

The *Honors in Practice (HIP) Handbook* offers students, faculty mentors, Departmental Honors Advisors, and academic advisors clear guidelines about the types and requirements of HIP work, including some HIP experiences structured by the Honors Program and others structured with mentoring agreements between students and their faculty mentors. Students can begin HIP work at any time; however, most students complete this work during their second and third 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. Contact information for [Departmental Honors Advisors](#) (DHAs) is available on the Honors website. The Canvas course also offers modules that contain explanations of each type of HIP work and viewable [examples](#) of some outstanding HIP work completed by students.

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

- Honors Book Labs (1 point each)
- Honors Leadership Academy (up to 3 points)
- Honors Student Leadership (4.5 points total; maximum of 3 points/year)
- Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs (4.5 points total; maximum of 3 points/year)
- Honors Mentoring Agreements between students and faculty (3 points per agreement)

WHEN?

Students can begin HIP work as early as their first year; however, most students complete these projects during their second and third years. Current/transfer students admitted after their first year may be awarded up to twelve 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 thinkers who are willing to take some intellectual risks. They often excel in the classroom, but they grow most when they take charge of their own education and challenge themselves to step outside their comfort zones. HIP work 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, as it helps students take responsibility for their own learning and communicate the value of their work to others. Keep in mind that because most HIP work is not graded, it creates a safe space for intellectual experimentation as students learn and grow.

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 [Portfolio](#) option in Canvas ([find out more](#) about Portfolio). 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, the final reflections help build a clear narrative about the value of the Honors undergraduate experience for both students and future employers and/or graduate programs. While USU offers all students a world-class education, the opportunity to create a portfolio and articulate the value of each step in their education prepares Honors Aggies exceptionally well for the future.

General Requirements for Honors in Practice

The HIP curriculum allows students to apply their academic knowledge outside 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. A rationale and explanation for each of these requirements follows:

Academic Knowledge in Practice

Rationale: Because experiential learning is central to USU’s land-grant mission, Honors rewards this work, structures HIP experiences, and helps students articulate their lasting value.

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

- In **Honors Book Labs**, students read a book together and discuss a range of important ethical, aesthetic, and cultural topics with their peers and a faculty mentor.
- 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/or publicists by collaborating on specific projects with Honors peers, staff, and faculty.
- In the **Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs**, students discuss with Honors alumni how to build upon their majors by setting personal and professional goals and working to achieve them.
- In **Honors Mentoring Agreements (HMAs)**, students work with faculty or professional mentors to design meaningful hands-on learning projects. These projects empower students to take control of their education by applying academic knowledge beyond the classroom. HMAs 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

Rationale: By completing short-term HIP projects, students prepare for their Honors capstone projects. The Honors curriculum guides students in developing strong project-management skills and helps them build a portfolio of project-oriented work that they can share with future employers or graduate programs.

All types of HIP work apply academic knowledge through independent or collaborative projects completed outside the classroom. In teams or individually, students work with a faculty or professional mentor 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 structured HIP projects like **Honors Book Labs**, **Honors leadership** opportunities, and **Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs**, projects emerge from course, program, or committee requirements. For independent **Honors Mentoring Agreements**, students collaborate with faculty mentors to define the parameters and value of their projects. This work should always go beyond class content. The focus of each HIP experience varies, but all HIP work extends the student’s academic experience in clear and practical ways.

Mentoring

Rationale: Mentors are crucial in helping students to understand the need for personal and professional connections, to articulate the practical value of their HIP projects, to learn project-management skills, and to situate each project within a growing portfolio of work.

Honors students choose faculty or professional mentors to oversee their HIP work and guide them in producing, editing, and polishing both final products and reflections. The nature of each HIP experience shapes the choice of mentor:

- For **Book Labs** and **Honors Excel** graduate courses, the mentor is the faculty member in charge.
- For **academic Honors Mentoring Agreements (HMAs)**, the mentor is typically a USU professor in the student's field.
- For **experiential Honors Mentoring Agreements (HMAs)**, the mentor is often a community leader, professional, or program leader/staff member. Experiential HMAs include community-engaged projects, internships, study abroad, Honors leadership opportunities, and the **Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs**.

In most cases, faculty mentors and Departmental Honors Advisors (DHAs) approve the student's final product and reflection. However, when mentors are not USU faculty members or for some Honors-structured experiences, the DHA in the student's home department and/or the University Honors Program will provide formal approval of the final product and reflection.

Students will indicate both the mentor and the final approver on their HMA proposal and completion forms.

Final Product and Reflection

Rationale: The ability to complete innovative projects and communicate their value defines a USU Honors student. Because final products and reflections require students to demonstrate their growth and development over the course of each HIP project, they place HIP at the heart of the Honors curriculum and make this work essential to an Honors education.

Final products and reflections allow students to document the value of their HIP work. As students complete each project, they add substance to their professional-development narrative, and their portfolio of work demonstrates that development.

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 about what to include in reflections for each type of HIP experience and what kinds of final products are appropriate for each type of work.

Honors in Practice: Structured Experiences

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

Honors Book Labs

Honors Book Labs create an engaging, short-term, interdisciplinary structure that is often a student's first introduction to HIP. 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 select summer months (usually June and July). Faculty members propose books to discuss, students sign up for labs, and Honors creates a schedule, organizes registration and waitlists, and buys/delivers all books/e-books.

