HONORS COLLEGE
STUDENT HANDBOOK

Lone Star College System – The Honors College
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The Honors College at Lone Star College: Mission, Vision, and Goals

The Lone Star College System Honors College exemplifies academic and personal excellence across the campuses of Lone Star College System by preparing students to fulfill the responsibilities of the Citizen Scholar. Through the four pillars of Community, Service, Scholarship, and Leadership, the Honors College promotes a realization of the fundamental relationship in American democracy: the relationship between open access to affordable, high quality education and critically engaged citizenship. By providing a unique and innovative environment that values critical thinking, cultural production, and community service, the Honors College constructs an enduring foundation for lifelong learning and achievement in a complex global society.

The vision for the LSC Honors College is to be a leader in honors education.

The Honors College at LSCS is designed to meet the needs of high-achieving students seeking to improve their college transcripts and transferability with challenging coursework provided across a broad range of disciplines. The Honors College offers a wide range of opportunities for honors students— from incoming freshman wanting to graduate with an Honors AA or Honors AS degree, to high-achieving students seeking to graduate with Honors distinction, to students interested in earning individual honors course credit.

Our courses will engage and challenge students inside and outside the classroom through small classes and close interaction with dedicated faculty. Opportunities to enrich the total college experience while at The Honors College include travel, off-campus educational and cultural events, service learning opportunities, conferences and special seminars.

Honors education is best understood as providing an enriching, innovative academic environment for our most academically talented students. One hallmark of Honors is celebrating the diversity of teaching styles and the freedom given to instructors to best meet the needs of the high achieving students in their classrooms. There is no single Honors classroom any more than there is a single honors teacher or honors student. Honors education, according to the National Collegiate Honors Council is based on the belief that “superior students profit from close contact with faculty, small courses, seminars or one-on-one instruction, course work shared with other gifted students, individual research projects, internships, foreign study, and campus or community service.” It is this experience that we hope to provide students in The Honors College at LSCS.
Admission/Eligibility

Admission

Eligibility for Admission
Honors College students are selected from a competitive process that includes an evaluation of their GPA and/or test scores.

Honors College Admission
Open to new or returning students with at least one of the following:

- A high school GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale
- 1150 or higher on the SAT (combined math and critical reading sections)
- 26 or higher composite score on the ACT
- 3.25 GPA with 9 or more college credit hours

Honors College Chancellor’s Fellows
Admission of a candidate into The Honors College as an Honors College Fellow is a consideration of a students’ potential beyond simply a test score or a GPA. Selection is through a holistic process that considers a variety of factors, including academics, leadership and community/school activities.

Additional Eligibility Requirements for Honors Fellows

- High School GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale
- Three letters of recommendation
- Writing Sample
- Personal Interview
- Completed FAFSA or TASFA?

Eligibility for Continued Enrollment in Honors
Each semester, students’ Honors Good Standing status is reviewed to confirm continued eligibility. Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 or higher, must participate in the required number of Honors events (as set by campus honors director), and must make significant progress in their academic plan toward graduation.

Definition of Honors Good Standing
A student in good standing is a student who:

- Maintains or exceeds the minimum qualifications for participation in the Honors College.
- Participates in the required number of Honors College events.
- Demonstrates the highest academic standards and integrity.
- Behaves in a professional manner befitting of a representative of the Honors College.
- Habitually meets key application, proposal, and class deadlines and meets attendance expectations for all class sessions.

Review of Records for Chancellor’s Honors College Fellows
Continued scholarship eligibility is assessed as part of the semesterly Review for Eligibility of Continued Enrollment in Honors.
Continued receipt of the Chancellor’s Honors College Fellows Award is contingent upon maintaining Honors Good Standing and any additional requirements as outlined in Official Admission Statements. The additional requirements include, but are not limited to, attending all mandatory advising appointments, Orientations, forums, and workshops and following the curriculum and plan as set out by the campus honors director each semester.

Additionally, students are responsible for reviewing and following the Lone Star College System Student Code of Handbook. The LSC Honors College Student Handbook is provided as a complimentary addition to the primary LSC Student Handbook. The LSC Student Handbook has priority and precedence in the event of any conflicts in content, procedure or policy.

