

## THE HONORS PROGRAM- INFORMATION PACKET

If you're interested in the Honors Program, please be sure to read this material carefully. It will answer many questions you may have about the program. Included is everything you need to get started:

- Answers to **F**requently **A**sksed **Q**uestions (FAQs)
- Honors Program Policies

The Individual Contract Form and the Program Completion form are both available on our website: [www.ccd.edu/honors](http://www.ccd.edu/honors)

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### What is the Honors Program?

The Honors Program is an opportunity for students to challenge themselves and extend the scope of the courses they are taking. To do that, students contract with individual instructors to do work above and beyond the ordinary course requirements focusing on a particular subject or interest related to the course that they would like to explore in more depth.

### Is Honors the same as Phi Theta Kappa?

The Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa are not the same. PTK is part of an international organization which focuses more on service and leadership outside the classroom, while CCD's Honors Program focuses solely on academic work in the courses you are taking. Students are welcome and encouraged to participate in both. For more information on PTK contact Nick Morris at [nicholas.morris@ccd.edu](mailto:nicholas.morris@ccd.edu) or Johanna Morrison at [johanna.morrison@ccd.edu](mailto:johanna.morrison@ccd.edu).

### Which classes can be taken for Honors credit?

Any transfer-level (100 prefix or higher) or certificate/degree-related course can be taken for Honors credit on an individual contract basis **with the instructor's approval**.

### Can I take an online course for Honors credit?

Any online transfer-level course offered by the Community College of Denver is eligible. Online courses offered by the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) are **not eligible**.

### Can I complete Honors for a course from a previous semester?

This is not an option for honors credit.

### Who is eligible to receive Honors credit for a class?

Any student can take a course for Honors credit; however, there are specific GPA requirements to formally complete the Honors Program (see below).

### How does a student receive Honors credit for a class?

Students and instructors agree upon specific work requirements over and above the regular work of the course and fill out a course contract. If the student successfully completes the course, with a letter grade of B or higher, and the Honors project, they will receive Honors credit for the class.

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## **When should I fill out the contract?**

Contracts should be filled out as soon as the project has been negotiated. The student should sign the contract, make a copy for their records, and give the original to the instructor who will make sure it is processed at the end of the semester. Verbal agreements are neither binding nor sufficient. A signed contract must be filled out.

## **Is there a minimum grade I have to earn to get Honors credit in a course?**

Students must earn a final grade of B or higher to earn Honors credit for a course.

## **What kind of work can earn Honors credit?**

Honors work must be clearly and directly tied to academic course work; it should require students to develop analytical, creative, and critical thinking skills, to gain insights, and to apply learned principles in specific areas; it should strongly emphasize verbal skills, including written work, oral presentations and group discussion; and it should provide students with an opportunity to develop research method skills. Honors work may take a variety of forms, including traditional course assignments (e.g., papers, presentations, projects) and service learning experiences.

## **What are the benefits of joining the Honors Program?**

The primary benefits are twofold. First, students are given a chance to greatly enrich their own educational experience through thoughtful, self-directed study. Second, students gain a valuable asset on their academic resume. Student transcripts will reflect the individual Honors courses and the overall completion of the Honors Program, providing recognition that will serve them as they transfer to other institutions, seek scholarships, and, eventually, pursue career goals.

## **Can I transfer my honors credits from CCD to a four-year college or university?**

CCD has an active articulation agree with Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSUD) which stipulates students can transfer up to 12 hours of honors course credit. In addition, students who complete their A.A. and the Honors Program at CCD are automatically admitted to MSUD's Honors Program upon submission of their final transcript.

## **What does it take to complete the Honors Program?**

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Students must complete a total of 15 credit hours of Honors courses (roughly 4-5 courses depending on your area of focus) AND have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or better to graduate with honors.

### **When should I fill out the Honors Program Graduation/Completion Form?**

The form should be completed the semester you plan to graduate. The deadline for inclusion in the Commencement program and ceremony is always the first Friday after Spring Break. Please see the Honors Program Completion Form for a specific date.

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### **What kind of formal recognition do Honors students receive?**

All courses taken for Honors credit will be identified as an “Honors Course” below the course title on transcripts. Students who complete the Honors Program will have the notation “Honors Program Completed” on their transcript. Those participating in the graduation ceremony will be awarded gold and purple cords at the Student Awards ceremony in April denoting them as Honors graduates. Students are privileged to wear these cords with their graduation regalia at CCD’s Commencement ceremony in May.

