

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.

College policy is that all honors theses become part of the permanent record of student 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 on a site maintained by Union College. A Thesis Copyright and Permission Form must be signed and submitted to the department secretary in order for all thesis requirements to be met.