**Grade Point Average Required**
To be eligible for continued enrollment in The Honors College, students must maintain a 3.25 GPA. A GPA of 3.5 is required to graduate with honors distinction(s).

**Review of Records and the Honors Probation Rule**
The Honors College will review eligibility of good standing each semester and after Summer II. Any student who does not maintain the minimum standards as an honors student in good standing for any semester will be placed on Honors College probation for the following Fall or Spring semester. That is, he or she will be permitted to continue with honors work for the subsequent semester (the semester following the drop in grades); however, to continue taking honors courses beyond that semester, the student would need to receive approval from the director and return to good standing. If probation is a result of GPA ineligibility, the student must raise his or her GPA to the required 3.25 by the conclusion of the semester.

Students on Honors College probation must be mindful the following rules apply to them:
- They must meet with the Honors Director at the beginning of the semester to discuss their academic plans.
- While on probation, they may not be permitted to take multiple or heavy honors course loads. In addition, they may not receive permission to enroll in certain honors classes.
- Students may be asked to garner a recommendation from an honors faculty to enroll in classes or remain in the Honors College.
- While on probation, students will not qualify to run for leadership positions in the Honors College Student Organization (HCSO).
- While on probation, students may not qualify for Honors travel and/or presentation opportunities.

Furthermore, should a student fall below a 3.0, the following probationary considerations will be applied:
- While on probation, the student will not be a member of the Honors College Student Organization.
- The Honors Director will weigh each case individually, but the student must be aware that he or she may be dropped from currently enrolled honors sections, depending on circumstance and honors course load.

For Chancellor’s Honors College Fellows, the above probation rules apply as follows:
- Students cannot participate in the travel capstone if not fully off probation by the end of the
Fall semester of Year 2. However, in some cases with the director’s approval, students may be given the minimester (one course only) to raise their GPAs.

- Students cannot participate in the travel capstone if they are still on probation during the Spring semester of Year 2. These students will not qualify to receive the Honors AA or AS if they are not completely off probation by the end of that semester, and they will not be given the May minimester or summer semester to raise their GPAs.

These rules are in place to protect the integrity of the program, as well as serve in the best interest of the honors students enrolled in Honors College classes. The Honors Director will weigh each case individually and has the discretion to consider special circumstances. Please note: in certain egregious circumstances (e.g., plagiarism, general misconduct, and behavior not befitting to a member of the Honors College) the Honors Director and Campus Honors Council may decide to forego the probation semester and expel the student from the Honors College.

Regaining Honors College Eligibility
If at the end of the probationary semester, the student has restored or exceeded the minimum requirements, the student may be restored to full membership.

If the student fails to restore or exceed the minimum requirements by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be officially removed from The Honors College. A student who has been removed from The Honors College may re-apply to the Honors College following a one semester absence, meeting all admission requirements in effect at that time.

Appeals
If a student is removed from The Honors College, the student may make a formal appeal of the decision by submitting to the campus Director of Honors a formal letter (hard copy) clearly explaining the circumstances and requesting reinstatement. If the campus Director of Honors is satisfied that the appeal is legitimate and serious, he or she will submit the appeal to the Honors College Appeals Committee on that campus. The Appeals Committee will then hold a hearing to consider the appeal. The committee may require the appellant to appear in person, and may require additional documentation. The Appeals Committee will announce to the appellant and to the Director of Honors its decision in no more than fourteen (14) calendar days after the hearing.

If the student believes that the Appeals Committee has rendered an inappropriate or mistaken judgment in the case, the student may appeal to the LSCS Executive Director of The Honors College for a re-hearing. The Executive Director may refer the appeal to LSCS Honors College Advisory Board¹, reject the appeal, or remand the decision to the Appeals Committee where the decision originated with comments to reconsider. The Appeals Committee will then reconsider the appeal, taking into account the Executive Director’s comments, or those of the LSCS Honors College Advisory Board. The Appeals Committee will announce its decision to the student, the Director of Honors and the Executive Director within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the remand.

