UNIVERSITY HONORS SCHOLARS PROGRAM
Academic Research Fellowships
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Program Guidelines and Expectations

Purpose
• To recognize, reward, and support the University Honors Program’s most outstanding students.
• To enable academically distinguished students to complete a University Honors Capstone project of such quality and distinction as to make them eligible for gainful employment or admission into the nation’s most competitive graduate programs.
• To highlight independent research and artistry undertaken by University Honors students at NIU.

Benefits
Paid Research allows students to put 100% of their focus into research.

• Each scholar receives a $2,000 stipend for University Honors Capstone research or artistry after completing the student responsibilities and outcomes.
• An additional $500 in salary, conference support, or commodities is given to the student’s faculty mentor in exchange for their extra work in supporting a University Honors student during their time as an Honors Scholar.
• Student holds the prestigious title “University Honors Scholar” until graduation.

Eligibility
• Must be a current University Honors student – in good standing – at the time of application.
• Must reach junior level status (60 credit hours earned) during the semester that the application is submitted.
• Must demonstrate high academic achievement. Greatest attention will be placed on the GPA at NIU. However, a student’s full academic record will be considered.
Student Responsibilities and Outcomes

1.) Attend the Fall Honors Research Workshop
   Sample Topics:
   • Getting Published: What Does It Take?
   • Presentations and Poster sessions
     • Oral presentations
     • Poster presentations
     • Visual arts presentations
   • Conference Submissions
     • Honors Council of the Illinois Region (HCIR)
     • National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)
     • National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC)

2.) By the Sunday after the second week of the student’s final semester, the student must submit the following completed item to the associate director of Scholarships, Programming, and Assessment of University Honors.
   (a) A fully completed, faculty-approved Honors Capstone proposal that contains the elements and meets the requirements as set forth by the University Honors Program for all students pursuing the Honors Capstone.

3.) Completed University Honors Capstone. It is expected that the research conducted will lead to a completed Honors Capstone by the end of the student’s senior year.

4.) An article for “The Luminary” is due at the same time as the completed Honors Capstone. The article should provide an abstract of the research, connect to the project, talk about the benefit of working with a faculty mentor, and summarize the Honors Scholar experience.

5.) Honors Capstone Research Presentation
   • Honors Scholars are expected to disseminate their Honors Capstone research or artistry project in a public forum during the academic year. Some examples of acceptable forums are Honors Day, NIU’s annual Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day, conferences in the student’s field, and/or at regional or national honors association conferences.
   • The student agrees to have his or her name, photograph, project title, and project blogs appear on the websites, social media, and videos of the University Honors Program and Northern Illinois University. Similarly, the student agrees to have such information included in printed university materials.

6.) The Honors Scholar stipend will be released upon completion of items 1-5 unless a budget was approved for early stipend access to support conference travel, research materials, or other opportunities that will advance the Honors Capstone research.
Faculty Mentor Expectations and Responsibilities

The faculty mentor is the student’s primary source of expertise, advice, guidance, inspiration, and moral support during the Honors Scholars experience. It is expected that the faculty mentor will be the student’s University Honors Capstone advisor. Therefore, the faculty mentor should work in the discipline in which the student intends to complete the capstone.

• The faculty mentor helps ensure the student selects and completes a research and artistry project or activity that will lay fruitful groundwork for an outstanding University Honors Capstone. The advisor also ensures the research and artistry work and the resulting capstone reflect the standards of the academic discipline. Providing advice on whether the project can be feasibly completed is another important contribution of the faculty mentor.
• The faculty member should seek to cultivate a personalized mentoring experience as well as help provide academic focus and direction. At minimum, the faculty member should meet with the student at least three times during each semester as an Honors Scholar to discuss the project’s progress.
• The faculty mentor reviews and approves the student’s final research and artistry report.

A Student’s Guide to Faculty Mentors

How to Select a Faculty Mentor

The mentor/mentee relationship is a key factor of your success in this program. The end product will depend on the strength of the relationship that you have with your faculty mentor. Once you decide what you are interested in researching, you must identify a mentor. We recommend that you make your request in a face-to-face meeting where you can share your ideas, receive feedback, and gauge how well you and your mentor may work together.
Working with Your Mentor

1. Remember, when you have identified a potential mentor, it is necessary to provide a brief rationale of why they should invest the additional time and resources to mentor you. Be sure to share your research interests, past research projects, résumé/CV, or any other relevant information they may need.

2. Choose a mentor that you are comfortable working with and speaking with on a regular basis.

3. Know the professor’s expectations for quality of work, meeting times, preferred method of communication, work style, and workload. Awareness of prior time commitments will help you assess the amount of time your mentor may have available to guide you.

4. Show up for any and all meetings on time and prepared.

5. Follow the advice your mentor gives even if it makes you explain findings that are contrary to your study.
Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Can I get academic credit for the research experience? Yes. If the major department and faculty mentor approve, the student may receive academic credit for the University Honors Scholars research and artistry project through an independent study course. This decision would be made by the student’s academic department or school. The student is responsible for the cost of tuition associated with any such course.

2. Can I get an Engage Plus or Honors Engaged notation for the experience? Yes, students can apply for Honors Engaged points. Students should contact EngagePlus to find out how to get transcript notations.

3. Is it acceptable to pursue a collaborative research and artistry project involving a team of people, which might include students who are not members of the University Honors Program? Yes, this is possible. The only caveat is that an individual student’s Honors Capstone must meet the requirements and standards set forth by the University Honors Program. In other words, it is recognized that in some disciplines, such as the sciences, engineering and some performing arts, students work in teams. In a team setting, the University Honors Scholars award remains $2,000 and belongs exclusively to the one designated recipient. The student will have to clearly demonstrate their significant contributions to the project, as well as any funding sources.


5. Can I do research in summer, fall, or spring? Yes, Honors Scholars can conduct research that leads to an Honors Capstone during the summer, fall, or spring of their junior or senior year, as well as during any single aforementioned semester.