The Honors in Practice (HIP) Handbook offers students, faculty mentors, Departmental Honors Advisors, and academic advisors clear guidelines about the types and requirements of Honors in Practice work, including some HIP experiences structured by the Honors Program and others structured with mentoring agreements (“contracts”) between students and their faculty mentors. Students can begin HIP work at any time; most students complete this work during their sophomore and junior years.

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Forms available at http://honors.usu.edu: Honors Mentoring Agreement Proposal, Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion, and Honors Research and Study Abroad Fund Application
Honors in Practice: What, When, and Why?

WHAT?
Honors in Practice (HIP) allows students to apply their academic knowledge beyond the walls of the classroom. HIP work therefore cannot be required for a course, with some guided exceptions (see Honors Excel, internships, and study abroad). Students upload most HIP work in the Honors Canvas Course, where they can also track their total Honors points and communicate with Honors staff and find contact information for Departmental Honors Advisors. The Canvas course also offers modules that explain each type of HIP work and viewable examples of some outstanding Honors student HIP work.

Honors offers various pathways toward earning the recommended NINE Honors points for HIP, including:

- Honors Book Labs (1 point each)
- Honors Leadership Academy (3 points)
- Honors Student Leadership (4.5 points total; maximum of 3 points/year)
- Honors Integrated Experiences (8 points total)
- Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs (4.5 points total; maximum of 3 points/year)
- Honors Mentoring Agreements (“contracts”) between students and faculty (3 points per agreement)

WHEN?
Students can begin HIP work as early as their first year; most students complete these projects during their second and third years. Current/transfer students admitted after their first year may be awarded some Honors points upon admission for past experiential learning that meets HIP requirements, including research, creative work, and community-engagement activities. Students can visit the Honors Canvas course and start exploring the HIP modules as soon as they are ready to begin.

WHY?
Honors students are curious, engaged, and creative. They often excel in the classroom, but they grow most when they take charge of their own educational experiences. The HIP part of the Honors curriculum dares students to think imaginatively and practically about the value of experiential learning through research, creative projects, community engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration. This work often lays the foundation for both Honors capstone projects and future professional paths by training students to take responsibility for their own learning and to communicate its value to others.

HIP structures and rewards this work with Honors points. In most cases, students earn points by submitting in the Honors Canvas course a final product and a written reflection about the value of the HIP experience. Honors recommends that students take advantage of the option to create a portfolio of Honors work, using the Portfolium option in Canvas. HIP final products contribute to this professional portfolio, giving students a concrete set of work examples that they can share with future employers or graduate programs. Similarly, students’ reflections help build for both students and future employers and/or graduate programs a clear narrative about the value of their Honors undergraduate experience. While USU offers a world-class education to all students, the opportunity to build a portfolio and articulate the value of each step in that education prepares Honors Aggies exceptionally well to take their next strides.
General Requirements for Honors in Practice

Honors in Practice asks students to make their academic knowledge real and tangible outside of the classroom. All HIP work must: 1) put academic knowledge into practice, 2) involve independent and/or collaborative projects completed outside the classroom, 3) be supervised by a faculty or professional mentor, and 4) result in a final product (poster, report, presentation, paper, work log, photo documentation, etc.) and a 500-600-word reflection. The rationale for each of these requirements follows:

Academic Knowledge in Practice

Honors in Practice allows students to put their academic knowledge into practice in a variety of concrete ways:

- In Honors Book Labs, students read and discuss across disciplines ethical, aesthetic, and cultural topics.
- As participants in the Honors Leadership Academy or members of the Honors Student Advisory Board, students learn to act as Honors ambassadors, peer educators, community builders, and publicists by collaborating on specific projects with Honors peers, staff, and faculty.
- Through Honors Integrated Experiences, students learn to apply knowledge learned through study to field, lab, community, and global situations beyond the classroom.
- In the Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs, students discuss with Honors alumni how to build upon their majors by setting and working to attain personal and professional goals.
- In Honors Mentoring Agreements (“contracts”), students and faculty design meaningful hands-on learning projects, empowering students to take control of the educational experience by applying their academic expertise to situations beyond the classroom. These mentoring agreements extend even into the graduate classroom with Honors Excel, an option that allows students to work with a professor to explore what it might be like to pursue further academic study at the graduate level.

Completion of Projects Outside the Classroom

All types of Honors in Practice work apply academic knowledge through independent or collaborative projects completed outside the classroom. Students work with a faculty (or professional) mentor, either in teams or individually, to propose and complete projects that address specific questions or problems, complete agreed-upon tasks, reflect upon experiential learning, and develop self-awareness and critical-thinking skills.

In Honors Book Labs, Honors leadership opportunities, Honors Integrated Experiences, and Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs, projects emerge from course, program, or committee content and requirements. For Honors Mentoring Agreements (“contracts”), students work with their mentors to define the parameters and value of their projects, provided this work goes beyond the content of any class in which the student has enrolled. The focus of each project varies, but all should develop the student’s academic experience in clear and practical ways.

Mentoring

Honors students choose faculty or professional mentors to oversee their HIP work and to guide them in the production of final products and the editing and polishing of reflections. The nature of the practical experience shapes the choice of mentor. In Honors Book Labs, Honors Integrated Experiences, and Honors Excel graduate courses, the mentor is the faculty member in charge. For academic Honors Mentoring Agreements (“contracts”), the mentor is typically (although not always) a USU professor in the student’s field. For experiential Honors Mentoring Agreements (“contracts”), including community-engagement projects, internships, study abroad, Honors leadership opportunities, and the Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs, the
mentor is often a community leader, professional, or program leader/staff member. Mentors are crucial in helping students shape the practical value and outcomes of HIP projects.

In most cases, faculty mentors and Departmental Honors Advisors approve the student’s final product and reflection. However, when necessary (particularly when mentors are not USU faculty members or for some Honors-structured experiences), the Departmental Honors Advisor in the student’s home department and/or the University Honors Program will provide formal approval of the final product. Students must indicate both the mentor and the final approver on their mentoring agreement forms, as appropriate.