¹ The Honors College Advisory Board participates in the formulation of academic and administrative policies of The Honors College and serves as an advisory body to the executive director. The Advisory Board meets biannually or more to address Honors College curriculum, faculty issues, admissions standards, and programmatic structure and assessment.
The Probation Rule and New Honors Students
The Probation Rule does not apply to newly registered Honors College students. If you enroll in classes as a new Honors College student and your GPA drops below the required 3.25 between semesters, your application to the Honors College will be denied, and you may be dropped from honors classes.

In short, you must first complete at least one (1) semester as an Honors College student in good standing before qualifying for probation.

Policy on Rescindment and Forfeiture of Scholarships
Students are informed of the Honors College Chancellor’s Fellows Award eligibility as part of their initial application.

As noted in the “Fellows Award Seat Notification,” students must meet additional requirements in order to confirm acceptance and receive the award, including, but not limited to, submitting an official copy of the student’s final high school transcript in order to verify graduation and to confirm continued academic achievement. A serious downturn in a student’s senior year could result in the rescinding of a Fellows Award by the Honors Director.

The award will be rescinded if a student:

- Becomes ineligible and/or otherwise demonstrates a serious downturn in academic achievement
- Fraudulently misrepresents any information on application documents

The award will be forfeited if a student:

- Fails to complete the required steps detailed in the “Fellows Award Seat Notification”
- Fails to attend mandatory Honors events such as advising appointments, Summer Honors Workshop, and Fall Honors Orientation
- Fails to submit requested documentation, including an official copy of the student’s final high school transcript by the stated due date
- Fails to follow the curriculum and plan set out by the student’s Honors Director
- Voluntarily withdraws from the Fellows program

Rescindment of a Fellows award will be determined by a subcommittee of the Honors College Advisory Board (HCAB). The subcommittee shall consist of no fewer than four HCAB members. Students will be informed of this decision by e-mail and/or mail. At that time, students will be informed whether they are eligible to apply to The Honors College as a non-Fellows member.

Any balances resulting from the removal of the scholarship may be the responsibility of the student to pay back LSC in full. Students may be responsible for any and all charges to their student accounts should it be determined, at any point during the term, that they are no longer eligible to receive the scholarship due to failure to meet GPA, good standing, or any other criteria as required by the scholarship.
Honors College Pathways

The Honors College at Lone Star offers students a wide range of opportunities for honors students - from incoming freshman wanting to graduate with an Honors AA or Honors AS degree, to high-achieving students seeking to graduate with Honors distinction, to students interested in earning individual honors course credits. Pathways include:

Chancellor’s Honors College Fellows: Honors AA or Honors AS degree

- Recipients of this award will receive an award package to pursue a course of study culminating in an 2-year plan of study, based on core curriculum with 27 Earned honors credits
- 20 students admitted per campus each year
- Award package to cover: Tuition and fees (up to 15 credit hours per semester), book allowance (up to $600 per semester), allowance ($600 per semester), and International Capstone trip.
- Eligibility Requirements for Honors College Chancellor’s Fellows Program:

Open to new or returning students with at least one of the following:
- A high school GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale
- 1150 or higher on the SAT (combined math and critical reading sections)
- 26 or higher composite score on the ACT
- 3.25 GPA with 9 or more college credit hours

In addition to meeting Honors College eligibility prospective Honors College Fellows are competitively selected based on a holistic evaluation of the candidate’s application file, including high school or college GPA, test scores, three letters of recommendation, writing sample, and a Personal interview with the Honors College Fellows Admissions Committee.

In order to receive the Honors AA or Honors AS, students must be in Honors Good Standing with a minimum 3.25 during the Spring semester of Year 2. Students must complete any remaining degree-required coursework no later than the following summer, but only students in Good Standing may have the summer to complete.

Honors College Graduation Distinction Plan

The Honors College graduation distinction plans are as follows:

- **Graduate with Honors in Research (Medallion)**
  - Completion of 9 Honors credits; 3.5 GPA
- **Graduate with High Honors in Research (Medallion, Red/Silver Double Cords)**
  - Completion of 15 Honors credits; 3.5 GPA
- **Graduate with Highest Honors in Research (Medallion, Red/Gold Double Cords, White Stole)**
  - Completion of 21 Honors credits; 3.5 GPA
• **Honors Scholar Capstone2 (Honors Scholar Medallion)**
  ▪ Completion of Honors Scholar (includes 25 hours of community service); 3.5 GPA.
  ▪ Prerequisite: The Honors Scholar may only be attempted by students with a minimum 3.5 GPA and after successful completion of 9 honors credit hours.