Students are responsible for the following four tasks:

1. **Reading** the books by the agreed-upon deadlines (set by Book Lab leader/instructor)
2. **Attending** all four scheduled Book Lab meetings
3. **Contributing** to the discussions at those meetings
4. **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 HIP 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 Honors Program Canvas course a **600-word reflection** that articulates how the student met each of the following Honors learning outcomes:

1. **New Ideas:** Describe an idea or ideas discovered through reading and discussion.
2. **Critical Thinking:** Articulate how the reading and discussion led to critical thinking about a particular issue.
3. **Interdisciplinary Discussion:** Discuss the value of considering this issue across disciplines with fellow students and instructor(s).
4. **Community Engagement:** Describe how the Book Lab experience might lead the student to engage with the community or world in new ways.

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 complete the four fundamental tasks 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.

Because Honors Book Labs are a repeatable HIP experience, students may participate in **one Book Lab per term** as long as they remain in good standing with Honors. They earn **1 Honors point** for successfully completing each lab.

Honors Leadership Academy

Designed for first- and second-year students, the Honors Leadership Academy (HLA) offers a year-long curriculum that trains Honors students in four key leadership areas (each with three learning outcomes):

1. **Honors Ambassador:** Students learn about Honors requirements and opportunities, understand what it means to be an “Honors Ambassador,” and gain experience in recruiting new students to USU Honors.
2. **Honors Publicist:** Students learn about Honors publicity and social media, understand what it means to represent Honors in written and visual content, and gain experience in creating written and visual content for Honors messaging and social media.
3. **Honors Peer Educator:** Students learn the details of all Honors requirements and assignments, understand what it means to be an “Honors Peer Educator,” and gain experience in talking meaningfully with Honors peers about their understanding of Honors requirements and assignments.
4. **Honors Community Builder:** Students learn what it means to plan an Honors event, understand the value of building Honors community, and gain experience in planning an annual Honors event.

Students must apply for admission, and admission is competitive. Admitted students complete an online Canvas course that includes scheduled assignments, meetings with Honors staff and student leaders, and reflection on leadership development.

Students who successfully complete all assignments AND submit a thoughtful **500–600-word reflection** on the entire Honors Leadership Academy experience will (1) gain a range of valuable, marketable leadership skills, (2) earn up to **3 Honors points**, and (3) qualify for future Honors Student Leadership roles in the areas covered by the HLA curriculum. *Ideally, students will complete the year-long commitment to the entire Honors Leadership Academy curriculum. However, the HLA also offers students the flexibility to decide which modules appeal most to them. If they do not complete the entire program, students will still receive credit for each completed module.*

Reflections on HLA should describe the Honors-in-Practice experience offered in HLA rather than just summarizing the work that the student did for each assignment. By the deadline posted in Canvas, students must describe in **500-600 words** how this form of engagement gave the student an HIP experience by putting academic knowledge into practice and preparing the student for leadership in the four key areas of the curriculum. The reflection must address how the HLA experience met Honors learning outcomes in the following four ways:

1. **Professional Development:** HLA added to the student’s education and/or future goals by developing leadership and ambassadorial, teaching, community building, or marketing skills.
2. **Critical Thinking:** HLA demanded critical thinking about the concept of leadership and the steps one takes to become a leader.
3. **Interdisciplinary Networking:** HLA broadened the student’s experience across disciplines by building relationships among students in HLA and between student and Honors Program staff.
4. **Community Engagement:** HLA engaged the student in the campus and broader communities through the ambassadorial, teaching, community building, or marketing roles.

Honors Student Advisory Board

The Honors Student Advisory Board (HSAB) advises the Executive Director and program staff in support of the mission, values, and goals of the University Honors Program. Serving on the board offers outstanding students the opportunity both to give back to the Honors Program and earn Honors points for participating in this year-long HIP collaborative experience. 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.

The HSAB’s advisory work focuses in particular on the following areas:

- Recruitment and retention of students

- Curriculum
- Student engagement with Honors

Students who agree to serve on the HSAB are expected to complete the full year of service and submit the required reflection and documentation of HIP work in the University Honors Program Canvas course at the end of each academic year of service.

In addition to that general expectation, the responsibilities of each HSAB member include:

- **Service** as a role model for all Honors students including a commitment to embody the Honors Program’s mission and values, attend and actively participate in Honors events, and engage with students in the Honors Leadership Academy;
- **Visible, vocal, active representation** of the Honors Program in the college/statewide and across the institution;
- **Active preparation** for and participation in monthly meetings of the HSAB;
- **Monthly check-ins** with college/statewide counterpart on the Honors Faculty Advisory Board to identify barriers and pathways to retention of Honors students in the college/statewide; and
- **Timely, thoughtful, and willing engagement** in the evaluation and discussion of course proposals and other aspects of the Honors curriculum.

The HSAB includes nine student members, one from each disciplinary area of USU’s five academic colleges and one from statewide campuses. Student members apply and are appointed for one-year terms by the Executive Director, based on committee review of applications. Students may re-apply to serve for one additional year, and re-appointments are made at the discretion of the Executive Director in consultation with the review committee. HSAB members who meet all expectations and document their work in the University Honors Program Canvas course earn **3 Honors points** for successful completion of one year, with the possibility of earning an **additional 1.5 points** for successful completion of a second year on the HSAB.

