

University Honors Contract Course Procedure

Description of University Honors Contracts:

University Honors Contracts allow students to make individualized arrangements with professors, in order to earn University Honors elective credit in upper-division, non-honors courses. University Honors Contracts are intended to provide students with a more engaging experience in the course and allow them to work more closely with the professor while exploring the course material in a more personally meaningful way. The goal of the University Honors Contract is to enrich the class experience by allowing a student to initiate a custom course of study under the mentorship of the professor. The University Honors Contract should be customized to the selected course and can take the form of a short research project, a literary review, a survey study, a work of art, or any project that builds on the course's subject area and involves independent initiative from the student. The development of a University Honors Contract should be a collaborative effort between the student and professor, but all University Honors Contract proposals must be submitted to the University Honors Office for review and approval by the Faculty Director of University Honors. University Honors Contract proposals are accepted within the first two weeks of the applicable quarter.

Restrictions on the types of courses that can be contracted and the professors who are eligible to oversee University Honors Contracts may impact a student's ability to contract a particular course. Refer to the detailed "Guidelines for the Substance of a University Honors Contract," "University Honors Contract Proposal Instructions," and "University Honors Contract FAQ" sections appearing below before approaching a professor about contract options. Please note that the following courses cannot be contracted: lower-division courses, HNPG courses, "H"-designated courses taught within the past five years, Summer Sessions courses, courses graded Satisfactory/No Credit (S/NC), and 190-level courses.

Guidelines for the Substance of a University Honors Contract:

The work assigned in conjunction with a University Honors Contract should be qualitatively different in nature from the work already assigned in the course. The mere addition of readings or assignments to existing coursework is not sufficient. For example, the contract work may require primary sources not formally introduced in the class, or emphasize increased depth and complexity on particular topics. University Honors will not approve contracts in which students merely function as TAs, readers, or discussion leaders in the course.

University Honors Contracts will be reviewed to confirm that they adhere to the aforementioned guidelines and that they are:

- **Specific:** Details of exactly what is to be done, such as required format, if relevant; number of pages; amount of reading; number of meetings; specific topic or process for choosing a topic, where relevant; expected completion date(s), etc.
- **Measurable:** Criteria for evaluating any output such as papers or presentations, or level of scholarship expected.
- **Relevant:** Appropriate to the course content and course level.
- **Beneficial:** Produce a benefit to the student, in terms of developing depth or breadth of knowledge/skills not available to non-Honors students, or application of knowledge/skills in ways not available to non-Honors students.

University Honors Contract Proposal Instructions:

- Attend the course intended for contract. Read the syllabus to gain an understanding of the required coursework and whether it is a good fit for a University Honors Contract.
- Ask the professor, who cannot be a lecturer, whether he/she would consider overseeing a University Honors Contract for the course. Explain the purpose of a University Honors Contract and, if necessary, the purpose of University Honors.
- Schedule a meeting with the professor to discuss, and decide on, the type of work to be completed for the University Honors Contract. Be prepared with suggestions and ideas. The contract is an opportunity to explore a topic of interest, with depth and complexity, through a specific project in the class. Feel free to be creative. The work completed in satisfaction of the University Honors contract should be stimulating and enjoyable.
- In conjunction with the professor, complete the University Honors Contract Proposal, which is available during the first two weeks of the applicable quarter. The proposal will require a description of the details of the contract experience, how the work will promote deep engagement with course material, and how the work will be differentiated from the non-honors experience in the course. Both the student and the professor must sign and date the proposal.
- Submit the University Honors Contract Proposal to the University Honors Office no later than the end of Week 2 of the applicable quarter. Late or incomplete University Honors Contract Proposals will be automatically denied.

- Wait for approval from University Honors. University Honors Contract Proposals will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, and approval can take as long as one week. Both the student and the professor will receive an e-mail regarding the status of the proposal, once it has been reviewed. There will be an opportunity for revision, if the proposal is not approved, as long as the revision is submitted no later than the end of Week 3 of the applicable quarter.
- Maintain communication with the professor throughout the quarter, in order to ensure that the expectations of the University Honors Contract are being met. If the expectations of the contract are not satisfied, Honors elective credit for the course will not be awarded.
- At the end of the quarter, the professor will notify the Faculty Director of University Honors to inform him/her whether the expectations of the contract were satisfied. If the Faculty Director does not receive notification from the professor, he/she will contact the professor directly.

University Honors Contract FAQ:

What courses are eligible for contracting?

- Upper-division courses taught by UCR faculty members (not lecturers) are eligible to be contracted. The exceptions are: lower-division courses, HNPG courses, “H”-designated courses taught within the past five years, Summer Sessions courses, courses graded Satisfactory/No Credit (S/NC), and 190-level courses.

How many University Honors Contracts can I complete?

- Students can complete a maximum of two University Honors Contracts, in satisfaction of their eight units of University Honors electives.

Can a graduate student, post-doc, or lecturer sponsor my University Honors Contract?

- No. Only a faculty member may sponsor a University Honors Contract.

How are University Honors Contracts graded?

- Professors are required to determine whether the student has satisfied the expectations of the contract by the same date grades are regularly due for the course. "Incompletes" are not permissible for University Honors Contracts, unless the student is receiving an "Incomplete" for the course and has obtained prior permission from University Honors to receive an “Incomplete” for the contract. No grade is given for the contract itself.

What happens if the expectations of the University Honors Contract are not satisfied?

- If a student does not satisfy the expectations of the contract, the student will not receive Honors elective credit for the course. Failure to satisfy the expectations of the contract, or satisfying them in an unsatisfactory way, should not affect the student's final grade in the course; the work assigned in association with the contract should not be considered in the student's final grade in the course.

Can I contract an Honors course?

- No, HNPG courses and “H”-designated courses that have been taught within the past five years cannot be contracted.

If I complete a University Honors contract, will I get a better grade in the class?

- The work assigned in association with the contract should not be considered in the student's final grade in the course. A student's final grade in the course should reflect the quality and content of the work assigned in the course.