• **Honors College Fellow (Medallion, Red/Gold Double Cords, Red Stole)**
  o Completion of Honors AA or Honors AA degree, a including minimum of 27 Honors Credits, Honors Capstone, and concomitant requirements of the Fellows Program; 3.25 GPA

### Honors College Tracks

**Eligibility Requirements:**

• Meet Honors College Eligibility for Admissions
• Completion of 9 or more Honors credits; 3.5 GPA

### The Honors College Leadership Track (Blue/White Single Cord)

• Allows students to combine their academic pursuits with their personal interests in leadership development.
• Outcomes include: synthesize academic knowledge with leadership activities, develop a personal leadership theory/style, facilitate team process by making substantial contributions team meetings and activities, practice leadership principles through involvement in The Honors College, Lone Star College, and/or the community.
• Requirements for Completion: Students submit a proposal for leadership track completion to their Campus Honors Councils to include configurable options from the following general categories:
  o HCSO participation/officer position
  o Peer Mentoring Program
  o Leadership Training
  o Institutional Service/Volunteerism
Options vary by campus. Contact the campus honors directors for more information.

### The Honors College International Studies Track (Blue/Gold Single Cord)

• Aimed at helping students think and communicate critically and clearly about the most pressing global challenges. Honors-level scholarship, as well as related co-curricular activities
• Outcomes include: Identify historical, political, social, cultural, and/or economic dimensions of international processes and issues, engage in scholarly inquiry related to international processes and issues, present to an academic audience a clear and concise account of a global issue, process, trend, or policy.
• Requirements for Completion:

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2 The Honors Scholar may only be attempted after successful completion of 9 honors credits OR, with director’s approval, after successful completion of 6 honors credits with concurrent enrollment in an additional 3 or more honors credits.
o 15 hours of IS-designated Honors courses
  OR
o 9 hours of IS-designated Honors courses
o Honors International Option (including Honors Model United Nations or Honors Study Abroad)
The Honors College Individual Course Credits

The Honors College Model United Nations (Model United Nations Pin)
- Lone Star College offers students the opportunity to learn about global issues and the challenges of diplomacy through the competitive Model UN program. The Model UN is a simulation of the United Nations system, where students assume the role of diplomats and participate in debates on current global issues found in the UN agenda. The Model UN delegations compete in the Spring semester.
- Requirements for Completion:
  o Successful completion of Honors College Special Topics section/project
  o Lone Star College International Education Conference presentation

The Honors College Civic Engagement Track (Blue/Red Single Cord)
- Coming soon

Special Topics in Honors
The Honors College Special Topics in Honors (HONRH courses) are independent study or small-group seminars for supervised honors research. Students are encouraged to investigate topics furthering their own academic and career interests when developing research questions. Requires a formal proposal, written component appropriate for the discipline, and presentation of the research at the Honors Undergraduate Research Day. May be repeated when topics vary. Instead of a letter grade, students will receive a “pass or fail” notation on the official transcript. Please contact your campus honors director to find out if this option or one of the above pathways best meets your transfer and/or career needs.
Honors Credits

Honors credits are earned by enrolling in honors sections, as well as by working with a faculty mentor in small group seminars or independent studies. An Honors section will take place as a scheduled class, and activities will be incorporated into the class syllabus. Credit is indicated on transcripts.