Students earn points at the end of each year of service by submitting in the Honors Canvas course a **final portfolio**, which includes (1) an **activity log** documenting the name, date, hours, and a brief description of each HSAB-related activity completed on behalf of the University Honors Program, and (2) a thoughtful, detailed **500–600-word reflection** on the HSAB experience. 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). *Please note that 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.*

Reflections on the HSAB experience describe in **500-600 words** how this form of engagement gave the student an HIP experience by putting academic knowledge into practice and creating meaningful relationships with the student’s peers on the board, their counterpart on the Honors Faculty Advisory Board, the Honors Program Executive Director, and the Honors staff. The reflection must address how the HSAB experience met Honors learning outcomes in the following four ways:

1. **Professional Development:** HSAB added to the student’s education and/or future goals by developing leadership and other professional skills.
2. **Critical Thinking:** HSAB demanded critical thinking about the Honors Program and the relationship between the student’s major, college, and other colleges and programs on campus.
3. **Interdisciplinary Networking:** HSAB broadened 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 staff.

4. **Community Engagement:** HSAB engaged the student in the campus and broader communities through collaborative retention work with their college/statewide counterpart on the Honors Faculty Advisory Board.

Honors Alumni Mentoring Programs

Honors offers two structured HIP pathways designed to professionalize students as they meet alumni and earn Honors points: Honors Alumni Connect (HAC) and the Honors Alumni Mentoring Program (AMP). HAC is a one-term (spring) introduction to alumni mentoring for first- and second-year students. The AMP is a year-long experience designed for advanced Honors students in their final two years at USU. Students apply for each of these programs and then select possible mentors from a web listing of bios. Applications are due in the fall for the year-long AMP and in the spring for the semester-long HAC.

Honors Alumni Connect (HAC)

This HIP experience allows first- and second-year students to earn **1.5 Honors points** by engaging in at least three conversations with alumni mentors over the course of one spring semester. Most students spend between 1-3 hours per month (about 20 hours total) on this experience.

Honors suggests specific topics of conversation, but students and mentors have the flexibility to extend, develop, or adjust those topics to meet their needs. Conversations take place via email, phone, video conference, or even in person, as circumstances allow.

Students who complete all three conversations, write a **500–600-word reflection** on the experience (details on p. 9), and thank their mentors will earn Honors points at the end of the spring semester in which they enrolled. *Please note that thanking mentors is part of this curriculum, and students who fail to thank their mentors will not earn points, even if they submit all other required work for HAC. Students must fulfill all HAC requirements or communicate early and clearly with Honors staff about extenuating circumstances to remain in good standing with Honors.*

Honors Alumni Mentoring Program (AMP)

This year-long HIP experience builds long-term professional relationships between advanced Honors students (in their final two years at USU) and alumni with similar professional and/or academic interests. We hope that students who enjoy working with an alumni mentor will consider mentoring a student themselves after they graduate and begin their own professional lives.

Honors has created a curriculum in a dedicated Canvas course covering four basic areas: **(1) Professionalism; (2) Applications; (3) Professional Networking, Development, and Organizations; and (4) 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. Most students spend between 1-3 hours per month (about 20 hours total) on this experience over the nine-month academic year.

The AMP requires progress on assignments and regular participation throughout the entire academic year. Completing this curriculum and submitting all required work results in **3 Honors points**, which may be combined for a total of **4.5 points** with either the 1.5 points students can earn through HAC in their first two years in Honors or a second year-long experience with a new mentor for an additional **1.5 points**.

Students in AMP are responsible for submitting all Canvas assignments, most of which require them to contact their assigned mentor for discussion or feedback on assigned work. This work will both add to the student's professional portfolio and result in a thoughtful **500–600-word reflection** on the mentoring experience as a

final assignment. *Please note that thanking mentors is part of this curriculum, and students who fail to thank their mentors will not earn points, even if they submit all other required work for AMP. 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 HAC and/or AMP should describe in **500-600 words** how the program gave the student an HIP experience by putting academic knowledge into practice and creating a meaningful relationship with the mentor. Reflections will vary according to student interest and the program in which the student enrolled. Students are encouraged to share reflections with mentors, as appropriate. The reflection must specifically address how the HAC or AMP met Honors learning outcomes in the following four ways:

1. **Professional Development:** HAC/AMP added to the student's education and/or future goals.
2. **Critical Thinking:** HAC/AMP required critical thinking about the value of an Honors education and/or professional topics connected with the student's major(s)/minor(s).
3. **Interdisciplinary Networking:** HAC/AMP expanded the student's experience across disciplines and/or demonstrated the value of such breadth of experience.
4. **Community Engagement:** HAC/AMP engaged the student in the local or global communities or demonstrated the value of such engagement.

Honors in Practice: Honors Mentoring Agreements

An Honors Mentoring Agreement (HMA) is a formal agreement between a student, a mentor, the Departmental Honors Advisor, and the Honors Program to complete an HIP 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 require a minimum of 20 hours of work outside the classroom. The Honors Program regularly updates [outstanding HMA examples](#) by type of agreement so that students, faculty mentors, and DHAs can use these examples as a model for their own collaborative work.

