



UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

University Honors Program Co-Directors

Dr. Monica VanDieren

Dr. Philip Harold

TABLE OF CONTENTS

University Honors Program Admission Policy	2
Admission	2
Proposed Patriot Scholars Admission Process	2
Application Procedures	3
Incoming Patriot Scholars	3
Continuing Patriot Scholars	3
Transfer Students	3
Remaining in Good Standing	4
University Honors Program Curriculum	5-7
RMU Core	6
Honors General Education Courses	6
Honors Seminar Course	6
Honors Thesis Project	7
Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study	8-10
Incoming Patriot Scholars	8
Continuing Patriot Scholars	8
Transfer Patriot Scholars	9
Patriot Scholars Check-list	10
Participation Policy	11
"Patriot Points"	11
Benefits	12
Honors Lounge	12
Priority Registration	12
Scholarships	12
University Honors Travel Fellowships	12
Opportunities	13-14
Study Abroad	13
Summer Research Programs	13
Internships	13
NCHC Sponsored Programs	14

University Honors Program Admission Policy

Patriot Scholar Admission Process. Patriot Scholar candidates are highly motivated individuals who wish to foster their love of learning in challenging environments where they are surrounded by students who share their drive and determination.

Individuals may apply to be Patriot Scholars during the following times:

- Upon entering the university as a first year student (Incoming Patriot Scholar)
- After an RMU student has completed between 15 and 30 credits and has a QPA of 3.5 (Continuing Patriot Scholar)
- Upon transferring to the university (Transferring Patriot Scholar)

While each Patriot Scholar is unique, they are recognized for their:

- Advanced critical thinking and written communication skills
- Superior academic performance in a challenging curriculum
- Excellent standardized test results on one of the following: SAT or ACT*
- Commitment to community service
- Demonstrated leadership skills

*An impressive academic record, Honors essay, and résumé of accomplishments and interests *may* compensate for standardized test scores slightly below the published guidelines.

Application Procedures

Incoming Patriot Scholars. Incoming Patriot Scholars will be recruited from the class of incoming first-year students. The UHP and Enrollment Services will work together to identify future Patriot Scholars from the academically qualified applicants who have been accepted to RMU. Once candidates have been identified, the UHP Director will send letters to prospective Patriot Scholars inviting them to apply. Interested candidates will be invited to return a completed application form.

Incoming Patriot Scholar Selection Criteria:

- A score of 1200 on the SAT or 26 on the ACT
- A 3.5 high school GPA
- School and community activities, honors, and awards
- One letter of recommendation
- Essay (response to a prompt selected by the UHP Director)

All Patriot Scholar candidates will be notified of the University Honors Program's decisions separately from their admission decision.

Continuing Patriot Scholars. Continuing Patriot Scholars are full-time students enrolled at RMU and will be recruited in the spring of their freshman year. The UHP and the Registrar's Office will work together to identify potential candidates. The UHP Director will send emails to the candidates inviting them to apply for admission to the UHP.

Continuing Patriot Scholar Selection Criteria:

- Completion of between 15 and 30 credits
- 3.5 RMU GPA
- Personal Statement indicating the student's goals and expectations
- Goals Statement (in which students discuss their educational and career goals and how being in the UHP would assist them in accomplishing those goals).
- Letter of Recommendation submitted by an RMU faculty member
- Review of applications will begin on March 1. Decisions will be announced after April 1.

Transfer students. Transfer students may also apply to be Patriot Scholars.

Transfer Patriot Scholar Selection Criteria:

- Completion of at least 30 credits
- 3.5 GPA
- Consideration of the type of transfer institution (e.g., two-year, four-year, technical)
- Consideration of previous participation in an Honors Program
- Amount and type of honors work completed
- Feasibility of completing the program
- Quality of application
- Review of applications will begin on March 1. Applications will continue to be accepted until all positions are filled

Remaining in Good Standing

To maintain their status as Patriot Scholars, **all** students must maintain the following QPAs:

First year:	3.3
Sophomore year:	3.4
Junior year:	3.5
Senior year:	3.5

If students fall below the required QPA, they will be placed on UHP probation for one academic semester. If, at the end of the probationary semester, a student has not raised his or her QPA to the required minimum, she or he will be removed from the UHP.

In addition to meeting the required QPA, in preparation for the honors' thesis, all students must attend the Undergraduate Research Conference each year in the spring semester. Additionally, students who fail to make progress towards meeting the Honors Program curriculum requirements or whose actions are not consistent with that of a Patriot Scholar may be removed from the honors program at the discretion of the Honors Program Directors.

Participation in the Honors Student Advisory Council and other honors' activities is highly encouraged.

