



**FORT VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**
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**Honors Program Handbook:
Requirements, Policies, and Procedures**

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Honors Program Handbook: Requirements, Policies, and Procedures

Dr. Mark A. Smith, Director &
ex officio chairperson of the Honors Faculty Council

(for current Council Members, consult the Honors Program web site)

October 2024

Fort Valley State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, masters, and education specialist degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Fort Valley State University.

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Honors Program Handbook

Overview

The FVSU Honors Program is designed to provide exceptional students with an exceptional education by offering an enriched learning experience utilizing high-impact instruction practices in a small classroom setting. Honors students will attend classes, join experiential learning activities, participate in intellectually stimulating activities, and build relationships with one another and with honors faculty members from a number of disciplines. All these activities will integrate them into a community of like-minded, motivated, and high-achieving students that can serve as a scholarly support system to further enable their own successes.

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Application Process

Students may apply for admittance to the FVSU Honors Program by completing and submitting an electronic application available on Eligibility Requirements page of the FVSU Honors Program web site (<https://www.fvsu.edu/eligibility-requirements/>). To complete the application, you will need to have the following information and materials ready:

- Full contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email address).
- A letter no more than two pages long that highlights their suitability for the program, to be attached to the electronic application.
- An unofficial copy of their transcripts (high school transcripts for entering freshmen, college or university transcripts for current FVSU and transfer students) , to be attached to the electronic application.
- One letter of recommendation from a high school or college instructor who has taught the student, to be attached to the electronic application.
- Submitting the application also constitutes students' acceptance of the FVSU Honor Code Pledge and an explicit agreement to abide by that pledge.

For any questions about the application process, please contact:

Dr. Mark A. Smith, Honors Program Director
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences
Fort Valley State University
1005 State University Drive
Fort Valley, GA 31030-4313
smithm01@fvsu.edu / honorsprogram@fvsu.edu

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Program Requirements

To join and remain in the FVSU Honors Program, all students must meet the following qualifications:

- Maintain a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.30 or higher.
 - Entering freshmen must have an overall high school GPA of 3.50 or higher.
 - Existing FVSU students may apply after completing 15 credit hours but before completing more than 60 credit hours if their institutional GPA is 3.50 or higher.
 - Honors students whose GPA falls below 3.30 will be placed on a one-semester probation in the program.
 - While on probation, honors students are expected to continue their participation in all required Honors Program extracurricular activities, but may not register for honors courses.
 - If a probationary honors student's GPA does not return to 3.30 or higher at the end of a single probationary semester, she or he will be dismissed from the Honors Program.
- Earn a B or higher in a minimum number of credit hours in honors courses.
 - Students who join the Honors Program at any point during their freshman year must complete a total of 18 credit hours in honors courses during their academic tenure at FVSU.
 - Students who join the Honors Program at any time after their freshman year must complete a total of 12 credit hours in honors courses during their academic tenure at FVSU.
 - Students may receive credit for up to 9 hours of their honors credit requirement for Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment credits earned while they were in high school, provided that those credits appear on their FVSU transcript.
- Maintain a minimum enrollment of 15 credit hours each Fall and Spring Semester.

- Abide by all policies in the most current FVSU Student Handbook.
- Comport themselves in accordance by the FVSU Honor Code; submitting an application to the Honors Program constitutes an acceptance of that code and a pledge to follow both its letter and spirit throughout their academic career.
- Participate in at least 4 campus intellectual activities during the regular academic year (i.e., each Fall and Spring Semester).
 - These activities include: FVSU speaker programs, an honors student's presentation of her or his own research as part of the FVSU Undergraduate Research Day (or similar events sponsored by individual colleges or departments), and participation in the Honors Book Discussion program.
 - Honors students are required to participate in at least one Honors Book Discussion each academic year, and they are encouraged to join all of them.
- Complete at least one experiential learning experience before graduation. These may include any of the following:
 - An internship related to their major field.
 - Honors students who select this option must arrange the internship through the program coordinator of their major program.
 - To receive Honors Program credit for the internship, once they have completed it honors students must supply the Honors Program Director with the following:
 - Documentation of the completed internship.
 - An essay of at least 600 words, explaining how their internship experience has augmented their understanding of and education in their major discipline. The completed essays should be signed by their major's program coordinator.
 - A study abroad experience. These must be conducted through the FVSU Office of Global Studies and Engagement.
 - A senior-level research project in their major field, which will be designated an Honors Thesis.
 - Honors students who wish to produce an Honors Thesis must identify an appropriate faculty mentor in their field of study and secure her or his agreement to direct the work.

