

Honors Program

The Wilkes University Honors Program provides an opportunity for talented and highly motivated undergraduate students to participate in challenging learning experiences focused on the development of leadership, integrity, and self-awareness while pursuing academic excellence. First-year students already accepted to Wilkes with a minimum SAT score of 1190 or a minimum ACT score of 26 and who rank in the top 20 percent of their high school class are invited to apply. Transfer students already accepted to Wilkes with a minimum SAT score of 1190 or a minimum ACT score of 26, a minimum cumulative collegiate GPA of 3.5, and a minimum of six remaining undergraduate terms are also invited to apply. New Wilkes students accepted into the program are notified during the spring prior to their first semester in the fall. Current Wilkes students with a minimum cumulative collegiate GPA of 3.5 and a minimum of six remaining undergraduate terms can also apply.

Honors Program Requirements

Students admitted to the program are required in their first fall semester to take a cohort-based, three-credit Honors class that counts towards University core requirements. They are required to take 18 additional Honors credits – six at or above the 300 level – in addition to their major and other University graduation credit requirements. All must also participate in a one-credit Honors capstone seminar.

Minimum Cumulative GPA Requirements

- 3.0 after two terms at Wilkes
- 3.2 after four terms at Wilkes
- 3.3 after six terms at Wilkes
- 3.4 after eight terms at Wilkes/to meet Honors Program completion requirements

A student is allowed only one grade of 2.5 in an Honors course to receive Honors credit. All other Honors course grades must be a minimum of 3.0. Students falling below the required cumulative GPA threshold will be given one full term to return their cumulative GPA to the minimum required. Students are always encouraged to draw on the expertise of all Wilkes University community resources, such as academic support and health and wellness services, when encountering academic, personal, or other challenges.

First-Year Honors Living-Learning Community

All first-year Honors students living on campus reside together in Honors housing. This enables students to begin connecting with each other in an environment conducive to their shared values and aspirations. While they may live in the hall of their choice during their remaining years at Wilkes, many choose to continue living in community with other Honors students.

Good Standing: Honors Program Community

Participating in Honors Program-sponsored activities, including meetings on campus with prominent guest speakers and engaging with prospective Honors students, helps to cultivate knowledge and skills that advance intellectual, personal, and professional development, contributions to the Wilkes campus community, and post-graduate success, whether through employment or continued education. Our weekly newsletter, The Honors Buzz, announces these opportunities throughout the academic year.

All Honors students must participate in at least one Honors-sponsored activity per term. This commitment is waived during a study abroad term.

Good Standing: Student Conduct

Honors students must remain in good standing with regard to student conduct. Any student found guilty of violating University policies is subject to review by the Honors Program Advisory Council.

Honors Program Course Offerings

Generally, Honors course components enable students to pursue breadth, depth, complexity and/or interdisciplinarity within their undergraduate education, helping to cultivate knowledge and skills that advance students' intellectual, personal and professional development; their contributions to the Wilkes campus community; and their preparation for post-graduate success, whether through employment or continued education.

Honors components should constitute approximately 15-20% of a student's work in a class. This could be quantified by proportion of final grade and/or by proportion of total assignments.

&H ("And H")

An &H section is added to an existing course in which both Honors and non-Honors students are enrolled to signal that the Honors students have the opportunity to earn Honors course credit. To earn this credit, Honors students must be enrolled specifically in the

Honors Program

&H section and they must satisfactorily complete work complementary to the existing syllabus. An Honors student is allowed only one grade of 2.5 in an Honors course to receive Honors credit. All other Honors course grades must be a minimum of 3.0.

H ("standalone Honors course")

An H section signals that all students enrolled in the course complete work that would yield Honors credit for that course. Non-Honors students could enroll in such a course, but while they would need to complete all of the same work as the Honors students, they would receive only non-Honors credit. An Honors student is allowed only one grade of 2.5 in an Honors course to receive Honors credit. All other Honors course grades must be a minimum of 3.0.

Options: Potential Modes of Learning:

- independent work, such as a research, case study or creative project within the student's discipline (in-depth learning)
- exploration of broad themes and/or enduring questions across disciplines (breadth of learning)
- experiential learning, such as internships, field work and study abroad
- service-learning (conscious and purposeful integration of service and learning elements)
- residential learning community (conscious and purposeful integration of living and learning elements)
- intercollegiate undergraduate academic competitions, presentations/conferences, and/or publications
- experimental or innovative pedagogy

Options: Potential Topics

- trends, issues and/or best practices within the student's discipline
- communities, ideas, practices, methodologies and/or values unfamiliar to the student

Options: Potential Skill Outcomes

- problem solving
- project management
- critical reading (ability to evaluate evidence-based arguments and judgments)
- critical thinking (ability to make evidence-based arguments and judgments)
- clear and persuasive writing
- clear and persuasive oral presentation
- artistic literacy
- metacognition (analysis of not just what is known, but also of how it comes to be known)
- comfort with ambiguity, uncertainty and the unfamiliar

The Wilkes University Honors Program endorses the core values of academic rigor (beyond academic expectations of regular section offerings), leadership, integrity (demonstrated learning of ethics and values), self-awareness (emphasis on self-reflection), importance of building community and appreciating diversity. Honors course components should reflect one or more of these core values.

Study Abroad

- A full semester abroad yields a waiver of six Honors credits at the 300 level
- A summer term abroad yields a waiver of three Honors credits at the 300 level
- Related independent study project (advised by instructor in relevant discipline) upon return earns three Honors credits at the 300 level (through either fall [[HNR-395]] or spring [[HNR-396]])

Internships

- one internship, either during a full semester or over a summer term, yields a waiver of three Honors credits at the 300 level
- independent study project (advised by instructor in relevant discipline) connected to internship earns three Honors credits at the 300 level (through either fall [[HNR-395]] or spring [[HNR-396]])

Study abroad, internships, or a combination of both can yield a maximum of six Honors credits at or above the 300 level.

First-Year Foundations (FYF) Requirement – 3.0 Credits

FYF-101H

Honors students take a special creative writing-based FYF class that develops collaborative community while cultivating skills in writing, speaking, problem-solving, and critical thinking as well as a comfort with encountering the ambiguous, uncertain and/or unfamiliar.

Honors Capstone Seminar – 1.0 Credit

[[HNR-390]]

This one-credit interdisciplinary capstone research seminar serves as a culminating experience for all prospective Honors Program graduates. The course is intended to explicitly engage students in reflection on what they have learned at Wilkes and how they can advance those skills and insights along their future personal and professional trajectories. Consequently, the course depends on students' consistent investment in critically assessing what they have learned during their undergraduate education, how that can be communicated to others, and what that makes possible for future endeavors.

Students' learning outcomes include:

- Communicating characteristic topics, methodologies, and professional concerns associated with their respective disciplines to non-expert audiences
- Collaborating with others, both within and outside of their respective disciplines, to accomplish shared goals
- Planning and managing long-term projects, balancing personal responsibility with coordination with team colleagues
- Organizing and delivering coherent presentation of work – from proposing prospective tasks to articulating evidence-based outcomes
- Specifying and critically assessing continuities as well as discontinuities across personal Wilkes educational trajectory and future endeavors