

A Partnership for Excellence in Honors Education



HONORS COLLEGE

Introduction

The Honors College at Marshall University exists to cultivate a vibrant academic community, inspiring students and faculty alike to pursue innovative teaching, critical inquiry, and transformative learning experiences. Honors-designated courses, offered by academic departments across the university, are a vital component of this mission. These courses represent the intersection of departmental expertise and the unique expectations of honors education, providing students with opportunities to engage deeply with material, challenge assumptions, and develop skills that prepare them to lead and contribute meaningfully to an evolving world.

Overview of the Guide

This guide is designed to help chairs and faculty refine and strengthen the honors-designated courses offered within their departments. It serves as both a resource and a roadmap for aligning these courses with the principles of honors education, ensuring they provide transformative learning experiences for students while supporting faculty in their professional growth. It builds directly on feedback from evaluations of these courses, national best practices for honors education (including as defined by the National Collegiate Honors Council, of which we are a member institution), and the Honors College's strategic priorities to provide practical tools, resources, and recommendations for improvement. The guide also emphasizes the collaborative spirit of this endeavor, encouraging chairs and faculty to view the Honors College as a partner committed to mutual success.

Specifically, this guide:

- **Outlines** best practices and standards for honors-designated courses, emphasizing intellectual rigor, active learning, and interdisciplinary engagement.
- **Highlights** tools, resources, and opportunities available to faculty, from one-on-one consultations to professional recognition programs.
- **Encourages** collaboration between the Honors College, departments, and chairs to elevate the quality of honors education.
- **Provides** actionable steps and aspirational goals for enhancing honors courses and fostering a culture of innovation and excellence.

Whether you are a faculty member teaching an honors-designated course or a department chair supporting your faculty, this guide is your starting point for contributing to and benefiting from the Honors College's mission of academic distinction and student success.

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A Shared Mission

As a collaborative partner, the Honors College recognizes that honors education *depends* on the dedication, creativity, and expertise of faculty from multiple disciplines and academic departments. We also *understand* the pressures faced by departments and chairs in balancing diverse responsibilities. This guide serves as a resource to strengthen our partnership and align our efforts with the Honors College's mission of academic distinction, innovative teaching, and student-centered learning.

Our work together to enhance honors-designated courses directly supports the broader mission of Marshall University: to advance public good through high-quality, accessible education that prepares students to succeed in a complex global society. By improving these courses, we not only elevate student experiences but also contribute to the professional development of faculty and the reputation of the departments that partner with us.

Why This Matters

Honors-designated courses are a cornerstone of the [Honors College curriculum](#). These courses play a significant role in shaping the perceptions and experiences of honors students, who often cite the opportunity for unique, more intimate honors-designated courses as a key reason for choosing Marshall University. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of these courses is essential not only to the Honors College's mission but also to the university's broader goals of recruitment, retention, and academic excellence.

The Honors College is also committed to supporting faculty who teach honors courses. Outstanding teaching in honors education reflects positively on faculty during promotion and tenure reviews, showcases innovative pedagogy, and contributes to a vibrant academic community. While the Honors College does not directly influence these decisions, we aim to equip faculty with tools and resources to excel in honors teaching and receive the recognition that they deserve for their contributions.

Our Aspirations: Building for the Future

Looking ahead, the Honors College aspires to develop a formal process for identifying "Honors Faculty," celebrating those who embody the principles of honors education through their teaching, mentorship, and innovative practices. While this remains a longer-term goal, our immediate focus is on enhancing the educational experiences of our students and providing tangible support to the faculty and departments that serve them.

By working together, we can ensure that honors-designated courses continue to reflect the best of Marshall University's academic values: creativity, excellence, and collaboration. This guide is your first step in that journey, offering a shared foundation for the critical work of improving honors education and fostering success for both students and faculty.

Observations from Course Evaluations: Patterns and Opportunities

What We Have Learned: Patterns in Course Evaluations and Surveys

Course evaluations—and our own internal student satisfaction surveys—provide valuable insights into how students experience honors-designated courses and where opportunities for growth may exist. While most students appreciate the opportunity to engage in honors education through these courses, the feedback reveals areas where we can enhance both student and faculty experience.

