



English Honors Requirements, Deadlines & Guidelines

English Departmental Honors applicants are responsible reading and understanding all of the following information. Please contact your English Academic Advisor or English Student Services in HLMS 101 (ssengl@colorado.edu) if you have any questions.

Departmental Honors in English

The English Department offers outstanding majors the opportunity to intensify their undergraduate study by writing and defending an honors thesis to graduate with an honors designation (cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude).

Literature track students may pursue honors by writing a scholarly thesis. Creative-writing track students may pursue honors by writing a scholarly thesis or a creative writing thesis.

Completing and defending an English Departmental Honors thesis is a serious undertaking. It is a process that requires a significant amount of effort and commitment from everyone involved.

If you are unsure whether pursuing English Departmental Honors is for you, please make an appointment to discuss it with your English academic advisor.

Requirements to Apply to the Honors Program in English

To apply for Honors in English in the Literature track a student must have:

- declared a major in English
- completed 60 hours toward the B.A.
- completed 15 hours in English, 9 of which must be literature courses, and **6 of which must be upper division literature courses completed at CU.**
- a general GPA of 3.3. Exact GPAs are available on a student's degree audit.
- a GPA in English of 3.3. Exact English GPAs are available on a student's degree audit.

To apply for Honors in English in the Creative Writing track students must have:

- declared a major in English, Creative Writing track
- completed 60 hours toward the B.A.
- completed 15 hours in English, 12 of which must be in creative writing courses, and **6 of which must be upper division creative writing workshops completed at CU.**
- a general GPA of 3.3. Exact GPAs are available on a student's degree audit.
- a GPA in English of 3.3. Exact English GPAs are available on a student's degree audit.

Students who meet these qualifications may apply for admission to the program by completing the *English Honors Application* form. Completed applications and all required supplemental materials must be submitted to English Student Services in HLMS 101 by the deadline indicated on the application. **The English Honors Committee reviews all applications; admittance is not guaranteed.**

Students are notified of the Committee's decision by the last day of the spring semester. Admission to the Honors Program and completion of a thesis does not necessarily guarantee an Honors designation. The decision regarding an Honors designation is made by the Honors Examination Committee and the College Honors Council after completion and defense of the thesis.

Application Deadlines

English Departmental Honors applications are accepted twice per year, once in the Spring semester and once before the Fall semester begins.

If you are graduating in Fall, you must apply by the spring semester: For example:

- Students who intend to graduate in December 2024 must apply to English Honors in Spring semester (usually by the last week of March or first week of April).

If you are graduating in Spring or Summer, you must apply by the beginning of Fall of the previous year: For example:

- Students who intend to graduate in May or August 2024 must apply to English Honors by Fall 2023.

The English Honors application deadline is generally set within the last week of March. The deadline is published each January at <http://www.colorado.edu/english/undergraduates/english-honors-program>.

Late applications are NOT accepted.

Requirements for Completion of the English Honors Program

1. The student must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.3 (both cumulative and in the English major).
2. The student must complete the requirements in the English major, either the Literature or Creative Writing track.
3. The student must write an honors thesis, typically 35-50 pages in length for literature theses and 30-60 pages in length for creative writing theses.
4. The student must participate in an oral defense of the thesis.
5. The student must complete and defend their Honors thesis before graduating.

Additional **Literature track** specific requirements:

- Students graduating in **May** or **August** are required to take ENGL 4820 Honors Seminar in the Fall semester, and ENGL 4830 Honors Thesis in the Spring semester.
- Students completing a literature thesis graduating in **December** are required to complete both ENGL 4820 Honors Seminar and ENGL 4830 Honors Thesis before graduating.
- Please note that **ENGL 4820 Honors Seminar is ONLY offered in the fall semester** and **ENGL 4830 Honors Thesis cannot be completed over the summer.**

Additional **Creative Writing track** specific requirements:

- Students completing a creative writing thesis will only be required to take ENGL 4830 Honors Thesis in their last semester, but should consult closely with their thesis advisor on research methods throughout. Thesis advisors are not expected to advise during summer months.
- It is strongly suggested that students should take a class with a Creative Writing faculty member before asking that person to serve as thesis advisor.
- In certain cases, English Literature faculty can serve as the thesis advisor for creative writing students. Such arrangements must be preapproved by the Associate Chair for Creative Writing.
- Please note that **ENGL 4830 Honors Thesis cannot be completed over the summer.**

Important English Honors Guidelines and Information:

Planning

Success in the English Honors Program requires planning, proactive communication and network cultivation. Prospective English Honors applicants are encouraged to plan each semester's academic study in consultation with their academic advisor and English faculty mentors, in order to create a personal course of study that is both challenging and coherent.

Required Bureaucratic Procedures

The Honors thesis process is jointly administrated by the Office of English Student Services in Hellems 101 and the Arts & Sciences Honors Program office in Norlin M400L. Each office is responsible for administrating different portions of your Honors thesis process, but English Student Services will be your primary contact throughout. You are invited to contact English Student Services (ssengl@colorado.edu) or the Honors Program (honors@colorado.edu) at any time to ensure that our respective requirements are clear to you.

Students must first apply to write an Honors thesis in English through the Office of English Student Services, as detailed above. An Honors file, recording matters such as advising, thesis topic, thesis advisor, and special course arrangements, will be kept in that office.

Students who have been accepted to English Honors will be instructed on the procedures for requesting enrollment in the required coursework. Additional information can be found below, under Honors Coursework.

