



 **Lewis**  
Honors College

**Student Handbook**  
**2025-2026**

# Mission

The mission of the Lewis Honors College is to better the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the world by helping students to explore their purpose, develop intellectually, and lead with integrity.

# Vision

The Lewis Honors College will provide a world-class Honors experience that is known for the success of its students, the quality of its faculty and curriculum, the respect of its peers, and the economic and social progress of our communities.

# Values

The Lewis Honors College is guided by its core values designed to support many people, one community:

- ◇ Excellence
- ◇ Integrity
- ◇ Innovation
- ◇ Curiosity
- ◇ Mutual respect and human dignity for all and opposition to hatred of any person or group
- ◇ Support students from a range of backgrounds
- ◇ Academic freedom
- ◇ Personal accountability and social responsibility
- ◇ Bring together varied perspectives to foster a sense of community
- ◇ Civic engagement and service

# *Student Handbook Purpose*

In keeping with the ideals of our mission, vision, and values, the Lewis Honors College (LHC) provides students with services aimed to holistically support high-achieving students through a stimulating academic program with advising and personal counseling. Our curriculum is designed to complement a student's major areas of study and prepare them for success after graduation. Students participating in the Honors College both broaden and deepen their studies through Honors seminars, departmental Honors courses, and a variety of experiential options. Our team of dedicated advisors and counselors works closely with students to tailor their experience at the University of Kentucky so that they are prepared for success as they continue in their academic and career trajectories. This document is intended to provide students with guidelines for mutual expectations over their four years in the College. Students should always refer to the website for the most up-to-date information, expectations, and resources.

## Institutional Neutrality Policy

### **YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

The Lewis Honors College prioritizes the health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. We know that high-level performance and the pursuit of goals are only sustainable when you are rested, well-nourished, and mentally focused. We also understand the pressures students face and the many demands competing for your time and energy.

That's why we are intentional about creating courses and programs that support you—and make it easier for you to explore and fulfill your purpose.

Have an idea to improve the collective well-being of our College? Share it with the dean, associate dean, assistant dean, advisor, counselor, or faculty members. Tell us what you need—we're listening.

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## **ACADEMIC, INTEGRITY, AND COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS**

In order to earn University Honors and the Lewis Honors College Medallion, students complete a 30-hour Honors curriculum, maintain their academic integrity, and attain a 3.4 Cumulative GPA by graduation. The curriculum and all other requirements are outlined below.

### **CURRICULAR & ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

- HON 140 Honors Foundation Seminar (3 credits)
- CIS/WRD 112 Accelerated Writing & Composition (3 credits)
- Two Lower-Level Honors Courses (6 credits)
- Two Upper-Level Honors Courses (6 credits)
- Honors Elective (3 credits)
- Honors Experience Courses (6 credits)
- Honors Thesis, grade B or above (3 credits)
- 3.4 CGPA by graduation

**Most of your Honors requirements will also count towards your major or UK Core requirements. Work with your Honors advisor to make strategic choices about course selections.**

Students who enter as second- or third-year students via the upper-level admission process complete a shorter curriculum. Students who enter with an associate's degree may petition for a reduced curriculum.

### **HONORS FOUNDATION SEMINAR – HONORS 140 KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIETY**

As a foundational course to the Honors curriculum, Knowledge and Society takes a vested interest in helping students develop an appreciation for the pursuit of knowledge. By exploring the links between subjective and social phenomena, students will gain a clearer understanding of the way inquiry and curiosity are implicated in our familial, cultural, historical, linguistic, educational, and political worlds. This course aims to foster an environment where students are equipped with the tools to confidently discern the assumptions, premises and expectations of variant claims to knowledge and truth. Knowledge and Society is an invitation extended to students to (re)imagine themselves as agents in an interconnected and ever-expanding global context.

### **LOWER-LEVEL HONORS COURSES (6 HOURS)**

Lower-Level Honors courses are taught by Honors Faculty and have been created specifically for Honors students, typically in their first and second years (100 and 200 level). In addition, departments across the university offer sections of existing courses to Honors students. HON courses are for Honors students only, have a maximum enrollment of 25 students, and rely heavily on discussion. These courses are distinct in their focus on deep exploration of the subject and frequently in their interdisciplinary scope. Many Lower-Level Honors courses meet UK Core requirements and help the student progress toward graduation regardless of their major. Students should

consult the course descriptions published on our website for details about offerings each semester. This is particularly important given that topics change every semester, and different sections of the same course vary tremendously.