Outcomes Common to Lone Star College Honors College Courses

All Honors College instruction should meet the following five National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) outcomes:\[1\]:

1. To help students develop effective written communication skills (including the ability to make effective use of the information and ideas they learn)
2. To help students develop effective oral communication skills
3. To help students develop their ability to analyze and synthesize a broad range of material
4. To help students understand how scholars think about problems, formulate hypotheses, research those problems, and draw conclusions about them; and to help students understand how creative artists approach the creative process and produce an original work
5. To help students become more independent and critical thinkers, demonstrating the ability to use knowledge and logic when discussing an issue or an idea, while considering the consequences of their ideas, for themselves, for others, and for society

In addition, Honors instruction should:

- Stimulate students to ask sophisticated questions and guide them in ways to address and answer them
- Engage students in regular and thoughtful discussion
- Provide students with significant, but reasonable, challenge
- Offer support to students to guide and help them produce original work
- Emphasize writing and active learning over rote memorization and lectures

Honors Courses

In honors sections, the entire course is designed as honors instruction—from text selection to course scheduling to class assignments. Discussion, writing, research, and presentations are hallmarks of Honors classes. Honors courses emphasize papers and essays, not multiple-choice exams, and emphasize ideas and active learning over the lecture-only classroom. A required honors project is an important component of the class, and a description of the honors project assignment is included in the syllabus. Instructors nominate student(s) to present on the Honors College Undergraduate Research Day; nominated students are expected to present their honors section research at the Honors College Undergraduate Research Day Conference.

Special Topics in Honors

The Honors College Special Topics in Honors (HONRH courses) are independent study or small-group seminars for supervised honors research. Students are encouraged to investigate topics furthering their own academic and career interests when developing research questions. Requires a formal proposal.

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\[1\] This information was taken in part from the website of the National Collegiate Honors Council
written component appropriate for the discipline, and presentation of the research at the Honors Undergraduate Research Day. May be repeated when topics vary. Instead of a letter grade, students will receive a “pass or fail” notation on the official transcript.
Honors College Events and Co-Curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities, activities outside of the classroom that complement academic studies, are an integral part of a comprehensive honors education. Our co-curricular program encourages students to put their studies into practice. From student travel to performing arts events—these beyond-the-classroom activities significantly add to students’ academic development. The Honors College’s co-curriculum emphasizes highly meaningful educational practices, such as writing workshops and undergraduate research presentations, and also provides a wide-variety of experiential learning opportunities allowing students to apply their analytical skills to leadership and real-world civic engagement.

Co-curricular experiences further scholarly inquiry and research by encouraging students to make connections between social, cultural, artistic, and professional enrichment outside of the classroom and the students’ own academic areas of interest. Like our honors courses, these opportunities foster academic excellence by enabling honors students greater responsibility and initiative in their academic careers.
The Honors College Co-curriculum:

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<td>• IRB Training</td>
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<td>• Honors Research</td>
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<td>• Honors Writing (Including proposals, annotative bibliographies, and abstracts)</td>
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<td>• Honors Presentations</td>
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<th>Civic Engagement</th>
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<td>• International Studies Track Option (Including Model UN)</td>
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<td>• Honors Scholar-Academic Service Learning</td>
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<td>• Community Service Opportunities</td>
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<th>Leadership Training</th>
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<td>• Honors College Student Organization (HCSO) Officer Positions</td>
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<td>• Peer Mentoring Training</td>
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<td>• Academic Professionalism Seminars</td>
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<td>• Advanced Education Prep (Including funding and application/personal statement writing)</td>
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<td>• Honors College Cultural Events (Semesterly)</td>
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<td>• Campus Events (See your campus's Honors calendar)</td>
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Affiliations with honors organizations and societies include:

- NCHC-National Collegiate Honors Council
- GPHC-Great Plains Honors Council
- GCIC-Gulf Coast Intercollegiate Consortium
- Phi Theta Kappa
The Honors College Undergraduate Research Day

The Honors College Undergraduate Research Day provides a forum for students to share their honors work—and for Honors Faculty to highlight Honors instruction—for their campus’s students, faculty, staff and administration. This undergraduate research conference takes place on each campus at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. Top presenters are nominated to speak at local and regional honors conferences and often present in sessions with juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

While we are proud to say Lone Star College honors students have earned a reputation at regional conferences for producing high-level scholarship, it is important to note that graduate-level presentations are not expected at the Honors College Undergraduate Research Day. The goal is a progressive development of research and communication skills throughout the students’ honors studies. The Honors College Undergraduate Research Day presentations should, however, reflect critical inquiry. “Book report” or simple narrative reflections do not constitute honors-level project presentations and are often the result of topics too broad to allow for the investigation of a specific research question/creative exploration. (See “Honors Project Rubric” for honors project criteria in the appendix to this handbook.)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

What is the IRB?
The Lone Star College System Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. The LSCS IRB exists as a safeguard to promote ethical and responsible treatment of human subjects/participants in research. The LSC IRB also aspires to be a helpful agent in the progression of research involving human subjects within Lone Star College System.