In order to graduate with Honors, students in English must also submit Honors Program registration paperwork to the Arts & Sciences Honors Program office in Norlin M400L. Students must submit their registration paperwork after their application is accepted by English Student Services, by no later than the semester before they plan to defend their thesis. Among other things, the registration paperwork requires that students have formed their thesis defense committee and must be accompanied by a brief prospectus of the thesis and a preliminary bibliography. The format of the prospectus and bibliography shall be defined by the thesis advisor and/or the instructor of ENGL 4820 Honors Seminar.

The Honors Program registration paperwork submission deadlines can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/honors/graduation>. *Late Honors Program registration paperwork will not be accepted.* Contact the Arts & Sciences Honors Program at honors@colorado.edu with questions.

Thesis Advisor

It is the student's responsibility to find a thesis advisor. With approval from the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies, an instructor may serve as a thesis advisor. Students must have obtained a commitment from their thesis advisor before they can apply for the English Honors Program. It is strongly recommended that students take at least one class from an English faculty member before asking them to serve as their thesis advisor.

Any rostered faculty member in English may serve as an English thesis advisor. In certain cases, English Literature faculty can serve as the thesis advisor for students writing a creative thesis. Such arrangements must be preapproved by the Associate Chair for Creative Writing. *Graduate students and adjunct lecturers may not under any circumstances serve as thesis advisors or examination committee members.*

Students are expected to consult regularly with their thesis advisors as they design and complete their thesis projects. Additional information about the thesis advisor's role can be found below, under Honors Coursework.

Honors Coursework

Participation in English Honors requires successful completion of required coursework detailed below. Honors enrollment is administrated by the Office of English Student Services in Hellems 101. Enrollment request instructions will be provided at the necessary intervals to students who have been accepted to participate in English Honors. Contact English Student Services at ssengl@colorado.edu with questions.

ENGL 4820 Honors Seminar (3 credits). *Enrollment in ENGL 4820 is mandatory for Literature thesis students only.* It is only offered during the fall semester. It is an in-person class that provides guidance on research methods and the structure of the literary thesis. Students are enrolled in this class by English Student Services, after acceptance to the English Honors Program.

ENGL 4830 Honors Thesis (3 credits). *Enrollment in ENGL 4830 Honors Thesis is mandatory for all English Honors students (Literature and Creative Writing) during the fall or spring semester in which they defend their thesis. These credits cannot be completed over the summer.* Students are enrolled in this class by English Student Services. In this class, students earn three credits for working on their thesis with the support of their thesis advisor. The thesis advisor is the official instructor and grader for these credit hours and will define the associated expectations, meetings and deadlines.

The Honors Thesis

The thesis is the heart of the English Honors Program. The honors thesis must be written under the supervision of a thesis advisor. For students completing a literature thesis, the thesis should be a significant extended essay (usually 35-50 pp.) on a topic of the student's own choosing. It should demonstrate ability in research, critical thinking, and writing. For students in the Creative Writing program, the thesis should be a collection of creative work (30-60 pp., double spaced) in poetry, fiction or drama.

The Defense of the Thesis

The thesis defense will be an oral exam conducted by an examination committee. At a minimum, the committee must be composed of three members: 1) the student's thesis advisor, 2) an English faculty member sitting on the Honors Council, and 3) a rostered faculty member from another (non-English) CU Boulder department. Contact ssengl@colorado.edu for a list of the English faculty members currently sitting on the Honors Council. If the thesis advisor is also an Honors Council member, then additional rostered English faculty member will need to sit on the committee.

Individual examining committees have to be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Honors Program administrator. Contact ssengl@colorado.edu & honors@colorado.edu if you have questions about forming your committee. All committee members attend the examination, participate in questioning, and vote on the honors recommendation.

The exam will normally last one hour. It will focus principally on the thesis, but it will also explore some ideas, authors, and texts not specifically covered in the thesis but relevant to it. The intent is to test critical thinking, articulation, and to a limited degree general knowledge of the field in the area of the thesis.

The oral thesis defense must be administered according to the schedule announced by the Arts & Sciences Honors Program. The defense deadline for each term (along with many other important Honors deadlines) can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/honors/graduation>. **These deadlines are non-negotiable and should be considered carefully when planning your thesis timeline. No Honors examinations can be given in the summer.**

The Key to Success. Most students who elect to do Honors find it a challenging but rewarding experience. Those who have difficulty are invariably those who put off the thesis until there is not enough time to do it well. Success in the program depends on working closely and steadily with the thesis advisor on a regular schedule.

Honors Designations. There are three honors designations: *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *summa cum laude*. The Examination Committee, in consultation with the thesis advisor, determines their designation recommendation after the thesis defense. The examination committee will not disclose their designation recommendation to the candidate. The committee's designation recommendation and the defense copy of the candidate's thesis are then reviewed by the College Honors Council in order to determine the final designation.

The designation awarded depends on four areas of academic achievement: the overall GPA, the GPA in English, the thesis, and the thesis defense. The College Honors Council suggests these minimum expectations for the overall GPA: a 3.3 for a *cum*, a 3.5 for a *magna*, and a 3.8 for a *summa*. These are, however, only guidelines for one area of academic achievement; the designation finally depends on excellence in all four.

Awards Convocation. For students graduating with Honors in the fall or spring terms, there is an Honors Convocation—usually a breakfast for students, parents, and friends. Contact Arts and Sciences Honors Program Office at Honors@colorado.edu with questions. Graduating English Honors students also receive individual recognition at the annual departmental graduation ceremony hosted the Department of English each spring.