



*Honors
Program
Handbook*

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

PORTLAND • OREGON



Honors Program Handbook

Concordia University - Portland, Oregon

This handbook provides information for Honors Program students and others interested in understanding the principles and practices that guide the Honors Program at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon.

I. Honors Program Mission Statement:

The Honors Program seeks to create, together with highly motivated students, an on-going community of learners that will create leaders for church and community characterized by their love of learning, devotion to excellence and commitment to service as an extension of and in service toward the stated mission of Concordia University. Concordia University's Mission Statement: "Concordia is a Christian University preparing leaders for the transformation of society."

II. Honors Program Profile:

Concordia University is one of hundreds of universities with Honors Programs, many in small, liberal arts colleges with a religious commitment and heritage. Concordia's Honors Program is a member of The National Collegiate Honors Council, an organization of faculty, students and administrators committed to honors education.

The Honors Program widens the appeal of Concordia University, attracting students with higher demonstrated academic aptitude and achievement.

The Honors Program has a strong record of retaining students many of whom serve the university in leadership positions while they are still students. These experiences prepare future leaders who will transform the societies in which they find themselves.

The Honors Program provides highly motivated students with a heightened collegiate experience at Concordia, socially and academically. Evaluations of the existing Honors courses have demonstrated that the students found their experiences in these courses to be academically rigorous and overwhelmingly positive.

The Honors Program helps build a community of learners. It allows students to challenge one another, a critical component in learning both inside and outside the classroom. It also provides for a superlative teaching experience, one in which new approaches to teaching and learning might be developed. Finally the Honors courses provide an occasion for implementing innovative technological initiatives and pedagogical strategies which might be transported to other courses in the curriculum, including non-Honors courses.

The Honors Program contributes to greater public visibility for Concordia University and enhances its academic profile in the Pacific Northwest.

III. Honors Program Goals:

The Honors Program will

1. provide an academic challenge for gifted and highly motivated students;
2. raise the academic profile of the student body and model the notion of Concordia University as a vibrant learning community;
3. serve as a pilot venue for innovative pedagogical methods and new technologies that will benefit all students;
4. encourage students to take advantage of leadership opportunities on campus;
5. provide extra-curricular activities that are intellectually and socially enriching, activities open to members of the Concordia community from all colleges and majors.

IV. Honors Program Desired Student Outcomes:

In addition to meeting Concordia University's General Education Desired Student Outcomes in a distinguished manner, the Honors Program seeks to create a community of learners in the following ways. The Honors Program will

1. promote complex critical thinking skills, including the ability to appreciate paradox and irony;
2. develop highly crafted communication skills in a variety of modes of communication that embody the notion that learning is a dialogical activity;
3. model the idea of servant leadership, incorporating the highest ethical ideals of the university;
4. exemplify the principle of experiential learning both inside and outside the classroom (e. g. using the community as an organic part of classes and extra-curricular activities, known as the *City as Text* concept);

5. enhance awareness of citizenship in the Global Village and promote involvement in social justice activities;
6. promote disciplined learning as well as synthesis of information from a variety of academic fields;
7. envision learning as a natural human endeavor and promote curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities across all colleges and majors.

V. Admission to the Honors Program:

1. Admission to the Honors Program is **highly competitive** and the number of positions available is limited to 25 incoming freshmen each year. The applications receiving highest consideration by the Admissions Committee will be **complete and submitted early**. Nursing students are not eligible for admission into the Honors Program due to the cohort nature of both programs.
2. Students may access **information about the Honors Program** from the program's website: <http://cu-portland.edu/admissions/honors/> Incoming freshmen students will be considered for admission in the Honors program if they meet the following minimum test score and GPA standards:

