

**University of Massachusetts Lowell**  
**Honors Program**  
**Honors Faculty Frequently Asked Questions**

## **FACULTY FAQs**

### **What opportunities are there for me to be involved in the Honors Program?**

Many! Here are a few to get you started:

1. You can volunteer to come to the **Honors Workshop** and talk to students about your research program. One of the workshop goals is to enhance an understanding of interdisciplinarity and the perspectives that different disciplines bring to a single topic. Hence, we need a spectrum of presenters over the course of each semester. Interested? Shoot me an e-mail: [doreen\\_arcus@uml.edu](mailto:doreen_arcus@uml.edu)
2. You can volunteer to come for a **Pizza & Prof** evening on the Honors Housing floor in the residence hall. Students will join in an informal setting to hear from faculty about some area of interest or fun, not necessarily academic at all. We hope to give our students a sense of the personal side of academic lives to foster connection and engagement, and so that they can begin to picture themselves in such a position. Contact [Kristen Rhyner@uml.edu](mailto:Kristen_Rhyner@uml.edu) or [Brooke Crossman@uml.edu](mailto:Brooke_Crossman@uml.edu)
3. You can represent your department on the **Honors Council**. Each department has a liaison on the Council who is appointed or elected at the department's discretion.
4. You can **encourage** students who do particularly well in your classes to find out about the Honors Program and consider joining it.
5. You can **teach** an Honors Section or an Honors Course. You might also announce at the beginning of each class that students in the Honors Program wishing to take the class for Honors credit by contract should contact you as soon as possible. It helps to have the additional honors experiences clear in your own mind so that you can discuss them with students who might not have as much of a sense of the particulars with regard to your course. Remember that Honors-by-Contract forms, *complete with the syllabus for honors by contract credit*, must be submitted to the Honors Office by the end of the drop-add period.
6. You can **mentor** a student who is thinking about an Honors Thesis or Project. Encourage him or her to plan ahead and to allow sufficient time (for many students two semesters is preferable to one) to complete the work, present it publicly, submit it to the committee for approval and revisions, and get it into the Honors Office.
7. You can **supervise** a student's Honors Thesis or Project either as the project advisor or as a committee member.
8. You can think about applying for the position of **Honors Director** when it's time for a change.

**Who can enroll in my honors course or sections?**

Students require permission to enroll in honors courses or sections and must obtain an ISIS permission number from the appropriate instructor. Students in honors sections or courses need *not* be enrolled in the Honors Program. Sometimes students take one honors section to see whether they will be able to handle the workload and whether they will like it. On the other hand, *only students in the Honors Program are permitted to register for honors-by-contract.*

**How do I find extra time for meetings with students in concurrent sections?**

Scheduling something out of students' free time can be challenging. Some instructors block off an additional meeting hour per week for the concurrent sections and have that built right into the course schedule at registration. We think that's a great idea.

**I want to teach an Honors Course. How do I get it on the books?**

Talk to your Department Chair. Honors courses are typically offered within departments rather than in the interdisciplinary (59) track. Please let us know when you will be offering the course so that we can bring it to students' attention.

**How can you identify Honors Courses by looking at the schedule?**

All honors courses have a 300 level section number. In addition there is a listing of all honors courses for the upcoming semester posted on the [Registrar's](#) website.

**How do I advise my students who are in the Honors Program?**

We have put together [a guide for improving the advising experience](#) for our students. We encourage students to bring it with them to their advising appointments. Please also encourage them to talk to any one of us in the Honors Office (North or South) for further assistance.

**How do I know what's going on in Honors?**

Every department has an Honors Liaison who serves on the Honors Council. These folks should bring information from Honors to your department meetings and should bring the concerns of your department to the Honors Council. Our meetings are open to all; please see [Honors News & Events](#) for the schedule.

Our annual reports are available on our website.

**What if there is something interesting going on in our department that I would like to share with Honors students?**

A couple options. Invite students to attend or participate through the honors office. Send the title, date, time, place, and a brief description of the event to [honors@uml.edu](mailto:honors@uml.edu) so we can include it in WHEN (weekly honors e-news). Or come present the information in the Honors Workshop.

**What are thesis requirements?**

These are summarized in the [Honors Project Handbook](#).

**My department has a capstone course. Can't our students just count that as their Honors Thesis or Project?**

Not "just count." If your students are completing their Honors Thesis as part of a capstone course that is required of all students in your department, *the Honors experience will have to be more extensive*. There has to be substantial additional effort for one student to receive Honors credit for meeting course requirements for which his or her classmates are receiving regular credit.

**Why does my student have to have the thesis proposal approved by the Honors Program? How can you judge the adequacy of proposals across a range of disciplines about which you know nothing.**

The Honors Director reviews every proposal to ensure that there is sufficient detail to hold parties accountable for meeting (or failing to meet) the thesis requirement by the end of the semester or year. The science (or art) itself is not reviewed, but all proposals should have a rationale, a method, expected outcomes, a timeline, a plan for public presentation (the default is the Annual UML Student Research Symposium), and a description of the final product. . Obviously, final products in disciplines in the Social Sciences may differ from those in the Fine Arts, which may differ from those in the Sciences, the particulars of which are for the major advisor and committee member to judge.

**My student is going to interview some HS students who go to his old school. We don't have to get IRB approval for that, do we?**

Yep. When human subjects are involved in the research, it is critical to obtain review of the IRB prior to initiating the study; this procedure must be part of the timeline. This is the case even when the research is exempt; the IRB must make sure it really is exempt. Any potentially vulnerable population—including youth as in the example above—must have the application fully reviewed. For more information go to <http://irb.uml.edu/> or contact the IRB administrator, [Stephen.Moses@uml.edu](mailto:Stephen.Moses@uml.edu). When animals are involved, contact the Office for Institutional Compliance with questions, [Elaine.Major@uml.edu](mailto:Elaine.Major@uml.edu).

**But what if we don't intend to publish the results of his thesis. Then can we skip the IRB?**

Nope. Since the thesis must be presented publicly, IRB approval must be obtained. So, go ahead and shoot for something publishable!

**My student has expenses for her thesis research that I have no funding to cover. Can the Honors Program help?**

We offer limited financial assistance for thesis research in the form of Senior Research Grants. These generally do not exceed \$500. Funding is from the Honors Endowment, supported by faculty donations. Please watch for the RFP.

**Sounds like a lot of work. What's in it for me?**

Well, the rewards of teaching in, or being otherwise involved with, the Honors Program are largely intrinsic. Connections with students who must complete an undergraduate Thesis or Project are likely to benefit your own program of research, and, beginning in 2006, we acknowledge the "Honors Mentor of the Year" at our spring banquet. Finally, you get to work with other faculty who are just a joy to be around for their dedication and enthusiasm.

**Other questions?**

Please send to [Doreen\\_Arcus@uml.edu](mailto:Doreen_Arcus@uml.edu). Thanks!