### **UPPER-LEVEL HONORS COURSES (6 HOURS)**

Upper-level Honors courses are taught by Honors Faculty and have been created specifically for Honors students, typically in their third and fourth year (300+ level). HON courses have (and departmental Honors sections usually have) a maximum enrollment of 25 students and rely heavily on discussion. Some courses provide UK Core credit; others can be used as major courses, electives, preparation for the Honors thesis, and experiential credit. Students should consult the course descriptions published each semester before registration opens on our website for details.

### **COURSE AGREEMENTS AND GRADUATE-LEVEL COURSES**

Students may further tailor their progression through Honors to meet their educational goals and fulfill Honors requirements by converting a current undergraduate course (200+ level) into a class that counts towards their Honors requirements with a Course Agreement or by taking a graduate-level course.

Honors Course Agreements allow a student to take a non-Honors course for Honors course credit by enhancing the experience with components that provide additional rigor, increased independence, and/or greater depth of study. In order to enter into a Course Agreement, students should ask the course instructor to help develop additional or alternative reading and/or assignments. The student then records the agreed-upon adjustments and outlines how the adjustments make the course Honors-worthy and relevant to their interests in the course agreement portal by the end of the second week of the semester. Our database will ask course instructors for approval.

Honors students can take 400G, 500-level and (with permission) 600-level courses to fulfill Honors Upper-Level course requirements if the student completes the graduate requirements of the course. As with Course Agreements, students should request to take graduate courses to count towards Honors via the course agreement portal by the end of the 2nd week of the semester.

### **HONORS EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION (6 HOURS)**

Honors experiences provide unique ways for Honors students to expand their horizons by conducting academic research, learning from professionals in their field, working with community service agencies, serving their communities in conjunction with learning goals, or by immersing themselves in other cultures around the world. All education abroad courses, internships taken for credit, most undergraduate research experiences, and some service-learning courses satisfy this requirement.

Credit for Honors experiences must be earned through credit-bearing courses. Many majors require such courses. A pre-approved list organized by major can be found [here](#). Students should work with their Honors advisor and CPD Counselor to find opportunities that align with their interests and goals. Six credit hours of Honors Experience credit are required. Please review the [Honors Experiential Education handout](#).

### **HONORS ELECTIVE (3 HOURS)**

Honors students can fulfill the Honors Elective requirement by taking any Honors course at any level, a graduate course, experiential education, or by entering into a Course Agreement. Students will work closely with their Honors advisor to ensure the elective course supports their exploration of purpose, intellectual development, and leadership.

### **HONORS THESIS (3 HOURS)**

The Honors thesis provides a culmination to an Honors student's academic career. The Honors thesis should be an outgrowth of the student's academic work, rooted in their chosen discipline, in most cases in the student's major or minor. Some students prepare for their thesis with 3 hours of research, independent study, or methodology courses within their major. Theses take very different forms across the university, and follow the norms and parameters of the students' major discipline. Many majors have a capstone or thesis course that the student can take and use to complete the thesis requirement. Other majors support independent research and faculty supervision of individual projects. In cases where a student has multiple majors, minors, or interdisciplinary interests that are not captured in a major or minor, the student can work with a faculty member to identify a topic that is supported by their academic work. The Honors thesis offers an opportunity - along with the responsibility - for a student to work with a faculty member on a research or creative project that integrates and expands on previous work. The Honors thesis will incorporate relevant, current research/previous work and demonstrate excellence in its design, execution, analysis, and presentation. All students must submit an Honors thesis proposal to our thesis portal to be approved by the faculty member advising the project. All students must provide both a written artifact to the thesis portal and report completion of a thesis presentation.