**Final Product and Reflection**

Final products and reflections are what make HIP experiences essential to an Honors education: building a professional portfolio and articulating the value of one’s educational experience define a USU Honors student. While the purpose of final products and reflections remains fixed, their content can differ, depending on the type of HIP experience. Please refer to the appropriate section of the handbook or Canvas modules/assignments for details.
Honors Program Structures for HIP

Honors has developed structured experiences that guide students through Honors in Practice. Each of the structures described below meets HIP requirements and results in the experiential learning and reflection that define HIP. Please note that Departmental Honors Advisors play no supervisory role in these Honors-structured HIP experiences.

Honors Book Labs (1 Honors point per lab)

Honors Book Labs create an engaging, short-term, interdisciplinary structure that is often a student’s first introduction to Honors in Practice. Each Book Lab consists of four virtual or in-person meetings, beginning in the second week of classes each semester (September and January) and in each of the first three months of summer (May, June, and July). Faculty members propose books to discuss, students sign up for labs, and Honors creates a schedule, organizes registration and waitlists (limit of five students per lab), and buys/delivers all books/e-books.

Students are responsible for the following tasks:
- **Reading** the books by the agreed-upon deadlines (set by Book Lab leader/instructor)
- **Attending** all four scheduled Book Lab meetings
- **Contributing** to the discussions at those meetings
- **Submitting** the required reflection in the Honors Canvas course, following the directions below (earning 1 Honors point upon approval by the Honors Program Executive Director)

Reflections on Book Labs should describe the Honors in Practice experience offered in the lab, rather than just summarizing the book’s plot or content. Within two weeks of the final meeting, students must submit in the University Honors Program Canvas course a 600-word reflection that articulates the following:

1. One **new idea or set of ideas** that the student discovered through reading and discussion
2. An example of how the reading and discussion led the student to **think critically** about a particular issue or problem
3. The value of discussing this issue or problem **across disciplines** with fellow students and instructor(s)
4. How the Book Lab experience might lead the student to **engage with the community or world** in a new way

Because demand is high and in fairness to all students, those enrolled in a lab must attend or return the book to remain in good standing with Honors. Any student who fails to meet the four basic requirements above (reading, attending, contributing, and submitting a reflection) will become ineligible for Book Labs in the following term and may jeopardize their Honors standing and privileges.

Students may participate in one Honors Book Lab per term, an experience that is repeatable, as long as they remain in good standing with Honors. They earn 1 Honors point for successfully completing each lab.

Honors Leadership Academy

Honors offers a year-long curriculum that trains interested first- and second-year Honors students to take on future leadership roles, both within and beyond the University Honors Program. Students must apply for admission, and admitted students complete an online Canvas course, with scheduled assignments, meetings with Honors staff and student leaders, and reflection on leadership. Students who successfully complete the Honors
Leadership Academy earn **3 Honors points** and qualify for the Honors Student Leadership roles described below.

**Honors Student Leadership**

Honors students can take on a variety of leadership roles, including Honors Ambassador, Honors Peer Educator, Honors Community Builder, and Honors Publicist. For the 2020-2021 academic year, these roles are all part of service on the Honors Student Advisory Board (HSAB), which offers outstanding students the opportunity both to give back to the Honors Program and to earn Honors points for participating in a year-long Honors in Practice collaborative experience.

The board consists of one student representative from each college, and the group meets monthly in both Fall and Spring terms, virtually or in person. Members also commit to act as an Honors Fellow in one of the four leadership areas described above. Based on their interests and talents, they agree to represent Honors and/or answer students’ questions at virtual, in-person, or video-recorded recruiting, to plan and participate in Honors-specific programming for students, and to take part in the review of incoming student applications to Honors. Students apply for these appointed positions and serve for a minimum term of one academic year.

At the end of the year, students submit in the Honors Canvas course a **final portfolio**, including an **activity log** documenting the name, date, and hours of each activity, plus a brief summary of tasks completed on behalf of the University Honors Program (excluding required board meetings and admissions work) AND a **500-600-word reflection**. Reflections and portfolios must be uploaded by the end of the summer term following board membership to earn points (by the last day of finals for students graduating in their year of service). **Students must complete their year-long commitment to the advisory board or communicate early and clearly with Honors staff about extenuating circumstances to remain in good standing with the University Honors Program.**

Completing this year-long HIP experience and submitting a portfolio in the Honors Canvas course results in **3 Honors points**, and the experience is repeatable (with Canvas documentation) for another **1.5 points** in an additional year. We hope that students who enjoy helping to shape the University Honors Program while on campus will consider volunteering for our various alumni-engagement programs after they graduate and begin their professional lives.

**Reflections on the HSAB experience** describe in 500-600 words how this form of engagement gave the student an Honors in Practice experience by putting academic **knowledge into practice** (the goal of all HIP work) and creating meaningful **relationships** with the student’s peers on the board, the Honors Program Executive Director, and Honors staff. The reflection must address how the HSAB experience met Honors learning outcomes by:

1. Adding to the student’s **overall education** and/or **future goals** by developing leadership and ambassadorial, teaching, community building, or marketing skills;
2. Demanding **critical thinking** about the relationship between the student’s major, college, and other colleges and programs on campus;
3. Broadening the student’s experience across disciplines by building **relationships** among students on the board and between the student and the Honors Program Executive Director and other staff members; and
4. Engaging the student in the **campus** and **broader communities** through the ambassadorial, teaching, community building, or marketing roles.
Honors Integrated Experiences

Honors currently offers one year-long integrated research experience and is in the process of developing parallel Honors in Practice experiences in community and global engagement. Honors students must apply to these programs, and accepted applicants earn **8 Honors points** through a structured curriculum, even as they develop several final products to add to their professional portfolios. Please contact the University Honors Program for more details.

Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs (AMP)

Honors offers two structured HIP pathways designed to professionalize students as they meet alumni and earn Honors points.

In Spring 2021, Honors plans to pilot a one-term introduction to alumni mentoring for first- and second-year students. More information will follow about this experience, for which students can earn **1.5 Honors points**.

The year-long program for more advanced Honors students (in their final two years at USU) fosters meaningful relationships between current Honors students and alumni with similar professional and/or academic interests. Honors has created a curriculum in a dedicated Canvas course covering four basic areas: Professionalism; Applications; Professional Networking, Development, and Organizations; and Gratitude and Appreciation. This curriculum foregrounds Honors learning outcomes and structures monthly student-mentor interactions via email, phone, video conference, or even in person, as circumstances allow.