Addressing Foundational Needs in Honors-Designated Courses

Some feedback points to challenges that reflect foundational needs for effective teaching and learning—issues that may arise when faculty are stretched thin or when pedagogical support has not been readily available or utilized. These areas are critical for all students but become particularly evident in honors courses, where students expect an enhanced academic experience. Honors students often exhibit high levels of academic achievement, intrinsic motivation, and a preference for analysis and synthesis over memorization.

They tend to grasp academic material quickly and expect clear and detailed syllabi that outline course expectations. Additionally, honors students are highly motivated and ambitious, often showing a genuine earnestness for learning. They are frequently anxious about their grades, not only for the course but any given assignment, particularly if they plan to attend graduate or professional school. Therefore, clear communication and consistent structure are especially important in honors courses, where students expect a higher level of engagement and transparency.

Furthermore, honors students value timely and constructive feedback, as it significantly impacts their satisfaction and learning. They appreciate ongoing feedback and encouragement on their work, which helps them become independent and critical thinkers. Providing clear explanations, well-organized material, and effective use of examples and illustrations can enhance their learning experience.

While clear course organization and timely feedback are beneficial for all students, they are particularly crucial in honors courses to meet the heightened expectations and learning preferences of high-achieving and highly aspirational students. The following patterns emerged in our review of course evaluations:

1. **Course Organization and Clarity**

Students frequently noted difficulties with understanding course structures, including unclear syllabi, inconsistent grading criteria, and vague expectations for assignments.

2. Timely and Constructive Feedback

Feedback timelines and clarity were common concerns, with students emphasizing how meaningful, actionable input fosters their learning and engagement.

Honors-Specific Expectations: Challenges and Opportunities

Honors education is distinct in its emphasis not only on intellectual rigor, but also interdisciplinary engagement and active learning. Evaluations highlighted two areas where students' expectations for an honors-level experience were most pronounced:

1. Intellectual Challenge and Engagement

- Honors students seek courses that push boundaries, encouraging them to think critically, question assumptions, and explore complex ideas.
- While many courses meet these expectations, students occasionally noted a mismatch between the level of rigor and their expectations for honors education, highlighting a need for balance between challenge and accessibility in these introductory level courses.

2. Interactive and Student-Centered Learning

- Honors students highly value courses that emphasize interactivity, whether through group discussions, collaborative projects, or experiential learning opportunities.
- Courses that rely heavily on lecture-based methods, which may be essential in some introductory courses for majors where content delivery is prioritized, were perceived by honors students as less engaging and unsatisfactory.

Opportunities for Growth and Collaboration

These observations provide a starting point for collaborative efforts to address student feedback and further enrich the honors education experience. By tackling these challenges together, we can ensure that honors-designated courses continue to meet the ambitious standards expected by our students, faculty, and institution.

As distinct as honors education is in its emphasis on intellectual rigor, interdisciplinary engagement, and active learning, these characteristics bring unique expectations from honors students. As suggested earlier, the feedback we received from course evaluations highlights two areas where these expectations are most pronounced and where opportunities for meaningful enhancement exist.

Foundational Needs Reframed for Honors Context

While foundational teaching practices like clarity and feedback are critical across all educational settings, their significance in honors education is amplified. Honors students are not only motivated but also expect courses to inspire deeper engagement and to actively connect their learning to broader academic and real-world contexts. These foundational elements underpin the more distinctive expectations of honors education:

1. Course Organization and Feedback within the Honors Framework

- Transparent communication about course structure and expectations becomes even more critical in honors courses, where students often balance rigorous workloads and ambitious academic goals.
- Timely, detailed feedback allows honors students to refine their thinking, hone their academic skills, and engage more deeply with course content in ways that foster independence and creativity.

Distinctive Characteristics of Honors Education

Honors courses are expected to go beyond traditional classroom dynamics, offering students transformative experiences. While feedback highlights the success of many courses in achieving this, it also reveals an opportunity to ensure greater distinction between honors-designated sections and their non-honors counterparts.

Faculty teaching honors courses may naturally draw upon their expertise and existing course materials from non-honors sections, particularly when these courses fulfill similar General Education requirements. This approach provides a solid foundation but must be complemented by intentional efforts to align the course with the unique goals and expectations of honors education. Honors students, who often exhibit heightened intellectual curiosity and intrinsic motivation, seek courses that inspire deeper engagement and go beyond the traditional boundaries of introductory coursework. Ensuring that honors courses are distinct is essential to maintaining the integrity of their honors designation.

