



JOHN V. ROACH
HONORS COLLEGE



Departmental Honors: Overview of Goals and Duties

To earn Departmental Honors, students in the John V. Roach Honors College must complete a research or creative project in their major (or, with permission, in the student's minor or area of emphasis). Students design and carry out a research project or creative work under the guidance of a faculty mentor, typically over two semesters. Students enroll in designated Departmental Honors courses during these two semesters, earning 1-3 credit hours per course. Senior students present their projects in a public forum and publish their finished works in the archives of the Mary Coats Burnett Library.

As its name suggests, "Departmental Honors" is a collaborative partnership between academic departments (and their associated colleges and schools) and the John V. Roach Honors College. The principal duties of all partners in the Departmental Honors process – students, supervising professors, committee members, department chairs, and colleges and schools – are as follows:

Departmental Honors students

First steps

- Talk to your Honors advisor about your upper-division Honors options: Departmental Honors vs. University Honors
- Declare your intent to pursue Departmental Honors (via the Honors College survey and by telling your Honors advisor)
- Find a professor in your major who is willing to supervise your project; or, if you wish to pursue a project in your minor or area of emphasis, start by seeking permission from the unit head (department chair or program director), then, if permission is granted, find a professor in your minor or area of emphasis who is willing to supervise your project
- Talk to your supervising professor about the course requirements for Departmental Honors in their department or program

Phase 1 (typically during junior year or first semester of senior year)

- Enroll in the first required Departmental Honors course
- Work with your supervising professor to identify 1-2 committee members (the required number varies by unit)
- Submit a Departmental Honors Registration Form to the Honors College
- Complete the requirements for the first Departmental Honors course

Phase 2 (typically during second semester of senior year)

- Complete the requirements for the second Departmental Honors course
- Present your project in a public forum (in a venue and format determined by your college or school)
- Two weeks before final exam week, submit a complete working draft of your project to the Honors College (via the Honors College online submission system)
[Please note: the purpose of this deadline is to guarantee that faculty committees and students have at least two weeks to complete a final round of feedback and revision; however, the Honors College strongly encourages supervising professors to set earlier deadlines, to better facilitate the feedback/revision process.]
- On the Monday of final exam week, submit your final document to the Honors College (via the online submission system)

Supervising professors

- Help the student identify a meaningful and tractable topic, determine appropriate methods of inquiry, identify 1-2 additional committee members (the required number varies by unit), and develop a realistic timeline for completion
- Assist the student as necessary in securing IRB/IACUC approval for projects involving human/live animal subjects
- Help the student understand/enact the iterative *process* of inquiry by setting appropriate deadlines for completion of parts or drafts of the project and by providing timely feedback at each stage – and by establishing clear expectations about when work is to be shared with the full committee (vs. submitted only to the supervising professor)
- Advise the student on formal details of the final product: organizational structure, formatting conventions, and citation style (per the conventions of your discipline)
- Attend the public presentation of the student's project
- Two weeks before the final submission deadline, after the student submits a full working draft to the Honors College (via the online submission system), inspect the document to verify that a full working draft has indeed been submitted, then communicate your "yes" or "no" to the Honors College via the online system
- Before the deadline for final submission to the Honors College, provide final feedback on the student's penultimate draft (in collaboration with the other member(s) of the student's committee), then review the final revised version of the student's project to make sure the student has made a credible effort to address all faculty feedback
- During final exam week (no later than 5:00 pm Wednesday), after the student has submitted his or her final project to the Honors College, indicate your summary assessment – either to grant or deny approval – of the student's Departmental Honors work via the online system, along with any comments you wish to add
- Determine the student's course grade at the end of each semester's work, in consultation with the other member(s) of the student's committee

Committee members

- Help the student understand/enact the iterative process of inquiry by providing formative feedback at various stages of the project (per deadlines and expectations set by the supervising professor)
- Attend the public presentation of the student's project
- Two weeks before the final submission deadline, after the student submits a full working draft to the Honors College (via the online submission system), inspect the document to verify that a full working draft has indeed been submitted, then communicate your "yes" or "no" to the Honors College via the online system
- After the student submits the final project to the Honors College on the Monday of final exam week, review the document and then submit your comments and summary assessment – either to grant or deny approval of the student's Departmental Honors work – via the online system
- Provide input to the supervising professor regarding the student's course grade at the end of each semester's work

Department chairs

- Make sure the required sequence of Departmental Honors courses is clearly understood by students and faculty members in your unit
- Sign off on students' Departmental Honors Registration Forms, to ensure that the composition of each student's committee is consistent with departmental norms/guidelines and appropriate faculty workloads
- Maintain open communication with the Honors College, including suggestions of ways that Honors might better support Departmental Honors students and faculty mentors

Colleges and Schools

- Provide a public forum for student presentations (in a format determined by each college or school) during the spring semester but no later than the first week of April (in advance of Honors Week)
- Organize a process to determine which student(s) will represent the college or school in the final round of the annual Boller Award competition during Honors Week (a campus-wide competition for the best Departmental Honors presentation)¹
- Designate a faculty or staff liaison to communicate with the Honors College about the public forum for Departmental Honors presentations in the college or school and about the Boller Award process, including timely communication of the name(s) of the college or school's Boller Finalist(s) – no later than the Wednesday before Honors Week
- Designate one faculty member to serve as a judge (and a second faculty member to serve as an alternate judge) for the final round of the annual Boller Award competition during Honors Week

¹ Each college/school is represented by at least one student in the Boller Finals; additional slots are allocated – up to an overall limit of 12 – based on the number and composition of students completing Departmental Honors during that academic year.

John V. Roach Honors College

- Provides each department with updated lists of students who have declared an intent to pursue Departmental Honors
- Provides modest stipends to supervising professors
- Communicates general goals and expectations for all Departmental Honors projects
- Via the Honors College website, provides resources to assist students, faculty committees, and department chairs (sample projects, answers to FAQ, instructions for scheduling Departmental Honors courses, and other helpful documents)
- Works with colleges and schools to coordinate public presentations of students' work
- Welcomes faculty and student feedback on how to enhance the Departmental Honors process