Students take control of this part of the Honors curriculum, which allows them to identify meaningful real-world experiences that add personal and professional value to their education. The best HMAs 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 make the most of USU's many academic resources.

Types of Honors Mentoring Agreements

- **Research and Creative Work:** Students may design agreements with faculty mentors to explore their own or their mentor's academic interests. These agreed-upon projects often prepare students for capstone work or graduate school 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 develop a research presentation for public presentation. 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 per term from the [Honors Research Fund](#) 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 form of HMA work counts toward the Undergraduate Research transcript designation, which is one of three [optional transcript designations](#) a student can earn at USU.
- **Professional Internships:** Internships or field-related work experiences may be completed as HMAs if they expand the student's academic work with a practical professional apprenticeship. The mentor of an internship will typically be an on-site professional who supervises the student's work experience. In such cases, the DHA in the student's home department and the Honors Program Executive Director are the on-campus mentors, and they evaluate the student's final product and reflection to ensure that the experience meets all HMA criteria. Daily contact with the on-site internship mentor fulfills the requirement for mentor-student meetings and can be noted on the HMA completion form.
- **Community Engagement:** Students may propose HMAs for local or global service/community-engaged projects that expand their classroom experience at USU. These HMAs are typically mentored by faculty members and/or professionals in the partner organization. Like internships, these projects will be overseen on campus by the student's DHA and the Honors Program Executive Director. Final products can be photo-essays documenting the experience, videos, websites, podcasts, or written narratives, depending on the type of project. This form of HMA work can count toward one or possibly two of the three optional transcript designations. Community-engaged

projects meet some requirements for the Community-Engaged Scholar designation and globally engaged projects may also meet some requirements for the Global Engagement Scholar designation.

- **Honors Excel Graduate Courses:** With faculty permission, Honors students may enroll in existing graduate courses, allowing them to explore the option of graduate school and work with top USU faculty and graduate students. Faculty and/or departments are under no obligation to admit Honors students to graduate courses; Honors Excel creates opportunities only when there is an agreed-upon fit between course and student. 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 course to earn Honors points. *Please note that students earn Honors points for Honors Excel courses only if they submit an approved/signed HMA proposal before the course begins and HMA completion documentation upon finishing the course.* The final product for Honors Excel can be a required course project, which students can submit with their HMA completion forms and required reflection in the Honors Canvas course.
- **Study Abroad:** Study abroad may be completed as an HMA if the study expands the student's academic experience in a meaningful way. Mentors will typically be on-site faculty or trip leaders who supervise the student's international experience. Daily contact with on-site mentors fulfills the requirement for mentor-student meetings and can be noted on the HMA completion form. When mentors are not USU faculty or when the experience occurs during the summer, the DHA in the student's home department and the Honors Program Executive Director act as on-campus mentors, and they evaluate the student's final product and reflection 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 also apply for up to \$1000 of financial support from the [Honors Study Abroad Fund](#).
- **Course Mentoring Agreements:** These agreements may be proposed and completed to deepen the coursework in any upper-division (3000-level or above) non-Honors course. *Course mentoring agreements require mentor contact no later than the first week of the term.* Such agreements are never part of regular coursework; instead, they offer students and professors the option to look beyond the course in ways that they find interesting and productive. Such agreements require additional work on behalf of both students and faculty, but that work can be structured to enrich the course experience by involving (1) an extra project in an area of mutual interest; (2) specific agreed-upon research or reading/discussion between student and mentor; (3) pedagogical work on the part of the Honors student that benefits both the professor and other students in the class; (4) student leadership on a project that helps others explore beyond the limits of the class; or (5) 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 HMA proposal and HMA completion forms. Students may not submit required coursework for the Honors Mentoring Agreement, as HMAs are not graded and do not affect the course grade. Students must earn at least a "B-" in the course to earn Honors points.

Excellent Uses of Honors Mentoring Agreements

*Remembering that HMAs are pathways toward future goals, students should carefully consider what each agreement adds to their Honors education. All Honors students master four key skills at USU: **critical thinking, independent research/creative work, interdisciplinary learning, and community engagement**. Our students find the following types of agreements to be particularly useful in developing these skills, and we have seen outstanding work in each of these areas:*

- **Capstone Preparation:** Although HMA work 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 HMAs prepare students to articulate their skills and development in their fields, and their final products often become starting points for intensive capstone work. As they build understanding to support capstone work, students prepare themselves to think critically about their present and future work in their fields, and they often gain experience in research or creative work. Such reflective **critical thinking** and **independent research/creative work** are two of the **four key skills** that all Honors students master at USU.
- **Research/Creative Apprenticeship:** Students can design HMAs that focus on research or creative work, whether or not that work will contribute to their capstone project. As outlined above, **independent research/creative work** is one of the **four key skills** that all Honors students master at USU. Acting as a research or creative apprentice in the lab, studio, or field trains students in important research/creative methods. Reflecting on their experience deepens their understanding of their place in that research or creative field.
- **Academic Exploration and Risk-Taking:** Some students may choose 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. Because HMAs are ungraded experiences, they create a safe space for such academic experimentation. **Interdisciplinary learning** is another of the **four key skills** that all Honors students master at USU, and HMAs agreements allow students to work with faculty in or outside of their majors (in courses at the 3000-level or above). Students may also choose to work outside the curriculum with faculty whose expertise could help to fill a gap in their knowledge or connect that knowledge to other disciplines. Reflecting on this experience puts the student's major interests in a broader context.
- **Local/Global Engagement:** Students can focus their HMAs 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 HMA work can help students apply academic knowledge in their local, national, or global communities. Students who pursue these kinds of HMAs will 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:** HMAs may also foster professional development by engaging students in graduate coursework, (inter)national fellowship applications, internships, or other professional exploration. HMAs focused on professional development teach students to **think critically** and practically about future plans, engage in professional **research/creative work**, forge **interdisciplinary connections** for professional purposes, and **engage with a professional community**. Such professional work and reflection allow students to hone the **four key skills** that all Honors students master at USU.

