

Honors College

The University of South Alabama Honors College offers a curriculum of interdisciplinary excellence designed to stimulate the analytical and critical thinking of exceptionally qualified and highly motivated students. To do so, the USA Honors College challenges these students with scholarly creative activities, exposes them to cultural enrichment, and requires them to engage in community service. The USA Honors College aspires to instill in students the intellectual excitement to prepare them for productive careers and citizenship.

Within the context and diversity of a midsize urban university, the Honors College provides the academic and cultural atmosphere one expects of a small, personal campus community of excellence.

Three Honors College options are available at the University of South Alabama, 1) Whiddon Research Scholars enter a four-year program resulting in a senior research thesis and the designation on the transcript and at graduation of "University Honors College;" 2) Departmental programs resulting in the designation of "Departmental Honors" on the transcript in selected majors or or 3) Focus tracks resulting in a senior capstone project and the designation of "Honors in _____".

Program Description

The University Honors College includes honors course work and extracurricular activities throughout the four years of a student's undergraduate career. In addition to general university curriculum requirements and degree requirements of the selected major, USA Honors students also complete enriched honors core courses, honors seminars and an Honors Senior Thesis/Project. A cornerstone of the program is that each student will be assigned a faculty mentor chosen from the student's major department, or suggested by the Honors College until a major has been identified, who will direct the student through the research and scholarly experience that will culminate in an Honors Senior Thesis/Project. Mentors will be outstanding faculty of the University. Honors classes are small, limited to 15 students, and are taught by the University's most stimulating faculty.

In addition to a challenging academic curriculum, the USA Honors College offers a variety of activities that extend learning beyond the classroom, including social and cultural events and community service projects. Honors Students are encouraged to participate in international programs and off-campus internship opportunities.

Students who complete the requirements of both the USA Honors College and of the selected major with a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher (overall and in the major) will receive the designation "University Honors", "Departmental Honors" or "Honors in _____" on the transcript and the diploma, depending upon which of the three options they participate in. These requirements apply to all students accepted into the University Honors College. Students transferring from honors programs of other institutions may petition to receive credit for honors work completed elsewhere. All courses completed for honors credit will be so indicated on the student's official transcript.

Qualifications For Consideration For The USA Honors College

High school seniors with a minimum 27 ACT Composite (or comparable SAT score) and a minimum 3.5 high school grade-point average (4.0 system) (as computed by the University of South Alabama) are invited to apply. USA students and transfer students who have completed no more than 30 semester hours with an overall grade-point average of 3.5 (4.0 system) are also eligible to apply to the program. Students without the above qualifications can submit an application package and documentation of evidence of their special qualifications for review by the Honors Admissions Committee. Transfer students applying for admission to the University Honors College should indicate any credit earned in other honors programs.

Procedure To Apply For The USA Honors College Whiddon Scholarship

1. Complete an application for admission to the University of South Alabama and submit it to the Office of Admissions with the nonrefundable processing fee.
2. Request that your high school counselor mail an official copy of your high school transcript to the USA Office of Admissions OR request that an official transcript from your college/university registrar be sent to the USA Office of Admissions.
3. Request your official ACT or SAT results be sent to the USA Office of Admissions.
4. After admission to the university, complete and submit the University of South Alabama Honors College/Whiddon Scholarship Application Form (one application) in JagSPOT: (https://southalabama.academicworks.com/users/sign_in). You will need your university I.D. number and university e-mail address password to sign in.
5. Arrange for two (2) letters of recommendation from individuals who can comment on your intellectual capabilities and personal characteristics such as independent thinking, motivation, creativity, and willingness to be academically challenged. Follow instructions in JagSPOT for letters of recommendation submission.

6. Complete an essay on a topic specified annually by the USA Honors College. The topic can be found in this brochure, in the Honors application, and may be requested from the Honors College Office at (251) 461-1637.
7. Participate in an interview with the Honors Admissions Committee if selected for final consideration to be admitted to the Honors College. Honors College/Whiddon Scholarship application with essay and two letters of recommendation must be submitted in JagSPOT (https://southalabama.academicworks.com/users/sign_in) by the annual published deadline date of the 1st Friday in December.

Incomplete applications will not be considered

Qualifications To Maintain Status As A USA Honors Student

University Honors Students must maintain satisfactory progress in the Honors Curriculum to remain in the Honors College. A minimum of 15 hours of enrolled credit per semester is required for scholarship recipients unless otherwise indicated in the scholarship award. Required overall grade-point averages for Honors Students are 3.0 after the freshman year, 3.25 after the sophomore year, and 3.5 after the junior year and throughout completion of the requirements for the Honors Degree. A student may be placed on honors probation for a period of one semester if the required GPA is not achieved and must attain the required GPA at the end of the probationary semester in order to return to full status in the Honors College.

Honors students are expected to participate in community and campus service projects and to attend cultural and scholarly events on campus and in the community. These activities will be facilitated by the Honors College Office and mentors. Participation may be as a group or in individually focused activities. If a student does not actively participate, then she or he may be put on Honors probation and/or removed from the Honors College.