1725 combined SAT and/or 26 ACT
3.65 high school GPA on a 4.0 scale

3. Invited students should submit their application for the Honors Program no later than March 1 for consideration for Fall semester admission. The application includes the **on-line application form**, an **official transcript** of the student's academic work (if one has been submitted with the original application to Concordia University, it is not necessary to submit a second transcript), a **personal essay** (see item 4 below) and at least **two letters of recommendation**, at least one of which should specifically address admission into the Honors Program and be written by a teacher who has had the student in class. Admission decisions will be based on academic record, test scores, personal essay and letters of recommendation. The Admissions Committee seeks to select students who show promise of fulfilling Concordia University's Mission Statement.
4. **Guidelines for Personal Essay:** In an essay of 500 words (typed, double spaced), please describe the academic, social and spiritual qualities of the ideal university you would like to attend. Consider the following questions as you write your essay (though you should not answer these questions in a mechanical manner): What does this ideal university "look like" and "feel like"? What is the role of teachers? Of students? What is YOUR role? What is the place of the university in the community? The Honors Program Admissions Committee is looking for substance and creativity

in responses. This essay is a way to let the Honors Admissions Committee know “who you are.”

In certain cases, applicants may opt for an on-campus, personal interview with the Honors Program Director in lieu of submitting a personal essay. Contact the Honors Program Director or Concordia University’s Admissions Office for details regarding this option.

5. Once students are accepted for admission into the Honors Program, they will have **thirty days** following notification of their admission to accept or reject admissions into the program as well as the Honors Scholarship.
6. **Transfer students** entering with sophomore or junior status may apply to the Honors Program by submitting an **Honors Program application form** (available from the Honors Program Director) and a **personal essay** (see item 4 above) and one **letter of recommendation** from a faculty member who has had the student in class. Transfer students are **not** eligible for the Honors Scholarship but may receive “Honors Program Graduate” on their diploma if they successfully complete 20 hours of Honors courses (sophomore transfers) or 14 hours of Honors courses (junior transfers) and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 or higher. NOTE: Transfer student admission is subject to space availability in the program.

Transfer admission standards for the Honors Program are as follows:
3.50 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale for all college courses.

7. Current Concordia students who have achieved sophomore or junior status may apply to the Honors Program by submitting an **Honors Program application form** (available from the Honors Program Director) and a **personal essay** (see item 4 above) and one **letter of recommendation** from a full-time Concordia faculty member. Concordia faculty members are encouraged to nominate eligible students who may then apply to the Honors Program. Nominations should be given directly to the Honors Program Director. Current students are **not** eligible for Honors Scholarships but may receive “Honors Program Graduate” on their diploma if they successfully complete 20 hours of Honors courses (if they join the program as sophomores) or 14 hours of Honors courses (if they join the program as juniors) and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 or higher. NOTE: Current student admission is subject to space availability in program.

Concordia current student admission standards for the Honors Program are as follows
3.50 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale for all college courses.

8. Current Concordia students, who are not members of the honors program, may enroll in individual honors courses upon the approval of the course instructor(s) **and** the Director of the Honors Program.

VI. Advantages of Participation in the Honors Program:

1. The Honors Program Scholarship (for incoming freshman applicants only) covers at least 50% of tuition and is renewable for up to three additional years.
2. Honors Students will take many general education course requirements in Honors sections, small classes where students and faculty will pursue excellence together.
3. The Honors Program will sponsor many enjoyable social and cultural activities (e. g. plays, hikes, speakers, etc.) that take education off campus, using Portland (and Oregon) as a “classroom.”
4. Students who successfully complete the requirements of the Honors Program (see below) will have “Honors Program Graduate” on their diplomas and transcripts, and will receive a commemorative medallion and academic cords recognizing this honor.
5. Graduate schools, professional programs, and/or prospective employers will note approvingly academic achievement in a rigorous program like Concordia’s Honors Program as well as the interpersonal and social skills developed in curricular and extracurricular activities.
6. In general, students in the Honors Program do not have to do more work than their counterparts in non-Honors classes. The level of discourse in the class is more intense but the expectation in terms of homework is quite similar in time consumption to traditional courses.

VII. Continuing Participation in the Honors Program:

In order to maintain the Honors Scholarship (or membership in the Honors Program for transfer students or current students who join the Program) and be eligible for “Honors Program Graduate” designation on their diploma, the Honors student must

1. maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 or higher;
2. successfully complete at least 24 hours of Honors courses with a cumulative GPA of 3.25. (See information under Section V. 6. and V. 7 “Admission to the Honors Program” for transfer students and current Concordia students who do not start the program as freshmen.);
3. make normal progress towards graduating in four academic years with 24 hours of Honors courses;
4. successfully complete the Honors Capstone Seminar during the senior year;
5. participate in a range of extracurricular Honors program activities;

6. meet once a year with the Director of the Honors Program to discuss academic and social progress and plans for the future.

