**Student Guide to Honors Contracts**

**What is an honors contract?**

An Honors Project Contract is an agreement between a student and a faculty member outlining the requirements for successful completion of an honors project. ***Each semester, any student wishing to earn honors credit by contract must complete and submit a proposed Honors Project Contract (available online at http://www.lonestar.edu/honors-montgomery.htm) by the specified honors calendar deadline, typically the fourth week of the semester.*** The honors contract allows students to earn honors credit for courses that are not designated as honors classes. A unique attribute of honors contracts is that they allow students to work one-on-one with a faculty mentor. Honors contracts may be submitted across a wide range of college-level courses across academic disciplines, and H-Contract projects should demonstrate effective communication skills and integrative scholarship, as well as critical thinking. Students earn honors credit for the course upon successful completion of the contract, presentation of their honors project at the end of the semester, and submission of an H-Contract Completion form by the faculty mentor once the final project has been submitted and grade assigned. H-Contract applications should outline proposed honors projects in enough detail that the Honors Council can readily determine whether the project entails honors level coursework. In addition to close consultation with the honors faculty mentor, students interested in earning honors credit through honors contracts can obtain additional information/assistance from the honors director and the Honors Student Organization (HSO).

**Can I complete an honors contract for a course I’ve already taken?**

The Honors Council recognizes that students enrolled in beginning courses may not have the necessary skills to do an honors project. Once the class is completed and the Honors Student has mastered the skills during the class, it may be more beneficial for the student to do an honors contract. Contracts therefore may be submitted for courses already taken. These contracts are referred to as retroactive. Retroactive honors contracts are submitted to the Honors Council for approval in the same way and with the same submission deadlines as other honors contracts. Retroactive contracts are limited to courses taken in the previous academic year and the student must have earned a grade of “B” or better in the class.

**What are the requirements of an honors contract?**

* Identify a faculty mentor who will work with you on an Honors Project.
* Work with your faculty mentor to complete and submit an Honors Contract application on your proposed Honors Project. ***Proposed honors projects should demonstrate effective communication skills and integrative scholarship, as well as critical thinking***.
* Meet at regularly scheduled times with your faculty mentor while working to complete your Honors Project.
* Submit the completed Honors Project to your faculty mentor, as well as a copy to the honors director, by the assigned semester due date (see Honors Calendar for details).
* Create and give a capstone presentation of your Honors Project on Honors Day. This presentation can incorporate PowerPoint, a poster, video, etc. The capstone presentation should explain the nature of the Honors Project for the non-specialist: what your project is about, why it is significant, and how your project has impacted your overall academic experience. ***All students are required to attend and present on Honors Day in order to receive honors credit for courses/contracts completed.***
* Submit a copy of your capstone presentation (poster, video, PowerPoint, etc.) to the Honors Director no later than one week prior to finals week for display during Honors Day.

**How do I choose an honors topic?**

The particular focus of the Honors Project depends on the student’s interest. The Honors Project provides the opportunity for a creative integration of learning and interest, the result of which will be an endeavor unique to each student. The Honors Project allows students to learn more about their chosen field of study, research, scholarship, and interests. It also gives students the opportunity to plan and execute a project that is primarily self-directed with guidance and mentoring from the faculty member with whom the student is working. For ideas on the types of projects students may choose from, see the “Different Types of Models” listed below.

While each student is ultimately responsible for choosing his or her individual Honors Project, narrowing a down a potential topic is greatly facilitated through preliminary research and frequent discussions with your faculty mentor in order to narrow your research focus. Students should spend the first few weeks of the semester discussing possible topics with a faculty mentor and conducting preliminary research to determine questions of interest that are related to your course outcomes. It is important to get a feel for materials available pertaining to your topic of interest, along with gathering background information on the topic itself. ***The more effort put into this initial research prior to your Honors Project Contract submission, the more likely that your semester honors project will be a success.***

**What happens after I submit a mentor approved honors contract?**

Once you have completed your honors contract application with your faculty mentor, it must be submitted to the Honors Council for approval. The Honors Council meets to discuss the contracts on the Thursday following the submission deadline for contracts. You will be notified of the Honors Council decision by email within three weekdays of the meeting. There are four possible responses from the committee.

*Approved* – Your honors contract application has been accepted by the Honors Council and you can move forward with your Honors Project.

*Approved with clarification* – Your honors contract application has been accepted by the Honors Council pending clarification of parts identified by the Honors Council during contract review.

*Resubmit* – Your honors contract application has merit, but requires significant revision and resubmission within an allotted time frame for reconsideration by the Honors Council. You will receive specific instructions on why your contract must be rewritten and what to include in the new contract.

*Rejected* – The Honors Project put forward in your honors contract application was not considered appropriate by the Honors Council.

**What should I do if I am unable to complete my honors contract?**

Should circumstances keep you from fulfilling the requirements of your honors contract, we suggest you speak with your mentor and/or the Honors Program Director. If there is no alternative but to withdraw from your Honors Contract, you must first advise your mentor, then contact the Honors Program Director. You may withdraw from the Honors Contract and still complete the course. You will not receive honors credit for the course. Withdrawing from an honors contract is your responsibility.

**Honors Contract Checklist**

* Complete the online application for the Honors College using the online application available at [www.LoneStar.edu/HonorsCollege](http://www.LoneStar.edu/HonorsCollege). A new application must be completed each semester a student is actively participating in the Honors College.
* Review your class schedule for courses in which you would like to pursue on honors contract. You may only attempt one honors contract during your first semester. In subsequent semesters, you may elect to attempt up to three contracts per semester, pending approval by the Honors Director.
* Make an appointment with your course instructor to discuss whether he/she is able/willing to work with you on an honors contract with you.
* Complete the Honors Project Contract form in close consultation with your faculty mentor.
* Submit the completed contract proposal to the Honors Director by the semester deadline.
* Contact the Honors Director if you have not received a response approximately one week after the honors project contract submission deadline.
* Meet regularly with your faculty mentor throughout the semester as specified in the contract.
* Submit your final project to your faculty mentor, and once the final project is approved submit two copies (faculty mentor & director) by the posted deadline
* Prepare and practice your honors project presentation for Honors Day .
* Attend the Honors Day Conference and make your student presentation.
* In order to ensure that you receive honors credit on your transcript, make sure that your faculty mentor submits an Honors Contract Completion form to the Honors Director *by the last day of finals*. This form is e-mailed to all mentors by the Honors Director and can be downloaded from documents section of our honors website.