

HONORS PROGRAM

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Honors Program Description

The UMKC Honors Program seeks to attract exceptionally motivated and academically talented undergraduates from every school and college at the University to participate in an environment that encourages excellence and challenges students to realize their greatest potential.

The UMKC Honors Program is designed to enrich the college experience of the most outstanding students through the integration of traditional and novel approaches to learning from the humanities, the behavioral and social sciences, the natural and physical sciences and other divisions of the University.

Honors Credit

In order to accomplish these goals, all honors students have the opportunity to enroll in a wide variety of honors courses offered each semester. Honors credit may also be earned through:

- Honors Contracts
- Honors Discussion Groups
- Study Abroad
- Beyond the Classroom Experiences
- Graduate Courses
- Senior Honors Thesis

Honors students are encouraged and supported in the conduct of research and the publication and presentation of their work regionally and nationally. As seniors, honors students have the option to complete a six-credit-hour project, the Senior Honors Thesis/Project. Upon graduation, those who complete an honors thesis in addition to the basic honors requirements are designated as Honors Scholars.

Honors Program Initiatives

UMKC offers a supportive atmosphere to encourage integrative thinking through an exciting Living-Learning Community and specialized advising with the Honors Program Advisor and Honors Faculty Fellows. Leadership skills are honed through unique seminars where students reflect on and analyze their community service experiences. Finally, with an eye toward giving students a leg up on their graduate school and career goals, honors students are strongly encouraged to conduct innovative individual and collaborative research or artistic activity in the form of the Senior Honors Thesis/Project.

Some of the other advantages that the UMKC Honors Program offers students include:

- Priority enrollment during advance registration
- Specially designated general education courses for honors students
- Graduate-level borrowing privileges at Miller Nichols Library
- Individual advising to prepare honors students to compete for prestigious national scholarships (such as the Rhodes, Marshall, Truman and Goldwater Scholarships).

Admission to the Honors Program

To be considered for admission, a first-year student should:

- minimum ACT composite score of 28 or a combined verbal and math SAT score of 1260, and
- have a minimum cumulative high school GPA of 3.5 in the core (17-unit) curriculum, consisting of English (4 years), math (4 years), science (3 years), social studies (3 years), foreign language (2 years of the same language) and fine arts (1 year).

Students who do not meet these criteria may apply for admission to the Honors Program and will be considered on an individual basis. For incoming first-year students, a total of 27 hours of honors credit is required to receive a bachelor's degree with University Honors.

Transfer students must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- All of the admission criteria for first-year students as stated above; or
- college-level GPA of 3.7 or above; or
- participation in the Honors program at their previous college or university.

Continuing UMKC students are encouraged to apply to the Honors Program. Students currently enrolled at UMKC must have a UMKC cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above.

For transfer and continuing students, a total of 21 hours of honors credit is required if the student enters the Honors Program with 50 or more credits. Transfer students may count up to 9 credits of honors coursework completed at their previous college or university in fulfillment of University Honors requirements.

The above-mentioned admission requirements are "target criteria." While priority consideration will be given to students who meet or exceed the requirements, the Honors Program Admissions Committee takes into consideration the totality of each student's application, with emphasis on academics and civic engagement. UMKC wants Honors Program students who will be leaders in the classroom and in all aspects of campus and community life. Accordingly, even if you do not meet these criteria, please feel free to apply for admission to the Honors Program. Applications are especially encouraged from students who have a strong record of community engagement and are highly motivated to succeed academically.

The Honors Program application may be found at the Honors website: <http://honors.umkc.edu/>. The application deadline is **August 1** for fall semester and **November 30** for spring semester.

Continued Participation in the Honors Program

Honors students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.2. Students whose cumulative grade-point average drops below a 3.2 have a one-semester grace period during which time they can remain in the Honors Program while they work on bringing their cumulative grade-point average above the 3.2 minimum. If, at the end of the grace period, the student's grade-point average is still below a 3.2, the student will be dropped from the Honors Program.

Honors Living-Learning Community

The UMKC Honors Program, in collaboration with Residential Life, sponsors the Honors Living-Learning Community. Located in UMKC's Oak Street Hall, this community of honors students has the opportunity to live and learn together through cohort classes, special programs and events, informal interaction with UMKC faculty, social activities and community service. The Honors Living-Learning Community is designed to build cohesive community among the honors students, promote student and faculty engagement, and provide continuity of the intellectual learning experience beyond the classroom.

Lucerna, the Honors Program Undergraduate Research Journal

The Honors Program produces *Lucerna*, UMKC's only research journal open to papers written by UMKC undergraduates. The honors student editors oversee all aspects of production of the journal, from soliciting submissions to editing the chosen papers. *Lucerna* is published annually.

Kauffman School Partnership

Beginning in Fall 2011, the UMKC Honors Program joined in partnership with a local charter school, the Ewing Marion Kauffman School, to create and develop an opportunity for students from both institutions to engage in intellectual growth and creative collaboration. Students in the Honors Program look forward each semester to working with the Kauffman School, promoting the educational and social opportunities available to Kauffman students. The Honors Program provides UMKC students with two options: work-study positions for students who are eligible and wish to work extensively (15 to 20 hours per week) at the Kauffman School, and volunteer positions for students who wish to help lead after-school clubs.

