



NORTHWEST

MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HONORS INSTITUTE

PROCEDURES MANUAL

PREFACE

The Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute Procedures Manual was created to communicate the mission and procedures of the Honors Institute. It serves as a guide for both students and faculty to outline the requirements of the Honors Institute and ensure consistency within the college.

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HISTORY

The Northwest Mississippi Community College is beginning its inaugural year starting in the fall of 2021. Northwest's Honors Institute started with a study of current honors programs in Mississippi and help from the resources of the National Collegiate Honors Society. All of the community colleges in our state graciously helped us by sharing resources. We give a special thanks to Northeast Mississippi Community College for allowing us to use its policy manual as a guide.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute exists to provide students who demonstrate academic excellence with enriched course offerings to develop higher level thinking skills, diverse opportunities for engagement and innovation to serve the community, and experiential learning programs to promote social and personal growth.

GOALS

The goals of Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute are:

1. Generate greater satisfaction of course work by creating personalized learning experiences that challenge students to reach their full learning potential.
2. Develop a community of leaders and productive citizens by establishing a culture of outreach and community service.
3. Prepare students for roles in future careers by generating experiential learning opportunities that broaden students' perspectives of employment opportunities.
4. Recruit academically advanced students who exhibit outstanding character and motivation.
5. Establish relationships with honors programs at area universities and provide a pathway for transitioning to the next level.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

There are two routes for admission into the Honors Institute.

For incoming freshmen:

- High School GPA of at least 3.5
- An ACT composite score of 25 or above
- Possible interview with the Director(s) upon request

For students currently enrolled at Northwest or transfer students:

- College cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 and 12 completed academic hours (excluding developmental, activity, and dual-enrollment courses)
- Students who join PTK are eligible to join the Honors Institute
- Possible interview with the Director(s) upon request

Students not meeting all qualifications may still apply and gain admission after application review by the Directors.

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN ENROLLMENT

Upon full admission to the Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute, students will sign the Honors Code and pledge to maintain its standards. The Honors Institute believes that the integrity of each honors student is vital to the integrity of the entire honors community. Signing the Honors Code demonstrates each student's commitment to the Honors Institute.

Additional requirements for maintaining enrollment status within the Honors Institute include:

- Maintain a 3.25 GPA (cumulative)
- Maintain a minimum of 15 hours each semester
- Maintain a minimum of 3 hours of honors courses per semester
- Maintain a minimum grade of an A or B in all honors courses (A grade of C or lower in any honors course will still count towards graduation.)
- Enroll in an Honors Forum course during each semester of enrollment
- Perform at least 10 service hours – many opportunities will be provided in the forum classes
- Adhere to the Honors Code

Criteria for continued enrollment will be evaluated on a semester basis. Students who do not meet the enrollment status requirements will be placed on probation for one semester. A rubric for evaluating criteria in maintaining enrollment status is found in Appendix B.

Probationary Status

Students will be notified of probationary status through email. Students are allowed only one probationary semester. If, after the probationary semester, the student has not successfully fulfilled the requirements to maintain enrollment status, he or she will be removed from the Honors Institute.

Appeals Process

To make an appeal regarding a decision made by the Honors Institute, the student must raise his or her concern with the Honors Director(s). If the appeal is not resolved by this process, a student may continue to the next stage in the appeals process and lodge a formal appeal with the Faculty Honors Council. If not satisfied, the appeal will be forwarded to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for a final decision.

HONORS CODE

Students are expected to take seriously their designation as honors students and to recognize the implications that follow. These scholars will be held to the highest standards regarding both academic conduct and personal integrity.

Accompanying NWCC's policy governing academic integrity, the Honors Institute will enforce the following statement, to which all honors scholars must agree:

I pledge myself to serve as an academic leader by maintaining high standards of academic integrity and personal conduct. I will strive to be a good ambassador of the NWCC Honors Institute both on campus and in the broader community. I understand that my actions are a reflection on myself, and also on my fellow students, the Honors Institute, and on Northwest Mississippi Community College. I commit to maintain myself as a role model on campus, submit timely assignments, abstain from the use of unoriginal work, and constantly strive to grow in scholarship and integrity. I understand that I must uphold this code, and encourage my peers in their effort to do the same.

CURRICULUM

Students enrolled in the Honors Institute are expected to complete curriculum that adheres to the Honors Institute mission and goals. Students should understand that honors courses are designed to be more challenging for the advanced learner. They will be required to master the general objectives for the course in addition to objectives that satisfy the higher academic standards of the Honors Institute. Experiential learning opportunities are strongly encouraged within honors courses.