- Once the Honors Thesis is complete and approved by the faculty mentor, she or he will submit it to the Honors Program Director for approval.
- Honors Theses must be separate from work completed in major capstone classes, but major program coordinators are encouraged to accept a successfully completed Honors Thesis for 3 hours of independent study credit as a major elective.

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Honor Code

All Honors Program students are expected to adhere to the following Honor Code:

- As a member of the Fort Valley State University community and the FVSU Honors Program, I pledge to maintain academic integrity in all my dealings with the University's faculty, staff, and students. Specifically, I will not give or receive unpermitted aid in any examination or assignment, in the preparation of any report or other work that is to be used by an instructor as the basis of a grade, and I will do my share and take an active part in holding others to both the spirit and the letter of this Honor Code.

Examples of Honor Code violations include but are not limited to:

- Copying answers from someone else's examination or allowing someone else to copy from one's own examination, whether the exam is in the classroom, online, or take-home.
- Any unpermitted collaboration on assignments.
- Plagiarism.
- Failing to report an Honor Code violation you have personally witnessed to the appropriate instructor, department chairperson, or college dean.

Submitting an application to the FVSU Honors Program constitutes an explicit pledge to abide by this code throughout a student's academic career at the University.

Any student who violates the Honors Code is subject to dismissal from the Honors Program in addition to any other sanctions applied by her or his instructor or by the University administration.

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Program Opportunities

The FVSU Honors Program provides participating students with many rewarding opportunities to enhance their collegiate experience:

- All students in the program have the opportunity to take specially-designated **honors courses** at all curricular levels. These classes, particularly at the freshman and sophomore levels, tend to be smaller classes, allowing for a more personalized experience. They are taught by University faculty who have been reviewed by the Honors Program's administration and acknowledged for their scholarly and pedagogical aptitude.
- Honors students will also be housed in an **Honors Residential Community** where they will live with other like-minded and high-achieving student in an intellectual and scholarly community.
- Honors students may also avail themselves of the community study and work spaces in at **Honors House**, where they may also engage with members of the program's administration as needed.
- All Honors students will be issued an individual **laptop computer** for their personal use that they may retain for the duration of their academic tenure in the FVSU Honors Program (see also Honors Program Laptop Loan Policy, below).
- Honors students also enjoy **priority registration** in the selection of courses. For the majority of students, when course registration opens each semester, seniors are allowed to begin first, juniors may register a week later, then sophomores, and finally freshmen. Provided that Honors students have completed all advisement and other requirements, they may begin selecting courses through the self-registration process on the first day of registration (i.e., with the seniors), regardless of their classification.
- Juniors and seniors in the program will also have the opportunity to join FVSU's Alpha Mu chapter of the **Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society**. This organization is a general scholarship honor society open to students in all academic areas. Criteria for membership can be found the organization's page at <https://www.alphakappamu.org/membership.html>. Interested students should contact the FVSU Honors Program Director who also serves as the faculty advisor for the University's Alpha Kappa Mu chapter.

- Honors students are also encouraged to apply for scholarship opportunities at Fort Valley State University. These include but are not limited to the **FVSU Presidential Excellence Scholarship**, the **FVSU 1890 Scholarship Program**, the **James H. Porter Scholarship**, the **Endowed Teacher Education Scholarship**, and many other private scholarship opportunities.
- Honors students may also obtain assistance from the Honors Program Director or any member of the Honors Faculty Council when applying for **external competitive scholarship** programs, such as the Fulbright, Truman, or Rhodes scholarships.
- Students in the program are also able to apply for **funding to present their own research** at professional conferences within their major fields of study. Students seeking such funding should contact the Honors Program Director.
- Finally, upon successful completion of all program and degree requirements, honors students will be supplied unique **honors medallion** to wear with their graduation robes at commencement, and all of their official FVSU transcripts will denote them as an **Honors Program Graduates**.

