on their official transcripts and graduation diplomas. Honors Scholars also receive special recognition during the Commencement ceremony.
- Honors students may enroll in **Honors 199**, which fulfills the requirement for all new students to enroll in an orientation course, typically WVUe 191.
- Honors students may take one or more honors course each semester. Many of these courses satisfy general education (GEF) requirements at Potomac State College and West Virginia University so completing the honors courses does not typically require students to take additional courses.
- Honors students choosing to transfer to Morgantown from Potomac State may also transfer into the WVU Honors College.
- Honors students have a variety of opportunities to participate in Honors Program-sponsored social and cultural activities.
- All honors students receive priority pre-registration for future semesters.
- Honors students have the option to request housing in Catamount Place.

## Honors Program Policies & Requirements

### Successful Completion

To be declared an Honors Scholar obtaining an Associate's Degree, students must complete a minimum of five honors courses (at least 13 honors credit hours), including an Honors Orientation course, and maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA and 3.5 honors credit GPA. In addition, students must complete an exit interview during the semester they plan to graduate.

To be declared an Honors Scholar obtaining a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Degree, students must complete a minimum of nine honors course (at least 25 honors credit hours), including an Honors Orientation course. A minimum of 12 honors credit hours must be completed at the 300-400 level. In addition, students must complete an honors portfolio, complete an exit interview and maintain a 3.2 cumulative GPA and 3.6 honors credit GPA.

### Probation and Suspension from the Honors Program

Any freshman or sophomore level student who fails to maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA and 3.5 honors credit GPA in a given semester will be placed on probation. Any junior or senior level student who fails to maintain a 3.2 cumulative GPA in a given semester will be placed on probation. Students on probation may return to good standing by raising their GPA to the required level. If students on probation are unable to meet the minimum GPA by the end of the semester they were placed on probation, they will be suspended from the Honors Program.

Any student who fails to complete at least six honors credits during the first three semesters of full-time attendance at PSC will be suspended from the program.

Honors Program suspensions are not recorded on college transcripts but do include a loss of all privileges associated with being an Honors Program student. Students will be notified of all probations and suspensions by the Program Coordinator.

### Admission of New PSC Students

New Potomac State students must have a 3.3 high school GPA and 23 ACT or 1060 "old" SAT/1140 "new" SAT (reading and math combined) score. Students meeting these requirements should receive a letter inviting them to join the Honors Program in the spring before their freshman year. Students who have met the requirements but have not received a letter should contact the Program Coordinator.

## **Admission of Current PSC Students and Transfer Students**

Current Potomac State students and transfer students who have a 3.5 cumulative GPA may be eligible for admission into the Honors Program. Honors credits received at other institution may be accepted as honors credits at Potomac State. Current and/or transfer students interested in the Honors Program should contact the Program Coordinator.

## **Ways to Receive Honors Credit**

### **Honors Orientation**

An honors orientation credit will be required for all first year students to remain in the Honors Program. Students can either enroll in HONR 199 or in a zero credit add-on section of honors orientation along with a different first year orientation course, like WVUe 191, ENGR 199 or FOR 101. The honors orientation requirement may be waived for transfer students and current Potomac State students who begin the Honors Program after their first semester.

### **Honors Courses**

Many honors courses are special sections of general education courses with a reduced size and a specially selected faculty member. These classes typically are more focused on open discussion and interaction. Honors courses are offered only to members of the Honors Program.

In addition, honors add-ons are available that modify general courses to provide honors credit. If an honors add-on is available for a course, honors students enroll in any section of the traditional course as well as the add-on course section. Add-on sections are either a zero or one credit course that meet once a week or less, depending on the course and credit hour given. Students enrolled in an add-on section complete additional work related to the traditional course. Students passing both the traditional course and the add-on receive credit for one honors course and 3-4 honors credits. Students who pass the traditional course but not the add-on will not receive any honors credit.