At the end of each semester, the Honors Program Director will verify the academic progress and participation status of Honors Program students. Students whose GPA falls below minimum standards for any one semester will receive a letter from the Honors Program Director stating that they are not making normal progress in the program. A copy of this letter will be sent to the student's advisor as well. Failure to make normal progress in the Honors Program over two successive semesters and/or failure to participate in Honors Program activities outside of the classroom will result in review membership in the Honors Program. The Honors Program Director will determine whether student participation satisfactorily meets the spirit of the Honors Program; the students may be placed on probationary status. Failure to remedy these behaviors will, under normal circumstances, result in expulsion from the program. Decisions regarding removal from the Honors Program may be appealed, in order, to the Honors Program Committee (see Section IX), Dean of College of Theology, Arts, and Sciences (CTAS), the Provost, and the President of Concordia University.

At the end of each academic year, students who are receiving the Honors scholarship and who are not making normal progress and/or not maintaining the minimum GPA will receive a letter from the Director of Financial Aid informing them of their probationary status regarding their scholarship. A copy of this letter will be sent to the student's advisor as well. Students on probation will continue to receive their scholarships for one semester. Failure to maintain the minimum GPA for two straight semesters will, under normal circumstances, result in the loss of the Honors Scholarship and dismissal from the Honors Program. In addition, dismissal from the Honors Program in accordance with the policy above will result in the loss of the Honors Scholarship.

Honors Program students are encouraged to become involved in the Honors Program Advisory Council (described in Section IX) and to participate in campus-wide activities, including Choir, Student Government (ASCU), Community and Worship Life, Ethics Bowl, etc.

VIII. Academic Curriculum:

Honors courses will have an "H" appended to their course number (e.g. HUM 151H). Some of these courses may be interdisciplinary. Some courses may be team-taught.

Honors courses will seek ways to challenge students with creative pedagogical methods and assignments appropriate to the workload for the credit hours earned.

Students may choose from a number of Honors-designated seminars to fulfill General Education requirements. The Honors Program Director will encourage Departments to propose and develop new Honors courses and seminars. See Section IX.

Students are encouraged to take a junior year semester abroad, an experience to be arranged with the Director of International Studies at CU and local faculty representative for AHA International for study abroad programs. Up to six semester hours of academic credit during a study abroad experience may qualify for inclusion as Honors courses at the discretion of the Honors Program Director. Students desiring such annotation on their transcripts should submit a request to the Honors Program Director prior to participation in the study abroad program.

The Honors Program will include a strong service component and opportunities to experience the “City as Text.” The “City as Text” concept—using the community and surrounding regions as an organic part of classes and extra-curricular activities—could be used to develop seminars that will meet General Education requirements for all students.

Honors courses may not be taken with a Pass/No Pass option.

The following list of courses is subject to change with department input. Departments will be consulted on a regular basis about Honors courses. At this time, Honors courses are limited to courses that meet general education requirements.

Freshman year

Semester One

HUM 151H	Ethics and Citizenship	3 Credits	Yearly
WR 121H	English Composition	3 Credits	Yearly

Semester Two

ENG 202H	Intro to Speech	2 Credits	Yearly
PSY 201H	Principles of Psychology	3 Credits	Yearly
REL 211/221H	Old/New Testament	3 Credits	Yearly*

Sophomore Year

Semester One

HUM 251H	From the Pre-Modern to the Post-Modern World	3 Credits	Yearly
ART 121H	Art Appreciation	2 Credits	Alternating Years*
or:			
MUS 121H	Music Appreciation	2 Credits	Alternating Years*

Semester Two

WR 30XH	“Advanced” Writing	3 Credits	Yearly*
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(*Either Rhetorical Approaches to Literature/Culture (Writing 303), Creative Nonfiction: Art of the Essay (Writing 304), Journalism and Feature Writing (Writing 305), or equivalent)

