

GRADUATION WITH ACADEMIC HONORS



University Policies: Graduation with Academic Honors

Baccalaureate degree students who have earned a minimum of 60 hours of letter-graded (i.e., not Pass/Fail) degree credit in residence at the University of Louisville will be eligible for consideration to graduate with honors. Students who have re-entered the university under the fresh-start policy must have earned at least 60 letter-graded credit hours since their return to be considered for academic honors.

Commencement programs will list eligible students as “Candidates for Honors” based on their having earned both undergraduate and program grade point averages of 3.5 or higher prior to the semester preceding graduation. Final determination of a student’s eligibility to graduate with academic honors will be based on the student’s standing upon completion of the degree. The name of the honor is decided by the unit.

Minimum criteria for honors are as follows:

- Cum Laude or Honors: 3.50 undergraduate and program grade point averages
- Magna Cum Laude or High Honors: 3.75 undergraduate and program grade point averages
- Summa Cum Laude or Highest Honors: 3.90 undergraduate and program grade point averages.

In addition to these minimum criteria, units may specify additional requirements for grade point averages and additional work such as honors projects or honors theses. Students should consult their advisor concerning eligibility and requirements for graduation with academic honors. The dean’s office will make any final decisions concerning eligibility.

Students who were admitted to the University Honors program may be eligible to graduate as an Honors Scholar. Students who complete the necessary coursework with the required GPA will earn the designation of University Honors Scholar on both their transcript and diploma. Students who earn this distinction are awarded a medal and recognized at an awards ceremony prior to university commencement.

Unit-Specific Policies

In addition to the university-wide policies regarding Graduation with Academic Honors, students may be subject to the unit-specific requirements listed below.

College of Arts & Sciences

Outside of the university policy for graduation with academic honors, students in the College of Arts and Sciences have additional eligibility for Latin honors with the completion of a Senior Honors Thesis.

Students should consult their advisor with any questions concerning eligibility and requirements for graduation with College Honors.

The minimum grade point average requirements for graduation with College Honors are:

Cum Laude: 3.50

Magna Cum Laude: 3.75 with no College honors thesis; 3.65 with College honors thesis

Summa Cum Laude: 3.90 with no College honors thesis; 3.75 with College honors thesis

All senior honors theses must be approved by the College of Arts & Sciences’ Honors Thesis Committee.

Further information about the requirements to graduate magna cum laude or summa cum laude—including eligibility, deadlines for the proposal, the completed project, and the defense of the project—can be found on the University Honors Program website (<http://louisville.edu/honors/>).

College of Business

In determining eligibility for graduation with College Honors, the College takes into consideration not only the university cumulative grade point average (which must be at least 3.5), but also an “expanded major grade point average” which is calculated using all courses taken to fulfill the required courses in the major including transfer courses.

Students pursuing a double major must have the appropriate minimum GPAs in **both** majors to receive their degree with honors, high honors, or highest honors.

Alternatively, students may graduate with Highest Honors with a thesis project and the following GPA requirements: 1) a minimum of 3.75 University and program GPA at the beginning of the semester in which the student plans to graduate, and 2) the 3.75 minimum university and program GPA must be maintained through the final semester prior to graduation. With this path, students must write a thesis in their major, according to the following procedures:

1. Prior to the beginning of the student’s final semester, he or she must contact the discipline Department Chair and initiate a request to be a candidate for graduation with highest honors.
2. The Chair will establish an Honors Committee of three faculty members. In consultation with the Honors Committee, the Chair will prepare a schedule of activities to help the candidate complete the thesis in a timely manner.

3. The Honors Committee will consult with the candidate and agree on a topic. The candidate will prepare the thesis according to the general requirements set up by the Honors Committee.

4. The candidate will submit the final draft of the thesis by the deadline set out in the initial schedule of activities. The Honors Committee will review the thesis on the basis of grammatical accuracy, substantive contribution, and response to the Committee's input. If the Committee chooses, it may conduct an oral examination of the candidate.

5. After reviewing the thesis, the Honors Committee will forward a positive or negative recommendation and a copy of the thesis to the Chair. To be acceptable, the thesis must be approved by all three members of the Honors Committee with the concurrence of the Chair. A candidate may appeal a negative decision to the COB Undergraduate Studies Committee. The thesis, along with the recommendations of the Honors Committee and Chair, will be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs no less than three weeks before the end of the semester in which the candidate is to graduate. It will be retained there in either a public or confidential file, as designated by the candidate. The discipline advisor will also be notified of the decision as the responsible party for notifying the Registrar's Office.

Honors Scholar in Business

To graduate as an Honors Scholar in Business, a COB student must complete at least 24 hours of honors courses with at least 18 hours in the COB; at least 12 hours at the 300 level or above; and at least two upper-level seminar courses (or one seminar plus a senior thesis), at least one of which must be non-business. The student's final university GPA must be 3.5 or higher.

College of Education & Human Development

In order to be eligible to receive a degree with the distinction of Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude or Summa Cum Laude, a student must earn:

Cum Laude: 3.50 university and program GPA

Magna Cum Laude: 3.75 university and program GPA

Summa Cum Laude: 3.90 university and program GPA and Honors project as outlined below. In order for a student to be eligible to receive a degree with the distinction of Summa Cum Laude, the student must have the recommendation of the major program faculty indicating an outstanding level of competence in the various phases of field experience as well as in all academic work.

"Program GPA" is defined as follows:

- HSS degrees: all degree-applicable HSS and SPAD courses
- Teaching and Learning degrees: all degree-applicable EDTP and EDSP courses
- Organizational Leadership and Learning degrees: all degree-applicable LEAD/ELFH courses.

Only credit earned at the University of Louisville will be used in calculating grade point averages used in decisions regarding honors.

Guidelines for Graduating Summa Cum Laude

Students intending to graduate with the distinction of Summa Cum Laude must submit a proposal and present a final paper or project based on the guidelines developed by the College of Education and Human

Development Honors and Scholarship Committee. The proposal must be approved by the Committee according to the following schedule:

- May degree applicant: Prior to September 30
- August degree applicant: Prior to October 15
- December degree applicant: Prior to March 30
- Detailed guidelines and forms are available at louisville.edu/education/advising/graduate-with-honors (<http://louisville.edu/education/advising/graduate-with-honors/>).

Each student must select a faculty sponsor for assistance and guidance in preparing the proposal and the final project/paper. The final project/paper must be approved by the Honors and Scholarship Committee according to the following schedule:

- May degree applicant: Prior to March 31
- August degree applicant: Prior to April 30
- December degree applicant: Prior to November 30

Speed School of Engineering

In order to be eligible to graduate with Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors, students must have completed at least one-half of the credit hours required in their undergraduate degree program while enrolled in the J.B. Speed School of Engineering.