Honors Student Research and IRB
Any honors student research that involves human subjects (including research methods such as interviews or surveys) requires approval by the Lone Star College System IRB.

Note: Applying for IRB approval is not as difficult as it sounds. However, it is crucial that you submit your application early in the semester in order to meet Honors Program deadlines. For more information on how to get started, see the IRB Cheat Sheet and IRB FAQ’s in the appendix to this handbook.
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

“The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), also known as the Buckley Amendment, was established to protect the privacy rights of all students and applies to any educational facility receiving federal funds. It also provided control over the release of educational record information.

Once a student turns eighteen, or attends school beyond secondary school, the rights of access to the student’s records transfer to the student. This means that all academic information goes directly to the student unless the student has given specific, written permission to release that information to someone else.

Lone Star College System FERPA Procedures
Please see the following link for additional information regarding Lone Star College System’s FERPA procedures: http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/generalcounsel/2012-11-30_LSCS_Procedures_for_FERPA_Compliance.pdf

LSCS FERPA Privacy Request Form
Please follow this link http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/admissions/ARC-011_FERPA_Privacy_Request.pdf to obtain a “FERPA Privacy Request Form.”

LSCS Authorization to Release Educational Records
Using the following link, students may download an “Authorization to Release Educational Records.”
Honors College Professional Affiliations

National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC)
The Honors College at LSCS is a member of the National Collegiate Honors Council. Membership provides The Honors College at LSCS with the most up to date information on curriculum development, teaching innovations, international and national study opportunities, internships, mentored research, as well as experiential and service learning teaching models. Additional information regarding NCHC can be found at: http://nchchonors.org/

Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC)
In addition to NCHC membership, The Honors College at LSCS is also a member of the Great Plains Honors Council, a regional (i.e., Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas) Honors council. As part of our membership, students accompanied by faculty advisors, present their selected work at an annual conference. Additional information regarding GPHC can be found at: http://www.greatplainshonors.com/

Gulf Coast Intercollegiate Consortium (GCIC)
The Honors College at LSCS is also a member of the Gulf Coast Intercollegiate Consortium (GCIC), a consortium of regional community college and universities. Each Fall semester, the colleges and universities come together providing an opportunity for students to present their research work at the annual conference. Over the past several years, this annual conference has been held at various Lone Star College campuses. In the Spring semester, the college and universities come together again for an annual Spring Retreat.
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<tr>
<th>Honors College Directors and Staff</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Director</strong></td>
<td>Katie Caruso</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lead Director (North Harris and University Park)</strong></td>
<td>Brian Kyser</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Contreraz</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lauren Rose</td>
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<td><strong>CyFair</strong></td>
<td>Esther Robinson</td>
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<td>Kay Thierheimer</td>
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<td><strong>Kingwood</strong></td>
<td>John Dethloff</td>
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<td>Linda Bogert</td>
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<td><strong>Montgomery</strong></td>
<td>David Kennedy</td>
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<td>Ofelina Chalico-Campos</td>
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<td><strong>Tomball</strong></td>
<td>Ava Veselis</td>
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<td>Karen Cummings</td>
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Appendix
IRB Requirements for Honors Project Surveys

What is IRB?

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. The LSCS IRB exists as a safeguard to promote ethical and responsible treatment of human subjects/participants in research. The LSC IRB also aspires to be a helpful agent in the progression of research involving human subjects within Lone Star College System. The LSCS Institutional Review Board reviews human subject research to ensure that:

- The rights and welfare of human subjects are protected.
- Risks have been considered and minimized.
- Potential benefit has been identified and maximized.
- All potential participants are being provided with legally effective informed consent.
- All research is completed in an ethical manner, and in compliance with established standards.
- All private information is kept confidential.