MTH 231H	Research and Statistics	3 Credits	Alternating Years
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Junior Year

Semester One

HUM 351H	Challenges/Global Diversity	3 Credits	Yearly
REL 371H	World Religions	2 Credits	Yearly

Semester Two

SCI 112H	Environmental Science	3 Credits	Alternating Years
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Senior Year

Semester One

REL 401H	Faith for Life	3 Credits	Yearly
**HON 488H	Honors Capstone Seminar	1 Credit	Yearly

* Offered on a rotation basis

**Successful completion required in order to receive “Honor Program Graduate” designation.

IX. Honors Program Advisory Councils and Extra-Curricular Activities:

There are two Advisory Councils for the Honors Program: a student council (**Student Honors Council**) and a faculty council (**Honors Program Committee**). The two councils will work separately on some projects and together on other projects.

The **Honors Program Committee (Faculty)** is composed of three faculty members who are invited by the Honors Program Director to participate on the Committee for a period not to exceed three years. Ideally, the Committee will be composed of members who represent the four colleges at Concordia.

The Honors Program Committee has the following duties:

- Propose and make decisions on Honors Program structure, goals, and objectives.
- Invite and make decisions on new courses for the Honors Program.*
- Be involved in admission of new students.
- Make decisions on student appeals.
- Brainstorm extracurricular activities for students.
- Develop procedures for evaluating the Honors Program, its personnel, courses and activities.

*Potential new Honors courses must be submitted to the Director of the Honors Program as Substantive Curricular Modifications by September 1 of the year before potential implementation. After approval by the Honors Program Committee, such courses must go through the normal submission process (approval by department, APC and faculty) and meet all deadlines established by the faculty for new courses.

The Student Honors Council, which models an ethos of servant leadership, is open to all Honors Students. Its leadership is composed of one student representative from each year (one freshman, one sophomore, one junior and one senior) and one President who will chair the council. In total, the Council will consist of 5 leaders. All positions will be voted on by Honors students and all elected officials must maintain good standing in the Honors Program. The President must be a junior or senior Honors student in good standing.

The duties of the Student Honors Council include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Help evaluate the program, including teachers and curriculum.
- Propose changes in the Program, including curriculum, brochure, website etc.
- Mentor new students.
- Plan and implement service activities and fund raisers.
- Suggest and implement extra-curricular and social activities. These may include faculty sponsored events (e. g. evenings at faculty members' homes), student pizza parties, or recreational or educational outings. Events organized by the Honors Program will be open to all students at Concordia.

X. Honors Program Administration:

1. The Honors Program will have a Director, chosen by the Dean of CTAS.
2. The Director will receive a stipend for his/her services, to be determined as the equivalent of three hours of adjunct weight load per semester (though it will not involve lowering the Director's teaching load).

The Duties of the Honors Program Director include, but are not limited to the following:

- Work closely with the CTAS Dean, the Honors Program Committee (Faculty), and the Student Honors Council (Students).
- Develop a budget for the Honors Program.
- Work with Department Chairs and other faculty to create new courses and experiences for the Program.
- Work with Department Chairs to select faculty for Honors sections of courses.
- Evaluate the Program, including courses, personnel and extra-curricular activities, and suggest changes.
- Work with Admissions to recruit Honors Students. Admissions will market the program to a pool of potential students and send a list of eligible students to the Director of the Honors Program, who will invite these students to apply (Fall semester and January/February of Spring semester). As admissions arrive (and no later than March 1), the Honors Program Committee (Faculty), along with the Honors Program Director, will select up to twenty-five (25) eligible students each year, who will be asked to accept or reject the scholarship offer within thirty (30) days.
- Monitor, record progress of and routinely report about Honors students to Financial Aid director, who communicates with students about scholarships and

to advisors, who are responsible to work with Honors students about progress in the program.

- Develop mentoring program that will enable upper division students to help new students adjust to the program.
- Write an annual report about the Honors Program, sharing information with the CTAS Dean about program, curriculum changes, retention of students, etc. The purpose of the annual report is to improve the program.

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