Students apply for the AMP and then select possible mentors from a web listing of bios in the fall. The program requires progress on assignments and regular participation throughout the entire academic year. Completing this curriculum and submitting all work results in **3 Honors points**, which may be combined with *either* the 1.5 points students can earn through alumni mentoring in their first two years in Honors or a second year-long experience with a new mentor for an additional **1.5 points**. We hope that students who enjoy the help of an alumni mentor will consider mentoring a student themselves after they graduate and begin their professional lives.

Students are responsible for completing and submitting all Canvas assignments, most of which require them to contact their assigned mentor for discussion of or feedback on their work. This work, like other HIP projects, will both add to the student’s professional portfolio, and result in a **500-600-word reflection** on the mentoring experience as a final assignment. **Students who fail to thank their mentors will not earn points, even if they submit all other required work. Students must complete the entire program or communicate early and clearly with Honors staff about extenuating circumstances to remain in good standing with Honors.**

**Reflections for the AMP** should describe in 500-600-words how the program gave the student an HIP experience by putting academic knowledge into practice (the goal of all HIP work) and creating a meaningful relationship with the mentor. Students are welcome and encouraged to share reflections with mentors, as appropriate. The reflection must specifically address how the AMP met Honors learning outcomes in the following ways:

1. Adding to the student’s **overall education** and/or **future goals**
2. Demanding **critical thinking** about professional topics connected with the major(s)/minor(s)
3. Broadening the student’s **experience across disciplines**
4. Engaging the student in the **local or global communities**
Honors Mentoring Agreements (“Contracts”) for Honors in Practice

An Honors Mentoring Agreement (“contract”) is a formal agreement between a student, a mentor, the Departmental Honors Advisor, and the Honors Program to complete an Honors in Practice experience. Each agreement proposes—and then documents the student’s completion of—an academic or professional project that extends learning beyond regular coursework. Students earn 3 Honors points for every successfully proposed, completed, and approved project, and these projects typically require a minimum of 20 hours of work outside the classroom. Please visit the Honors Canvas course for examples of outstanding Honors Mentoring Agreements.

Students take control of this part of the Honors curriculum, which allows them to identify meaningful real-world experiences and to articulate their personal and professional value. The best Honors Mentoring Agreements prepare students for the future and allow them to use what they know in concrete ways. Whether these agreements focus on the near future (capstone preparation, exploration of academic interests, study abroad) or a long-term plan (national fellowship applications, Honors Excel graduate courses, internships, professional research), they allow students to follow their intellectual passions and to make the most of USU’s many outstanding academic resources.

Types of Honors Mentoring Agreements

- **Research, Scholarship, Creative, Service, and Other Projects:** Students may design agreements with faculty mentors to explore their own or their mentor’s academic and/or professional interests. These agreed-upon projects often prepare students for capstone work by allowing them to complete preliminary research or reading, work as a research apprentice on a faculty project, experiment creatively in a field of interest, or engage in academically relevant local or global service. Furthermore, the projects can fill gaps in knowledge or skills not covered by regular coursework, investigate areas of academic interest outside a student’s major(s), or open up future possibilities with a major grant or scholarship application. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, both original work and apprenticeship with faculty build meaningful professional relationships between students and mentors. Students may apply for up to $500 from the Honors Research Fund per term to support travel and other costs related to research and creative work, and winners of URCO grants receive an automatic funding match from Honors. This HIP work can create a pathway to three optional transcript designations: research or creative work meets some requirements for USU’s Undergraduate Research designation; community-engaged projects meet some requirements for the Community-Engaged Scholar designation; and globally engaged projects meet some requirements for the Global Engagement Scholar designation.

- **Course Mentoring Agreements:** These agreements may be proposed and completed as extensions of or deeper explorations within upper-division (3000-level or above) non-Honors coursework. Such agreements are never part of regular coursework; instead, they offer students and professors together the option of looking beyond the course itself. Such agreements require additional work on behalf of both parties, but that work can be structured to enrich the course experience by involving an extra project in an area of mutual interest, specific agreed-upon research or reading/discussion between student and mentor, pedagogical work on the part of the Honors student that benefits both the professor and other students in the class, student leadership on a project that helps others to explore beyond the limits of the class, or any other enrichment activity related to the course and designed collaboratively by the professor and student. The professor serves as project mentor, and students and mentors must meet at least six times outside of class, according to the guidelines on the Honors Mentoring Agreement Proposal and Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion forms. Students may not submit required coursework for the Honors Mentoring Agreement, which is not graded and does not affect the course
grade. Students must earn at least a “B-” in courses attached to proposed Honors Mentoring Agreements to earn Honors points.

- **Honors Excel Graduate Courses**: Over half of graduating Honors students enroll in graduate or professional programs each year; this HIP option places Honors students, with faculty permission, in existing graduate courses and thus allows them to see what it might be like to collaborate on cutting-edge research and/or learn about advanced topics in their disciplines with USU’s top faculty and graduate students. In addition to developing mentoring relationships that will continue through the Honors student’s undergraduate career, the Honors Excel structure allows students to explore a future professional path as they earn Honors points. Professors evaluate all Honors student work, coordinate collaboration, and set project requirements. Students must complete all assignments on time and pass the class to earn Honors points. **Students registered for Honors Excel classes must complete Honors Mentoring Agreement Proposal and Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion forms to earn points (see page 9 for details).** Faculty and/or departments are under no obligation to admit Honors students to graduate courses; the Honors Excel structure creates opportunities only when there is an agreed-upon fit between course and student. The final product for Honors Excel can be a required course project, but students must also submit a reflection on the experience with their Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion forms in the Honors Canvas course.

- **Professional Internships**: Internships or field-related work experiences may be completed as Honors Mentoring Agreements, as long as they expand the student’s academic work with a practical and relevant professional apprenticeship. The mentor of an internship will typically be an on-site professional who supervises and guides the student’s work experience. In such cases, the Departmental Honors Advisor in the student’s home department and the Honors Program Executive Director perform the on-campus mentoring, evaluating the student’s reflection and final product to ensure that the experience meets criteria for HIP work. Daily contact with the on-site internship mentor meets the requirement for mentor-student meetings and can be noted on the Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form.