Who serves on the IRB?
The LSCS IRB is composed of faculty members, administrators who have responsibility for research, institutional researchers, and members from the community. The human subjects review process is administered through the office of Resource Development and Administration.

Do surveys for honors projects need to be submitted to the IRB for approval?

Yes, an application is required, because the research involves human subjects, and because of the “Honors College Undergraduate Research Day Presentations” and the potential “to present at local or regional conferences.”

Note: It is crucial that you submit your application early in the semester in order to meet Honors Program deadlines!

As part of the application process, will I need to complete online training?

Yes, Federal Regulations require that all research investigators [this includes honors mentors (PI’s) and honors students (co-PI’s)] to complete a training course regarding research with human subjects. Note: Both honors students and honors mentors who have completed this training have reported that it helps students prepare for future research opportunities or requirements often encountered in academic and professional careers.

Certification may be obtained online at the following site: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php

First time users must complete the registration form on the linked page before starting the course. **Please allow 1-2 hours to complete the course.** Certificate will be available to print following completion of the tutorial.

For assistance with training, or for more information contact the IRB Office at 832.813.6588 or IRB@LoneStar.edu
What is the role of the student’s honors mentor?
The sponsoring faculty member must serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) and submit the application to the IRB. The student should be identified as the Co-PI. A sponsoring faculty is responsible for student research. Faculty will inform students of human subject guidelines and take measure to enforce compliance to those guidelines. It is the responsibility of the supervising instructor/faculty to determine whether projects are subject to review. Always err on the safe-side and seek consultation from the IRB if a question arises regarding human subject research and classroom activities.

Are some surveys exempt for the application process?
Yes, the research qualifies as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2): “Research Involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview protocols, or observation of public behavior.” Again, always err on the safe-side and seek consultation from the IRB if a question arises regarding human subject research and classroom activities.

What is an example of an exemption?
According to Debra Blackburn, IRB Administrator, exemptions include questions asking participants about education received or about their knowledge base. An example would be the survey on hypertension which assesses students understanding of the causes of hypertension but does not ask participants to reveal any information about themselves. Sample Question: "Does the use of excessive salt increase the risk of hypertension?"

Such questions are considered “non-identifying questions.” Again, always err on the safe-side and seek consultation from the IRB if a question arises regarding human subject research and classroom activities.

Is it acceptable for the honors student, or co-PI, to fill out the paperwork?
Yes, as Blackburn writes, the mentor, or PI, can then approve and forward the application and ensure compliance.

What if one mentor has several students applying for IRB approval? Is there a way to streamline the process?
Debra Blackburn’s advice is to “[c]onsider incorporating similar projects on one application; list all students as co-PIs” and then “attach the individual surveys.”

How do I begin the application process?
If you are a student researcher, talk with your mentor. You will need to go to http://www.lonestar.edu/irb-get-started.htm to see the appropriate steps for submitting an application for review, or please contact the IRB office by phone at 832.813.6588, or by e-mail at IRB@LoneStar.edu.
IRB Cheat Sheet

- **The Mentor and Student:**
  - Complete NIH Certification, which may be obtained at [https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php](https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php).
  - With the mentor as facilitator, the student completes the IRB application, including the necessary attachments. For application materials go to: [http://www.lonestar.edu/irb-get-started.htm](http://www.lonestar.edu/irb-get-started.htm).
    - **NOTE:** Do not submit the application directly to the IRB administrator.
    - (See also sample IRB applications for common verbiage to expedite the process).
  - The mentor performs a quality check to ensure the application has all attachments and questions are answered fully.
  - **If complete, the mentor sends the application with attachments to the campus honors director.** If not, student must make any necessary revisions.

- **The Honors Director:**
  - Submits the application and attachments to the Honors IRB subcommittee for review
  - Submits the Notice of Intent to complete research on campus, or NOI, to the campus president to be signed and then forwards the signed NOI to the Honors IRB subcommittee.

- **The Honors Subcommittee:**
  - Once the NOI is signed by the president, the Honors subcommittee will examine the application.
  - The subcommittee performs a quality check to ensure application has all attachments and questions are answered fully. If it looks complete, the application will be forwarded to the IRB administrator.

