

Honors Program Proposed Template

Ottawa University's Honors Program is designed to offer students a rigorous and enriched academic experience with learning opportunities that go beyond the classroom. The Honors Program provides students with an exciting pathway to integrate the broader education of the liberal arts with experiential learning experiences beginning their freshman year. These experiences include study abroad opportunities, seminars, scholarly publications, research day events, and personal access to relevant keynote speakers. The Ottawa University Honors Program is designed to produce exemplary graduates in their chosen field and to prepare them to lead lives of significance. It is a program which, from the day students set foot on this campus to the day they leave it, enables them to experience the richness of the life of the mind.

Program Overview:

- Guaranteed funding for travel/study abroad
- Individual faculty mentor
- Living-learning community
- Career-relevant research or internship
- Freshman Seminar
- Junior Seminar
- Participation in Undergraduate Research Day
- Participation in *The Ottawa Scholar* publication
- End-of-year Honors reception or banquet
- Meets the following "high impact" practices as identified by the American Association of Colleges & Universities:
 1. undergraduate research
 2. first-year seminars and experiences
 3. learning communities/common intellectual experiences
 4. capstone course and projects
 5. service learning/internships
 6. study abroad/global learning

Study Abroad:

- Guaranteed funding for travel/study abroad
- Study abroad course tied to interdisciplinary team-taught Junior Seminar
- We expect that offerings in this area will grow, and that lead faculty may make use of this funding in their requirements for their honors students
- This funding can be utilized by students participating in current offerings open to all students, or in honors-specific programs that may develop

Freshman Seminar (designated by Honors IDS course number):

- Options: 8 weeks, 4 instructors; 16 weeks, 7 instructors

Ideally, the course will deploy teams of faculty to teach a course that examines a major issue or debate. Examples might include contemporary debates over the 1619 project, the climate crisis, or the uses and social effects of AI.

Junior Seminar (designated by Honors IDS course number):

- Taught by two instructors, rotating
- Topic selected by instructors, vetted by committee
- Ideally this is a deeper analysis of a text/phenomena/event/field from the perspective of more than one discipline
- Can possibly incorporate study abroad funding

Research Day:

- Freshmen and sophomores:
 - Work event. Sophomores train freshmen.
- Juniors and seniors:
 - Present at event.
 - Individual posters for poster session at Banquet.

Scholars Publication:

- Continue publishing *The Ottawa Scholar*
- Every Honors student participates
- The book itself is part yearbook, part program overview, and part recruiting tool
- Current prompts (open to change):
 - First Year: Why Ottawa?
 - Second Year: How have you changed?
 - Third Year: What is the purpose of a Liberal Arts Education?
 - Fourth Year: either a) scholarly work, or b) How has OU prepared you for a life of significance?

Honors reception or banquet:

- Parents/Family invited
- Includes all scholars
- Individual awards for scholars (*The Ottawa Scholar* book submissions, research, etc.)
- Keynote speaker
- Poster session prior to dinner
- Excellent opportunity to solicit donations for the program

The Honors Program by Year:

- Freshmen
 - Fr. Honors Seminar
 - Work Research Day
 - Contribute to Scholars Book
 - Attend reception/banquet
 - Departmental Requirements
- Sophomores
 - Contribute to Scholars Book
 - Work Research Day
 - Attend reception/banquet
 - Departmental Requirements

-Juniors

- Jr. Honors Seminar
- Present at Research Day
- Contribute to Scholars Book
- Contribute to Poster Session at reception/banquet
- Departmental Requirements

-Seniors

- Contribute to Scholars Book
- Present at Research Day
- Contribute to Poster Session at reception/banquet
- Departmental Requirements

Advantages:

- Bespoke
- Intellectual diversity
- Since it is comprised of non-athletes, it opens up a path for increased enrollment and increased levels of intellectual seriousness in the classroom and on campus
- International exposure
- Chance to help develop and shape the program as it grows
- Wide latitude for Lead Faculty to tweak/specialize
- Utilizes faculty, resources, and programs we already possess

Desiderata for the Future:

- Sophomore Seminar
- Two Honors seminars are what we consider the bare minimum
- We'd like to reconvene after the program's first year and consider expanding course offerings

One University:

- The Surprise, AZ and Ottawa, KS campuses might collaborate on study-abroad opportunities, drawing students and faculty from both sites
- Some Junior Seminars could be team-taught by faculty from both campuses
- Students from both sites will have opportunities to learn collaboratively throughout the program through livestreaming of visiting speaker events, etc.
- Undergraduate Research Day could rotate to each campus in alternate years, with all Honors students presenting their research together

Admittance and Recruitment:

- Selection of students based on Top Scholar Program
- Honors Program replaces Top Scholar and Elite Scholar Programs
- To be considered for this program, high school seniors must have:
 - a minimum ACT composite score of 24 (SAT equivalent), AND;
 - be in the top third of their graduating class OR;
 - a minimum cumulative high school GPA of 3.5 (unweighted out of 4.0).
 - interview with program director

- Scholarship award between 75-100% of published tuition – student responsible for published room, board, and fees charges (requirement of program is for Honors students to reside on campus)
- Academic scholarship only; it can't be combined with other scholarships or varsity sport athletics
- A future pathway can be created to allow entry into the program for transfer students and student-athletes
- Targeting to recruit 10-20 first-year students for the fall 2023 semester

Investments:

- Cost of trips (minimum of one trip expected—ideally study abroad—at approximately \$3k per student)
- Cost of banquet(s) and events
- Potential for faculty and staff incremental cost (as program grows)
- Two Honors Program Directors, one for Ottawa and one for Surprise. Starting salary \$75,000 - \$85,000 for each position. If hiring from within, Director should be either an administrator (e.g., Academic Dean), or faculty member with at least ½ teaching load reduction.
- Select Honors Committee members willing to mentor Honors students

Benefits to Ottawa University:

- Increase diversity and academic rigor of student body
- Balancing of athletic and nonathletic student populations
- Potential for increasing retention and persistency rates
- Potential to positively impact campus culture
- Utilizes current university resources and faculty

Benefits to Ottawa University students:

- Offers rigorous and enriched academic experience with learning opportunities that go beyond the classroom
- Adds value to their educational investment
- Provides rich relationship opportunities with fellow students in the program, including collaborative activities
- Provides networking opportunities with professionals in their chosen fields or future career path
- Provides all Ottawa University students (not just Honors Program students) the opportunity to attend selective events such as keynote speakers or Undergraduate Research Day