

Honors in Psychology Student Guidelines

Honors in Psychology (PSYC 495,496,497) A student may receive a B.A. or B.S. degree with Honors in Psychology by meeting the standards outlined in the *Honors in Psychology Student Guidelines*. Students must complete an Independent Study (empirical or literature review) prior to enrolling in Honors in the Major. Also, a student must have an overall GPA and a Psychology GPA of at least 3.4, at the time of graduation in order to receive the designation of "Honors" on the diploma. The work is carried out independently, with guidance from a faculty mentor. Students taking PSYC 496 will complete is the one-credit course. PSYC 495 and 497 are ½-credit courses; Honors in Psychology is a full credit course taken for a grade.

Honors in Psychology (and Independent Study) are strongly recommended for students who plan to attend graduate school in any of the research areas of psychology. Admission criteria for M.A. and Ph.D. programs often include research experience, and one's likelihood of acceptance into a competitive program is enhanced by having a record of research participation.

To participate in Honors in Psychology, a student must have completed an Independent Study and gained approval by the Department (see *Honors in Psychology Student Guidelines*). Students must also complete an [Application for Research in the Department](#), an [Application for Honors in Psychology](#), and a written proposal by the first Wednesday of the semester. Note, that your research mentor may require an earlier proposal deadline.

Expectations for students

- That they will have completed an Independent Study prior to enrolling in Honors in Psychology.
- To find members for your Honors Committee (i.e., your primary advisor and two additional faculty members, one of whom may be from another discipline) and to schedule an Honors Defense to occur at the end of the semester (typically during finals week).
- In consultation with the faculty mentor, to complete a *Research Assistant Contract* outlining duties and expectations.
- To follow the *Honors in Psychology Student Guidelines*.
- To work 12-15 hours per week on your research project.
- To complete work on a timely basis.
- To keep submit drafts of your work to your advisor and Honors Committee periodically throughout the semester(s).
- To treat all data as confidential. Data should never be taken home or stored on personal laptops, PCs, flash drives, etc unless approved by your mentor.
- To write a 3-5 page reflection paper at the end of the semester.
- To completing a *Final Honors in Psychology Paper* (see example below). If the proposed research is planned to be carried out over multiple semesters (e.g., taking 495 and 497), students may be asked to submit a revision of their original Research Proposal with preliminary results if applicable.
- Your grade will be based on fulfilling these expectations and any other expectations and goals outlined in your *Research Assistant Contract*. If you are required to write a paper, your paper is expected to be at or above the quality level of the *Final Honors in Psychology Paper (EXAMPLE)* available on the [Honors in the Major website](#).
- To seek out help with writing, study design, data entry/analysis, etc. when needed (from your research mentor, other faculty, other research assistants, the writing center, the library, etc.).

- To present your Honors Thesis at a formal honors defense (see *Honors PowerPoint EXAMPLE*). You may be asked to make revisions to your paper based on feedback from the committee. These revisions are due at least 4 days before senior grades are due.
- Once your Honors Thesis is approved you will be asked to make final revisions and then to submit your paper for binding by the print shop (one copy for the Department and one copy for yourself).

Expectations for faculty

- To enumerate expectations for the research assistant using a *Research Assistant Contract* or a similar document. This should include expectations about hours, deadlines, duties, meetings, specific outcomes (e.g., completion of data collection, drafts, submission to committee members, final paper, etc.), and his or her behavior.
- To provide guidelines and a due date for his or her final reflection paper (see *Student Research Reflection Guidelines* below for an example).
- To follow the *Honors in Psychology Student Guidelines*.
- To provide guidelines, feedback, and a due dates for drafts, submissions to committee members, and the Final Honors in Psychology Paper.
- Faculty advisors are expected to consult with honors committee members to ensure proper standards are met when issuing a final grade.
- To provide feedback and assistance with writing, study design, data entry/analysis, etc. when needed.
- Once the Honors Thesis is approved and final revisions have been made, the final paper is to be submitted for binding by the print shop (one copy for the Department and one copy for the student).

A student may receive a B.A. degree with Honors in Psychology or a B.S. degree with Honors in Psychology by meeting the standards outlined below. Students must also complete an [Application for Research in the Department](#) and an [Application for Honors in Psychology](#).