- **Study Abroad**: Study abroad may be completed under an Honors Mentoring Agreement if the study expands the student’s academic experience internationally and reflectively. Mentors will typically be on-site faculty or trip leaders who supervise and guide the student’s international experience. As in internships, daily contact with on-site mentors meets the requirement for mentor-student meetings and can be noted on the Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form. When mentors are not USU faculty or when the experience occurs during the summer, the Departmental Honors Advisor in the student’s home department and the Honors Program Executive Director perform the on-campus mentoring, evaluating the student’s reflection and final product to ensure that the experience meets Honors learning outcomes. Study abroad partially fulfills the requirements for the optional Global Engagement Scholar Transcript designation. Students may apply for up to $1000 from the Honors Study Abroad Fund.

### Excellent Uses of Honors Mentoring Agreements

*Remembering that Honors Mentoring Agreements are pathways toward future goals, students should carefully consider what each agreement adds to an Honors education. Our students find the following types of agreements to be particularly useful, and we have seen outstanding work in each of these areas:*

- **Capstone Preparation**: Although work completed in Honors Mentoring Agreements cannot be part of the capstone itself, students often design agreements that prepare them for their capstones and set them up for success. Such agreements can involve literature reviews or library research, creative experimentation, laboratory or fieldwork, courses or academic programs not offered by USU, or other
forms of preparation. Reflections on these mentoring agreements prepare students to articulate their skills and development in their fields, and their final products often become starting points for more intensive capstone work. By building understanding that will support capstone work, students prepare themselves to think critically about their own and others’ work in their fields. Such reflective critical thinking is one of the four key skills that all Honors students master at USU.

- **Research/Creative Apprenticeship**: Students can design Honors Mentoring Agreements that focus on research or creative work, whether or not that work is directly connected to a future capstone project. Independent research (defined, in a broad sense, as gathering and communicating knowledge) is another of the four key skills that all Honors students master at USU. Acting as a research or creative apprentice to a professor’s lab, studio, or field work trains students in important research/creative methods. Reflecting on that experience then deepens understanding of one’s place within a chosen research or creative field.

- **Academic Exploration**: Some students may want to deepen and contextualize their academic knowledge by applying what they learn in class to an extracurricular project or by engaging in academic work outside their areas of expertise. Interdisciplinary learning is another of the four key skills that all Honors students master at USU. Students interested in placing their academic knowledge in a broader context can design course mentoring agreements with faculty in or outside of their majors (provided the course is at the 3000-level or above); they may also choose to work outside the curriculum with faculty whose expertise might help to fill a gap in their knowledge. Reflecting on this experience puts one’s major interests in context.

- **Local/Global Engagement**: Students can focus their Honors Mentoring Agreements on local, national, or international service/humanitarian projects, research, or internships. Community engagement is one of the four key skills that all Honors students master at USU, and mentored HIP work may therefore put academic knowledge into practice in the local, national, or global communities. Students who pursue these kinds of HIP milestones will necessarily reflect on the broader relevance of their academic work, and they may also decide to pursue USU’s Global Engagement Scholar or Community-Engaged Scholar transcript designations.

- **Professional Development**: Honors Mentoring Agreements may also foster professional development by engaging students in graduate coursework, (inter)national fellowship applications, internships, or other professional exploration. Like capstone preparation projects, mentoring agreements focused on professional development teach students to think critically and practically about future plans and to reflect on their professional goals.

**Work Not Appropriate for Honors Mentoring Agreements: Guidelines and Rules**

*Honors Mentoring Agreements are designed to be flexible, but they must add clear, distinct, and documented value to an Honors education. The program requires approval of proposals and completed agreements by mentors, Departmental Honors Advisors, and the Honors Executive Director because these faculty experts can assess that added value within a specific area of study, the discipline as a whole, and across disciplinary boundaries. When in doubt about a specific kind of experience, students should seek the input of the University Honors Program Advisor or their Departmental Honors Advisors. The following work cannot be framed with Honors Mentoring Agreements:*

- **Work Required for a Course**: Students may not earn Honors points for regular coursework, just as they may not, according to USU’s academic honesty/integrity code, submit the same work for credit in different courses. Honors in Practice asks students to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom, and using
coursework for that experience defeats the purpose. One exception to this rule is experiential credit for experiences like internships, study abroad, and graduate work in Honors Excel. Because of the experiential growth-oriented nature of this work, students may propose Honors Mentoring Agreements that include substantial final products and reflections, even when students take those experiences for credit.

- **Capstone Project Work**: Although Honors Mentoring Agreements may prepare students for capstone projects, they cannot be a direct part of the final capstone project. Students earn distinct Honors points for HIP work and for the capstone project, and completing the same work for these two separate parts of the Honors curriculum does not meet the goals of the program. The rationale in these circumstances is therefore the same as in any course: students may not submit the same work for credit in two different courses.

- **USU Scholarship or Grant Applications**: Honors recognizes the importance of student applications for department, college, Honors, or university scholarships or grants (including URCO, Honors Research and Study Abroad Fund, USUSA funding, etc.). Only major national or international grant and scholarship/fellowship applications can be proposed as Honors Mentoring Agreements, however, because they require much more extensive self-assessment, mentoring, revision, and research to complete. Any national fellowship application submitted as a mentoring agreement must be proposed and completed in the same way as other such agreements.

- **Conferences, Trainings, or Other Brief, Unmentored Professional Experiences**: Honors also recognizes the importance of student professionalization activities, such as conference presentations or attendance, or attendance at other professional events of a limited scope, and supports these experiences through Honors Research Funding opportunities. However, only those experiences that include a sustained mentoring relationship, a clear, concrete final product, and at least 20 hours of experiential work outside the classroom qualify as Honors Mentoring Agreements.
Steps and Deadlines for Honors Mentoring Agreements

Students must follow the steps below to earn 3 Honors points upon completion and submission of work.

1. CONTACT MENTOR – The earlier students contact mentors, the more time they have to craft outstanding Honors Mentoring Agreements together. Ideally, students talk to potential mentors in the term before the desired agreement would begin. The mentor and DHA may be the same person for HIP work, but not for Honors capstone projects. Remember to follow USU’s academic honesty/integrity policy, described above.
   o Course mentoring agreements require mentor contact no later than the first week of the term.