The University Honors Program Curriculum

To increase further the cohesion and sense of community among Patriot Scholars, all Patriot Scholars will complete the following curriculum:

COURSE	NUMBER OF CREDITS	COURSE LISTING(S)
RMU Core Courses	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSK1225 • COSK2225 • COSK2235 • COSK2245
General Education Credits	6	<p>Students will choose 2 of the following General Education Courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELIT 2065 • GEOL 1095 • HUMA 1015 • HIST 1105 • POLS 1025 • SOCI 1025 • PSYC 1015 • STAT 2125 • INFS1025 • ECON 1015
Honors Seminar	3	<p>Students will complete an Honors Seminar Course with a grade of “B” or better. Additionally, select pre-approved Study Abroad Experiences may stand-in for the Honors Seminar requirement.</p>
Thesis Project	6	<p>HNRS4900 (3 credits)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Methodology course taught by the UHP directors (3 credits) <p>HNRS4911 (1 credit)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors Thesis Research supervised by the faculty thesis advisor <p>HNRS4912 (2 credit independent study)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors Thesis Completion and Presentation supervised by faculty thesis advisor. All Honors Theses will be presented at the Undergraduate Research Conference

For RMU core courses, Gen Ed courses, and thesis classes: A student must receive a “C” or higher in the honors section for it to count as honors credit.

RMU Core Courses (12 credits)

Given that the core is a set of courses that all RMU students have in common and was agreed upon by university faculty, we do not support redesigning or re-imagining the core for Patriot Scholars. However, all Honors sections of COSK courses will be capped at 15 students. To compensate for potential low enrollment in Honors designated sections and to help boost enrollment in the UHP, any student who is not a Patriot Scholar but has a QPA of 3.5 or higher may petition the UHP Director to enroll in the honors section of the course. Students must complete this course with a “C” or better to count as honors credit.

Honors General Education Courses (6 credits)

Patriot Scholars will be required to take two courses from the core curricula outside of Communication Skills designated as honors sections. The list includes:

- ELIT 2065 Honors World Literature
- GEOL 1095 Honors Stars, Planets and the Cosmos
- HUMA 1015 Honors Humanities: Art and Music
- HIST 1105 Honors United States History I
- POLS 1025 Honors American National Government
- SOCI 1025 Honors Contemporary American Social Problems
- PSYC 1015 Honors General Psychology
- STAT 2125 Honors Statistics
- INFS1025 Honors Intro Decision Support Systems
- ECON 1015 Honors Survey of Economics

Students must complete this course with a “C” or better to count as honors credit.

Honors Seminar Course (3 credits)

Each Patriot Scholar will complete at least one Honors Seminar course, to be taken during their junior or senior year. Students not enrolled in the UHP with a QPA of 3.5 or higher will be allowed to enroll in these courses. In lieu of completing this required course, Patriot Scholars may instead complete an approved Study Abroad experience. The Honors Seminar Course will be an interdisciplinary course taught by the UHP directors and professors from different disciplines on a rotating basis. The list includes:

- Math, Music, and Art
- Presidential Leadership
- Physics and Sport
- Topics in Sustainability
- Jane Austen’s World
- Identities & Inequalities: Race, Class, Gender, Sex
- Creating the Magic: Walt Disney World

Honors Thesis Project (6 credits)

All Patriot Scholars are required to complete an Honors Thesis Project to graduate from the program. The honors thesis project is the culmination of the honors experience. Students, working with a faculty advisor, earn six credits for work that most often culminates in a thesis that reflects substantial scholarship and demonstrates outstanding research, writing, and presentational skills. In some fields the culminating experience could be a creative work that demonstrates imagination and originality in addition to craftsmanship and professionalism in production. Students must complete thesis courses with a “C” or better to count as honors credit. The honors thesis project consists of a total of six credit hours:

- **HNRS 4900: Research and Methodology** **(3 credits)**

This course is designed to assist students in selecting a thesis project, advisor, and appropriate methodology. Students examine examples of research from many disciplines and learn about various styles of research design. At the end of the course, students have selected an advisor, decided upon a thesis project and methodology, and submit a prospectus. This course is taught by the UHP Directors.

- **HNRS 4911: Honors Thesis Research** **(1 credit)**

This course is designed to assist students as they begin conducting and interpreting their original research for their thesis project. At the end of the course, students have completed their literature review, all data collection, and analysis. This course is supervised by the student’s thesis advisor.

- **HNRS 4912: Honors Thesis Completion and Presentation** **(2 credits)**

This course is designed to assist students as they synthesize their findings into the completed thesis. Students will present their thesis to members of the Honors community at the end of the semester at the Undergraduate Research Conference. This course is supervised by the student’s thesis advisor.

