

University of Utah Honors College Expected Learning Outcomes and Assessment Guidelines

Mission

At the Honors College, dedicated teachers and motivated learners collaborate to build an innovative educational environment, where everyone is challenged to think, ask questions, take risks and explore the full scope of the world around them. Honors students who choose to complete the demanding Honors curriculum benefit from depth and breadth of study. Students acquire the intellectual tools that will enrich their lives and enable them to thrive in a rapidly changing global community.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The Honors College curriculum assessment plan is based on the learning outcomes established for students earning the Honors Degree (HBS, HBA, HBFA, etc.). The expected outcomes for Honors Degree recipients, regardless of major, are:

- demonstrate expertise and research skills in their major field, particularly through the completion of an Honors Thesis Project;
- demonstrate interdisciplinary perspectives across the liberal arts and sciences;
- demonstrate intellectual independence, articulating arguments that critically analyze information from a variety of sources and perspectives;
- actively participate and collaborate as informed members of local and global communities;
- be well prepared for graduate school, professional study, and careers in the public, private or nonprofit sectors.

To evaluate these outcomes, the Honors College created a curriculum map (Fig. 1) that identifies the core courses fulfilling one or more of the above outcomes. The core curriculum includes 2 Intellectual Traditions, 1 Science, 1 Writing, and 1 Thesis course. Additionally, students must complete three honors elective courses to earn the Honors Degree, which can be completed in a multitude of ways through departmental honors courses, study abroad, and internships, to name a few. For this reason, Honors selected to focus its assessment efforts on its core curriculum and unique offerings (such as praxis labs).

University of Utah Honors College Curriculum Learning Outcomes					
	Learning Outcome #1: Demonstrate interdisciplinary perspectives across the liberal arts and sciences	Learning Outcome #2: Demonstrate intellectual independence, articulating arguments that critically analyze information from a variety of sources and perspectives	Learning Outcome #3: Actively participates and collaborates as informed members of local and global communities	Learning Outcome #4: Demonstrate expertise and research skills in their major field, particularly through the completion of an Honors Thesis Project	Learning Outcome #5: Be well prepared for graduate school, professional study, and careers in the public, private or nonprofit sectors
Honors College Core Courses Options					
HONOR 2101: Intellectual Traditions		X			
HONOR 2102: Intellectual Traditions		X			
HONOR 2103: Intellectual Traditions	X	X			
HONOR 2104: Intellectual Traditions		X			
HONOR 2105: Intellectual Traditions		X	X		
HONOR 2106: Intellectual Traditions		X	X		
HONOR 2107: Intellectual Traditions		X			
HONOR 2108: Intellectual Traditions	X	X			
HONOR 2109: Intellectual Traditions	X	X	X		
HONOR 2110: Intellectual Traditions	X	X	X		
HONOR 2211: Writing in Honors		X			
HONOR 2601: Science & Storytelling II	X		X		
HONOR 3200: Research University		X		X	X
HONOR 3860: Non-Fiction Writing	X	X		X	
HONOR 2500: Evidence for Evolution					
HONOR 2600: Science & Storytelling I	X	X			
HONOR 3215: Global Environmental Change	X		X	X	
HONOR 3400: Science & Pedagogy			X		X
HONOR 4450: History of Physics	X				
HONOR 4471: Science Seminar	X		X		
4999 Thesis Course		X		X	X
Deeply Engaged Experiences					
HONOR 3700: Praxis Lab	X	X	X	X	X
HONOR 3850: Novel Writing Workshop		X		X	X

The summer prior to the start of the new academic year Honors will select two learning outcomes to evaluate for the year. Faculty who teach courses¹ in those areas will be asked to identify and submit assignments that can be used to assess the selected learning outcomes. Additionally, students from those courses will receive a survey with questions related to the learning outcomes. This survey will be a mix of Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The learning outcomes team will meet once a year in the Spring to evaluate the materials submitted during the previous semester (Fall). Courses that are only taught in the Spring, or whose final projects are completed in the Spring as in the case of Praxis Labs, will be evaluated the following Fall semester.

Since Honors will focus its assessment efforts on two different learning outcomes per academic year, a full assessment cycle for all five outcomes will be completed in a three-year period. The process outlined above, however, will be fine-tuned as needed moving forward.

Assessment Team

The Honors College will form a learning outcomes assessment committee. Members will include two core Honors faculty, the Associate Dean, and the Director of Curriculum and Assessment.

Assessment Reporting

The Director of Curriculum and Assessment will write the annual report summarizing the findings and recommendations that result from the assessment. A brief outline of the learning outcomes and courses to be reviewed for the year will also be included. The report will be reviewed by the Dean of the Honors College, and shared with Undergraduate Studies.

¹ Please note that not every class section will be selected, but a reasonable sample.