2. SUBMIT MENTOR-APPROVED AGREEMENT PROPOSAL TO DHA – Following the detailed instructions on the Honors Mentoring Agreement Proposal, mentor and student complete each part of the proposal, mentor signs, and DHA has one week to give final approval (with signature) before students must upload proposals in the Honors Canvas course. Proposals should be uploaded and approved by all parties (student, mentor, DHA, Honors) before the official start date of agreed-upon work, but students can talk with an Honors advisor if they forgot to submit a proposal but want to create an agreement for a project. Mentoring agreements are typically completed within 10-15 weeks.
   o Course mentoring agreements require students to submit the mentor-approved proposal to DHA by the end of the second week of classes in the agreement term.

3. UPLOAD MENTOR AND DHA-APPROVED HONORS MENTORING AGREEMENT PROPOSAL TO HONORS CANVAS COURSE – Student, mentor, and DHA must have signed the form; Honors verifies that agreement proposes to meet HIP requirements and approves/denies proposal in Canvas.
   o Course mentoring agreements require students to upload the mentor- and DHA-approved proposal to the Honors Canvas course by the end of the third week of classes in the agreement term.

4. COMPLETE WORK WITHIN TIMELINE – Keep in mind that the timeline need not align with the term schedule; students may work with faculty and Honors to renegotiate the terms or timeline of the agreement, as necessary.

5. LOG AT LEAST 20 HOURS OF WORK OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM – This work should enrich the student’s academic experience beyond normal coursework. Students may complete more than one Honors Mentoring Agreement for an extensive project, but each part of that longer project must be proposed, approved, and completed as its own agreement.

6. HOLD REGULAR MENTOR- STUDENT MEETINGS (minimum of six meetings) – Remember that these meetings about the project must take place outside of class (if relevant). Students record all mentor meetings and report on them at the end of the project (for global engagement or internship projects that require regular daily interaction between student and mentor, no additional documentation is necessary)

7. SEND REFLECTION AND FINAL PRODUCT DRAFTS TO MENTOR AND DHA – one week before the final day of agreement: Mentor has time to offer feedback before final deadline to Honors, and DHA has time to identify any problems with meeting Honors requirements.
   o Course mentoring agreements require students to submit this draft of the reflection and any other final product to the mentor one week before the last day of classes in the agreement term.

8. UPLOAD REFLECTION, FINAL PRODUCT, AND SIGNED COMPLETION FORM TO HONORS CANVAS COURSE – All requirements described on form; due at end of project (merged pdf).
   o Course mentoring agreements require students to upload reflection, final product, and completion form to the Honors Canvas course as soon as possible at the end of the agreement term.
Responsibilities in Honors Mentoring Agreements: Overview

Built upon mentoring relationships between Honors students and faculty, each Honors Mentoring Agreement involves not only a primary faculty mentor, but also the Departmental Honors Advisor and the Honors Program Executive Director. Mentoring an Honors project takes time, and students should therefore make every effort to develop projects that will interest and engage their faculty mentors. The best way to find mentors is to work on building positive working relationships with faculty and other professionals: students can begin to shape those relationships in classes, through research or service projects, and within clubs and other academic or professional organizations. Mentors are much more likely to help students whom they know to be bright, organized, dependable, curious, and engaged with their fields.

Because these relationships are so crucial to the Honors curriculum, the program has carefully defined responsibilities for the Honors Mentoring Agreement process. Before entering into such an agreement, please familiarize yourself with the responsibilities of the student, mentor, Departmental Honors Advisor, and Honors Program.

Brief Overview

Students are responsible for selecting and working with a mentor to write a mentoring agreement proposal, securing all required signatures and promptly submitting the proposal in the Honors Canvas course, conferring regularly with the mentor, meeting all deadlines, and completing a high-quality final product (along with a reflection) that fulfills the agreement.

Mentors are responsible for helping the student to define and focus the project, mentoring the agreed-upon work and the construction of a meaningful final product and reflection, and ensuring high-quality work within the discipline.

Departmental Honors Advisors act as liaisons between the mentor and the Honors Program, ensuring that proposed projects meet both Honors requirements and disciplinary standards; students may therefore choose whether to submit their Honors Mentoring Agreements to the DHA in their own and/or their mentor’s home department, if that department differs from their own.

The Honors Program supports students and faculty and ensures that all Honors Mentoring Agreements meet Honors standards and thus merit the award of Honors points documenting successful completion of the project.

More detailed responsibilities are outlined below.
Honors Student Responsibilities for Honors Mentoring Agreements

PROPOSAL:

- Work with mentor to complete an Honors Mentoring Agreement proposal (form on Honors website) following the required format, including a clear description of project goal, proposed work, rationale, reasonable timeline (typically 10-15 weeks), and final product. Mentor and student sign when approved.
- Send an electronic copy of the proposal to the appropriate DHA once signed by mentor and student. DHA signs and returns, if approved, within one week.
- For course agreements, submit a mentor-signed/approved proposal to the DHA by the end of the second week of classes in the agreement term and upload a mentor- and DHA-signed/approved form and proposal to the Honors Canvas course by end of the third week of classes.
- For all other Honors Mentoring Agreements, upload the form and proposal (merged into a single PDF) to the Honors Canvas course once the proposal is approved and signed by both your faculty mentor and the appropriate DHA.

PROJECT WORK:

- Schedule, hold, and document regular (minimum six) mentor meetings (for study abroad and internships, such meetings may occur daily and may be noted as such on the completion form).
- Work with the mentor to decide how the meeting time will be used effectively and complete any agreed-upon work prior to meetings.
- Finish all agreed-upon work in a professional and timely manner, according to proposed timeline.
- Discuss immediately with your mentor, DHA, and/or Honors staff any changes to or questions about your responsibilities and/or work.

