

GRADUATION WITH ACADEMIC ACCOLADES



University Policies: Graduation with Academic Accolades

Baccalaureate degree students who have earned a minimum of 60 hours of letter-graded (i.e., not Pass/No Credit or Pass/Fail) degree credit in residence at the University of Louisville will be eligible for consideration to graduate with academic accolades. 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 accolades.

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.

There are three categories of academic accolades upon graduation from a Baccalaureate degree program: recognition based on GPA, recognition based on successful completion of the University Honors or Honors Scholars program, and successful completion of a unit or department recognition program such as a thesis or project.

Minimum criteria for University academic accolades based on GPA:

- **Cum Laude:** 3.50 undergraduate grade point average
- **Magna Cum Laude:** 3.75 undergraduate grade point average
- **Summa Cum Laude:** 3.90 undergraduate grade point average.

Note: This recognition will appear on the student’s transcript and diploma.

Students who were admitted to the University Honors program may be eligible to graduate as an Honors Scholar.

- Students in the University Honors program who maintain a 3.35 cumulative UofL GPA, successfully complete three 3-credit Honors courses within their first four (full-time) semesters in the Honors program, and who successfully complete a minimum of 15 credit hours of Honors courses, will earn the recognition of **University Honors** on their transcript.
- Students in the University Honors Scholars program who maintain a 3.50 cumulative UofL GPA and complete an Honors-approved

academic plan, focused on interdisciplinary Honors seminars and including a minimum of 24 credit hours in Honors coursework, will earn the recognition of **University Honors Scholar** on their transcript and diploma. Students who earn this distinction are awarded a medal and recognized at an awards ceremony prior to university commencement.

In addition to these minimum criteria, some degree programs allow students to graduate with Distinction upon successful completion of a thesis, paper, or project. These students will earn the recognition of **<Program Degree> Distinction** on their transcript and diploma.

A student may earn academic accolades from more than one of the above categories.

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

Students may graduate With Highest Distinction upon completion of the A&S Senior Thesis. Students are required to have a GPA of 3.5 in order to initiate the thesis.

Students may graduate With Distinction upon successful completion of a departmental honors program.

College of Business

In determining eligibility for graduation with College Distinction, 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 distinction, high distinction, or highest distinction.

Alternatively, students may graduate with highest distinction 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.

Kent School of Social Work and Family Science

In determining eligibility for graduation with Distinction from the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, Kent takes into consideration not only the university cumulative grade point average (which must be at least 3.5), but also the Program GPA, which is calculated using the grades from all 200+ level courses with the course index of the degree program (e.g. all 200+ level BSW courses).

Minimum criteria for Kent School academic accolades based on GPA:

- With Distinction: 3.50 Social Work program grade point average
- With High Distinction: 3.75 Social Work program grade point average
- With Highest Distinction: 3.90 Social Work program grade point average

Note: This recognition will appear on the student's transcript and diploma.
