

Student Guide to Honors Contracts

Thank you for your interest in an Honors-by-Contract. This guide provides an overview of the steps you will need to take to ensure appropriate, timely, and effective application. Please follow these guidelines carefully, communicate at each instance with your Honors Contract faculty supervisor, and stay vigilant with the application deadlines.

1. Review the Honors Contract deadlines.

Deadlines change semester by semester. Please check the Honors-by-Contract website for the most up-to-date deadlines. There are two separate deadlines for the application process, the **Student Interest Form**, to be completed by the student, and the Faculty Application, to be completed by the faculty supervisor. We must receive both documents by or before the deadlines in order to consider your Honors Contract. Late interest forms or applications, regardless of the reason, will not be considered.

2. Review the Honors Contract regulations.

We cannot consider Honors Contracts under the following circumstances:

- For courses at the 100 or 200 level, regardless of program or discipline
- For courses with already-designated Honors sections
- For courses cross-listed with graduate programs (eg. 400/500 level courses)
- For courses ending in 399 and 499 (internships and independent studies)
- For courses with alternate grading parameters (pass/fail)
- For courses not in the students major or minor area of study
- For students attempting to complete multiple contracts in a single semester.

NB: beginning Fall 2021, students may only complete one Honors Contract during their academic career.

If your proposed contract is in conflict with any of the above regulations, please reach out to the Honors College Director of Student Services (ehjett@ua.edu), to see if an alternate approach is possible. Generally, this will mean deferring an Honors Contract to a later semester or designating a different course to consider for a contract.

4. Identify a faculty supervisor suitable for your project.

We advise students to email supervisors at least one month prior to the semester during which they plan to complete an Honors Contract. This allows you and the professor ample time to imagine, create, and mutually agree upon the Honors Contract. If you happen to approach a supervisor who is unsure about the Honors Contract process,

please have the instructor reach out via email to the Honors College for additional information (ehjett@ua.edu).

5. Confirm your Honors Contract proposal with your faculty supervisor and complete the HBC Student Interest Form.

After you and your faculty supervisor have agreed, in principle, to your Honors Contract, you should complete the Student Interest Form. The form can be accessed via the Honors Contract website, and a worksheet detailing the contents of the Interest Form can be found below (in case you and your supervisor would like to discuss the questions in advance). Submitting the **Student Interest Form** is the final step that a student needs to take in the application process, though it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the Student Interest Form and the *Faculty Application* are submitted by the appropriate deadlines.

6. Complete your Honors Contract.

We will forward the information that we cull from your Student Interest Form to your faculty supervisor, along with the specific Honors-by-Contract application and some guidelines for completing the application. For all applications submitted on time, we will aim to have decisions made by the third week of classes. Honors-by-Contract decisions will be sent to the student's Crimson email address. Occasionally, we may ask for a contract to be revised, and an emailing detailing the extent of the revision required will be sent to both student and faculty supervisor. Revised contract must be resubmitted via email within seven days of receipt.

7. Submit your project and “project reflection” to the Honors College.

Approximately two weeks prior to the end of term, we will reach out to you via email to remind you that your completed project and a reflection on the experience need to be submitted to the Honors College. Details for both will be included in the email. At approximately the same time, your supervisor will receive a grading sheet for your Honors Contract, so you will also need, according to the agreement, to send your completed work to your faculty supervisor as well. The Honors College will crosscheck completed work against the original contract and, in instances of incompleteness, the Honors College may decide to void the work.

This is a worksheet intended to help you complete the Student Interest Form in an effective way. Please use this worksheet when talking about your project with your faculty supervisor. You can then transfer your answers into the appropriate section of the Student Interest Form.

What learning area does the proposed contract emphasize?

- a. Applied theory or methods

Applied theory or methods (ie. “applied learning”) refers to any educational approach in which a student learns by application, that is, by the implementing and testing of a theory or method in a real-world, extracurricular setting. Generally, these theories or methods are derived from the scholarly work in a given discipline, though a student may also, with the permission of their supervisor, design their own applied learning experience.

- b. Professional and/or public presentation

Professional and/or public presentation refers to any kind of project that is intended to be displayed or presented. Successful “presentation” projects might work towards an ultimate goal of professional presentation, at a conference or other professional organization; alternatively, students might present their work throughout the semester, to their classmates, to the department, or elsewhere as appropriate in the University system. Examples of “presentation” projects might include artistic exhibits or installations, technical blueprints or modeling, computer programming, data analytics or the like.

- c. Novel or discrete research

Students wishing to write a research paper as a component or the whole of their Honors Contract should work closely with their supervisor to identify a research question as well as a prospective bibliography; for lab based research, students should work with their supervisor to identify the steps, materials, and methods needed to bring the research to completion. Students selecting any kind of “research” as their Honors Contract should make it clear in their application materials how the research is a valuable and novel approach to a discipline or field of study.

d. Interdisciplinary or Global perspectives

Practically, an “interdisciplinary” or “global” project will take the shape of one of the methods listed above (applied learning, presentation, or research), though the content of the project will push beyond standard disciplinary or national boundaries. In your description of your project, please designate what you take to be its interdisciplinary or global perspective, and why you feel such a perspective is a warranted and valuable approach to the subject matter.

Describe your Honors Contract Project (150 words max):

Describe your project as thoroughly and accurately as possible, paying particular attention to the project materials, methods, and prospective outcomes. We should be able to determine from your description the purpose and value of your project and have some sense of the steps that will be involved in bringing it to conclusion. We will forward your project description to your faculty supervisor for editing and approval.

How does your proposed contract go beyond the regular requirements of the course (150 word max):

Working with your faculty supervisor, please detail for us how your Honors Contract differs qualitatively from the regular coursework. Occasionally, a student or a faculty supervisor will present contract work that is additional but not discrete from the syllabus; your answer to this inquiry on the Interest Form is your opportunity to explain to use that the value of your contract work is more than a quantity or a degree of difficulty (though both might be auxiliary results of the project!).

Does your project meet minimum standards for IRB approval?

If your project includes human subjects in any way or form, then you will need to seek Institutional Review Board approval before the Honors College can sign off on the contract. The role of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to review all proposed research involving human subjects to ensure that subjects are treated ethically and that their rights and welfare are adequately protected. The human subjects review process is administered through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. All research activities involving the use of human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before data collection can begin. You may not solicit subject participation or begin data collection until you have received written approval from the IRB. Please discuss this with your Director and visit the IRB website: <http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/institutional-review-board-irb/>.