The following observations highlight areas where honors-specific expectations intersect with opportunities for growth:

1. Intellectual Challenge and Engagement

Honors students seek courses that challenge them to engage deeply, think critically, and explore innovative solutions to complex problems. Evaluations and surveys revealed that while many courses meet these expectations, others closely mirrored their non-honors counterparts, sometimes missing opportunities to incorporate the depth, complexity, or interdisciplinary connections that honors students value.

2. Interactive and Student-Centered Learning

Some evaluations noted that honors courses relied heavily on lecture-based methods, which are often emphasized in non-honors sections of these courses for ease of “content delivery.” While lectures have their place, honors courses should pair them with dynamic, participatory methods that reflect the innovative spirit of honors education.

By intentionally differentiating honors-designated courses from their non-honors counterparts, we can ensure that these courses fully embody the principles of honors education. This differentiation should not require much additional work but rather a thoughtful approach to course design that enriches students’ intellectual, interdisciplinary, and participatory engagement. Together, we can

build courses that reflect the best of both distinct, disciplinary faculty expertise and honors pedagogy, creating transformative experiences that set honors education apart.

Standards and Best Practices for Honors-Designated Courses

Purpose and Importance of Standards

Honors-designated courses are at the heart of the Honors College experience and should provide our students with the opportunity to engage deeply with academic material in ways that challenge, inspire, and prepare them for meaningful contributions beyond the classroom. Establishing clear standards for these courses ensures consistency, quality, and alignment with the distinctive goals of honors education while allowing faculty the flexibility to innovate and excel in their teaching in all their courses.

The standards outlined here are designed to serve as a guiding framework for faculty and departments offering honors-designated courses. They emphasize the unique characteristics of honors education—intellectual rigor, interdisciplinary engagement, and active learning—while supporting faculty in delivering courses that meet the elevated expectations of honors students.

Key Standards for Honors-Designated Courses

1. Course Organization and Clarity

- **Transparent Expectations:** Honors students thrive when course objectives, expectations, and grading criteria are clearly communicated. Faculty should ensure that syllabi:
 - Articulate specific learning goals, including alignment with at least three of the Honors College Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in departmental honors-designated courses. Our outcomes are based on the [Marshall Baccalaureate Degree Profile](#) and, therefore, should already intersect with many departmental course SLOs. Simply highlighting those that do would go along way to helping to align these courses.
 - Provide detailed descriptions of assignments, participation requirements, and grading rubrics.
- **Structured Flexibility:** While courses should follow a logical structure, flexibility is key to accommodating dynamic and participatory learning activities.

2. Intellectual Challenge and Engagement

- **Rigorous Content:** Honors courses should go beyond content delivery to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. In addition, balancing rigor with accessibility ensures that students are intellectually stretched without being overwhelmed. Faculty can distinguish honors sections by incorporating elements such as:

- Problem-based learning that encourages students to tackle complex, open-ended questions.
- Interdisciplinary approaches that bridge multiple fields of study to offer broader perspectives.
- Student-driven projects that foster autonomy and creativity while pushing intellectual boundaries.

Balancing rigor with accessibility is key. Honors education should stretch students' capacities without overwhelming them, fostering growth and confidence.

3. Interactive and Experiential Learning

- **Participatory Approaches:** Honors students highly value interactivity and participation, such as group discussions, collaborative projects, and experiential learning opportunities. These approaches help students connect course material with broader academic and real-world applications. The goal here is to emphasize learning through interaction, collaboration, and application. Effective strategies include:
 - Group discussions, debates, or peer-led projects that encourage active engagement that allow students to engage with diverse viewpoints.
 - Experiential activities like service learning, case studies, or hands-on research opportunities.
 - Facilitating interdisciplinary case studies where students work collaboratively to solve complex problems.
- **Incorporate High-Impact Practices:** Honors courses should integrate at least one high-impact educational practice, such as:
 - Writing-intensive projects.
 - Community-based or interdisciplinary learning.
 - Collaborative assignments or e-portfolios.

4. Timely and Constructive Feedback

- **Responsive Communication:** Faculty are encouraged to maintain clear communication channels with students, ensuring timely responses to questions or concerns.
- **Actionable Feedback:** Feedback should go beyond grades to offer meaningful insights that help students refine their thinking and skills. Faculty should:
 - Provide specific, constructive comments on assignments.
 - Use feedback to encourage self-reflection and growth.