A grade of a B- or higher is required for any honors course (traditional or add-on) to count as an honors course. If a student earns a grade between a D- and a C+, then the course will still count toward graduation and their degree, but will not count toward their honors credits.

## Contract Courses

Students may also receive credit for a non-honors course by contracting it as an honors class. By adding some additional requirements (usually through more intense reading requirements, a special paper, and/or a final project), students receive honors credit for the non-honors course. In order to do this, students should contact the course professor before the semester begins to fill out a contract form, available on the Honors Program web page or from the Program Coordinator. The form, when completed, must be returned to the Program Coordinator. Only 200 level or higher courses taught by a full-time faculty member may be contracted. To be eligible to contract a course, a student must have attained sophomore status (completed 24 credit hours of college courses.) A maximum of 4 honors credit hours for either an Associate's or Bachelor's degree can be achieved by contracting a course. A grade of a B- or higher is required for the course to count as an honors course.

## 300-400 Level Honors Courses – BAS degree students only

To receive honors credit for a 300-400 course, students must earn an A in any 300 or 400 level course offered at Potomac State College of WVU. In addition, students can complete a thesis to receive a maximum of 6 honors credits (max of 3 credit hours per semester) at this level.

## Honors Thesis – BAS degree students only

An Honors Thesis requires greater depth than a typical course-related research paper. The greater depth is the natural outcome of choosing a topic in which a student already has a good deal of background, and is made possible by the student's commitment to spending a more extended period of time on background research, scholarly effort, and writing the paper or preparing the final product in the case of a creative arts or engineering project.

Students typically begin work on the thesis no later than the beginning of the semester prior to the semester of anticipated submission of the thesis and preferably even earlier. The student is encouraged to be thinking about a thesis topic and to be talking with potential advisors/instructors, once there is sufficient exposure to the discipline to know what issues and ideas are most engaging. In order to apply for credit, students must complete the Honors Thesis Contract, found on the Honors Program web site. This contract will be due during the first week of the semester that will start the thesis credit. Students must receive an A or B in the thesis course to receive honors credit. For more information about the thesis option, please contact the Honors Program Coordinator.

## Priority Course Registration

Students in the Honors Program receive the benefit of priority registration and are able to access the STAR database a week before the general student body.

## Exit Interview

All honors students must complete an exit interview to graduate as an Honors Scholar from Potomac State College of WVU. Students must schedule and attend an exit interview (not to exceed 15 minutes) with two to three members of the Honors Program Advisory Committee. Exit interviews should be scheduled with the Honors Program Coordinator within six weeks of the end of the last planned semester before graduation. For BAS honors students, the Honors Portfolio is due to the Honors Program Coordinator at least ten business days prior to the exit interview, and interviews may last up to 30 minutes. More information about preparing for the exit interview can be obtained from the Program Coordinator.

## Honors Portfolio – BAS Degree Students ONLY

Students must complete an Honors Portfolio to graduate as an Honors Scholar from a BAS degree program from Potomac State College of WVU.

The portfolio must be submitted as a PDF document containing all their text files. Samples of completed work that cannot be converted to PDF, such as art files or music files, can be burned to a CD/DVD and submitted.

The Honors Portfolio must contain all of the following:

- Cover page (including name, major)
- A one-page reflection for **each** honors course completed
- Resume
- Degree Plan
- A three-page reflection describing the student's overall Honors Program experience

Students are encouraged to include photos, samples of completed work, and other items relevant to their Honors Program experience, not to exceed 30 pages/250 MB.

## For More Information

More information about the Honors Program can be found on the Potomac State College web site. Go to [www.potomacstatecollege.com](http://www.potomacstatecollege.com), click on “Academics”, then “Honors Program”

Students may also contact the Honors Program Coordinator, Dr. Vicki Huffman, at [vicki.huffman@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:vicki.huffman@mail.wvu.edu) or 304-788-6971.