Applicants for the honors thesis project first register for HNRS 4900, a three-credit course taught by the UHP directors, in their junior or senior year. During this course students will consult with their faculty advisor and the UHP directors, and are expected to write the proposal for the project and review the pertinent literature. Students whose proposals have been approved for an honors thesis project will then register for HNRS 4911, a one-credit course, the following semester. This independent study includes the research and writing of the project. Next, students register for HNRS 4912, a two-credit course, to be taken during the third and final semester of the project. During this independent study, students are expected to complete the writing, make the necessary revisions after consultation with the faculty advisor and readers, prepare the final document for submission to the Honors Program, and deliver an oral presentation of the thesis at RMU’s Undergraduate Research Conference. The faculty advisor will assign a grade at the end of each semester of HNRS 4910 and HNRS 4911/12 that reflects the progress made during that stage of the project.

Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study

Incoming Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study

Academic Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule
First Year	FYSP1005 COSK1225	COSK 2225
Sophomore	COSK 2235 General Education Course (Honors Section)	COSK 2245 General Education Course (Honors Section)
Junior	Honors Seminar Course	HNRS4900 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)
Senior	HNRS 4911 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)	HNRS 4912 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)

Continuing Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study

Academic Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule
Sophomore	COSK 2235 General Education Course (Honors Section)	COSK 2245 General Education Course (Honors Section)
Junior	Honors Seminar Course	HNRS4900 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)
Senior	HNRS 4911 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)	HNRS 4912 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)

In their second year, Continuing Patriot Scholars are required take one honors COSK course each semester. In the third year, usually in the spring, they should begin their honors thesis project, by completing the research and methodology course and submitting the project proposal. The final year should be devoted to completing the Honors Thesis Project. All honors requirements must be completed **before** students are acknowledged as graduates of the UHP in the commencement program and at the commencement ceremony.

Transfer Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study

Academic Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule
Sophomore	COSK 2235 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)	COSK 2245 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)
Junior	Honors Seminar Course	HNRS4900 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)
Senior	HNRS 4911 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)	HNRS 4912 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)

If students transfer with all COSK courses satisfied, then they do not have to complete the Honors sections of COSK courses; however, if students still have a COSK course(s) to complete, then they **must** enroll in and successfully complete the Honors section of the course(s).

If students transfer to RMU at the beginning of their sophomore year and are selected to be Patriot Scholars, then they are required take one honors COSK course each semester. If students transfer to RMU at the beginning of their junior year and are selected to be Patriot Scholars, they must complete two general education honors section courses, the seminar course, and the thesis requirements. All honors requirements must be completed **before** students are acknowledged as graduates of the UHP in the commencement program and at the commencement ceremony.

Patriot Scholars' Checklist

	Course Name	Semester and Year Completed or Anticipated	Check if Completed
Honors Sections of Communications Skills Classes	COSK 1225		<input type="checkbox"/>
	COSK 2225		<input type="checkbox"/>
	COSK 2235		<input type="checkbox"/>
	COSK 2245		<input type="checkbox"/>
Honors Section of Two Core Classes¹			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
Honors Seminar or pre-approved study abroad			<input type="checkbox"/>
Honors Thesis	HNRS 4900		<input type="checkbox"/>
	HNRS 4911		<input type="checkbox"/>
	HNRS 4912		<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ Currently the core classes with honors sections include ELIT 2065 Honors World Literature, GEOL 1095 Honors Stars, Planets and the Cosmos, HUMA 1015 Honors Humanities: Art and Music, HIST 1105 Honors United States History I, POLS 1025 Honors American National Government, SOCI 1025 Honors Contemporary American Social Problems, PSYC 1015 Honors General Psychology, STAT 2125 Honors Statistics, INFS1025 Honors Intro Decision Support Systems, ECON1015 Honors Survey of Economics.

Participation Policy

Students are required to accumulate a minimum of 10 “Patriot Points” per semester. Points can be acquired by attending various Honors and Honors-promoted events on campus. Below is a breakdown on the points scale.

Number of Points	Category
1	Honors Promoted Events: SAC meetings, book club meetings, semester meeting, lunch with a professor/Rooney scholar, SAC student outings, volunteering at Honors events
3	Honors Events & Important Campus Events: Roundtables, academic events (Rooney Scholars, diversity series), professional events (Going to grad/med/law school, info sessions), newsletter contribution, and other specially designated events
5	Big Ticket Items: URC, featured speakers, presenting at a conference (not the URC), honors leadership roles (SAC leaders, book club leaders, lunch with a professor leader)

Students that accumulate more than 10 points a semester will receive SET credit. An award will be given to the student with the following criteria: the freshman student with the most points per semester and the student (any year) with most points per semester. The top 10% of students with the most points will also receive SET credit under recognition.