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Program Administration & Governance

The **Honors Program Director** maintains the primary responsibility for the immediate governance of the FVSU Honors Program. She or he is the head administrator and public face of the program, and she or he operates under the immediate supervision of the University's Office of Academic Affairs. It is her or his responsibility to develop, revise, and maintain all program requirements with the advice and support of the Honors Faculty Council.

The Director also retains ultimate authority maintaining all administrative records and planning all Honors Program-specific extracurricular activities, such as the Honors Book Discussions held each semester.

She or he also serves as the faculty advisor for FVSU's Alpha Mu Chapter of the national Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society and the FVSU liaison for Truman Scholarship applications.

The Director also serves as the secondary advisor for all honors students, and they should consult her or him during advisement each semester before registering for classes. It is the Director's responsibility to ensure that honors students are maintaining program requirements while they also continue to advance their degree progression.

The **Honors Faculty Council** consist of six faculty members approved to teach honors courses, with each faculty member on the Council serving a term of three years. The Council assists the Honors Program Director with program maintenance, the planning of extracurricular activities, the development and approval of all program requirements.

The Council also assists the Director in reviewing student applications to join the Honors Program, faculty applications to teach in the program, and assisting honors students who choose to apply for post baccalaureate scholarships such as those offered by the Rhodes, Truman or Fulbright foundations.

To provide a student perspective on the actions and decisions of the Honors Faculty Council as well as the direction of the Honors Program, two honors students will be invited to serve as non-voting Council members. These student councilors shall serve a term of one year, and they may freely join all of the Council's deliberations except those pertaining to the admission of new honors students, which in the interests of student privacy will be conducted in executive session and shall be attended only by voting (i.e., faculty) Councilors.

The **Honors Faculty** of Fort Valley State University consists of those members of the University faculty who have applied and been approved to teach honors courses in support of the program. Current faculty members interested in teaching these courses should submit a current curriculum vitae, a one-page philosophy of teaching statement, and sample syllabi of both standard and honors versions of the specific course the individual wishes to teach. These application materials may be emailed to the Honors Program Director who will review them in conjunction with the current Honors Faculty Council.

Once approved, Honors Faculty are requested to supply the Honors Program Director with an electronic copy of the actual course syllabi used in honors classes for the program's records. Appointments to the Honors Faculty will last for three years at the expiration of which time faculty may reapply to retain the Honors Faculty designation.

Proposals to create new or modify existing **Honors Courses** must be routed through the Honors Faculty Council for its approval before they are submitted to the University's regular curricular approvals process. While the Honors Program does not maintain specific requirements for new or modified Honors Courses, it is expected that such courses will include some extraordinary intellectual or academic experience beyond what is found in non-honors courses. As such, proposals for new honors versions of existing courses should include sample syllabi for both the regular and honors versions for comparison. If the faculty member proposing the course is not currently a member of the Honors Faculty, she or he should also submit the materials required to join the Honors Faculty.

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Laptop Loan Policy

Each FVSU Honors Student will be issued a University-owned laptop near the beginning of their career as an Honors Student, provided they have completed the electronic **Honors Program Laptop Loan Form** (found on the program website) and acknowledged the policies governing the use of these machines.

Once the form has been completed and the laptop issued to the Honors Student, she or he will retain it for the duration of her or his academic career with the FVSU Honors Program. The devices, however, remain the property of Fort Valley State University.

If an Honors Student's University-owned laptop is damaged, lost, or stolen, the student will not be held financially liable, but in the case of damage, loss, or theft of the device, Honors Students are expected to inform the Honors Program Director immediately. At the discretion of the Director, the University **may** issue a new University-owned laptop as a replacement. Such replacement, however, is not guaranteed and will occur entirely at the Director's discretion, contingent upon available device inventory.

Honors Students must return their University-owned laptops to the Honors Program Director when they leave the Honors Program due either to graduation from the University or their dismissal from the program for failing to maintain its requirements. If they do not surrender the laptop within three (3) business days of a request issued for return from the Honors Program Director, then a hold will be placed on their University account by the FVSU Registrar's Office, and that hold will prevent them from registering for additional courses or from graduating until such time as the Honors Program Director requests that the hold be removed.

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Contact Information

For more information about the Honors Program, contact:

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For a list of current Honors Faculty Council Members, consult the program's web pages at <https://www.fvsu.edu/honors-program>.

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