



Honors Program

Student Handbook

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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. 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 Program Policies & Requirements

Available Programs

There are two honors programs available at Potomac State College. The AA/AAS Honors Program is for students completing an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Applied Arts (AAS) degree. The AA/AAS Honors Program involves completing honors courses while obtaining an AA or AAS degree. The BAS Honors Program is for students completing a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree. The two programs are separate, and students can complete either one of the programs or both. Students do not have to complete or be in the AA/AAS Honors Program to be eligible for the BAS 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 into 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 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.

Admission of Students into the BAS Honors Program

Current Potomac State students and transfer students who have at least a 3.5 GPA can apply to the BAS Honors Program during the semester before they begin their BAS 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. All 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

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 obtain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA and 3.5 honors credit GPA.

To be declared an Honors Scholar obtaining a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Degree, students must complete two honors contract courses of 300 or 400 level courses, an honors project, 30 hours of community services and obtain at least a 3.2 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.

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 for the AA/AAS Honors Program. Only 300 level or higher courses may be contracted for the BAS Honors 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 4 honors credit hours for the AA/AAS Honors Program can be achieved by contracting a course. For the BAS Honors Program, two 300 or 400 level courses must be contracted. 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.

BAS Honors Programs

Community Service

BAS Honors Program Students must complete 30 hours of approved community service within their discipline and/or the Keyser area spread over at least three semesters with a minimum of 5 hours and a maximum of 15 hours per semester. Students gain approval each semester by providing a short description of the service, including how many hours will be earned and how it will be documented to the Honors Program Coordinator by the end of the first week of the semester. Documentation of completion will be submitted to the Honors Program Coordinator by the last day of the semester in which the service was completed.

Honors Project

BAS Honors Program Students must complete an honors project. Students will first enroll in HONR 450 as their project development course. This one-credit course will allow students to propose and coordinate an honors project in their major in the form of an internship or other experiential learning activity to be completed during their last semester.

Students will then enroll in HONR 451 as their honors capstone course. This one-credit course will allow students to complete their honors project and a portfolio to reflect upon their project and honors experience. The purpose of the project is to allow the student to gain discipline-specific experience prior to entering the workforce or applying to a graduate program.

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. Vicki Huffman, at vicki.huffman@mail.wvu.edu or 304-788-6971.