

**Holyoke Community College
Honors Program**

How to Be a Faculty or Expert Mentor in the Honors Program

Faculty can serve as mentors in four ways:

- Mentoring an Honors Project, a 1-credit independent Honors project attached to an existing HCC course (English 101 and 0-level classes are not eligible)
- Mentoring an Honors Project, a 1-3 credit independent Honors project
- Mentoring an Independent Semester Project for a student in the Honors Colloquium
- Sponsoring a student presentation at the Undergraduate Research Conference

Who can be an Honors mentor?

- Full-time HCC faculty
- Adjunct faculty with experience at HCC
- Other faculty or non-faculty experts may be approved mentors. **If the mentor is not an HCC employee, the student must meet with the honors program coordinator before starting the project.**

Note: All mentors should have expertise in the student's area of interest.

What does a mentor need to do?

- If you agree to be a mentor, you will serve as a resource and a guide; you should meet regularly with the student over the course of the semester for a total of 10 or more hours.
- Once you agree to be a mentor, you must submit a signed Mentor Agreement form to the honors program coordinator. This form defines the project and specifies your

role. It will be signed by the honors program coordinator, who keeps a copy on file. (You are encouraged to retain a copy for your records.)

- You will help the student focus or narrow possible research questions, identify appropriate research avenues and methods, ensure consistent work over the course of semester, and provide advice on presentation skills where applicable.

How is a mentor compensated?

- Full-time or adjunct faculty: You will receive a stipend (approximately \$430 as of spring 2017) for each project you mentor.
- Others: Please see the honors program coordinator.

What makes an Honors Project?

- Honors projects can happen in any discipline and in multiple forms.
- An Honors project is a semester-long work decided on by student in collaboration with faculty mentor. The honors program coordinator and/or honors committee will also provide feedback on projects.
 - For the Honors Colloquium, a student must choose a project that connects to the larger Honors Colloquium theme. The student will work on the project independently but under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Honors Colloquium projects also have a presentation component at the end of the semester. More information is provided in separate project handout provided by Honors Colloquium faculty.
 - Honors 1-3 credit projects and projects for the Undergraduate Research Conference are worked on independently, under the supervision of faculty mentor. Undergraduate Research Conference projects can be presented verbally or done as a poster presentation. More information on the Undergraduate Research Conference can be found on the conference website: <https://www.honors.umass.edu/undergraduate-research-conference>

Further Details for Honors Projects

- Student projects can focus on any aspect of the Honors Colloquium theme, course material, or independent project. Students may explore a topic touched upon in class or delve into one of their own. Students should clear their topic and narrow their focus with the Colloquium professors and/or you, their faculty mentor.
- Projects vary in form—see examples below under “Five Types of Honors Projects.” No matter what form it takes, the student’s completed project must be well researched.
- Honors Colloquium and Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) projects must be presented; mentors are encouraged to assist with presentations and attend them

when possible. No final presentation is required of Honors 1-3 credit non-URC projects.

- For the Honors Colloquium, the student will present a 20-minute oral presentation of project to the colloquium. Presentations may be scheduled during the last week of classes or during the course's final exam slots.
- For the Undergraduate Research Conference, students can choose to either present a 10-minute oral presentation or a poster presentation.

FIVE TYPES OF HONORS PROJECTS

Two notes about writing requirements:

- Reflective essay: At the end of your project, you will write a 1-2 page reflection that reveals what you learned from your Honors Project experience.
- If you complete a project under Options B, C, D, or E below, you will write a report that is appropriate in length and style to the discipline in which you are working, in consultation with your mentor.

Option A: *Research projects*

Your project should

- develop and investigate a research question that needs to be explored/answered
- engage in critical analysis of social science, humanities, and/or interdisciplinary work
- result in a paper of at least 10 pages, excluding the abstract and works cited pages
- conform to MLA, APA, or Chicago documentation.

Option B: *Creative projects*

In the medium of your choice, you will explore a question or problem within that medium.

Note: The Music Department has specific requirements—contact Elissa Brill Pashkin for more information. In completing your creative project, you should

- create and present your work on campus and/or in the community
- invest at least as much as would be required for a traditional research project.

Option C: *Civic Engagement/Service Learning projects*

This option allows you to work with a community organization to develop and implement a range of projects. Students may

- conduct community-based research that will benefit a community-based organization; for example, you might research the water quality in a nearby brook and then report your findings to interested community partners
- design a specific project in conjunction with a community partner around a course issue/topic/theme; for example, if you were in an environmental design course, you might create a new garden for an organization that promotes sustainability
- develop other civic engagement opportunities in consultation with your faculty advisor; these may including letter-writing campaigns or other action-oriented work around an issue or topic related to the course.

Option D: *Fieldwork/Lab work*

This option allows you to do either of the following:

- Laboratory or fieldwork research on an existing topic, which will provide you with direct lab or fieldwork research experience
- Anthropological fieldwork-based research using ethnographic methodologies; you will learn and practice qualitative research techniques with real world applications.

Option E: *Original Design / Problem-Based Project or Advanced Study (STEM)*

This option allows you to do either of the following:

- Original project/problem-based research, which allows STEM students to work on a design problem or on a project that can be built or tested, such as a computer program or an engineering project
- Research that is experimental, theoretical or computational; this type of project would allow you to learn advanced concepts on your own and gain research experience by trying to answer mathematical/scientific questions and write in a style appropriate for scientific research.

Questions? Contact Dr. Vanessa Martinez, Honors Program Coordinator, FR 270, ext. 2858, vmartinez@hcc.edu or Sue Streeter, Program Assistant, FR 270, ext. 2427, [sstreeter@hcc.edu](mailto:ssstreeter@hcc.edu).