

## THE HONORS COLLEGE

Christopher P. Long, DEAN

The Honors College at Michigan State University is one of the country's most distinctive and extensive honors programs, serving talented, committed students who wish to pursue and achieve academic excellence. The College strives to ensure an enriched academic, social, and cultural experience for its members and to create an environment that fosters active and innovative learning. It emphasizes personalized program planning rather than a tightly prescribed set of courses. Honors College members have the opportunity and are encouraged to design their own personalized programs of study; enroll in dynamic Honors classes, interactive seminars, and graduate courses; participate in faculty-led research projects; and join with other Honors College students who share their curiosity and enthusiasm to enjoy the intimacy of a small college along with the advantages of a major research university.

### Organization

Honors course work and departmental academic advising are designed to strengthen individual Honors College members' associations with their respective major departments or schools.

The Dean and staff of the Honors College are responsible for fostering the development of appropriate Honors course work, approving substitutions for standard general education requirements, and for coordinating the system of faculty honors advising throughout the university. They also work directly with Honors College students on many aspects of their programs. Honors College advisors assist students in discovering special opportunities such as research, international engagement, and service to enliven and enrich their undergraduate experiences, in exploring different fields of concentration, in pursuing multiple interests, and in making special arrangements and accommodations to help students take full advantage of Michigan State University's rich resources.

### Requirements for Membership

**Incoming Students:** The Honors College invites prospective Michigan State University students to be members based on outstanding high school achievement, a challenging curriculum, and where provided, nationally standardized test scores. Students who have exhibited a commitment to intellectual curiosity and academic rigor may submit an additional essay and current grades in order to receive further consideration. Honors College members are expected from the outset to pursue broader and more rigorous programs of study than other first year students.

**Current Students:** Admittance to the Honors College is *by invitation only*. The admission process begins early each spring semester and closes by early February. At the beginning of each spring semester, the Honors College will target the top 10 percent of first-year students in each college (based on cumulative GPA at the end of the fall semester). In addition, successful and sustained involvement in one of MSU's key enrichment programs will also be taken into consideration as this participation indicates a student's interest in personal growth and academic achievement. Invitations will be sent to students' MSU email accounts through the Confidential Message System maintained by the Office of the

Registrar. The annual review process that occurs each spring semester will include all first-year students who have been at MSU for one calendar year or less. The Honors College at MSU is designed as a four-year experience, and current students will only be reviewed for admission during their first year at MSU. Students who decline a membership invitation or who are not invited to membership as part of the annual review process will not be considered in future reviews. Students who are not invited to Honors College membership may still enhance their educational experience through Honors Options in regular courses or by requesting an override from the offering department into a specific Honors course/section (overrides are granted based on availability and a review of students' overall academic progress and program). Students may also graduate from the university with honor (top 7-20 percent) or high honor (top 6 percent) designations by meeting cumulative GPA standards, regardless of Honors College membership.

**Transfer Students:** Admittance to the Honors College is *by invitation only*. All transfer students who have been at MSU for one calendar year or less are automatically included in the annual review process each spring semester, which targets the top 10 percent of first-year students in each college (based on cumulative GPA at the end of the fall semester). Invitations will be sent to students' MSU email accounts through the Confidential Message System maintained by the Office of the Registrar. The MSU Honors College is designed as a four-year experience, and membership is not available to students who will reach junior standing (56 credits) by the end of the spring semester in which their record is reviewed. Students who are not invited to Honors College membership may still enhance their educational experience through Honors Options in regular courses or by requesting an override from the offering department into a specific Honors course/section (overrides are granted based on availability and a review of students' overall academic progress and program). Students may also graduate from the university with honor or high honor designations by meeting cumulative GPA standards, regardless of Honors College membership.

**Continuing Membership:** To remain in good standing, Honors College students must maintain a minimum all - university grade-point average of 3.20; demonstrate progress toward completing eight Honors experiences by completing at least three by the end of the second year; and use the enhanced academic resources available.

### Basic Features of the Program

In fulfilling the expectation for an enriched program of study, a student may use a combination of the various types of Honors opportunities available. Honors College members use appropriate disciplinary substitution courses to satisfy the university's general education requirements, freeing them to select from among the university's vast advanced course offerings. Members may major in any area and participate in Honors experiences as a way to enhance all components of their college education. Among the many resources available to Honors College members are those described below:

**Honors Courses and Sections:** These classes aim at a more rigorous examination of the subject matter, are limited and selective in enrollment.