Work Not Appropriate for Honors Mentoring Agreements: Guidelines and Rules

While HMAs are designed to be flexible, they must always add clear, distinct, and documented value to an Honors education. Because HMAs are part of the Honors curriculum, the program requires faculty approval of all proposals and completed HMAs. Mentors and DHAs approve students' proposals and completion documentation with signatures on the required form and the Honors Executive Director approves this work in the Honors Canvas course. Each of these faculty experts assesses the value of an HMA in a specific area of study (mentor), the discipline as a whole (DHA), and across disciplinary boundaries (Honors ED). When in doubt about a specific kind of experience, students should seek the input of the University Honors Program Advisor or their DHA.

The following work cannot count toward an HMA:

- **Work Required for a Course:** Under USU's academic honesty/integrity code, students may not earn Honors points for regular coursework, just as they may not submit the same work for credit in different courses. The HIP curriculum invites students to apply knowledge beyond the classroom, and using coursework for that experience defeats the purpose. One exception to this rule is experiential credit for opportunities like internships, study abroad, and Honors Excel graduate work. Because of the hands-on experiential nature of these kinds of work, students may propose HMAs that document their internships, study abroad, and Honors Excel with final products and reflections, even when students take those experiences for credit.
- **Capstone Project Work:** Although HMAs can prepare students for capstone projects, they cannot be completed as 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 violates USU's academic honesty/integrity code. Just as students may not submit the same work for credit in two different courses, they may not submit the same work for two different projects in the Honors curriculum.
- **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.). However, only major national or international grant and scholarship/fellowship applications can be proposed as HMAs because they require much more extensive self-assessment, mentoring, revision, and research to complete. A national fellowship application submitted as an HMA must be proposed and completed in the same way as any other HMA.
- **Conferences, Trainings, or Other Brief, Unmentored Professional Experiences:** Honors recognizes and supports (through Honors Research Funding) the importance of student professionalization activities, such as conference presentations or attendance at professional events with a limited scope. However, these experiences typically do not qualify for HMA work because HMAs always require (1) a sustained mentoring relationship, (2) a clear, concrete final product, and (3) at least 20 hours of experiential work outside the classroom.

Steps and Timelines for Honors Mentoring Agreements

HMAAs are typically completed in 10-15 weeks. Students must follow the steps below to earn **3 Honors points** upon completion and submission of work:

1. **CONTACT MENTOR:** The first step in the proposal process is for the student to contact the faculty member with whom they would like to work. The earlier students contact mentors, the more time they have to work together and the more respect the student shows for the mentor's time, expertise, and support. Ideally, students talk to potential mentors in the term before the agreement would begin. The mentor and DHA may be the same person for HMA work. This rule differs from the Honors capstone, which requires a third committee member if the mentor and DHA are the same. Course mentoring agreements require mentor contact no later than the first week of the term.
2. **WRITE A PROPOSAL, COMPLETE THE PROPSAL FORM, AND GAIN MENTOR APPROVAL:** Following the detailed instructions on the proposal form, the student drafts a proposal and works with the mentor to revise as necessary to gain the mentor's approval. The mentor signs the form to indicate their approval. The student signs the form to indicate understanding of HMA requirements.
3. **SUBMIT SIGNED PROPOSAL TO DHA:** Next, the student submits the form with both student and mentor signatures to the DHA. DHA should suggest changes or approve with signature within a reasonable time (usually about a week). Course mentoring agreements require students to submit the mentor-approved proposal to the DHA by the end of the second week of classes in the agreement term.
4. **UPLOAD MENTOR AND DHA-APPROVED PROPOSAL TO HONORS CANVAS COURSE:** Once student, mentor, and DHA have read and approved the proposal, the student uploads the signed form and the proposal itself under the first open HMA assignment in the Honors Canvas Course. If a student has already proposed HMA #1, for example, they would upload their second proposal under HMA #2. Honors verifies that the proposal meets all HMA requirements then the Executive Director approves/denies the proposal in Canvas. Course mentoring agreements require students to upload the mentor- and DHA-approved proposal to Honors Canvas course by the end of the third week of classes in the agreement term.
5. **COMPLETE WORK WITHIN TIMELINE:** The bulk of the HMA involves completing the work within the timeline set by the student and mentor. Keep in mind that the timeline need not align with the term schedule. Students may work with their faculty mentors to restructure the timeline of the agreement, as necessary, and there is no need to inform the Honors Program if the mentor and student agree to change the timeline.
6. **LOG AT LEAST 20 HOURS OF WORK OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM:** Students should remember to keep track of the hours they work to complete the HMA. This work should enrich the student's academic experience beyond regular coursework. For long projects, students may complete more than one HMA, but each part of the project must be proposed, approved, and completed as a separate HMA.
7. **HOLD REGULAR MENTOR-STUDENT MEETINGS:** Throughout the process, students should also have a minimum of six meetings with their faculty mentor to discuss progress and plan for next steps. Remember that these meetings must take place outside of class (for course-related HMAAs). Students record all mentor meetings and report them on their completion form at the end of the project. For global-engagement or internship projects that require daily interaction between the student and mentor, no additional documentation is necessary, and students need not list every day as a "meeting" on the completion form.