By the junior year, each Honors Student will identify a suitable faculty mentor and will design and implement an Honors Senior Thesis/Project. The project represents a scholarly effort appropriate to the major, including a significant component of investigation and written presentation. Juniors will prepare a prospectus of their project prior to initiating the project. The two-semester Senior Thesis/Project will total 6.00 credit hours - 3.00 credit hours for each of the two semesters of the graduating senior's culminating academic year at USA. Graduating Honors seniors will present their Honors Senior Thesis/Project at a defense before their committee in a professional format suitable for the project and discipline (e.g., an exhibition, research presentation or poster, or performance). The senior thesis/project will be evaluated and graded by a committee of three faculty members and chaired by the honors project mentor and must be approved by the Dean of the Honors College in order to graduate with an Honors designation.

Departmental Honors College

A second honors option is available in many departments throughout the Colleges of the University of South Alabama. This option may be particularly suitable for transfer students, or others, who have completed significant credits toward graduation before deciding to pursue an honors degree, and for whom completing the entire University Honors curriculum would not be practical. To receive a designation of "Departmental Honors," students must successfully complete an Honors Senior research thesis in their major, have at least a 3.5 GPA, and meet the specific honors requirements of their major department. These students may also elect to take Honors Seminars and participate in other University Honors College activities upon the recommendation of their major advisor. The Dean of the Honors College must approve all Departmental Honors graduation designations.

Please consult departmental sections of the Bulletin for any additional honors requirements specific to your major.

Other Non-Research Tracks

In addition to the research focus track (Whiddon Scholarship), new tracks are being created for the Honors College. These tracks will have a theme and enriched experiential learning activities leading to a senior Capstone Project. A modified honors curriculum will be available appropriate to each theme. Themes will include departmental honors, health professions and global engagement. Other themes are being developed and will include other areas and topics. Students not selected for the research focused Whiddon Scholarship may be invited to participate in the Honors College as part of a non-research track. Others not wishing to be considered for the research experience can choose to be considered for track admission only. All students selected and admitted to a non-research track will receive only their Presidential Scholarship award. Switching from a research Whiddon Scholarship to a non-research track is not allowed once a student has begun matriculating. Application to a focus track does not require use of JagSPOT. An abbreviated application requiring both an essay and recommendation letters can be completed from the Honors web page. All materials are due by the first Friday of March and should be directly submitted to the Honors College office. No campus interview is required.

Other Honors Options

For transfer students, or others, who have completed significant credits toward graduation, the specific curriculum requirements for the Honors Degree may be impracticable. Additionally, other non-honors students may find certain honors courses desirable while being unable to commit to the entire honors curriculum. Options available in these cases include enrollment in specific

honors courses (indicated on the transcript as honors credit) with permission of the instructor and the Honors College Dean when space is available, and/or pursuing and completing an appropriate Honors Senior Project. Students interested in these options should consult with the Honors College Dean and their major advisor.

University Honors Curriculum Requirements

The following courses, or a substitute approved by the Honors College Dean, must be completed with a grade of "C" or better, in addition to general studies requirements and specific requirements of the major department, to graduate with University Honors recognition. Transfer students may petition to receive credit for honors courses taken elsewhere. High School AP and IBP credits may not substitute for Honors required courses.

Honors Requirements	Credit Hours
HON 101, 105 or 111, Honors Freshman Experience (Required in first semester)*	1
HON 201 or 211, Honors Sophomore Experience	1
Two (2) Upper-level Honors Seminars (Variable content)	6
HON 301 or 311, Introduction to Honors Senior Project (taken in the Junior Year)	1
**Honors Senior Thesis/Project (may count toward major)	6
*Honors Electives selected from any Honors courses (only 3 hours may be from major)	9
Total	24
* Not required of transfer students or USA students who have completed at least 15 semester hours with a 3.0 or greater GPA.	
** Student should determine early in their program the requirements in their major.	

Honors Seminars are special topics courses, and a variety are available each fall and spring semester for students to make their selection. Topics are generally not repeated or are repeated infrequently. When appropriate, Honors Seminars may be approved by an academic advisor for general studies credit, in addition to satisfying an Honors College requirement.

The Honors Electives requirements can be satisfied by taking any courses offered for Honors credit (courses with "Honors" in the title or an "H" suffix) or by "contracting" Honors credit for non-honors course work such as courses that satisfy general education requirements at USA.

USA Education/Study Abroad

Honors College students are encouraged to participate in an international experience through study, research, internship or work abroad. Honors students should seriously consider applying for one of the many international prestigious scholarship programs such as the Goldman Sachs Global Leaders Program, Winston Churchill Foundation Scholarship, George J. Mitchell Scholarship, Rhodes Scholarship, Fulbright Student Grants, Gates Cambridge, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarships and NSEP Boren Scholarship and Gilman Scholarship. For more information contact your Honors advisor and the Office of International Education.

Descriptions Of All Honors (HON) Courses