**"Getting a head start on your thesis is as simple as talking to a faculty member in the field you are interested. Find out why they love what they do and then see if there is room in their research (lab, project, what have you) for you to participate. You could earn 3 of your 6 credits of required honors experience just by working in their lab or on their research, learning about the field and your own interests at the same time."  
-Associate Dean James**

After successful completion of the Honors thesis a student will be able to:

1. Clearly identify a project goal and/or problem and articulate a subsequent research question/hypothesis or creative objective.
2. Discover and evaluate existing research/previous work relevant to a project of interest.
3. Formulate a plan to achieve desired research or creative goals, while identifying opportunities to make improvements throughout the process.
4. Recognize the importance of meeting established goals and/or deadlines.
5. Demonstrate a command of relevant scholarship/creativity and offer a rationale for the work's contributions to a discipline in an appropriate manner in the form of a written and an oral component.

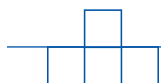
Students must earn a grade of an A or B on both their Honors thesis (or equivalent artifact, depending on the student's home department requirements) and in the course associated with the thesis in order to graduate with University Honors.

The Lewis Honors College strongly encourages students to share their thesis work by uploading their completed thesis text into [UKnowledge](#) and participating in the Fall Honors Thesis Showcase or the Spring [Undergraduate Research Showcase](#).

Students interested in seeing examples of UK Honors theses should explore the holdings in UKnowledge.

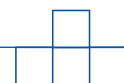
## **INTEGRITY**

Membership in Lewis Honors College is an honor and a privilege for students and comes with a host of benefits. To participate fully and utilize all the advantages the College has to offer, students must uphold all LHC expectations and requirements, as well as those of the University at large. All Honors students abide by the [University Academic Policy of Integrity](#), the [University Code of Student Conduct](#) and the Lewis Honors College Pledge of Excellence.



### *Lewis Honors College Pledge of Excellence*

"As a member of the Lewis Honors College I dedicate myself to intellectual inquiry, life-long learning, and critical thinking. I pledge to demonstrate personal and academic integrity both inside and outside the classroom. I pledge to always be willing to engage my peers in earnest and respectful discussion with an open mind."



An Honors student will be dismissed from the Lewis Honors College if found responsible of an academic integrity violation that:

- Rises to the level of being recorded by the Registrar or,
- Leads to suspension or is recorded on their unofficial transcript

All due process and appeals available through the University Appeals Board and the Office of Student Conduct will be upheld. Students dismissed from the Lewis Honors College will not receive a refund on their Honors fee.

## **REQUIRED CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE**

Honors students are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher. Honors students whose CGPA has fallen below 3.4 but above 3.0 at the end of the academic year will be placed on Academic Support. Honors students whose CGPA has fallen below 3.0 at the end of the academic year will be dismissed from the Honors College (but will have the option to appeal). In order to graduate with University Honors, a student must have a cumulative GPA of a 3.4 or higher at the completion of their degree.

## **GRADUATING WITH UNIVERSITY HONORS**

Students who complete all Lewis Honors College requirements graduate with the distinction of the Lewis Honors College degree on their UK transcript. Students also receive an Honors Medallion and are invited to participate in the Honors Medal Ceremony prior to graduation. They are also eligible for several graduation awards.

## **GRADUATION AWARDS**

The following graduation awards are presented at the Spring Honors Medal Ceremony. Students expecting to graduate in December are eligible to be nominated for the graduation awards presented in the Spring semester before they graduate.

### **Raymond Betts Crystal Award**

Awarded to an Honors student for outstanding service to the Lewis Honors College and the University of Kentucky community at large. Students must be nominated by student peers, faculty, or staff.

### **Diachun Award**

Awarded to a graduating senior who has demonstrated outstanding research talent in the form of his/her thesis and coursework and who holds high promise for further professional development in graduate school. This \$1,000 award is to be used for expenses in graduate or professional school. Students must be nominated by student peers, faculty, or staff.

## **Leadership Award**

Awarded to a graduating senior who has excelled in leadership positions at the university, college, or major level. Students must be nominated by student peers, faculty, or staff.

## **Diachun Scholar**

The graduating senior, majoring in science or a related field, who has the highest academic achievement will be named the Diachun Scholar. Selection is based on GPA and course rigor at the end of December before the graduating year. Other academic accomplishments may be given consideration, including academic achievements (such as election to Phi Beta Kappa or Sigma Xi), scholarships such as the Rhodes Scholarship or the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, recommendations from thesis advisors, and breadth of intellectual interest (including courses in the humanities). The recognition includes a monetary award of \$3,000, which can be spent at the recipient's discretion.