5. Integration of Interdisciplinary Perspectives

- **Connecting Concepts:** Honors courses should encourage students to explore connections between disciplines, fostering a broader understanding of course material.
- **Real-World Applications:** Highlight how academic concepts apply to societal challenges or professional contexts, helping students see the relevance and impact of their learning.

6. Alignment with Honors College Mission and SLOs

- Faculty should ensure that courses explicitly support the Honors College mission by integrating at least three Honors Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) into course objectives and assessments:
 - make connections while adapting and applying skills and learning among varied disciplines, domains of thinking, experiences, and situations.
 - outline divergent solutions to a problem, develop and explore potentially controversial proposals, and synthesize ideas or expertise to generate original plans and approaches.
 - evaluate the effectiveness of their own work, reflect on strengths and weakness of their knowledge and skills in defined areas, and devise ways to make improvements.
 - produce cohesive oral, written, and visual communications capable of connecting effectively with specific audiences.
 - appraise how cultural beliefs and practices affect inter-group communication, how specific approaches to global issues may affect communities differently, and how varying economic, religious, social, or geographical interests can result in conflict.
 - demonstrate principles of ethical citizenship and socially responsible leadership through collaborative partnerships.
 - evaluate how academic theories and public policy inform one another to support civic well-being.

Encouraging Innovation and Flexibility

The standards above are not rigid rules but a framework to inspire creativity and excellence in honors teaching. Faculty are encouraged to think boldly and experiment with pedagogical approaches that align with the principles of honors education. Whether through interdisciplinary collaborations, innovative assessments, or transformative learning activities, honors courses should reflect the unique strengths and interests of the faculty who design them, the needs of the departments that offer them, and the transformative potential of student-centered learning.

Tools and Resources for Faculty

Supporting Faculty Excellence in Honors Education

Faculty are central to the success of honors-designated courses, which are essential to the mission of the Honors College. These courses challenge students intellectually, foster interdisciplinary connections, and emphasize active learning. To support faculty in this important work, the Honors College provides tools and resources designed to empower and inspire. While some support offerings are already available, others reflect aspirational goals tied to the Honors College's strategic priorities, ensuring continued growth and collaboration.

Current Offerings

I. Personalized Support

- **One-on-One Consultations:** Faculty are encouraged to meet with Honors College staff for tailored consultations. These sessions can help faculty align their courses with the Honors College Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), address specific pedagogical challenges, or brainstorm innovative strategies for course design.

II. Faculty Collaboration

- **Peer Mentoring:** To help new honors faculty, in particular, navigate the expectations of honors education, we can facilitate connections with experienced colleagues. These relationships provide an opportunity to share best practices, troubleshoot challenges, and collaboratively develop honors-level teaching strategies.
- **Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs):** The Honors College can support ad hoc learning communities for faculty who wish to discuss shared challenges, explore interdisciplinary opportunities, or develop innovative teaching approaches for honors courses.

III. Professional Recognition, Support & Growth

- **Celebrating Faculty Excellence:** Faculty teaching honors courses are vital to the success of the Honors College, and their contributions are regularly recognized through:
 - Spotlights in Honors College newsletters and social media platforms. Insights from experienced honors faculty on their most successful strategies and approaches. Departments are welcome to *nominate* faculty.
- **Honors Faculty Fellow Program: Supporting Innovation in Honors Education**

The Honors Faculty Fellow program is an initiative designed to support faculty development and curricular innovation in honors education. Through this program, faculty members receive dedicated support from the Honors College to develop new honors courses, refine existing honors-designated courses, and explore interdisciplinary or high-impact teaching strategies.

Benefits of the Honors Faculty Fellow Program for Faculty and Departments:

- **Innovation in Course Design:** Faculty gain the resources and support to design engaging, student-centered honors courses.
- **Professional Growth:** Participation in the program provides mentorship opportunities, recognition, and strengthens promotion and tenure portfolios.
- **Departmental Advancement:** Departments benefit from expanding their honors offerings, attracting high-achieving students, and reinforcing academic excellence in their fields.

Faculty interested in becoming an Honors Faculty Fellow or learning more about the program can visit the [Honors Faculty Fellows](#) page or contact the Honors College for more details.