8. FINAL PRODUCT AND REFLECTION DRAFTS TO MENTOR AND DHA: Once the project has been completed, students send drafts of their final product and reflection to both their mentor and DHA. Ideally, students send these documents for review at least one week before the final day of the agreement. This timeline gives the mentor and the DHA a chance to offer feedback on the project and to ensure that the project meets all HMA requirements before the mentor and DHA formally approve the work and the student submits the project to Honors. 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.
9. FILL OUT THE COMPLETION FORM AND GAIN HMA APPROVAL FROM MENTOR AND DHA: Once the student, mentor, and DHA are satisfied with the final product and reflection, the student signs the completion form, gets the mentor's signature, and then gets the DHA's signature. Faculty signatures indicate their final approval of the HMA.
10. UPLOAD FINAL PRODUCT, REFLECTION, AND SIGNED COMPLETION FORM TO HONORS CANVAS COURSE: Finally, the student uploads all of their HMA materials to the Honors Canvas course. Please submit all of the required materials as a merged pdf, including the final product, reflection, and signed completion form. All of the requirements are described on the completion form. Course mentoring agreements require students to upload final product, reflection, and completion form to the Honors Canvas course as soon as possible at the end of the agreement term.

In keeping with the steps above, proposals should be uploaded and signed/approved by all parties (student, mentor, DHA, Honors) before the official start date of the work, but students may ask the Honors Academic Advisor for help if they forgot to submit a proposal for a project that was recently started.

Responsibilities in Honors Mentoring Agreements: Overview

Built upon mentoring relationships between Honors students and faculty/professionals, HMAs involve a primary mentor, a DHA, and the Honors Program Executive Director. Mentoring an Honors project takes time, and students should make every effort to create projects that will engage their mentors. The best way to find mentors is to build 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 or other academic and professional organizations. Mentors are much more likely to help students whom they recognize as 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 HMA process. Before entering into an HMA, please familiarize yourself with the responsibilities of the student, mentor, DHA, and Honors Program.

Brief Overview

Students are responsible for selecting and working with a mentor to write an HMA proposal, earning project approval with required signatures, submitting the proposal in the Honors Canvas course, conferring regularly with the mentor, meeting all deadlines, completing a high-quality final product and reflection, gaining approval for successful completion of the agreement, and uploading all completion documentation to the Honors Canvas course to earn points.

Mentors are responsible for helping the student define and focus the project, mentoring the agreed-upon work, overseeing the construction of a meaningful final product and reflection, being responsive to the student and signing proposal and completion forms promptly when work is approved, and ensuring high quality work within the discipline.

Departmental Honors Advisors are responsible for acting as liaisons between the mentor and the Honors Program, ensuring that proposed projects meet both Honors requirements and disciplinary standards, and being responsive to the student and signing proposal and completion forms promptly when work is approved. Students may choose whether to submit their HMAs to the DHA in their own and/or their mentor's home department, if that department differs from their own.

The Honors Program is responsible for supporting students and faculty, ensuring that all HMAs meet Honors standards, evaluating work submitting in the Honors Canvas course regularly, and awarding Honors points upon 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 HMA proposal, following the required format. The proposal must include (1) a clear description of the project goal(s) and proposed work, (2) a rationale describing how the project meets Honors learning outcomes (see form), (3) a reasonable timeline, and (4) a brief description of the final product. The HMA proposal form can be found on the [Honors website](#).
- Gain mentor approval of the proposal, indicated by signature. Sign the proposal form yourself.
- Next, send an electronic copy of the proposal itself and the form (signed by your mentor) to the appropriate DHA. If the DHA approves of the project, they will sign and return the form promptly.
- For most HMAs, the proposal must be approved and signed by the student, their faculty mentor, and the appropriate DHA. Then, the student uploads the proposal and proposal form to the Honors Canvas course. Please merge the proposal and proposal form into a single pdf.
- For course-related HMAs, submit a mentor-approved (signed) proposal to the DHA by the end of the second week of classes in the HMA term. Upload a mentor- and DHA-signed/approved form and proposal to the Honors Canvas course by end of the third week of classes.

PROJECT WORK:

- Schedule, hold, and document regular mentor meetings. For most HMAs, a minimum of six meetings is required. For study abroad and internships, such meetings typically 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 most effectively. 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 the mentor, DHA, and/or Honors staff any changes to or questions about student responsibilities and/or work.

