

Departmental Honors in Chemistry

The Department Honors programs are aimed at those students who could benefit from an in-depth exposure to the methodology of a field to an extent greater than would be appropriate for most other students. Department Honors Programs offer the student the opportunity to engage in a unified, scholarly project¹.

University Honors vs. Departmental Honors

A student can receive Departmental Honors without participating in the University Honors Program. However, to receive University Honors, a student must complete Departmental Honors and must complete the 499 Honors Thesis form, registering for between 0 and 8 credits. Requirements for both programs are summarized in the table below:

	University Honors	Departmental Honors (only)
Must be in the University Honors Program	Yes	No
Must complete Departmental Honors	Yes	Yes
Register for and complete Chem 499 Honors Thesis (0-8 credits)	Yes	Yes
Apply for Departmental Honors	Yes	Yes
Cumulative GPA minimum*	3.50	3.50
Cumulative GPA in Chemistry and cognate courses*	3.50	3.50
Complete approved project involving a minimum of 400 hours of lab time	Yes	Yes
Write satisfactory Honors thesis	Yes	Yes
Successfully defend Honors thesis to Honors Committee	Yes	Yes
Complete two Honors courses	Yes	No

* at the time of application, registration for Chem 499, and of graduation

Application and Eligibility for Departmental Honors

The student should apply for Departmental Honors by filling out a form available from the Chemistry Department assistant. Typically, the student should apply before the end of the junior year, though applications will be accepted through the first week of the fall semester, senior year (since some students might determine during the summer that their research experience could serve as an Honors project). Students applying for Departmental Honors should have a record of demonstrated high academic ability and self-discipline. In particular, the student needs a 3.50 cumulative GPA as well as a 3.50 GPA in chemistry and cognate courses to be considered for Departmental Honors. Additionally, the student should have completed half of the credits required for a major in chemistry before applying for Departmental Honors.¹

¹ From Academic Catalogô Special Academic

Requirements for the Award of Departmental Honors

To receive Departmental Honors in Chemistry, the candidate must:

1. have attained a GPA of 3.50 in all chemistry and cognate courses at the time of graduation.
2. have attained a cumulative GPA of 3.50 at the time of graduation
3. complete an approved project in chemistry that involves at least 400 hours of lab time (which may accumulate in one or more summer projects)

provide an estimate for the number of hours worked on the project. The student should confer with the honors committee chair by the second week of fall semester to assess the research experience. Upon discussing the project with the student and obtaining information from the research supervisor, the committee chair may determine that the student needs to do further literature research and reading to complete the honors project. (For example, if the project did not lead to substantial results, the student did not work an adequate number of hours, or the student did not show sufficient understanding of the project, then further work may be required.)

Chem 499

Students pursuing departmental honors must register for Chem 499. Students typically take Chem 499 for zero credits during one semester (between 0 and 8 credits are allowed by the University). Usually a S/NC option is chosen rather than a letter grade. A student wishing to take Chem 499 for one or more credits should first consult with the department chair. Forms to register for Chem 499 are available in the chemistry department office and should be submitted by early (usually by the end of the first week) in the spring semester to the Registrar. Students must have a 3.50 cumulative GPA at the time of Chem 499 registration.

Chem 400 and Honors

The project used for departmental honors may also be used as the topic for Chem 400, and the Chem 400 paper may be revised and submitted as the honors thesis. The honors defense will be a separate presentation from the senior seminar presentation, and will generally be given at a later date. A student wishing to take Chem 499 for one or more credits will need to show that additional work will be conducted beyond that required for the Chem 400 paper.

Honors Thesis

Sample student papers are available on the Wittenberg Honors Program web site: <http://www4.wittenberg.edu/academics/honors/thesis.html>. See the senior paper description in the Chem 300/400 booklet for information. The senior paper is a senior level paper for the awarding of departmental honors. That is, all the features of the senior paper described in the booklet should be present, and the writing should be clear, compelling, thoroughly referenced and virtually free of grammatical and spelling errors.

See the Deadlines section below for information about thesis drafts.

Thesis Defense

The following are features of a defense that would be expected for the award of Departmental Honors. It is a demonstration of chemical knowledge and understanding of the project and its presentation.

1. The student will put the project into context with similar studies, showing both how it is related to similar studies and what is unique about the work.
2. The student will explain the rationale for the project.
3. The student will describe how the experiments were conducted (not every detail needs to be presented). The student will show chemical structures, balanced chemical equations, and reaction mechanisms where appropriate. If instrumentation was central to the

research, the student will explain how the instrument works, particularly how the signal is generated.

4. The student will present results clearly, with good use of tables and figures.
5. The student will discuss uncertainties in the data where appropriate.
6. The student will explain how conclusions follow from the data.
7. In answering questions from the committee, the student will show knowledge of the theory behind the project and a good understanding of the results.
8. The student will exhibit a command of chemical language and understanding of basic chemical principles.

Deadlines

(assuming a traditional 4-year graduation plan)

Deadline	Task
end of spring semester, junior year or at least by Friday of 1 st week of fall semester, senior year	Submit application to department chair.
2 nd week of fall semester, senior year	Confer with honors committee chair on results of project (particularly for projects outside of Wittenberg).
end of fall semester, senior year	Complete laboratory research.

Departmental Honors in Chemistry Application Form

This form must be completed prior to the end of the junior year (or at least in the 1st week of the fall semester, senior year). Return this form to the Chemistry Department Assistant.

Name _____

Graduation Date _____

What is your current GPA, based on your chemistry, math and physics courses? _____

What is your current overall GPA? _____

How many credits have you currently completed in Chemistry? _____

Are you also pursuing University Honors? _____

List the names of the faculty members you wish to serve on your Honors Committee. Include one faculty member from outside the chemistry department.

Please describe the project that you will complete for Chemistry Departmental Honors. If the project is to be pursued outside of Wittenberg, give contact information for the research supervisor.