- **John Marshall University Scholars Award through the Honors College**

The John Marshall University Scholars Award program offers full-time, probationary tenure-track or tenured faculty members and librarians at Marshall University the opportunity to pursue significant creative or scholarly projects. This award provides recipients with dedicated time and resources to engage deeply in research, design, development, field study, creative work, or performance.

Key Features of the Award:

- **Dedicated Project Time:** Recipients receive a semester-long, four-course reassigned time commitment, allowing them to focus entirely on their proposed project without teaching or overload assignments during the award period.
- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be full-time, probationary tenure-track or tenured faculty members or librarians at Marshall University. Faculty are eligible for one award—academic year or summer—within a three-year period.
- **Outcome Expectations:** Projects should be structured to produce a tangible scholarly or creative output by the end of the award period, such as a presentation, publication-ready paper, exhibit, or performance.

Why Apply Through the Honors College?

Faculty teaching **HON** courses that serve our students are encouraged to apply for this prestigious award through the Honors College, which has a unique advantage in the application process. While all Marshall colleges are allocated the same number of awards, the applicant pool for the Honors College is typically smaller, providing faculty with an enhanced opportunity for selection. This ensures that faculty engaged in honors education have a strong pathway to secure dedicated time for scholarly or creative work.

For detailed information on application procedures and deadlines, please visit the [John Marshall University Scholars Award Program](#) page.

- **Enhancing Professional Growth:**

- Teaching honors courses can significantly enhance faculty portfolios by showcasing innovative pedagogy, interdisciplinary approaches, and student-centered learning strategies. These experiences:
- Contribute to professional development by demonstrating a commitment to teaching excellence and creativity.
- Strengthen faculty credentials for promotion and tenure by highlighting their ability to design and deliver distinctive, high-impact learning experiences.
- Offer opportunities to develop and share best practices through workshops, conferences, or publications in honors education.

A Vision for the Future

The tools and resources outlined here are designed to support faculty in delivering exceptional honors courses that meet the elevated expectations of students while reflecting the creativity and expertise of the faculty who teach them. As we work first to establish and then expand these offerings, we look forward to building a collaborative, supportive community that enriches the honors education experience for everyone involved.

I. Building a Repository of Resources

- The Honors College aspires to create a comprehensive repository of tools to support faculty in designing honors courses, including:
 - Sample syllabi that demonstrate alignment with Honors College SLOs and innovative course design.
 - Grading rubrics that emphasize critical thinking, creativity, and interdisciplinary connections.
 - Examples of effective assignments, such as interdisciplinary projects, problem-based learning activities, and case studies.

Faculty and chairs are encouraged to *contribute exemplary materials* that showcase innovative teaching and align with the Honors College Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

II. Partnering for Professional Development

- Collaborating with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Honors College aims to offer workshops and training sessions that address:
 - Honors-specific pedagogy, such as fostering intellectual rigor and managing interdisciplinary approaches.
 - High-impact practices that enhance active learning and experiential opportunities.
 - Strategies for course assessment and alignment with honors-level expectations.

III. Formalizing Collaboration Opportunities

- **Structured Peer Mentoring:** Expand the peer mentoring program into a formalized network that pairs faculty with complementary teaching styles or interdisciplinary interests.
- **Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs):** Transition ad hoc learning communities into regular forums where faculty can exchange ideas, reflect on teaching practices, and collaboratively develop innovative approaches to honors education.

Building a Stronger Partnership with Chairs and Departments

Acknowledging the Essential Role of Chairs

In departments offering honors-designated courses and where faculty are permitted to teach HON courses for the Honors College, chairs serve as pivotal leaders in honors education. They manage faculty, resources, and curricula within their departments while supporting broader university initiatives. The Honors College deeply appreciates the essential role chairs play in fostering a culture of academic excellence and collaboration.

As we work to enhance the quality and distinctiveness of honors-designated courses, the Honors College is committed to aligning with departmental goals and ensuring our efforts contribute to the success of both individual academic departments and the university as a whole.

Strengthening Our Partnership

1. Shared Goals and Mutual Benefits

- **Attracting High-Achieving Students:** Honors-designated courses provide departments with a unique platform to engage some of the university's best and brightest students. By showcasing innovative teaching, rigorous academic standards, and engaging course content, these courses can inspire honors students to pursue further coursework—or even a major—in the department.
- **Enriching Departmental Offerings:** Honors courses elevate the overall academic profile of departments, offering a space for faculty to experiment with advanced pedagogies and interdisciplinary approaches that can benefit all students. We serve as a true incubator for innovative pedagogies.
- **Enhancing Visibility and Reputation:** Collaboration with the Honors College raises the profile of departments, both within Marshall University and externally, by highlighting their role in providing transformative educational experiences for top-tier students.