FINAL PRODUCT and PROJECT COMPLETION:

- Send a draft of the required final product and reflection to the mentor and DHA 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 and reflection, implementing mentor and DHA feedback.
- Complete and sign the completion form and then send it, along with the final product and reflection, to the mentor for approval and signature.
- Once you have the mentor's signature, send the signed form, along with the final product and reflection, to the DHA for final review and approval. Signatures on the HMA completion form indicate approval. 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, your reflection, and the signed HMA completion form to the Honors Canvas course. The completion form is available on the [Honors website](#). For most HMAs, upload by the project completion date. For course-related HMAs, upload by the last day of classes in the agreement term. Please merge all documents as one PDF (see directions in Canvas).

Mentor Responsibilities for Honors Mentoring Agreements

PROPOSAL:

- Work with the student to draft the HMA proposal, following the required format. The proposal must include (1) a clear description of the project goal(s) and proposed work, (2) a rationale describing how the project meets Honors learning outcomes (see form), (3) a reasonable timeline, and (4) a brief description of the final product. The proposal form is available on [Honors website](#).
- Sign proposal form to indicate approval. By signing a student's HMA proposal form, 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 reflection on the experience in addition to submission of a final product.
- Please note that once the mentor has approved, students will send the HMA to the appropriate Departmental Honors Advisor (DHA) for review, comments, approval, and signature.
- Course-related HMAs 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 HMAs are accepted on a rolling basis and are typically completed within 10-15 weeks. Mentors may remind students of deadlines and process, but it is the student's responsibility to get all signatures and to upload the proposal and form on time.

PROJECT WORK:

- Hold regular meetings with the student. For most HMAs, at least **six meetings** outside of class are required. For study abroad and internships, faculty or internship supervisors who meet with students daily need not schedule additional meetings. Ensure that the meetings are pedagogically useful (the student's responsibilities include meeting scheduling, working with the mentor 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 mentoring responsibilities and/or the student's progress on the work of the HMA.

FINAL PRODUCT, REFLECTION, and PROJECT COMPLETION:

- Require a draft of the final product and reflection at least one week before the completion date for the HMA to allow time for revision (for course-related HMAs, this deadline should be the last day of classes).
- Offer timely feedback and ensure that the final product and reflection meet the terms of the agreement and represent valuable work in the student's discipline.
- Sign and return the student's completed HMA completion form indicating approval of both the final product and the reflection. *Please note that students should complete the form fully before seeking approval/signatures.* If the student has not satisfactorily completed the HMA, please communicate promptly with Honors.
- Please note that once the mentor has approved the work and signed the HMA completion form, students must also submit the final product and reflection to the DHA for approval/signature. Students will then upload the signed HMA completion form, final product, and reflection to the Honors Canvas course by the agreement completion date. For course mentoring agreements, the student will upload by the last day of classes in the agreement term.

Departmental Honors Advisor Responsibilities for Honors Mentoring Agreements

The DHA oversees the process within the department rather than the individual HMA work itself. 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 the department for their proposed HMA work and direct students to [examples](#) of outstanding past HMAs. DHAs should learn what makes a strong agreement and share this link with both students and faculty who need direction.
- HMA proposals for course-related work are due to DHAs for review in the first or second week of classes and for signature by the end of the second week of classes in the HMA term. DHAs should only receive proposals that are already signed and approved by the faculty mentor.
- HMAs that are not connected to a specific course are accepted by Honors on a rolling basis and should be reviewed, signed, and returned to the student promptly. The DHA's responsibility is to ensure that HMA timelines are reasonable and that they meet both standards in the discipline and Honors requirements. For timelines, *note that agreements are typically completed within 10-15 weeks*. To meet completion standards, students must complete *at least 20 hours of work* that usefully applies academic knowledge, meet regularly with their mentors, and complete a final product and reflection that clearly meet Honors learning outcomes.
- For HMAs that meet all requirements and that address each part of the proposal form (goals and work, timeline, rationale for how the HMA meetings Honors learning outcomes, and final product description), please electronically sign the HMA proposal form and return it promptly (ideally within one week) to the student, since students must then upload signed forms and proposals to the Honors Canvas course.
- For HMAs that do not meet these requirements, communicate clearly and promptly with students and mentors about problems with the HMA. Work with students and mentors to revise and resubmit HMAs in a timely fashion. Course-related HMAs 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 HMA work, although they do review final products and reflections and approve if the work has been completed as proposed. Please make time to answer any questions about Honors requirements and be as responsive as possible to both faculty and students.

FINAL PRODUCT, REFLECTION, and PROJECT COMPLETION:

- DHAs are responsible for ensuring that mentors and students understand HMA requirements, reviewing final products and reflections, and signing HMA completion forms only when projects meet 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; if so, they can indicate that fact on the form.
- Most HMAs must be completed by the agreement completion date. Course-related HMAs must be completed by the last day of classes in each HMA term.

University Honors Program Responsibilities for Honors Mentoring Agreements

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

PROPOSAL:

- Regularly remind students and DHAs of HMA proposal requirements.
- Promptly review all HMA proposals, 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, rationale for meeting Honors learning outcomes, 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 students to clarify the purpose, value, structure, and processes of HMAs.
- Build and maintain an archive of [outstanding HMA examples](#) so that students and faculty understand the value and possibilities of HMA work. Individually archive all work and guide students in the use of the Canvas Portfolium tool.
- 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 HMAs.
- Answer any questions about HMA goals, requirements, and responsibilities.
- Support faculty, professional mentors, DHAs, and students in the HMA process.

