



Honors Contracts

FAQs for Students

Fall 2023

What are Honors Contracts?

Honors Contracts are projects Honors Students can undertake in any LMC college level course. If the student completes the Honors Contract, the accomplishment is noted on her/his/their transcript and counts towards Honors Program requirements. Under a professor's supervision and guidance, the student conceives of a project which goes *above and beyond the regular coursework*. This project should relate to the skills and knowledge being taught in the class but take it to a more advanced level. The Honors Contract project should take about *25 extra hours*. This includes all the time researching, writing and meeting with their professor.

What kinds of projects can be done?

Any project that relates to the subject area can be approved – creativity is encouraged! The kinds of projects that have been approved in the past include:

- Research Project/Paper
- Demonstration of an advanced skill
- Creative Work (painting, film etc.)
- Class Presentations
- Service/Community Based Learning Project

The main question the Honors Board asks when evaluating proposals is *how does this project supplement and advance the skills and knowledge of the course?* The [Honors website](#) has many resources.

The Honors Contract Process Overview

To do an Honors Contract, the student needs to develop a proposal which outlines the work to be done. This proposal must be approved by the professor to indicate their approval of the project and is submitted to the Honors Board which will conduct a thorough review. Here is the general process:

1. Attend the Honors Contract Workshop & start generating a basic project idea
2. Approach Professor and begin honing idea in collaboration with the Honors Director
3. **Submit the Honors Director Approval form by 11:59pm on Sunday, September 3.**
4. Develop Proposal Rough Draft – get input
5. **Submit the Online Final Honors Proposal form by Noon on Thursday, September 14.**
6. Revise if necessary or get to work
7. Follow plan & complete project

Honors Contract Proposal Development Timeline

STEP ONE: Initial Project Development with the Mentoring Faculty Member & Honors Director Approval **Deadline for Student Submission: *Sunday, September 3 at 11:59PM.***

First the Honors Student should approach their professor, obtain their agreement to mentor the project, and start discussing the project's focus. It is the professor's prerogative to assess the student's ability to succeed in the Contract when deciding whether they want to commit to the extra time it will take. Then by the end of the second week of classes, the student needs to get the Honors Director's approval for the project. This is done via an online form the student fills out which includes their rough idea for the project along with information about their other academic commitments for the semester. The professor will receive a copy in the email the student provides.

STEP TWO: Final Proposal Development **Deadline for Student Submission: *Thursday, September 14, at NOON.***

Once the Honors Director has approved development of an Honors Contract proposal, the professor and student will continue collaborating to come up with the basic idea for the project. It is the student's responsibility to develop and submit their Honors Contract Proposal. *They will be asked to forward an email or provide a cover sheet signature from the professor indicating their willingness to mentor the project and their approval of its academic plan.*

STEP THREE: Honors Board Review

The Honors Advisory Board then closely reviews the Proposal and ranks it either "Approved", "Approved with Minor Revision", "Needs Revision" or "Not Approved". The main criteria the Board uses to judge proposals by are:

- **Clarity:** Is it clear exactly WHAT the student proposes to do, HOW s/he/they will do it, what the OUTCOMES of the project will be, and what the TIMELINE for the project is?
- **Academic Relevance and Quality:** Does the project clearly relate to and supplement the content/skills of the course? Are the intellectual and academic demands of the project of sufficient caliber to merit Honors Credit?
- **Feasibility:** Is this project really do-able in the 25-hour time frame?

You will hear back from the Honors Board by Friday, September 22.

Honors Board Review

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- **Clarity:** Is it clear exactly WHAT the student proposes to do, HOW s/he is going to do it, what the OUTCOMES of the project will be, and what the TIMELINE for the project is?
- **Academic Relevance and Quality:** Does the project clearly relate to and supplement the content/skills of the course? Are the intellectual and academic demands of the project of sufficient caliber to merit Honors Credit?
- **Feasibility:** Is this project really do-able in the 25-hour time frame?

Tips for a Strong Proposal

- **Highest quality work.** No typos. Meet deadlines.
- **Make the basics clear**
 - WHAT will you do?
 - WHY are you doing this? What question are you trying to answer? What skill are you trying to develop?
 - What OUTCOME will there be to your project? What evidence will there be that the work has been completed. Quantify and give details!
 - What METHOD will you use?
 - What is the TIMELINE for your project? Break it down.
 - What RESOURCES have you already located that will assist you in this project
- **Choose an idea that is the right size**
- **Be sure the project relates to and supplements the course material.** It's OK to be creative but remember to keep the focus on your academic goal!
- **Demonstrate that you have already thought about this and done your initial research.**
- **Avoid "book report" type projects.** This isn't about regurgitating information, but rather synthesizing it, creating something new, or looking at things from a unique perspective.

How are Honors Contracts Graded?

The Honors Contract is graded on a "Pass/No Pass" basis and will in no way affect the student's grade in the course. (The grade in the course is based on the same assignments and criteria as all the other students.) Successful completion of the Honors Contract will result in the student's receiving honors credit for the course on her/his transcript and a certificate noting the accomplishment. *Note that the student must receive a "C" or better in the course for Honors credit.*

Can I drop out of the Honors Contract?

Honors students may drop out of the Honors Contract obligation at any time during the semester, however if this occurs twice, the student's membership in the Honors Program will be reviewed by the Honors Board.

Can I get an Incomplete in the Honors Contracts? The Honors Contract MUST be completed before the end of the semester; there are no "incompletes" allowed for honors contracts. However, in the case that the student receives an "incomplete" in the overall course in accordance with college guidelines, the student shall be permitted time to complete the Honors Contract along with the course.

What are the most common pitfalls for students?

- **Students often choose a project that is way too BROAD in its ambitions.** Often they want to answer a question or complete a task that is far too big for a 25-hour project.
- **Students often procrastinate and then get in over their heads towards the end of the semester.** LMC Professors who've experienced a lot of success with Honors Contracts report that by setting deadlines and requiring tangible outcomes along the way helps keep students on track.
- **Honors Contract Proposals are often too vague or are poorly written.** Intellectual superficiality, grammar/spelling mistakes or weak prose make a huge impression on the Honors Board reviewers. They take seriously their role as quality control for the Program and only approve Honors Contracts which meet high academic standards.