West Virginia University

POTOMAC STATE COLLEGE

HONORS PROGRAM

StudentHandbook

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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. The program offers options for both the associate degree and bachelor degree levels. 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. I am excited to have you here! My door is always open so stop in and let's discuss how to help you be successful in your academic journey.
All the best,
Sheri C. Chisholm, Ph.D.
Honors Program Coordinator

Benefits of the Honors Program

- There are two Honors programs offered on the Potomac State College, the AA/AAS Honor program and the Honors EXCEL program for BS or BAS students.
- Students successfully completing the Honors Program will receive **Honor Scholar** designation on their official transcripts and graduation diplomas. Honor Scholars also receive special recognition during the Commencement ceremony.
- Honor students may enroll in **Honors 191**, which fulfills the requirement for all new students to enroll in an orientation course, typically WVUe 191.
- Honor 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 honor courses does not typically require students to take additional courses.
- Honor students choosing to transfer to Morgantown from Potomac State may also transfer into the WVU Honors College.
- Honor students have a variety of opportunities to participate in Honors Program-sponsored social and cultural activities.
- All honor students receive priority pre-registration for future semesters.

Honors Program Policies & Requirements

Available Programs

There are two honors programs available at Potomac State College.

1. The AA/AAS Honors Program is for students completing and Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Applied Arts (AAS) degree. The AA/AAS Honors Program involves completing honor courses while obtaining an AA or AAS degree.

2. The Honors Experiential and Community Engaged Learning (EXCEL) Program is for students completing a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree or Bachelor of Applied Science Degree (BAS).

The two programs are separate programs. Students can complete the AA/AAS Honors Program and/or the EXCEL Honors program. Students do not have to complete or be in the AA/AAS Honors Program to be eligible for the EXCEL Honors Program.

Admission of New Students into the AA/AAS Honors Program

New freshmen Potomac State students must have a 3.3 high school GPA and 23 ACT or 1140 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 and Transfer Students into the AA/AAS Honors Program

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

Admission of Students into the BAS or BSN Honors EXCEL Program

Current Potomac State students and transfer students who have at least a 3.5 GPA can apply to the BAS or BSN Honors EXCEL Program during the semester before they begin their BAS o r B S N degree. In addition, PSC students with at least a 3.0 GPA and a letter of support from a faculty member can apply during the semester before they begin their BAS degree.

Transfer students with at least a 3.5 GPA can apply after acceptance to Potomac State College of WVU. Applications will require an essay explaining why the student wishes to be accepted into the BAS Honors Program and will be reviewed by the Honors Advisory Council.

Successful Completion of AA/AAS Honors Program

Upon graduation, to be declared an Honor Scholar obtaining an Associate Degree, students must complete a minimum of five honor courses (at least 13 honors credit hours), including an Honors Orientation course, and obtain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA and 3.5 honors credit GPA.

Successful Completion of Honors Experiential and Community Engaged Learning (EXCEL)

Upon graduation, to be declared an Honor Scholar obtaining a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree or Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) degree, students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete two contracted courses for a minimum total of 6 credits in their major at the 300 or 400 level or NSG 495; Independent Study (BSN),
- Complete HONR 450: EXCEL Project Development,
- Complete HONR 451: EXCEL Summative Experience,
- Perform a minimum of 15 hours of documented community experience,
- Create an Honors Portfolio,
- Participate in an Honors Exit Interview and
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and an Honors GPA of 3.5.

See Appendices A and B for proposed timelines.

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.

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 191 or in a zero-credit add-on section of honors orientation (HONR 298) 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 typically taught by a full-time 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 for the AA/AAS Honors Program. Only 300 level or higher courses may be contracted for the BAS or BSN Honors EXCEL Program. To be eligible to contract a course, a student must have attained sophomore status (completed 24 credit hours of college courses.) A maximum of 8 honors credit hours for the AA/AAS Honors Program can be achieved by contracting a course. For the BAS Honors E X C E L Program, two 300 or 400 level courses must be contracted for a minimum of 6 credit hours. For the BSN Honors EXCEL Program, NSG 495: Independent Study: Experiential/Community Engaged Learning Project will be taken for a total of 6 credit hours. A grade of a B- or higher is required for the course to count as an honors course.

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.

For More Information

More information about the Honors Program can be found on the Potomac State College web site. Go to www.potomacstatecollege.com, click on "Academics", then "Honors Program"

Students may also contact the Honors Program Coordinator, Dr. Sheri Chisholm at 304-788-7119 or sheri.chisholm@mail.wvu.edu.

Appendix A Proposed Timeline for BSN EXCEL Student

- o **Fall of Junior Year:**
    - Take HONR 450: EXCEL Project Development
    - Takes on PSC campus taught by PSC faculty
    - Totals 1 hour
    - Assesses need for, proposes, plans, and design project
    - Completes and documents minimum of five community service hours

- o **Spring of Junior Year and Fall of Senior Year:**
    - Take NSG 495: Independent Study: Experiential/Community Engaged Learning Project
    - Takes on PSC campus taught by Nursing faculty
    - Totals 6 hours
    - Implements project
    - Completes and documents a minimum of five community service hours per semester (10 total)

- o **Spring of Senior Year:**
    - Take HONR 451: EXCEL Summative Experience
    - Takes on PSC campus taught by PSC faculty
    - Totals 1 hour
    - Presents, evaluates, and externally disseminates capstone project/findings
    - Completes and documents a minimum of five community service hours

*This is a proposed timeline. Your program coordinator and academic advisor will work with you to successfully complete your requirements.

Appendix B Proposed Timeline for BAS EXCEL Student

- **Fall of Junior Year:**
    - Take HONR 450: EXCEL Project Development
    - Takes on PSC campus taught by PSC faculty
    - Totals 1 hour
    - Assesses need for, proposes, plans, and design project
    - Completes and documents minimum of five community service hours

- **Spring of Junior Year and Fall of Senior Year:**
    - Take contracted 300 and/or 400 level course
    - Takes on PSC campus taught by faculty within the student's major
    - Totals 6 hours
    - Implements project
    - Completes and documents a minimum of five community service hours per semester (10 total)

- **Spring of Senior Year:**
    - Take HONR 451: EXCEL Summative Experience
    - Takes on PSC campus taught by PSC faculty
    - Totals 1 hour
    - Presents, evaluates, and externally disseminates capstone project/findings
    - Completes and documents a minimum of five community service hours

*This is a proposed timeline. Your program coordinator and academic advisor will work with you to successfully complete your requirements.