REFLECTION, FINAL PRODUCT and PROJECT COMPLETION:

- Advise students about completion of the HMA process and ensure that they receive information annually about HMAs and other HIP milestones.
- Remind faculty and students of HMA requirements and timelines as necessary; the reflection and final product of the HMA should be carefully crafted and/or edited, and both documents must be uploaded to the Honors Canvas course, along with a completed and signed HMA completion form by the agreement completion date (last day of classes for course agreements).
- Promptly review and approve/deny all HMA completion uploads, ensuring that all work meets Honors requirements for HIP work.
- Award students points for the completion of each HMA project in the Honors Canvas course.

Resources and Assistance

Funding: Please see the [Honors website](#) for application materials.

- Many Honors students completing HIP 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** and/or [Peak Summer Research Fellowships](#) to support research-focused HMAs. There are three application windows throughout the year that correspond to each semester: Fall (June 1-15), Spring (October 1-15), and Summer (February 1-15). More information is available on the [Office of Research website](#). 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 contact honors@usu.edu to learn more about available study spaces in the Living and Learning Community and the USU library. All Honors students have access to the Joyce Kinkead Honors Study Room in 334H of the Merrill-Cazier library (contact Honors for passcode). The computer facilities in the study room are available during regular library hours.

Writing, Editing, and Math: Honors encourages students to take advantage of the USU Writing Center, Science Writing Center, and Aggie Math Learning Center. These resources can help students improve writing at any level, learn to proofread their own work and analyze their evidence/data more effectively, and complete calculations or statistical analyses in a project or for a course. Please make use of these Aggie resources.

HIP Canvas Training: Honors maintains a series of self-paced modules about HIP work in our Honors Canvas course. While these modules are not required, they are a resource designed to help students learn about types of HIP work, examine examples of outstanding projects, and explore the possibilities for their own projects. Students are encouraged to complete 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 change mentors in the middle of an HMA, after the proposal has been approved by another mentor?

YES. However, to ensure that the student, mentors, and University Honor Program all approve the work as proposed and understand the parameters of the project, students must update the proposal to reflect the change, get approval from both the new mentor and the DHA, and resubmit to the Honors Canvas course for program-level approval.

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 scholarships in support of approved research projects. Honors awards points for completed HIP work as long as students arrange HMAs for that work and submit documentation of completed projects, 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 exceptions of approved Honors Excel, internships, and study abroad experiences, HMA work must be distinct from required regular coursework (see [USU's Academic Honesty/Integrity policy](#)). While HMA work often extends the content of a student's courses, the work and final product for an HMA must not overlap with regular, required coursework. HMA work is not graded and does not affect a student's GPA or any course grade, making it an ideal intellectual playground. Honors Excel courses are always counted as HIP milestones if they are agreed upon with the professor and submitted with HMAs 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. Students should find an appropriate faculty mentor and propose an HMA to earn Honors points for such 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 HMA is not allowed. Honors encourages students to perform literature reviews or preliminary research, engage in field or lab work, and apprentice themselves on faculty projects in preparation for their 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 HMA?

COMMUNICATE IMMEDIATELY. Sometimes circumstances prevent a student from completing a proposed HMA. If for whatever reason a student decides not to complete a mentoring agreement that has already been approved by the mentor, DHA, and/or Honors, they must communicate immediately with the mentor/professor and DHA, as a personal and professional courtesy. The Honors Program also requests that students notify their [Honors Program Advisor](#) of this decision so that we can assist the student and/or faculty, as necessary.

Advice from Past Honors Students

Most Honors students find that Honors in Practice work gives them the chance to gain practical experience. Completing short-term projects prepares students for the longer-term capstone project, and engaging with other students in Honors Book Labs or other structured Honors experiences builds both skills and community. HIP is an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally, and our students advise you to make the most of that opportunity.

Students especially advise their peers to maximize these benefits of HIP work:

1. Develop relationships with your professors.

Professors can help you find projects you are interested in, connect you to opportunities and resources, provide expert feedback, and serve as valuable mentors. Honors Mentoring Agreement mentors can eventually become capstone mentors, and all mentors can write strong, specific recommendation letters because they know you and your work.

2. Gain practical experience.

HIP allows students to put knowledge into practice and learn to navigate real-world situations. As you begin to look beyond the classroom and into the future, seek out practical experiences (in the lab, the community, or the field/workplace) that will help you reach your personal and professional goals.

3. Explore and refine possible capstone topics.

Honors Mentoring Agreements can help you discover topics that you are passionate about and can serve as springboards to your Honors capstone project. They can also introduce you to potential faculty mentors and give you experience that will strengthen your capstone and other future projects.

4. Seek out an internship or study abroad.

Internships and study abroad experiences will help you discover your interests, gain valuable personal and professional skills, and make important connections. Honors Research and Study Abroad funding can help support these experiences, so remember to apply for financial support as you pursue these opportunities.

5. Present or share your work.

Presenting your work at a conference or other public forum gives you the opportunity to gain valuable insight from professionals in your field, share your knowledge with others, and refine your communication skills. Honors Research Funding can help support this work, and your mentors can help you find opportunities to present or share your work with others.