FINAL PRODUCT and PROJECT COMPLETION:

- Present a draft of the required final product and reflection to your mentor at least one week before the final day of the agreement (one week before the last day of classes for course agreement).
- Carefully craft and/or edit the final product, responding to mentor feedback as necessary.
- Send the completed final product and reflection to the mentor, for approval and signature, and then to the DHA, allowing time for review, comments, and approval (with signatures on the completed Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form). Please remember that faculty must see all information completed on this form, as they are verifying its accuracy with their signatures.
- Upload the approved final product and reflection, along with the signed Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form (available on Honors website) indicating faculty approval to the Honors Canvas course by the last day of classes in the agreement term (course agreements) or by the project completion date (all other agreements). Please merge all documents as one PDF (see directions in Canvas).
Faculty Mentor Responsibilities for Honors Mentoring Agreements

PROPOSAL:
- Work with the student to draft the Honors Mentoring Agreement proposal (form available on Honors website) following the required format, including a clear description of project goal, proposed work and timeline (typically 10-15 weeks), rationale, and an appropriate final product that demonstrates work completed.
- Sign proposal when approved.
- Please note that once the mentor has approved, students will send the Honors Mentoring Agreement to the appropriate DHA for review, comments, approval and signature.
- Course-related agreements must be signed and submitted to DHAs by the end of the second week of classes in the agreement term and uploaded (by students) to the Honors Canvas course by the end of the third week of classes.
- All other Honors Mentoring Agreements are accepted on a rolling basis and are typically completed within 10-15 weeks. You may remind students of deadlines and process, but it is their responsibility to secure all signatures and to upload the form and proposal on time.
- By signing a student’s Honors Mentoring Agreement proposal, the faculty mentor indicates approval of the project plan, timeline, and proposed final product. Please keep in mind that all agreements require students to complete a 500-600-word experiential reflection in addition to submission of a final product.

PROJECT WORK:
- Hold regular meetings with the student (minimum six meetings outside of the classroom—study abroad faculty or internship supervisors who meet with students daily need not schedule additional meetings) and ensure that the meetings are pedagogically useful (the student’s responsibilities include meeting scheduling, working with you to define meeting structure, and completing any agreed-upon work prior to the meetings).
- Guide the student in completing the agreed-upon work in a professional and timely manner, according to the proposed timeline.
- Discuss immediately with the student, the DHA, and/or Honors staff any questions about your responsibilities and/or the student’s progress on the work of the Honors Mentoring Agreement.

REFLECTION, FINAL PRODUCT, and PROJECT COMPLETION:
- Require a draft of the final product and reflection early enough to allow for revision, as necessary (at least one week before the last day of classes for course agreements).
- Offer timely feedback and ensure that the final product and reflection meet the terms of the agreement and represent useful and competent work in the student’s discipline.
- Sign and return the student’s completed Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form indicating approval of both project and reflection (NOTE: students should fully complete the form before seeking approval/signatures). If the student has not completed the project agreement to your satisfaction, please communicate with Honors promptly.
- Please note that once the mentor has approved and signed the agreement completion documentation, students must also submit the final product and reflection to the DHA for approval/signature. Students will then upload the signed Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form (indicating faculty approval of agreement), final product, and reflection to the Honors Canvas course by the last day of classes in the agreement term (course agreements) or by the agreement completion date (all other Honors Mentoring Agreements).
Departmental Honors Advisor Responsibilities for Honors Mentoring Agreements

The Departmental Honors Advisor oversees not the individual Honors Mentoring Agreement work itself, but the process within the department. For this reason, DHAs may be responsible for agreements of students and/or faculty mentors in their home departments; please remember that students may choose to complete agreements outside of their home departments. Acting as a liaison between the student/mentor team and the University Honors Program, the DHA ensures that all projects meet minimum requirements both within the discipline and for Honors.

PROPOSAL:
- Help Honors students find appropriate mentors in your department for their proposed HIP work and communicate to students that they can find sample Honors Mentoring Agreement ideas in the Honors Canvas course. DHAs should become increasingly well educated in what makes a strong agreement as they become more experienced; if you need access to some examples, please contact the University Honors Program.
- Signed, mentor-approved course agreement proposals are due to DHAs during the first or second week of classes (for review) and for signature by the end of the second week of classes in each agreement term.
- All other (non-course) Honors Mentoring Agreements are accepted by Honors on a rolling basis and should be reviewed, signed, and returned to the student promptly. Your responsibility is to review these agreements to ensure that their timelines are reasonable (agreements are typically completed within 10-15 weeks) and that they meet Honors requirements (at least 20 hours of work that expands a student’s academic experience in practical ways with the expectation of regular mentor meetings and a final product) and standards in your discipline.
- For Honors Mentoring Agreements that meet these requirements and that address each part of the proposal form (goals and work, timeline, rationale, and final product articulation), please electronically sign the Honors Mentoring Agreement Proposal form and return it to the student within one week, since students then need to upload signed forms and proposals to the Honors Canvas course.
- For Honors Mentoring Agreements that do not meet these requirements, communicate clearly and in a timely manner with students and mentors about why you cannot approve the agreement; the electronic submission of the proposal to you before the student secures final approval of the mentor is designed to facilitate this process. Work with students and mentors, if possible, to revise and resubmit agreements in a timely fashion (course agreements are due for student upload with all signatures in the Honors Canvas course by the end of the third week of classes).

PROJECT WORK:
- DHAs are not responsible for overseeing Honors Mentoring Agreement work, although they do review outcomes and approve if the work has been completed as proposed (see below). Please make time to answer any questions about Honors requirements.

REFLECTION, FINAL PRODUCT, and PROJECT COMPLETION:
- DHAs are responsible for reviewing final products and reflections and signing Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion forms to ensure that projects meet Honors requirements and that mentors and students understand those requirements. In some instances, DHAs act as the final approver of an internship, work experience, or study abroad experience (if there is no faculty mentor); they may also, in some cases, serve as both DHA and mentor, in which case they can indicate that fact on the form.
- Mentoring agreements must be completed by the last day of classes in each agreement term (course agreements) or by the agreement completion date (all other Honors Mentoring Agreements).
University Honors Program Responsibilities for Honors Mentoring Agreements

To ensure that proposed HIP projects meet all Honors requirements, the University Honors Program reviews and approves/denies each Honors Mentoring Agreement proposal and then approves/denies the completion of the agreement for Honors points upon submission in Canvas of the student’s final product, reflection, and Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form. Honors Program responsibilities include:

PROPOSAL:
- Regularly and consistently remind students and DHAs of Honors Mentoring Agreement proposal deadlines and requirements.
- Promptly review all Honors Mentoring Agreement proposals once students upload them in the UHP Canvas course, ensuring that all proposal forms are signed by both mentor and DHA and that they include clear descriptions of project goals, proposed work and timelines, and final product(s), in addition to the required reflection.
- Communicate immediately with any students, mentors, and DHAs whose proposals do not meet minimum requirements, and work with them as necessary to revise and resubmit the proposals.