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**Honors Options:** In many courses, students may earn Honors credit by completing Honors-caliber study and/or academic service learning experiences with special guidance from the instructor.

For current information on which courses are eligible for Honors Option credit, please see <https://honorscollege.msu.edu/faculty/honors-option-authorization.html>.

**Honors Research and Independent Study:** Honors College members may earn Honors credit for research, thesis, or independent study projects. Students engage in research through the Professorial Assistant Program, Honors Research Seminars, independent study, or research appointments with faculty. The Honors College Research Fund provides small grants on a competitive basis to support faculty-sponsored undergraduate research projects.

**Graduate Courses:** Honors College students have the opportunity to enroll in graduate courses with the approval of their advisors and their course instructors. Many do so during the senior year, and some during the junior year or even earlier, often in substitution for advanced undergraduate courses in their fields. Credit earned in graduate courses is applied toward the student's undergraduate degree unless he or she obtained prior approval to be dually enrolled and was admitted to a graduate program before enrolling in the courses.

For more information, refer to the *Dual Enrollment by Undergraduates* statement in the *Graduate Education* section of this catalog at [www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Print.asp?Section=328](http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Print.asp?Section=328).

**International Engagement:** Honors College members are strongly encouraged to participate in international engagement experiences. Honors students should consult their major college for international experiences that could enhance their curriculum.

### Other Membership Benefits

A number of special opportunities are provided to support the mission of the Honors College, namely, the pursuit of academic excellence.

- (a) **Academic Advising:** In addition to departmental Honors College advisors, members are served by full-time academic advisors in Eustace-Cole Hall, who are available by appointment to help with program planning. Honors College advisors approve general education course proposals and keep record of general education substitutions and honors experiences. They can assist with choice of major, and with exploration of possibilities outside members' field of study, such as selection of additional majors, minors or second degrees.
- (b) **Enrollment Priority:** In order to implement the academic programs planned by Honors College students and approved by their advisors, the class enrollment system grants rising second year and higher Honors College members enrollment priority in Honors and regular courses. Enrollment priority is especially helpful in gaining admission to upper-level courses and scheduling when only single sections are offered.

- (c) **Scholarships:** In addition to scholarships awarded by the university to incoming students, Honors College members are eligible to apply for a variety of scholarships administered by the college for continuing students.
- (d) **Co-curricular Opportunities:** Honors College students can take advantage of a wide array of student activities and organizations to build connection to the College and important leadership and professional skills. The College also sponsors numerous programs that foster students' strong relationships with faculty, administrators, and community partners.
- (e) **Graduation Recognition:** Graduating members of the Honors College are given special recognition in the commencement program. In addition, an Honors College designation is recorded on their transcript and diploma. The requirements to graduate as a member of the Honors College can be found on the Honors College Web site at <https://honorscollege.msu.edu/admissions/graduation-recognition.html>.
- (f) **Graduate/Professional School Planning:** The Honors College can assist its members in preparing for graduate school applications and fellowship support. The Honors College also serves as the campus liaison office for many major national and international fellowship competitions (e.g., Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, Churchill, Goldwater, Hollings, Truman, and Udall).
- (g) **Eustace-Cole Hall:** The Honors College is housed in a historic building conveniently located at the confluence of East and West Circle Drives. In addition to staff offices, this facility provides lounge and study space for members, and rooms for Honors seminars.
- (h) **Honors Housing:** Designated space is available on special Honors floors within the campus residence hall system. Honors housing provides a study-oriented living situation conducive to lively social and intellectual exchange.

### The Academic Scholars Program

Michigan State University offers the Academic Scholars Program to students who are not initially invited to join the Honors College. Such students may be interested in pursuing an enrichment program and may be invited to join the Honors College during their first year. Participants in this program have the opportunity to take Honors sections of Integrative Studies courses and have access to some Honors courses and sections. The program includes a residential option similar to that offered Honors College members. The requirements to graduate as a member of the Academic Scholars Program can be found on the Honors College Web site at <https://honorscollege.msu.edu/about/academic-scholars-program.html>.

Questions regarding the Honors College may be addressed to:

Dean, Honors College  
Michigan State University  
Eustace-Cole Hall  
468 E. Circle Drive, Room 105  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1041

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1-517-355-2326  
honors@msu.edu  
*www.honorscollege.msu.edu*