## **Evans Scholar**

The graduating senior, majoring in humanities or a related field, who has the highest academic achievement will be named the Evans Scholar. Selection is based on GPA and course rigor at the end of December before the graduating year. Other academic accomplishments may be given consideration, including academic achievements (i.e., election to Phi Beta Kappa or Sigma Xi), scholarships such as the Rhodes Scholarship or the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, recommendations from thesis advisors, and breadth of intellectual interest (such as courses in the sciences). The recognition includes a monetary award of \$3,000, which can be spent at the recipient's discretion.

Nominations for Graduation Awards can be made [here](#).

## **OUR HONORS COMMUNITY REQUIRES YOUR PARTICIPATION**

The Lewis Honors College strives to cultivate a distinctive and supportive Honors community made up of people with different backgrounds and experiences who can feel valued among their peers.

Experiencing meaningful engagement is important to student success. We also aim to foster a community within the University where difficult and challenging conversations can be held with integrity and respect. Honors Faculty and staff should exemplify openness and respect to students, and should demonstrate how to disagree on important topics while being respectful to one another. We believe that open conversations are essential to a vibrant intellectual community.

The Lewis Honors College is committed to providing opportunities for student involvement and development throughout their career. From the moment students set foot on campus until they graduate with Honors, we provide a community-oriented learning environment that engages students in enriching experiences. The Lewis Honors College first-year experience begins with early move-in to the Honors Residential Experience and orientation at Lewis Launch. Then the College facilitates the student's introduction to the Center for Personal Development and to their own dedicated Honors advisor. Every semester, the Lewis Honors College hosts a variety of events to complement students' academic, professional, co-curricular, and well-being interests. Students may choose how and when to engage with these opportunities, and their participation takes many forms. Some students will develop their leadership skills by taking on College-supported roles such as Peer Mentors or HCATS. Others may choose to become involved in other parts of campus. Honors students are expected to be citizens of their University and their world, and to possess an inquisitive attitude toward a wide range of ideas and intellectual concepts. We count on all students to open the weekly *Compendium* enewsletter, attend events and get engaged in activities of interest, help us improve by coming to Town Halls and taking our surveys. We encourage you: Join a club... Ask a question... Apply for a grant... Study Abroad with other Honors Students... Find your own way of making a positive impact... Wear your Lewis Honors College Medallion to Commencement.

We are here to serve you, but can only do it when you get involved and tell us what you need.

## **BENEFITS OF HONORS AND SERVICES WE PROVIDE**

### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Individual academic advising is a benefit of membership in the LHC. Honors advisors strive to support the intellectual and personal development of Honors students through both individual advising appointments and group programming. Advisors seek to foster student success through personalized academic planning that helps students make the most out of their Lewis Honors College experience.

### **Academic Advising Meetings**

Students should schedule both major and Honors advising meetings well in advance of priority registration. Advising Holds are lifted by primary/major academic advisors upon completion of the major advising meeting. Honors advisors reserve the right to issue an Honors Progression Hold if a student has not completed the Honors Plan by the conclusion of their third semester in Honors.

Honors students should adhere to the following appointments:

**First Year:** both fall and spring semesters in advance of filing the Honors Plan

**Second Year:** at least once to review Honors plan, including experiential education goals

**Third and Fourth Year:** at least once each year to discuss Honors progress and Thesis completion

As a result of participation in Honors Academic Advising, students will be able to:

- Understand the Honors curriculum and overlap with University and major requirements
- Identify opportunities for credit-bearing experiential learning opportunities
- Develop a plan for completing the Honors curriculum and thesis alongside major requirements
- Articulate how selected Honors courses contribute to one's academic and professional goals

Supplemental documents include:

- [Honors Curriculum Plan](#)
- [Honors Bridge](#)
- Honors BLUEprint

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

### Center for Personal Development

The LHC's Center for Personal Development (CPD) is a unique and holistic resource offering individual appointments and collegewide events. The mission of the center is to partner with students in their exploration of purpose by cultivating well-being, leadership development, and career readiness. Each Honors student is paired with a CPD counselor to form a collaborative partnership to reach their goals. Students meet with counselors regarding topics such as:

Stress management  
Time management  
Career assessment  
Job search strategy  
Interviewing skills

Confidence/self-esteem  
Public speaking  
Career decision-making  
Grad school strategy  
Networking strategy

Setting boundaries  
Nonverbal impact  
Experiential education  
Resume/CV  
And more...