PROJECT WORK:
- Meet annually with DHAs and hold annual HIP showcases for faculty and students.
- Build and maintain an archive of outstanding examples of Honors in Practice in the Honors Canvas course and internally so that students, faculty, and other interested parties can better understand the content and value of HIP work. Individually archive all work and guide students in the use of the Canvas Portfolium tool.
- Ensure that students understand the purpose and structure of HIP work.
- Make the Honors in Practice Handbook available on the Honors website and distribute, upon request, to all mentors and students who have entered into (or are considering) Honors Mentoring Agreements.
- Answer any questions about Honors Mentoring Agreement goals, requirements, and responsibilities.
- Support faculty, DHAs, and students in the Honors Mentoring Agreement mentoring process.

REFLECTION, FINAL PRODUCT and PROJECT COMPLETION:
- Advise students about the Honors Mentoring Agreement process and ensure that they receive information about Honors Mentoring Agreements and HIP milestones annually.
- Remind faculty and students of Honors Mentoring Agreement requirements and deadlines as necessary: the reflection and final product of the agreement should be carefully crafted and/or edited, and they must be uploaded to the Honors Canvas course, along with a completed and signed Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion form (see Honors website), by the agreement completion date (last day of classes for course agreements).
- Promptly review and approve/deny all Honors Mentoring Agreement completion uploads (including final products, reflections, and Honors Mentoring Agreement Completion forms), ensuring that all work meets Honors requirements for HIP work.
- Award students in the Honors Canvas course the points marking the completion of each HIP project.
Resources and Assistance

Funding: Please see the Honors website (http://honors.usu.edu/scholarships) for application materials.

- Many Honors students completing Honors in Practice projects are eligible for Honors Research and Study Abroad Funds (HRSAF). These awards range from $50-$1000 to support student research, study abroad, unpaid internships, conference participation, and other scholarly or creative activity. Honors accepts applications on a rolling basis.
- Students may also apply for Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunities (URCO) grants to support research-focused Honors Mentoring Agreements. URCO deadlines are October 15, February 15, and June 15; more information is available on the Office of Research website (https://urco.usu.edu/about-the-urco/). The HRSAF (above) automatically matches URCO grants for successful Honors applicants (no need for an additional application to Honors).
- Students should check with their departments, colleges, and USUSA about funding resources for undergraduate work.

Facilities and Computing: Honors students are invited to use our study space in the Honors office (LLC Building A, Room 112) during business hours. All Honors students also have access to the Joyce Kinkead Honors Study Room in 334H of the Merrill-Cazier library. The computer facilities in the study room are available during regular library hours. We encourage all Honors students to use this resource. Current Honors students can contact honors@usu.edu for the access code to the study room.

Writing, Editing, and Math: Honors hires our own writing tutor from the USU Writing Center, as well as a math tutor. Honors tutors hold regular office hours (listed in each weekly email from Honors) in LLC A 112. They can help students improve and edit writing at any level or complete calculations or statistical analyses in a project. Honors tutors can help students learn to proofread, edit, and analyze data effectively. Please make use of this resource.

Honors in Practice Canvas Training: Honors maintains a series of self-paced modules about HIP work in our Honors Canvas course. Students can learn about types of HIP work, examine examples of outstanding projects, and begin to explore the possibilities for their own projects. Students typically begin these modules in the summer between their first and second years, although students are free to start at any time. They may also use the Honors Canvas course to chat with peers, contact a librarian about areas of interest, ask Honors staff or peer advisors specific questions, and find information about upcoming deadlines and opportunities.
Frequently Asked Questions

Can students get paid for their Honors in Practice work?
Yes. There are many opportunities for paid internships, laboratory jobs, or fieldwork. Additionally, students may apply for Undergraduate Research or Creative Opportunity (URCO) grants that allow for student stipends. Honors awards points signaling HIP project completion as long as students arrange Honors Mentoring Agreements for the work and submit documentation of completed work, with appropriate approval and reflection, in the Honors Canvas course. Please note that Honors Research Fund awards cannot cover student wages or compensation.

Can students count required course work for Honors in Practice?
No, with the exception of approved Honors Excel, some Honors Integrated Experience courses, internships, and study abroad experiences. HIP work must usually be distinct from required regular coursework (see USU’s Academic Honesty/Integrity policy). While HIP work often advances or extends the themes in courses, the work and final product for a mentoring agreement must not overlap with regular, required coursework. Mentoring agreement work is not graded and does not affect a student’s GPA or any course grade. Honors Excel courses are always counted as HIP milestones if they are agreed upon with the professor and submitted with Honors Mentoring Agreements in the Honors Canvas course.

Can students complete Honors in Practice work outside of their main fields of study?
Yes. HIP work can deepen and contextualize Honors students’ academic knowledge by allowing them to engage in significant and practical academic work outside their majors. This kind of work is particularly useful for students whose capstone projects or professional interests might involve interdisciplinary work.

Can an Honors Mentoring Agreement be connected to a student’s Honors capstone project?
Yes, within the restrictions of USU’s academic honesty/integrity policy. Mentoring agreement work can absolutely feed into a student’s Honors capstone project, but completing part of the capstone as an Honors Mentoring Agreement is not. Honors encourages students to perform literature reviews or research, engage in field or lab work, and apprentice themselves on faculty projects in preparation for their own capstone projects. This work can lay a foundation for the capstone, with the faculty mentor’s approval.

