

# HONORS BY CONTRACT INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACULTY

*Except in special circumstances, only full-time faculty should oversee Honors by Contracts.*

## ***What is Honors by Contract (HBC)?***

Honors by Contract (HBC) is another way to fulfill the Honors Program curriculum requirements. Most 3-hour courses numbered 200 or above at JSU can confer the Honors Program designation.

Course contracts enable students to earn Honors credit by incorporating an Honors component within a regularly offered class. Honors contract courses ideally require something qualitatively different rather than something quantitatively more. Enhanced substitutions for the normal course requirements are preferable to more of the same. The component should be designed to incorporate a "consolidating experience," a written paper or report (possibly including a class presentation) that serves to bring the experience together.

Where longer papers, additional reports, etc., are called for, the added work should be designed to fulfill a larger learning objective. Teaching one or more classes and doing special research projects (especially in the STEM fields) have been especially beneficial. Wherever possible, Honors students should share the results of their work with the class in the form of an oral presentation, a poster session, or some other means. Other suggestions are detailed below.

## ***How does a student receive Honors credit through HBC?***

If a student completes the contracted course with a grade of "B" or better and satisfactorily completes the terms of the contract during the semester that credit is earned, the student will earn an Honors designation for the course. Students receiving an "Incomplete" in a course that they have contracted will not receive Honors designation upon completion. Likewise, students receiving an "A" or "B" in a contracted course who had not completed the terms of their contract will not receive Honors designation. If a student is unable to complete the contracted work, the student can still receive credit for the course but cannot receive an Honors designation.

## ***What type of assignment is suitable for HBC?***

**For 300 and 400-level HBC classes, the following guidelines are suggested.** If these details do not apply to your discipline or the instructor has other ideas, please contact the Dean of Honors to discuss the HBC before proceeding. We are happy to work with faculty on an individual basis. HBCs may include a combination of a written component, high-impact and hands-on learning, or a presentation. Details of HBCs may be discussed with the Dean of Honors prior to the submission of the online HBC form.

- Where the course calls for a research paper, an Honors paper might use primary sources, incorporate a substantial literature review that connects the topic to the broader issues in the field, include primary data derived from student research (oral histories or other interviews, statistical analysis, laboratory experimentation), etc. Honors research papers are typically 8-10 double-spaced pages. Citations are required.
- Where additional readings or reports are indicated, it is best to synthesize them as part of a larger Honors component. For example, an essay involving a comparison/contrast of regularly assigned readings with the specially selected seminal readings would be appropriate.
- The Honors component might include a substantial programming project or extended fieldwork or laboratory experience, concluding with a final report of at least 8-10 double-spaced pages, including a narrative part of at least 5-7 pages, by the student outlining the experience with the conclusions reached or experience gained. Citations are required.

- Where teaching one or more classes by the student is indicated, it is best for the professor to provide guidance in organization and content to ensure that the material enhances and supports the intention of the class. In this case, the written component would typically consist of a report of 5-7 pages on the topics covered in the lectures.
- Where the course is a cross-listed undergraduate/graduate-level course (where the undergraduate and graduate courses are taught by a single instructor at a common time), the student may complete the graduate-level syllabus to meet the qualitative, culminating Honors experience that is expected when contracting a course. Note: The Honors Program student will be enrolled in the undergraduate section of the course and will receive undergraduate credit.
- Presentations of the work/research to the class or at a conference or symposium are highly encouraged to be part of the Honors requirement.

**For 100 and 200-level HBC classes, the following guidelines are suggested.** If these details do not apply to your discipline or the instructor has other ideas, please contact the Dean of Honors to discuss the HBC before proceeding. We are happy to work with faculty on an individual basis. HBCs may include a combination of a written component, high-impact and hands-on learning, or a presentation. Details of HBCs may be discussed with the Dean of Honors prior to the submission of the online HBC form.

- Where the course calls for a research paper, an Honors paper might use primary sources, incorporate a substantial literature review that connects the topic to the broader issues in the field, include primary data derived from student research (oral histories or other interviews, statistical analysis, laboratory experimentation), etc. Honors research papers are typically 4-5 double-spaced pages. Citations are required.
- Where additional readings or reports are indicated, it is best to synthesize them as part of a larger Honors component. For example, an essay involving a comparison/contrast of regularly assigned readings with the specially selected seminal readings would be appropriate.
- The Honors component might include a substantial programming project or extended fieldwork or laboratory experience, concluding with a final report of at least 4-5 double-spaced pages, including a narrative part of at least 3-5 pages, by the student outlining the experience with the conclusions reached or experience gained. Citations are required.
- Presentations of the work/research to the class or at a conference or symposium are highly encouraged to be part of the Honors requirement.

***A student has asked you to help them with an HBC for your course, what are the next steps?***

- A. Students should reach out regarding HBCs in the semester prior to when they will enroll in the course.
- B. Following your initial discussion with the student, formalize ideas by developing answers to the following questions. The answers to the questions will compose the portion of the contract that you will be asked to submit.
  - Describe the Honors component of the course, discussing the nature of the project, how this project constitutes "Honors," and the nature of the "consolidating experience." Be as specific as possible in describing what will be done, including references to specific readings and/or methodologies where appropriate, lengths of required papers or reports, number and nature of presentations, etc. (see question 3). Instructors are required to establish two deadlines in the semester, with one being a midterm deadline, in order to monitor student progress in completing the HBC requirements.

- How does the Honors component differ from normal course expectations? A copy of the course syllabus may be submitted if needed to illustrate. Address if the Honors component will be factored into the final grade in the course and, if so, what the grading expectations will be.
- C. The student will initiate the electronic HBC form. He/she will give all pertinent information regarding the semester the HBC will be completed, the course, the instructor, and the student's contact information. Once the student completes this portion of the contract, you will receive an email from [forms@jsu.edu](mailto:forms@jsu.edu) asking for the following information. This information is the terms the student will follow for completing the assignment(s).
- Describe as fully as possible the additional or alternative work or project that this student must satisfactorily complete in order to earn Honors designation for the course.
  - Is a paper or research project required?
    - i. What is the required length of the paper/project?
    - ii. What is the font type/size?
    - iii. What are the spacing options? (ex. single, double, 1.5)
    - iv. What are the paper margins? (ex. all 1"; top 1", sides 0.75")
    - v. Will a certain number of words be required? How many?
  - Is a presentation required?
    - i. What is the length of the presentation?
    - ii. Is PowerPoint or another similar program required for the presentation?
  - Does the paper or project have multiple deadlines during the semester?
    - i. List all deadline dates.
    - ii. All papers/projects should be due no later than the last day of class.
- D. The contract will then be reviewed by the Honors Program Dean. If any information that was requested is not indicated in the contract, or clarification is needed for the assignment, the Dean will contact the instructor.
- E. At the end of the semester, you will receive the contract from [forms@jsu.edu](mailto:forms@jsu.edu) in order to upload the completed assignment(s). If there are multiple assignments to upload, a zip file will be accepted.

Thank you for your willingness to help our Honors students. If you have any questions or need assistance in the Honors by Contract process, do not hesitate to reach out to us.

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