

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS – Union College

Summary of Legislated Requirements for Award of Departmental Honors to Graduating Seniors

1. Candidates must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.3.
2. Candidates must have an index of at least 3.3 in the courses of their Major, excluding cognates, and must have at least three A's or A-'s in such courses, excluding any given in connection with the writing of their Senior Thesis.

Note: In the case of students receiving concurrent Bachelor's and Master's degrees, the requirements for Departmental Honors are based on all courses accepted as credits towards the Bachelor's degree, including any graduate credits which may have been counted toward the undergraduate degree.

3. Candidates must submit to their Department evidence of independent work of substance and distinction in the form of a thesis or some written or documented work, which shall have been awarded a grade of at least A-. This evidence must be presented in a form prescribed by the Dean for Studies.

Any candidate proposing to submit work in any other form than the traditional thesis should ask his or her thesis advisor to consult the Dean for Studies as soon as possible, so that they can work out a suitable form in which it can be submitted.

4. Candidates must have taken the final six terms of their program at Union College, unless enrolled elsewhere in a study program approved by the College.
5. Candidates must have satisfied any additional requirements laid down by their individual departments and they must be formally nominated for Departmental Honors by "the department in which they are taking their major." This phrase requires some interpretation in the case of students not following traditional programs.
 - a. **Interdepartmental majors** must be nominated by both the departments of their major, and must satisfy the honors requirements as applied to all work counted toward meeting requirements for the major. Exceptions to this are Leadership in Medicine and Law and Public Policy Interdepartmental majors.

In the case of interdepartmental majors, students must satisfy the above for each department, except that for departmental honors, they need to have at least two grades of A- or better in each department, not three. Interdepartmental majors also must submit to the Honors Committee, through the major departments, evidence of independent work on which a grade not lower than A- has been earned, and they must be nominated by the major departments.

- b. Students majoring in a recognized **Multidisciplinary Program** which includes courses in two or more departments should be nominated by the Director of the program. The nomination form must also be signed by a faculty member from one other department. All courses which form part of the program of such students should be taken into account in calculating their departmental indices.

- c. **Organizing Theme** majors may be nominated by the Chairperson of the Department of the advisor their thesis/senior project work. The above criteria should be applied to the courses that are formally declared to constitute the student's Organizing Theme major.
- d. **Five-year, two-degree** students may be nominated by either department irrespective of the standard of work for the other. They may also be nominated by both.
- e. A student may be nominated by a department in which he/she is not officially majoring, but must have done all the work which would have been expected if he/she had been a major in that department.
- f. Where two students have jointly produced a single thesis or alternative piece of work for Departmental Honors, both may be nominated provided they are otherwise qualified, but the department should at the same time certify that both have taken roughly equal shares in the work.

Other Comments on Departmental Honors

The Union College nomination form and instructions for submitting it are available online <http://union.edu/library/pdfs/honors-theses/nomination.pdf>

It should be emphasized that the purpose of these honors is to reward outstanding work in the major field, provided the candidate has achieved a creditable record overall. *The legislation sets forth only minimum requirements, and it is not suggested that all students reaching these standards should be nominated as a matter of course. Each department is free to fix higher or additional qualifying standards of its own.* Information concerning the requirements for Departmental Honors should be made available by each department for all interested students.

College policy is that all theses become part of the permanent record of student honors work preserved in its archive in Schaffer Library. Beginning in 2008, the Library began collecting honors work in electronic rather than printed form. The Library will continue to maintain preservation copies of theses (made from the electronic originals). These copies will remain available for consultation in the library. With the permission of thesis authors, the Library also makes thesis work available online to a site restricted to the Union College community. A Union College Honors Thesis Copyright and Permission Form must be signed and submitted to the department secretary along with an electronic copy of the thesis in order for all thesis requirements to be met.

Regulations concerning the permission form, the thesis format, and submission procedures are available on the library's website at <http://libguides.union.edu/researchservices/senior-thesis> Each candidate should consult and follow with care the instructions given on that site. The form of the *title page* and *abstract*, including the *heading* (author's name, etc.) of the abstract, are particularly important, as are the electronic format submission requirements. Schaffer Library also requires that the date on the title page should be June and the year the student is graduating.