

What is an Honors College?

If you're looking to put your exceptional academic abilities to the ultimate test, you may be considering enrolling in an honors college to exceed your educational ambitions.

Since the upsurge in higher education after World War II, honors colleges have grown increasingly popular for providing special enriched learning opportunities for top-tier students. Honors colleges typically are housed as autonomous academic entities in larger four-year multi-collegiate universities. Honors students are provided more demanding courses, stimulating discussions, international study options, and engaging thesis projects in a supportive learning environment tailored to their unique needs.

Below we'll take a deeper look into [what honors colleges offer](#) bright, motivated students to help determine if it's the right setting for you. Go to <http://chronicle.com/article/Whats-the-Point-of-an-Honors/144227/>

Benefits of Honors Colleges

Publicly supported state schools often create honors colleges to attract talented students who might otherwise select a liberal arts college or private research university. Therefore, honors students can expect to get the equivalent of an education at a smaller school for significantly lower tuition costs. Honors colleges offer students the chance to attend smaller classes, interact with full-time faculty, live in the honors housing community, and sometimes receive priority registration. Attending an honors program paints a positive picture on a student's academic reputation, so it's also an excellent springboard for leaping into graduate, medical, veterinary, or law school after graduation.

Potential Drawbacks of Honor Colleges

Honors colleges are usually the ideal learning setting for ambitious university students, but there are some potential disadvantages that students should be aware of. Not all credits needed to complete your major will be honors courses, so you will still need to take some traditional lectures with larger [class sizes](#). Although universities often have more resources available than liberal arts schools, honors students must share them with the rest of the student body and often deal with crowds. Honors colleges typically focus on academics, which cuts down on time for extra-curricular activities and even hands-on internship experiences. Also, the application process for an honors program will be highly selective with additional essays and interviews required.

Tips for Choosing an Honors College

As with selecting any other collegiate setting, it's important to find honors colleges that fit your individual learning needs and offer the undergraduate major you seek. Honors colleges are commonly located within universities that pride themselves on their research and/or scholarship mission. Look for accredited universities with highly developed honors colleges that offer great range of curriculum, comprehensive research resources, diverse campus culture, small class sizes, and top faculty credentials. Make sure you investigate how learning opportunities are being cultivated in the honors colleges and what will be expected of you. If you want to extend your learning into your living environment, find universities that boast residence halls specifically catered to honors students too.

Once you've made the decision that an honors program would be a great fit, it's time to bulk up your application by earning high standardized test scores and showing the additional academic talents you'll bring

to the campus community. Honors students must write a greater volume of papers, so put extra time into [preparing a compelling application essay](#) as well. Then, you'll have the best chance of being in the upper quarter of the applicant pool and landing a prestigious spot in your university's honors college.

Why Honors Colleges?

State-supported schools have honors programs to attract and retain students who might have otherwise chosen another school, whether it be a highly regarded privately-supported liberal arts college or an exceptionally selective private national research university.

While we do not believe that such programs will detract a well-to-do student from attending a private school, nor can they deter a student from an economically disadvantaged background from going to a well-endowed school that can meet their financial needs without leaving them with a large pile of debt, they do get the "thumbs up" from thousands of excellent students.

Benefits of an Honors College

What are the upsides to honors programs?

- + Students get a chance to attend smaller classes taught by full-time faculty from their freshman year onward.
- + This means that they get the equivalent of an education at a smaller private school for much less money.
- + Honors students in some programs, such as Penn State's, receive priority registration for classes.
- + Honors programs that include honors housing put highly motivated students together.
- + Honors credentials, including excellent grades and a promising thesis, can be an excellent springboard into graduate work, law school or medical school. Admissions committees look most favorably upon the applicants with the strongest academic credentials.
- + Honors students may receive more favorable attention from faculty, even those who do not teach honors-level courses.
- + An honors program of respectable size, up to 10 percent of the student body, paints a positive picture on the academic reputation of the greater university community.
- + The better programs allow students to apply for admission during or after the freshman year. They offer a second chance to people who were not offered admission the first time.
- + A public honors college, such as St. Mary's College of Maryland or New College of Florida, offers a quality liberal arts education much like prestigious private schools, starting at a considerable discount. St. Mary's out-of-state tuition and fees, for example, are less than two-thirds of those of leading private colleges in the Mid-Atlantic states such as Bucknell, Dickinson, Franklin and Marshall and Gettysburg.
- + A public honors college is also an attractive alternative to a large state university for students who are sure that they want a liberal arts education.

Honors College

Honors college programs are generally programs for smaller groups of students who have met some kind of specialized requirements in order to qualify for the programs in question. Some of the most academically talented and motivated students in the school can likely be found in its honors college program. This is a great alternative to the most highly selective colleges.

The specifics of honors colleges are going to vary from university to university, of course, so if you've been accepted at your college's honors program, you should inquire further there to find out the particulars. Often, though, honors programs will involve special activities and academic courses, as well as a different or specific living space.

Honors colleges and programs offer different experiences than what you might otherwise find, but that doesn't always mean that honors programs are right for you. You'll have to do some investigating and look at all the involved factors in order to determine whether or not pursuing an honors program is the right course of action for you.

Fifty Honors Programs...

Alabama Honors College.
Arizona Honors College
Arizona State, Barrett Honors College
Arkansas Honors College
Auburn Honors College
Clemson, Calhoun Honors College
Colorado State Honors Program
Connecticut Honors Program
Delaware Honors Program
Florida State Honors Program
Georgia Honors Program
Illinois, Campus Honors Program (CHP)
Indiana, Hutton Honors College
Iowa Honors Program
Kansas Honors Program
Kentucky Honors Program
LSU Honors College
Maine Honors College
Massachusetts, Commonwealth Honors College
Miami University Honors Program
Michigan, LSA Honors Program
Minnesota Honors Program
Mississippi, Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College (SMBHC)
Missouri Honors College
North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Honors Carolina
North Carolina State Honors Program
Ohio University Honors Tutorial College
Oklahoma Honors College

Oklahoma State Honors College
Oregon, Clark Honors College
Oregon State Honors College
Penn State, Schreyer Honors College
Purdue Honors Program
Rhode Island Honors Program
Rutgers, SAS Honors Program
South Carolina Honors College
Temple Honors Program
Tennessee CHP Honors
Texas A&M Honors Program
Texas Tech Honors College
UC Irvine, Campuswide Honors Program
UCLA Honors Program
University at Albany Honors College
UT Austin, Plan II Honors Program
University of Utah Honors College
Vermont Honors College
Virginia, Echols Scholars Program
Washington Honors Program
Washington State Honors College
Wisconsin, L&S Honors Program

Five noteworthy regional public university honors programs: Eastern Illinois Honors College; Grand Valley State Honors College; North Carolina Wilmington Honors Scholars College; Western Kentucky Honors College; and Wisconsin Eau-Claire Honors Program.

Some outstanding public universities are not included, most notably UC Berkeley and the College of William & Mary. A few other well-known public universities either declined to participate in our review project or have honors curricula that are so flexible that we could not quantify honors completion requirements or identify honors class sections, both of which are major factors in our ratings for other programs.