Honors Contract Information for Faculty

A University Honors Program (UHP) student would like to complete an Honors Contract in conjunction with a course you either taught or are currently teaching. In order to gain approval for an Honors Contract, the student must submit an Honors Contract Proposal Form to the UHP SmartSite by 5:00 PM, Wednesday, October 7, 2015.

The Proposal Form requires your signature for approval. The following FAQ is intended to provide you with information about the University Honors Program and Honors Contracts. Please read the FAQ carefully before signing the student’s Proposal Form.

Honors Contract Faculty FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

What is the University Honors Program (UHP)? The University Honors Program (UHP) is campus-wide honors program for highly motivated students. The mission of the UHP is to enhance the undergraduate experience of highly motivated students to prepare them for the challenges they will face in business, professional or academic careers. UHP accomplishes this mission by offering an academic program that encourages students to think critically, learn collaboratively, solve real-world problems by working in teams, improve written and oral communication skills, and develop new research skills through close contact with faculty. This program promotes creative approaches to student learning and faculty development on the Davis campus.

What is an Honors Contract? The honors contract, a one-unit course designated as HNR 190X, is an independent project completed in conjunction with an Upper Division course which the student has successfully completed or is currently enrolled in. Honors Contracts may vary in form, however all contracts require the student to meet regularly with the instructor of the course and culminate in a final product. This final product is evaluated by the instructor. Honors Contracts cannot be completed in conjunction with an independent study, internship, or other course graded on a Pass/No Pass basis.

What is the goal of the Honors Contract? The goal of the Honors Contract is to enrich the experience of a UHP student by facilitating greater student-faculty interaction and allowing the student to initiate and pursue study beyond what is required of other students in the course. The project is in addition to, not an extension of, the regular assignments in the course.

Who is eligible to complete an Honors Contract? Completing an Honors Contract serves as one mean for students to satisfactorily fulfill part of their UHP curriculum requirements. These special contracts are only available to UHP students.

How much work is appropriate for an Honors Contract? Honors Contracts are one-unit, which is equivalent to three hours of work per week. This includes any student meetings with the instructor, researching the topic, and creating the final product. Please consider whether or not the student is taking on a realistic amount of work for one-unit of credit.

What is involved in the approval process? Students must submit an Honors Contract Proposal Form to the UHP office for approval. Students are responsible for checking on the status of their contract proposal, which will be reviewed and must meet UHP criteria in order to be approved. Students should not assume that an Honors Contract Proposal will automatically receive approval; additional information may be required before approval can be granted. The student and instructor should review the proposal carefully to ensure that all questions are answered clearly, keeping in mind that the audience may not have prior knowledge of the subject. It is important to determine completion dates for key components of the project. This step will assist the student in maintaining satisfactory progress throughout the quarter.
How will I know if the student’s proposal has been approved? Proposals are due to the UHP SmartSite by 5:00 pm on Wednesday October 7, 2015. The UHP will notify the student via email of the contract’s approval by Friday, October 9, 2015 (the last day to add). The student is responsible for registering for the contract course (HNR 190X) on SISWEB. During the next week, UHP will send a follow-up letter/email to faculty sponsoring Honors Contracts, including/attaching a copy of the approved proposal form.

What is the due date for the final product? The due date for the final product is determined and agreed upon by the student and instructor during the proposal process. The student must submit a final completion date on the proposal form. UHP recommends the last day of instruction as the completion date, however, depending on the project, an alternate deadline may be appropriate.

What are the responsibilities of the student? The student should meet with the instructor to formulate the specific details of the Honors Contract Proposal before submitting it for approval and should refer to the Honors Contract Instructions for information about submitting the proposal form. The student should meet regularly with the instructor. UHP requires a minimum of three meetings after the instructor has approved the contract. The student must complete the project by submitting a final product by the date agreed upon with the instructor. In addition, the student must complete the one-page UHP Contract Summary at the end of the quarter. UHP must receive a copy of the Contract Summary, uploaded to the UHP SmartSite, by the last day of instruction (December 4, 2015).

What are my responsibilities as the instructor? The instructor is responsible for helping the student develop and carry out the Honors Contract. Signing the completed "Honors Contract Proposal" indicates the instructor's approval of its goals, contents and workload. The instructor should meet with the student on a regular basis during the quarter to further explore the subject matter, to review evidence of progress, and to offer advice and suggestions. The instructor must submit a letter grade for the honors contract at the end of the quarter.

How are Honors Contracts graded? The student and instructor should discuss grading criteria while drafting the Honors Contract Proposal. It is the instructor's prerogative to decide what letter grade will be assigned. Grading for the honors contract is separate from grading for the companion course. Final grading for Honors Contracts may include assessment of the process the student engaged in throughout the quarter (research, understanding and application of concepts, communication with the instructor) in addition to an evaluation of the final product, at the instructor’s discretion. Instructors are required to assign the grade electronically via Smartsite, in the same fashion all other grades are assigned. In addition, instructors will receive an Honors Contract Evaluation Form via email on which to provide comments and feedback regarding the Honors Contract Process.

How can I get more information? For more information about the University Honors Program, visit our web site at http://honors.ucdavis.edu/. We appreciate your support of the University Honors Program. Please contact our staff if we can be of any assistance to you.

- Associate Director:
- Assistant Director: Heidi van Beek, hvanbeek@ucdavis.edu, 752-9325
- Program Analyst: Nicole Seemungal, nseemungal@ucdavis.edu, 752-3223