2. Supporting Departmental Resources

The Honors College recognizes the pressures departments face in keeping an eye on SCHs per FTEs. To address these concerns:

- We have assured university-wide policies and accounting practices that ensure honors courses do not disadvantage departments in resource allocation. All SCHs “follow” the instructor/s and remain with their department and college.
- We seek to co-develop processes that minimize additional administrative burdens for chairs while maximizing the impact of honors courses.

3. Encouraging Faculty Excellence

Teaching honors courses is a mark of distinction. Chairs can support faculty by:

- Encouraging participation in honors teaching as a professional development opportunity that strengthens portfolios and contributes to career goals.
- Working with the Honors College to formally recognize and celebrate faculty contributions through professional recognition and mentorship opportunities.

4. Developing Honors-Designated Dual Credit Courses

The Honors College is committed to expanding collaborative opportunities with departments to develop honors-designated dual credit courses. These courses, offered in partnership with local high schools, provide a valuable bridge between secondary education and college-level honors experiences.

Why Develop Honors-Designated Dual Credit Courses?

1. Stronger Preparation for College:

Unlike AP courses, which often fail to align with university expectations, honors-designated dual credit courses immerse students in an authentic college experience, easing their transition to Marshall.

2. Increased Course Enrollment and Departmental Visibility:

- Departments offering dual credit courses can attract more students, including those who might otherwise fulfill general education requirements before arriving at Marshall.
- These courses also introduce students to specific disciplines, increasing the likelihood of them pursuing majors in the department.

3. Better Pipeline for Honors College Recruitment:

- High school students completing honors-designated dual credit courses are more likely to come to Marshall and to join the Honors College upon enrolling at Marshall.
- These students enter with genuine honors course experiences rather than AP-equivalent credits that may not align with honors expectations.

The Honors College invites departments and faculty to explore how they can develop and expand honors-designated dual credit courses.

5. Expanding Departmental Honors: A Pathway for Advanced Learning

Departmental Honors programs offer students a deeper level of engagement within their chosen fields, allowing them to undertake advanced research, creative projects, or significant capstone experiences that contribute to their academic and professional development.

While Departmental Honors pathways exist in some majors, including Anthropology and Sociology, there is a tremendous opportunity for other departments to create structured honors experiences that enrich student learning, elevate departmental reputation, and align with Marshall University's commitment to high-impact educational practices.

Why Establish a Departmental Honors Program?

1. Enhance Student Engagement and Academic Excellence:

- Offers motivated students the chance to undertake original research, independent study, or significant creative projects that deepen their expertise.
- Prepares students for graduate and professional education by providing hands-on experience in scholarly and creative endeavors.

2. Strengthen Departmental Identity and Visibility:

- Positions the department as a leader in high-impact education, appealing to both prospective students and faculty.
- Aligns with national best practices, reinforcing the department's role in advancing academic excellence.

3. Create Synergy Between Honors and Departmental Learning Objectives:

- Honors students already seek intensive academic experiences—Departmental Honors pathways provide a formalized way to integrate them into their majors.
- Departments can tailor these programs to align with their specific disciplinary needs while maintaining the rigor expected in honors education.

The Role of the Honors College in Supporting Departmental Honors

The Honors College is committed to working collaboratively with departments to develop structured, sustainable, and student-centered Departmental Honors programs.

- We consult with chairs and faculty to design department-specific honors pathways that complement existing curricula.

- Departmental Honors credits can be recognized within the Honors College curriculum, allowing students to fulfill both university and honors requirements in a meaningful way.
- The Honors College provides resources, templates, and examples from existing Departmental Honors models to guide development.

We invite departments to partner with the Honors College in exploring and developing Departmental Honors programs that support student success and faculty innovation. Interested chairs and faculty should contact the Honors College to begin the conversation.

A Vision for Collaboration

To sustain and expand our productive partnership, the Honors College aspires to:

1. Formalize Processes for Honors Courses:

- Develop shared standards for honors-designated courses that ensure alignment with both departmental and Honors College goals and learning outcomes.
- Provide templates and resources that simplify course development and clarify honors-specific expectations.