- **The LSCS IRB Committee:**
  - Once final approval is achieved, the IRB Administrator will notify the student, mentor, honors director, and the Honors IRB subcommittee.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honors IRB Subcommittee</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie Caruso</td>
<td>Brian Kyser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Katharine.H.Caruso@LoneStar.edu">Katharine.H.Caruso@LoneStar.edu</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Brian.H.Kyser@LoneStar.edu">Brian.H.Kyser@LoneStar.edu</a></td>
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<tr><th>Four Core Tenets</th><th>Superior 4</th><th>Acceptable 3</th><th>Need Improvement 2</th><th>Insufficient 1</th></tr></thead>
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<tr><td>Proposal demonstrates the proper level of analytical inquiry (i.e. is centered around a governing question). </td><td>Student identifies a complex and/or creative research question/problem to be investigated. The research question lends itself to critical analysis rather than a “book report” summary, narrative, or simple reflection. Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. </td><td>Student identifies a complex research question/problem to be investigated. The research question is stated fairly clearly and lends itself to critical analysis rather than a “book report” summary, narrative, or simple reflection. It could be recommended that a further degree of detail or specificity be developed to comprehensively deliver all relevant information necessary for full understanding. </td><td>Student identifies a research question/problem to be investigated. The stated research question may be somewhat vague or obvious, and, thus, may lead to a “book report” summary, narrative, or simple reflection. The research question/problem and concomitant focus should be revised to convey the complexity of the question/problem. </td><td>Student may include a general or even limited topic but does not provide a research question/problem to be investigated. OR Student proposes an inaccurate or inadequate research question/problem, or states it poorly as to be indistinguishable. The proposal seems more appropriate for a “book report” summary, narrative, or simple reflection. </td></tr>
<tr><td>Proposal addresses a practical, scientific, theoretical, social/cultural, historical, or artistic gap. </td><td>Student explains significance of research questions/problem to be investigated. That is, student addresses the “so what” question by conveying why the research project is important. The statement of significance is clear and perceptive. </td><td>Student explains significance of research questions/problem to be investigated. Student largely addresses the “so what” question by conveying why the research project is important. It might be suggested that a further degree of detail or specificity be developed to fully appreciate or convey the significance of the research question/problem. </td><td>Student addresses the relevance of the general topic but does not offer a clear statement of the project’s significance. The statement of significance should be revised to accurately reflect the direction of the project. </td><td>Student does not address the significance of the research question/problem. </td></tr>
<tr><td>Proposal utilizes research methods (or experiment) appropriate to field or discipline. </td><td>Student provides a coherent outline of the research process that links investigative methodology to research question/problem. Proposal demonstrates an understanding of the research process pertinent to the selected project and academic discipline. </td><td>Student provides a methodology or approach suitable to the research question/problem. The stated amount and types of research are appropriate to the field of study and sufficient to successfully answer the analytical inquiry, but could use a greater degree of detail regarding the actual parameters of the research utilized. </td><td>Student provides some methodology but may need additional or alternative sources/types of research to successfully answer the analytical inquiry. Student should expand or add to the research suggested for project completion. </td><td>Student does not describe the amount or type of research necessary for the project. OR The stated amount and/or types of research are insufficient to successfully answer the analytical inquiry. </td></tr>
<tr><td>Proposal encompasses sufficient length and narrow enough scope to fully realize stated goals and/or reach necessary conclusion(s). </td><td>Student defines a scope allowing in-depth critical analysis. Student frames the research question/problem with a full appreciation for its complexity while retaining an appropriate sense of focus. </td><td>Student defines a scope allowing sufficient critical analysis. It could be recommended that scope be narrowed/expanded to sufficiently target the stated parameters of the project and to result in a useful investigation toward understanding the research question/problem. </td><td>Student defines a scope allowing some in-depth critical analysis. However, focus should be revised and limited/expanded to adequately meet the parameters of the project and/or to result in a useful investigation toward understanding the research question/problem. </td><td>Student offers no clear focus. OR Student provides a focus too narrowly or broadly defined to result in a useful investigation toward understanding the research question/problem. </td></tr>
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