What happens if I cannot complete a proposed Honors Mentoring Agreement?
If for whatever reason a student is unable to complete a mentoring agreement or other Honors in Practice work, they must communicate in writing (and preferably also in person) with the mentor/professor, DHA, and Honors Program as soon as possible. Students must explain why they did not finish the project, summarize the work that they did complete, and articulate specifically what they will do differently in future HIP work. Honors students with two consecutive incomplete Honors Mentoring Agreements or other HIP experiences must meet with the Honors Program Executive Director to remain in good standing with Honors.
Advice from Past Honors Students:

1. **Develop relationships with your professors.**

   - **Samantha Beirne – Wildlife Science**
     “After several attempts to get started on other projects, I realized I was not excited about any of the topics, and decided to find a professor who would fit my research interests. I contacted Dr. Karen Beard after learning about her interest in amphibians and conservation biology. She suggested a project I would be interested in and I was excited to get started. Once I had found a research project I was passionate about, it became a lot easier to write my thesis.”

   - **Nickelle Hunsaker – Human Movement Science**
     “Schedule meetings regularly and a few days in advance. Be prepared for your meetings – have something to present. Don’t be afraid to ask questions when you have them. You’ll learn more.”

   - **Katherine Shakespeare – English**
     “An Honors contract [mentoring agreement] is a valuable and unique opportunity to have insightful one-on-one conversations with a professor. It is the perfect setting for the type of mentoring conversations that let you pick an expert’s brain, seek advice for your own academic goals, and form the relationships that result in excellent letters of recommendation.”

2. **Get practical experience with field research.**

   - **Morgan Hughes – Wildlife Science**
     “When in a classroom or a hypothetical situation, it is easy to design studies with perfect sample set up. In the field, however, I have come to realize that plans never go as expected. As a result, I have learned to collect all possible data. This method of planning big would have allowed more conclusions to be drawn and assured that at least one project would go as planned.”

   - **Austin Spence – Biology**
     “Because I persisted in working and volunteering in [the] lab, I got a field technician job … to catch lizards throughout Arizona, Utah, and western Oregon. This job is what started my first independent research project.”

   - **Marilize Van der Walt – Biology**
     “I know that when things get rough in the field, it is best to remain positive because the truth is that you really couldn’t do much better than field work. There is always something beautiful, or something to be proud of. I learned that even if I am sure I will remember something, I should write it down. Any future research projects I conduct will be meticulously recorded in a lab journal or diary.”

3. **Explore and refine possible capstone topics.**

   - **Brandi Allred – Anthropology**
     “Starting early on finding a project was key; by the time I realized that I had to realign my [capstone] research, I was already so deep into the literature on the topic that it really was no problem. Had I waited until my last semester at school to even start thinking about what I would do for my Honors thesis, I would have been in a world of trouble…. I would suggest starting to mull over your ideas long before you actually start the thesis. With a well-formulated topic and question, the rest will come easily.”
• **J. Daniel Obray – Psychology**
  “One of the most important things I learned is the value of starting to read early and continuing to read. I don’t think that it is possible to have read too much or to be too prepared to write a [capstone] paper. Additionally, reviews are useful tools. Reviews are a great way to get an idea of what has already been researched within a given field, and [they] also give an idea of what the most important research topics are moving forward. They will help to focus future reading and to give structure.”

• **David Youd – Religious Studies**
  “Footnotes and bibliographies are the principal and invaluable guide in research…. Many of the ideas you may spend much time developing from older works may have already been pointed out by more recent scholarship …. Start at the very end of the discussion: find the most recent works … [that] contain a bibliography, and trace the development of issues back from the footnotes of the latest publications. This is the sort of thing which students would do well to understand before starting [a capstone project], and I would advise any student to take up issues of approach and the research process with their advisor and experienced faculty members before beginning [your capstone].”

4. **Seek out an internship or study abroad.**

• **Andrew Izatt – Economics**
  “My internship at Orrin Hatch’s office was a life-changing experience. More than anything else in my undergraduate career, it helped me to realize what I do and do not want to do. I enjoyed the time I spent there. I met amazing, hard-working, driven people with a real passion for politics. I saw the inner workings of a high-profile Senate office and what work on the Hill entails. I have been interested in healthcare policy for a while and the debate surrounding it. Thanks to my internship and my project, I was able to dive headfirst into the material and begin to get my head around the complex and bewildering world of healthcare in America.”

• **Jacob Blotter – Biology**
  *Humanitarian Medical Trip to Guatemala:* “The … trip was amazing. I was able to learn a lot about the people of Guatemala and to connect with them as patients and human beings. I had the opportunity of shadowing medical professionals the entire trip and learning about diseases and treatments. The relationships I built with the people on the trip will have an effect on my career as a doctor, as I received advice and words of wisdom for most of them. … My experience brought my premedical education to life, and it has fueled my desire to help those in need once I have completed my goal to become a doctor.”

• **Darianne Willey – Watershed and Earth Systems**
  *Engineers Without Borders trip to Mexico:* “These experiences are truly unique and memorable. I bore people all the time with “In Mexico…” stories, but I can’t stop thinking about it. The work was hard. We had to wash more than 100 gallons of river sand just for [water] filter filling. We hiked to families that lived outside of the community up in the hills; we packed sand in ripping burlap bags all over the valley. But it was worth it. Community members getting the filters would join us in building and washing, and during that time we got to know them. They really appreciated our interest in their way of life, and especially loved all of the bad Spanish.”

5. **Present your work if possible.**

• **Gracie Arnold – Marketing**
  “I was fortunate to have found the SRS [Student Research Symposium] … conference on USU campus that occurs each spring. Being involved with this conference was a huge success, and I won an award for my abilities as an oral presenter. I highly suggest taking this opportunity to any student. This conference refined my skills and gave me an excellent forum to present my findings and research design.”

• **Trinity Smith – Wildlife Science**
  “Overall the most valuable part of this project was articulating my research to peers. I was able to attend the Utah Chapter of the Wildlife Society Annual meeting (UTTWS), as well as the USU Student Research Symposium and
National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR)…. I gained valuable insight from peers about the implications of my research and was able to use this feedback for my [capstone] manuscript.”

- **Laura Taylor – Interior Design**
  “The Student Research Symposium was my favorite part of the capstone process. It was so fantastic to stand alongside other researchers and talk with them about their research journeys. … I would recommend it to anyone, and I wish I had participated in it earlier as a contract [HIP] researcher.”