2. Expand Recognition for Departments and Chairs:

- Highlight the contributions of our partner departments in Honors College communications and at events.
- Explore opportunities for co-branded initiatives that promote shared successes, such as interdisciplinary courses or co-curricular programs.

3. Promote Interdisciplinary Engagement:

The Honors College recognizes that implantation of an Incentivized Budget Model at Marshall may create apprehension about interdepartmental or cross-college collaboration. Despite these concerns, interdisciplinary engagement remains a hallmark of honors education and a powerful way to attract high-achieving students while enhancing the academic reputation of participating departments.

- **Strategic Benefits for Departments:**

By collaborating on team-taught honors courses or interdisciplinary projects, departments can:

- Share resources and expertise to create innovative courses that would be challenging for a single department to develop independently.
- Increase visibility among honors students, potentially attracting them to multiple departments or fields of study.

- Demonstrate alignment with Marshall University's mission to foster collaborative and forward-thinking academic opportunities.

- **Examples of Possible Interdisciplinary Connections:**

Consider team-teaching courses such as:

- A seminar blending Environmental Science and Public Policy, focusing on sustainability and governance.
- An honors course combining Literature and Psychology, exploring the intersection of narrative and mental health.
- A project-based course integrating Engineering and Art, where students design and build functional yet aesthetically driven prototypes.

- **Advocating for Institutional Support:**

The Honors College is committed to working with university leadership to advocate for policies that incentivize interdisciplinary efforts under the budget model. These efforts may include:

- Exploring shared credit arrangements or recognition for contributions to cross-departmental courses.
- Highlighting the broader institutional value of interdisciplinary engagement in recruitment, retention, and academic reputation.

Moving Forward Together

The Honors College is committed to being a supportive and engaged partner for departments and their chairs. Together, we can ensure that honors-designated courses exemplify the best of Marshall University's academic values and create transformative opportunities for students and faculty alike.

Appendix: Resources for Further Information

To support your efforts in delivering exceptional honors education, the following resources are available to provide additional guidance, context, and inspiration.

Honors College

1. [**Contributing to Honors Education**](#)
Learn more about teaching honors courses, faculty support, and opportunities to engage with the Honors College.
2. [**Honors College Strategic Plan**](#)
Explore the Honors College's mission, goals, and strategies for advancing honors education at Marshall University.
3. [**Honors College Curricular and Other Requirements**](#)
4. [**Honors College Student Learning Outcomes \(SLOs\)**](#)
Review the Honors College SLOs to ensure your courses align with the educational goals we strive to achieve.
5. [**Sample Honors Course Materials**](#)
A collection of sample syllabi, assignments, and rubrics from successful honors courses. We are continuing to work on this repository.

University

1. [**Marshall University Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)**](#)
Access workshops, resources, and one-on-one consultations to enhance your teaching practices.
2. [**Marshall University Strategic Plan**](#)
Understand the broader university vision and goals to align your work with institutional priorities.
3. [**National Collegiate Honors Council \(NCHC\)**](#)
Explore best practices, course design principles, and professional development opportunities in honors education. We are a member institution of the NCHC. If you need access to something behind a member login, we can help obtain it for you. Just let us know.

Honors Course Design and Pedagogical Inspiration

Innovative Teaching Practices

Honors courses thrive on creativity, intellectual rigor, and engaging pedagogies. The following resources are designed to inspire faculty with proven methods and innovative approaches to teaching honors-level courses:

1. **Course Design** (*NCHC*)

Explore the principles of honors course design, focusing on intellectual engagement, interdisciplinary thinking, and innovative assessment techniques.

[NCHC Course Design](#)

2. **High-Impact Educational Practices** (*AAC&U*)

Learn about evidence-based teaching practices such as collaborative learning, service learning, and undergraduate research to enrich your honors courses.

[Explore High-Impact Practices](#)

3. **Active Learning Strategies for Honors Students** (*Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching*)

Access guides and examples for implementing active learning techniques like problem-based learning, flipped classrooms, and peer teaching in honors settings.

[Read More on Active Learning](#)

Contact the Honors College

For any questions, suggestions, or further support, please reach out to the Honors College team:

- **Email:** honorscollege@marshall.edu
- **Phone:** (304) 696-5421
- **Office:** Old Main 230