All first-year students should meet with their CPD counselor at least once during the year in the Honors College. Counselors aim to establish a relationship and consider the unique short and long-term goals of each student. They work in conjunction with Honors academic advisors to provide additional support that goes beyond a student's academic course of study. The Honors BLUEprint (available on Canvas) can provide a structure for setting goals with your counselor.

Collegewide events and programs offered by the CPD include opportunities to further develop professionalism, leadership skills, and well-being strategies. Students can access the schedule on the Lewis Honors College [website](#) and on [Handshake](#).

Students are notified of their counselor assignment by email and can see their information through MyUK GPS as well. The CPD is located within the LHC and is open on weekdays between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Our team is available for appointments in-person or on Zoom. Appointments are scheduled using [Handshake](#). Instructions for utilizing Handshake to make appointments are located [here](#).

### **Honors Residential Experience**

The [Honors Residential Experience](#) provides students the opportunity to live among like-minded peers who are intellectually curious and prioritize their studies, well-being, and community. Honors housing provides students with opportunities for engagement in programs that are holistic in nature – attending to all facets of well-being (intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, environmental, financial, occupational, and emotional). Students in this distinctive community enjoy opportunities to engage with faculty, staff, and guest speakers during interdisciplinary programs. Residents also have access to a relaxation room designed specifically for high-achieving students. The goal is for members to become lifelong learners as they aspire to live a balanced life in their communities and society beyond the University of Kentucky experience.

### **Leadership Opportunities**

Providing leadership development and opportunities for Honors students is central to the mission of the Lewis Honors College. There are [multiple roles](#) available to students that are focused on key programs provided throughout the Honors student lifecycle, such as Honors College Ambassador Team, Lewis Launch Leader, Peer Mentor, and Lewis Liaison. In addition, the Honors College offers the [Rising Leaders Program](#) which is designed to engage Honors students from all academic majors in an experiential leadership development program. Additional details about leadership opportunities are located on the LHC [website](#).

### **PRIORITY REGISTRATION**

All Honors students qualify for priority registration and will have access to the course booking window earlier than the majority of the University of Kentucky undergraduates. This benefit enables students to be intentional about their course selections in support of the mission of the Lewis Honors College.

## **GRANTS AND AWARDS**

Applications can be found on the Honors College [website](#). Student grant funds will be awarded based on the strength of the application, level of financial assistance currently being distributed to the student, and need relative to the cost of the program or experience that the student is applying for. Please keep in mind while creating your application that we wish to provide an opportunity for all Honors students to engage in learning outside of the classroom.

There are three main categories for funding: 1) Undergraduate Research and Travel Grants, 2) Experiential Learning Grants, and 3) Education Abroad Funding. All use the same application form, [here](#).

## **THE FINE PRINT**

### **FEE**

Students enrolled in Lewis Honors College are charged a semesterly fee of \$250. These fees support the work of the college in many different ways (programming, courses, Center for Personal Development, Advising, and so on). Fees are waived for students who are Pell-grant eligible. Students withdrawing from Honors must complete the [Withdrawal Form](#) by the last day of add/drop to receive a refund of the fee for the current semester.

### **WITHDRAWING FROM HONORS**

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the Lewis Honors College at any time by completing a Withdrawal Form, located on the [Academic Forms](#) page on the Honors College website. On the form, students will be asked to submit the following information: 1) student name; 2) student ID number; 3) email address; 4) college and major; and, 5) reason for their withdrawal.

Students will be contacted by their Honors advisor to confirm the submission of their request. Students should be aware that communication from the LHC may continue for up to two weeks after their request is processed.

Withdrawal will result in the student losing access to all LHC benefits, including enrollment in any HON courses for the upcoming semester and priority registration. Credit earned in Honors classes prior to withdrawal will remain on a student's transcript and count towards their GPA and degree requirements. As mentioned above, students must submit their withdrawal form by the last day of the add/drop period in order to receive a refund on their Honors fee for the current semester.