Study Abroad

Students in the UMKC Honors Program are strongly encouraged to spend a summer, a semester or a year studying in a foreign country. Taking classes and living abroad is one of the most personally and intellectually fulfilling experiences a student can have while an undergraduate. Every summer, the Honors Program organizes a summer study abroad program in Ireland, Scotland, or Sweden; however, in consultation with the administration of the Honors Program, students can earn honors credit by participating in any study abroad program. Visit Study Abroad and Global Engagement (<https://info.umkc.edu/international/study-abroad/>) for complete information on all study abroad opportunities at UMKC.

SEARCH: Students Engaged in Artistic and Academic Research

Honors students completing the senior honors thesis or undergraduate research project are encouraged to present their findings at the annual SEARCH Symposium for Research and Creative Achievements. The purpose of this symposium is to display and celebrate undergraduate participation in outstanding research and other creative endeavors. Presentations may be in the form of poster presentations or other performance media displaying creative works. For more information, see the SEARCH (<http://www.umkc.edu/searchsite/>) website.

Faculty

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Undergraduate University Honors Requirements

Students must complete 27 hours of honors coursework to earn the University Honors distinction. Students must earn a grade of "B" or better in an honors course in order for it to count in fulfillment of University Honors requirements. A minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.2 is required to graduate with **University Honors**.

Transfer students, and currently enrolled UMKC students who enter the Honors Program with more than 50 hours, will need 21 hours of honors credit to earn the University Honors distinction. Transfer students may count up to 9 credits of honors coursework completed at their previous college or university in fulfillment of University Honors requirements.

How to Earn Honors Credits

The Honors Program offers many opportunities for students to earn honors course credits.

- Take **honors courses** and receive a course grade of B or higher.
- Complete an individual **honors contract** in any course to receive honors credit for that course.
- Participate in an **honors discussion group** – a weekly discussion session offered in connection with certain specific courses at UMKC. Honors credit may be assigned retroactively in a course for which a student has successfully participated in a related discussion group.
- Complete a **Study Abroad Program**. Up to 15 credits earned in any UMKC-approved Study Abroad program may be counted as regular honors credits in fulfillment of the coursework needed to earn the University Honors distinction.
- Enroll in a **Beyond the Classroom Experience**, which could be an internship, a clinical experience, practice teaching, undergraduate research, or a community engagement project. Up to six credits earned in Beyond the Classroom Experiences may be counted toward the University Honors distinction.
- Enroll in **Graduate Courses**. Up to six credits of graduate-level coursework may be counted toward the University Honors distinction. Students must earn a B or better in a graduate course to receive honors credit.
- Complete a **Senior Honors Thesis**. See "Honors Scholar Requirements" below.

Honors Scholar Requirements

All Honors Program students are encouraged to undertake a six-credit **Senior Honors Thesis** in their senior year. The Senior Honors Thesis should be a research paper or project in the student's major discipline that is completed under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Upon graduation, those students who complete an honors thesis in addition to the University Honors requirements are designated as **Honors Scholars**.

The **Senior Honors Thesis** is normally completed over three semesters, starting with a preparatory seminar in spring semester of the junior year. Students are invited to select their own thesis topic, which will involve in-depth research with a faculty mentor. All senior honors thesis coursework must be completed with a course grade of B or better. See the senior honors thesis guidelines (<http://honors.umkc.edu/academics/senior-honors-thesis/>) for additional information.

The **Honors Scholar** distinction requires a minimum of six credits of honors thesis or independent research project coursework in addition to the 27 credits required for the University Honors distinction. The following course sequence is recommended for Honors Program Thesis projects.

Junior and Senior Years (6 hours)

- **Honors Thesis or Project**
 - **Junior Year:** (Spring) Honors 330 *Senior Honors Thesis/Project Practicum* (1 credit)
 - **Senior Year:** (Fall) Honors 495 *Senior Thesis independent study* (2 credits)
 - **Senior Year:** (Spring) Honors 499 *Senior Thesis/Project Writing Group* (1 credit)
 - **Senior Year:** (Spring) Honors 495 *Senior Thesis independent study* (2 credits)

Tools for Planning and Fulfilling Academic Requirements

UMKC's Major Maps are detailed, semester by semester plans that lead a student to complete all degree requirements within four years. Plans include benchmarks and critical courses by term that assist a student's evaluation of progress and major "fit". In order to ensure that the appropriate courses are taken, students are encouraged to consult with the undergraduate advisor for this major. Please see the tab above to view the major map for this program.

UMKC's Transfer Guides (<https://www.umkc.edu/admissions/transfer-guides.html>) provide detailed guidance on recommended transfer coursework, plans of study, transfer timelines, and transfer contact information. To ensure a seamless transfer experience, students are encouraged to work with both their community college advisor and a UMKC advisor when planning their coursework.

UMKC's PlanMyDegree 'Audit' (<https://www.umkc.edu/registrar/academic-programs/plan-my-degree.html>) degree audit system provides an individual evaluation of all degree requirements (General Education, Degree Specific, Major Specific, etc.) for students' officially recorded (Office of Registration and Records) and "what if" exploratory plans of study. This evaluation is used to certify all graduation requirements.

UMKC's PlanMyDegree 'Plans' (<https://www.umkc.edu/registrar/academic-programs/plan-my-degree.html>) degree planning tool enables students to develop a personalized semester by semester plan of study towards completion of degree requirements for student's officially recorded (Office of Registration and Records) and "what if" exploratory plans of study. Update and edit your full plan to degree completion each term and confirm accuracy each semester with your Academic Advisor(s).