Students enrolled in the Honors Institute must participate in a semester of Honors Forum each semester they are enrolled. Honors Forum courses engage students in campus and community activities by providing opportunities to develop higher-level thinking skills and hands-on experience to promote social and personal growth.

Honors Institute scholars take the same general education curriculum as all other students in the college although a number of courses are specially designated as Honors sections. These Honors sections are taught by vetted Honors instructors.

Once enrolled in the Honors Institute, scholars must take the Honors Forum class (HON 1911/1921/2911/2921) which is offered every fall and spring.

In accordance with the National Collegiate Honors Council, requirements constitute at least 15 percent of the total coursework of the participants and satisfy general education requirements.

Types of Honors Courses

Courses at Northwest Mississippi Community College may be designated as honors in the following ways:

1. Honors section – an entire section devoted to only honors students; curriculum is modified to meet honors course standards; honors syllabi must be approved by the Honors Director(s).
2. Split course – students are a mixture of honors and non-honors; instructors will use syllabi supplements with curriculum modifications for honors students; syllabi must be approved by the Honors Director(s).
3. Honors contract – majority of class is non-honors; honors student will have an individual contract with instructor documenting curriculum modifications; these classes are available to students in any academic course with permission from the instructor (other than developmental or activity courses); honors contract must be approved by Director(s). The honors contract must be formed between the instructor and student and sent to the Honors Director(s) for approval within three weeks of the start of the course. An honors contract template can be found in Appendix D.

Honors Forum

Honors Forum is the “hub” of the Honors Institute. This course provides opportunities for students to build a group identity and to freely discuss topics of general interest which may not be included in the various courses in which they are enrolled. The general objectives for Forum are to develop leadership skills, discuss current topics, and engage in community service. Speakers are often invited to speak in Honors Forum.

GRADUATION STANDARDS

There are two levels of graduation standards for honors students: (Students with unusual circumstances can apply for an exception by the approval of the Honors Committee.)

1. Honors Scholar.
 - Meets all maintenance requirements
 - Earns at least 8 honors hours
 - Completes at least 1 Honors Forum class
2. Distinguished Scholar.
 - Meets all maintenance requirements
 - Earns at least 16 honors hours
 - Completes at least 3 Honors Forum classes

GRADUATION RECOGNITION

Honors graduates will be recognized during graduation.

ADVISEMENT AND COUNSELING

Honors scholars are required to meet with Honors faculty for advisement during each term. Individual advisement, by appointment, takes place during the scheduled advisement period each semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating/plagiarism is unacceptable.

- First offense: 0 on the assignment
- Second offense: dismissal from Honors Institute
- For more information see NWCC Policy Manual

HONORS INSTITUTE PERSONNEL

Directors

The Director and Assistant Directors of the Honors Institute possess an understanding of the policies and procedures, mission, and goals of the Honors Institute and ensure the innerworkings of the Institute are aligned. The Directors oversee operation of the program and membership in the National Collegiate Honors Council. The Directors serve as advisors and mentors for honors students, providing additional academic counseling when needed, and adhere to policy outlined in the procedures manual. A Faculty Honors Council provides support and guidance for the Directors.

Honors Council

The Honors Council will advise the Northwest Honors Institute and its Directors. It represents the interests of honors students. It works to ensure policies and procedures of the Honors Institute reflect the mission and goals of the honors community.

The Honors Council is composed of various representatives from Northwest Mississippi Community College and a student representative. This council meets periodically to discuss matters related to the Honors Institute and to advise the Directors.

Faculty

The criteria for selection of the Honors Institute faculty include marked enthusiasm; exceptional teaching skills; the ability to provide intellectual leadership, stimulation and mentoring for Honors scholars; and

appreciation for the mission of Honors education. Northwest Mississippi Community College encourages faculty to develop innovative methods, approaches, and pedagogies. In addition, the Honors faculty will provide Honors scholars with honors-related academic advising.

The role of an honors course instructor includes but is not limited to the following:

- Possess the skills and knowledge needed to facilitate an honors-level course
- Have the ability to develop and implement a differentiated curriculum at a level above the standard curriculum to support advanced learners
- Use a variety of instructional strategies to engage advanced learners
- Stay abreast of current curriculum innovations and research in the subject area taught

Interested faculty must submit a proposal outlining the methods intended to create the honors class to the Director or Assistant Director of the Honors Institute. The proposal should include details of how the course will utilize in-class and/or extracurricular activities to enrich the learners' experience.

Instructors may design an honors course or course project that is tailored to their particular subject area; however, the following questions should be addressed in the syllabus addenda.