If you want credit for a single event on your SET, you can attend the event, and then email Lindsey Sobolosky at sobolosky@rmu.edu a one-page reflection paper that exhibits a detailed description of the event with evidence of your reflection about it. Examples of events that require a reflection paper are Roundtables, Rooney Scholar presentations, Diversity Speaker Series presentations, and RMU or off-campus plays or musicals.

Patriot Scholars' Benefits

Priority Registration

Because of the Honors Curriculum requirements and in order to recognize Patriot Scholars, all honors students will be given early access to registration each semester.

Honors Student Center

Patriot Scholars will be given exclusive access to the Honors Student Center. A designated, centrally-located space on campus for honors students to study, gather and socialize.

Honors Networking Lunches

Several times each semester, Honors students are invited to meet with Faculty and graduate students on campus for the Honors Networking Lunches. These gatherings provide students with the opportunity for informal, personal interaction with faculty from across the university. It is a great chance to learn about research going on around campus and to meet faculty who may serve as honors thesis advisors.

Scholarships

In recognition of the academic accomplishments of the Patriot Scholars, academic scholarships conditional on meeting eligibility requirements for and remaining active in the University Honors Program may be available.

Honors Travel Fellowships

A limited amount of funds is set aside each year for Honors Travel Fellowships. Honors Travel Fellowships will help to partially offset the expenses associated with travel, lodging and conference fees for Patriot Scholars who attend research conferences. Attendance at these conferences will permit the students to interact with leaders in their fields and make presentations.

Honors Travel Fellowships will be awarded through a competitive process taking into account participation in the Student Advisory Committee and other University Honors Programs events. Preference will be given to those students who have been invited to make presentations at the conference.

Patriot Scholars' Opportunities

Student Advisory Council

The Student Advisory Council will be composed of interested honors students. The Student Advisory Council will offer recommendations and suggestions to the UHP Director and the Honors Program Committee concerning the policies, regulations, curriculum and activities of the Honors Program. The following officers will be elected to run the Student Advisory Council: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and SGA representative. Attendance for all service projects, cultural events and faculty lectures will be voluntary.

Study Abroad Opportunities

The University Honors Program has a strong track record of participation in study abroad opportunities. Working with the International Programs Office at RMU, the University Honors Program supports students in identifying, planning for and making the most of their study abroad experiences. Honors students have traveled to Australia, Ireland, Italy and Finland, and Israel.

Internships

Working with the RMU Career Center, the University Honors Program Co-Directors identify internship and internship-funding opportunities for Patriot Scholars. One example is the Washington Center Internship and Academic Seminar program. Through this program students earn college credit while engaging in a professional work experience tailored to their individual interests. The Washington Center internship programs include government agency placements, positions in local companies, Peace Corps opportunities and study abroad programs. Scholarship money is set aside for Robert Morris University students and additional scholarships are available for Patriot Scholar to help defray the costs of participating in this program. Other internship opportunities are available. Contact the RMU Career Center or the University Honors Program Co-Directors for more information.

Summer Research Programs

Many national agencies and foundations provide funding for undergraduate research opportunities at universities and labs across the country. These programs provide RMU students with an expanded curriculum in their major, research experience for future careers or post-graduate study and the opportunity to interact with talented students, scientists and professors from outside the RMU community. Check the RMU University Honors Program website for a list of these summer research programs.

National Collegiate Honors Council Supported Opportunities

The National Collegiate Honors Council sponsors the *Partners in the Park*, the *City as Text* and *Honors Semesters* programs. RMU Patriot Scholars are eligible to apply for these programs and for scholarship money set aside by the NCHC for these programs.

Partners in the Park is a learning experience run by university faculty in cooperation with the U.S. National Park Service. Students travel to a national park and spend one week camping, attending seminars on historical, cultural and scientific aspects of the park and enjoying the recreational features of the park. Past *Partners in the Park* programs have included Acadia, Fire Island to Ellis Island, Big Thicket, Bryce Canyon, Zion, Grand Canyon-Parashant and Saguaro/Organ Pipe national parks. The NCHC offers student stipends for up to \$200 towards travel experiences. These stipends are awarded through a competitive application process.

The *City as Text* and the longer-term site-specific *Honors Semesters* are structured learning opportunities that take advantage of the location. Students explore the environment and local culture in small teams through short-term laboratories or longer-term research projects. Past *Honors Semesters* have been in Washington, D.C., the Grand Canyon, New York City, El Paso, Appalachia, the Maine Coast, Iowa, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Greece, the Czech Republic, Spain, and the Southeast coast of the United States, on topics ranging from local culture to global concerns. Some of the programs provide students with upper-division honors transfer credit that can be applied to their graduation requirements.