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## Honors Program Policies

**Admissions criteria to program:** No formal entry application or fee is necessary. **With the instructor's approval**, any CCD student registered for a transfer-level or degree-related course may attempt Honors work. Only those who meet the graduation requirements defined below will graduate with honors. Completed Honors contracts serve as official records of a student's active participation in the program.

### Criteria for honors work/credit:

- Honors work must be clearly and directly tied to academic course work. In most cases, this will mean being tied directly to a specific course being taken by the student. In some cases, (i.e., independent study options) this could also mean work which relates to a broader program of study (i.e., a specific certificate or degree program).
- Honors work should require students to develop analytical, creative, and critical thinking skills, to gain insights, and to apply learned principles in specific areas.
- Honors work should strongly emphasize verbal skills in performance criteria, including written work, oral presentations and group discussion. Students should perform and be evaluated on these skills as part of the grading criteria. These criteria should be clearly described in the honors contract. Simple "participation" in class/group activities should not satisfy these criteria.
- Honors work should provide students with an opportunity to develop research method skills. Research may include either secondary (e.g., library) research and/or primary (e.g., experimental, observation, survey, interview) research. Research requirements should be supported, as necessary, with instruction in appropriate methodology.
- It is the philosophy of the honors committee that for students in their first two years of college, the development of research skills is more important than the amassing of facts or subject content. Learning how to find answers is more useful than knowing answers.
- Honors work may take a variety of forms, including traditional course assignments (e.g., papers, presentations, and projects), service learning experiences, student activities experiences, and Phi Theta Kappa activities.

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## **Options for Earning Honors Credit:**

### **Honors Credit for Regular Courses (Individual Contract):**

This is the current and most common method for receiving honors credit. Individual students contract with instructors to do some form of honors work related to the course in order to receive honors credit for the course. As these arrangements are made between interested students and willing instructors, all programmatic courses at the college (i.e., courses which are transferable and/or apply towards a degree or certificate) could potentially be taken for honors credit. As long as the student and instructor agree upon the work which will be done to receive honors credit and that work meets the above criteria, the student can receive honors credit for that course. Instructors are not obliged, however, to provide students with an opportunity for honors work in regular courses.

### **Honors Independent Study Courses (Individual Contract):**

For students wishing to pursue honors work outside the context of a preexisting course, it may be possible to arrange for independent study credit. Students could pursue this option through a Service Learning experience, certain Phi Theta Kappa and Student Activities experiences, or through an arranged course of study with a program faculty member. As with all honors work, any such independent study must relate clearly and directly to academic course work. This could mean doing advanced or focused study in a specific area for which a comparable course is not offered (e.g., Native American Literature) or some form of broad based study relating to the degree or certificate program in which the student is engaged. Independent Study courses are numbered as 299, and credit hours can range from 1-6. The transcript record would look something like this: "LIT 299 Indep. Study: Native American Literature (Honors)". All Independent Study courses must be primarily developed and overseen by a faculty member in the relevant academic program area in collaboration with the Honors Coordinator and, as appropriate, with the advisor or coordinator of the relevant activity area (i.e., Service Learning, PTK, and Student Activities).

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## Individual Contracts:

All current forms of Honors credit require students to arrange and fulfill an individual contract with an instructor. The contract stipulates the work which will need to be done by the student and the criteria by which that work will be evaluated. **Students are responsible for filling out all sections of the contract. Verbal agreements are neither binding nor sufficient. Contracts must be signed by the student once the contract for honors is agreed upon. At that time, the original contract should be kept by the instructor until the end of the semester. Once the contract is completed the instructor should sign off and submit to the Honors Coordinator, Courtenay Avant, in Cherry Creek Classroom 307. In the case of Independent Study courses, the contract must also include a course syllabus.**

## Requirements for Completion of Program:

To formally complete the Honors Program, students must both:

- Maintain a minimum of a 3.5 cumulative GPA or higher
- Earn Honors Credit for a total of at least 15 credit hours of courses

## Formal Recognition for Honors Program Students

Students in the Honors Program will, at a minimum, receive the following forms of recognition from the College:

- Students will have the notation "Honors Course" added under the course title on their transcript for any individual course for which they have earned Honors Credit
- Students who complete the program will have an "Honors Program Completed" notation added to their transcript
- Students who complete the Honors program and who earn a Certificate or Degree will have the notation "Awarded with Honors" on their official transcript
- Graduating students who have completed the Honors Program will be recognized in the graduation program and may wear honorary chords as part of their regalia