I. College Standards for Honors in the Major

1. The student must have at least a 3.4 GPA in the major at the time of application for honors work and must have at least a 3.4 GPA in the major at the time of graduation in order to receive the designation of "Honors" on the diploma.
2. The student must complete an Honors Project that must consist of at least one unit of work and receive a grade of at least "A-." The project must be undertaken in the senior year or in the summer prior to the senior year. It may be completed in one semester as one unit or in two semesters as two 1/2 units. While it may be based on previous work, such as an independent study, it must represent a "significant and original project over and above any past work."
3. The student must have a committee of at least three faculty members, one of whom will serve as primary advisor. The other members may include a faculty member from outside the student's major. To apply for Honors, the student submits a proposal to the committee by the first Wednesday of the semester. Note, that your research mentor may require an earlier proposal deadline. After approval by the committee, permission to enroll in Honors work in the following term will be granted. The committee's evaluation of the project will be based on the final product and an oral examination; the

primary advisor will assign a letter grade to the project, after consultation with the other committee members.

II. Requirements for Honors in Psychology

1. For Honors in Psychology, the student must complete 12 units in Psychology, one of which will be Independent Study and one of which will be an Honors Project.
2. The Honors Project must be an **empirical study** carried out in one semester (as PSYC 496) or in two semesters (as PSYC 495 and 497, which are 1/2 unit designations).
3. The Honors project must be based on an Independent Study which may be undertaken in the junior year, the summer before the senior year, or the fall of the senior year. The Independent Study may be either a Literature Review Independent Study (PSYC 311,312,313) or an Empirical Independent Study (PSYC 405,406,407). In either case, the Independent Study must provide the background for the empirical research in the Honors Project and will include as one of its products the proposal for the Honors Project. Independent Study is a prerequisite for Honors in the Major.
4. A proposal for the Honors Project and selection of an Honors Committee are required before enrollment in PSYC 496 or PSYC 495-497. The Honors Committee must consist of the primary advisor and two additional faculty members, one of whom may be from another discipline. The Honors Committee will approve of the Honors Project, but final permission to enroll in PSYC 496 or 495-497 must be granted by the Department.
6. After completion of the research report based on the Honors research, the Honors Committee will conduct an oral defense of the student before assigning a grade to the Honors Project. This oral defense will typically take the form of a formal presentation followed by a question and answer session.
7. The student will receive the designation of HONORS IN PSYCHOLOGY on the diploma if a grade of "A-" or "A" was earned on the Honors Project and the student has a GPA in Psychology of at least 3.4 at the time of graduation.
8. Students who are in the Honors Program may use PSYC 496 as their Honors Project for that program. Thus, a student may graduate in the Honors Program with HONORS IN PSYCHOLOGY, too.
9. Students may enroll in PSYC 312 or 406 with a minimum GPA in the major of 3.0; however, in order to progress to PSYC 496 or PSYC 495-497, a GPA of 3.4 must be attained. If a student completes PSYC 406, but is unable to continue in the process toward HONORS IN PSYCHOLOGY, she or he will nevertheless have earned a credit for PSYC 406 that can apply as an elective for the BA or an Applied Methods requirement for the BS.

Schedule Options for Honors in Psychology Project

The following chart shows seven possible arrangements for initiating and completing the pre-requisite Independent Study and the Honors in Psychology project.

Schedule Number	Fall Semester (Junior)	Spring Semester (Junior)	Summer	Fall Semester (Senior)	Spring Semester (Senior)
(1)	Propose 312/406	PSYC 312/406	PSYC 496*		
(2)	Propose 312/406	PSYC 312/406	PSYC 495*	PSYC 497	
(3)	Propose 312/406	PSYC 312/406		PSYC 496*	
(4)	Propose 312/406	PSYC 312/406		PSYC 495*	PSYC 497*
(5)		Propose 312/406	PSYC 312/406	PSYC 496*	
(6)		Propose 312/406	PSYC 312/406	PSYC 495*	PSYC 497*
(7)		Propose 312/406		PSYC 312/406	PSYC 496*

*Requires Honors Committee approval of an Honors Proposal and permission of Department.

Ethical Considerations

The student is expected to follow APA guidelines concerning ethical treatment of research participants. These include such matters as consent and confidentiality for human participants and humane care for animal subjects. The student is also expected to follow Departmental procedures for obtaining human participants. The student is also expected to maintain the integrity expected of a scientist. Falsification of data and plagiarism are violations of academic integrity.