1. How does the honors course differ from a non-honors version of the course? What additional and/or modified work will the student perform? (Please be as specific as possible.)
2. How will the outcomes deepen or extend the students' learning beyond what would be achieved in the non-honors version of the course? (Please be as specific as possible.)
3. How will assessment of the honors student differ from assessment of typical students? What portion of the course grade will be accounted for by the Honors component of the course?

As part of the evaluation process, the Director(s) of the Honors Institute will work closely with the faculty to evaluate coursework and ensure student work adheres to the goals and mission of the Honors Institute. Syllabi for honors courses will be kept on file in the office of the Honors Institute. Contract-based honors agreements must be approved by the Director(s) and will also be kept on file. A rubric used to evaluate honors courses can be found in Appendix C. A guide for creating an honors contract is found in Appendix D.

APPENDIX A

The purpose of this rubric is to clearly evaluate criteria for entrance into the Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute. Students are encouraged to use the online form found on the Honors Institute page at northwestms.edu.

Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute Admission Evaluation Rubric

Student Name: _____

Entry Term: _____

Pathway: _____

		Met	Not Met
<u>Entering Freshman</u> <i>(Both GPA and ACT Requirements should be met.)</i> High School GPA \geq 3.5 ACT Composite score of 25 or above	GPA:		
	ACT:		
<u>Current Student</u> <i>(Both GPA and hour requirement should be met.)</i> GPA \geq 3.5 Completed \geq 12 academic hours	GPA:		
	HOURS:		
<u>Interview Comments.</u> <i>Also, if admission recommendation is based on criteria other than above, please explain.</i>			

RECOMMENDED DECISION

Admit: _____
Sign and Date

Deny: _____
Sign and Date

APPENDIX B

The purpose of this rubric is to clearly evaluate criteria for maintaining enrollment in the Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute. Students are evaluated at the end of each semester. **Students must receive “met” on all criteria to maintain enrollment in the Honors Institute.**

Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute Evaluation Rubric for Maintaining Enrollment

Student Name: _____		Notes:	
Entry Term: _____			
Current Semester: _____			
Program of Study/Concentration: _____			
		Met	Not Met
GPA \geq 3.25	GPA: _____		
Completed \geq 15 academic hours	Hours Completed: _____		
Completed \geq 3 hours in an honors course	Hours Completed: _____ Honors Course(s) and Term: _____		
Enrollment/Completion of Honors Forum Courses	Honors Courses Completed: _____ Honors Forum: _____		
Participation in required Service Hours	Comments: _____		
Adherence to Honors Code	Comments: _____		
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Maintain Enrollment: _____ Probation: _____ Removal: _____		

Co-Directors: _____
Sign and Date

Sign and Date

APPENDIX C

The purpose of this rubric is to clearly identify how the honors level course is different from a standard level course. The rubric assesses how the curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices are adapted for advanced learners. The course syllabi or honors contract is used to evaluate the course.

**Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute
Honors Course Evaluation Rubric**

Course: _____ Instructor: _____

Criterion	Met	Not Met	Comments/Recommendations
There is evidence that the honors course contains learning opportunities through extension, acceleration, or enrichment.			
There is evidence of instructional diversity indicating experiential and personalized learning opportunities above a standard level course.			
There is evidence that assessment practices align with honors level curriculum (<i>practices may include ongoing student self assessment, peer assessments, formative and summative assessments</i>)			

Co-Directors: _____
Sign and Date *Sign and Date*

Semester: _____

APPENDIX D

**Northwest Mississippi Community College Honors Institute
Honors Contract**

Student Name: _____ Semester and Year: _____
Student Email: _____ Student ID: _____
Course Title: _____ Course ID: _____ Section: _____
Instructor: _____ Instructor Email: _____

Honors Contract Proposal

Briefly describe the project and provide a description of what product will be created as a result of the project:

What learning outcomes will be addressed as part of this contract, and how will they be demonstrated?

Approximately how much time will be spent on this project? _____

Approximately how much time will be spent with the instructor on this project? _____

We, the undersigned, hereby agree to pursue the project detailed above during this semester. As a result of the successful completion of this work, an Honors designation will be affixed to the above-named course as it appears on the student’s official transcript.

Approval Signatures:

_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>(Assistant) Director</i>	<i>Date</i>
_____	_____		
<i>Student</i>	<i>Date</i>		

Notification of Completion:

_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>(Assistant) Director</i>	<i>Date</i>
_____	_____		
<i>Student</i>	<i>Date</i>		