

Honors Capstone Project Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Honors Capstone Project?

The Honors Capstone Project is an opportunity to apply what you have learned at CMU. You will generate new knowledge, new perspectives, or a creative endeavor in your field of study or discipline under the guidance of an experienced CMU faculty member.

What steps are necessary to complete my Honors Capstone Project?

There are generally six steps to completing your project.

1. Identify a topic in which interests you.
2. Work with a faculty advisor to develop an idea into a proposal with goals, tasks, and outcomes.
3. By the second semester of your junior/third year, prepare and submit a formal proposal for approval by the Honors Program Director.
4. By the first semester of your senior/fourth year, complete your Honors Capstone Project.
5. Submit your project and final advisor evaluation form (including grade received) to the Honors Program Office (both must be received at the same time).
6. Share your project in a professional setting. This could include a presentation at a national or regional conference, a juried exhibition, a public performance, or presenting/displaying your project at the CMU Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition (SRCEE).

Please note that there may be more steps necessary for your individual project and each of those steps should be included in your proposal.

How much work is the Honors Capstone Project?

Your Honors Capstone Project is a significant undertaking, and 3-6 credit hours are awarded for its completion. Accordingly, you should begin the process no later than the second semester of your junior / third year. In general, it will be a project that may require 5-10 hours each week for one full semester.

What is the value of doing an Honors Capstone Project?

This is your opportunity to work in depth on a project with a faculty member you highly respect. It also provides you the opportunity to integrate the knowledge and skills you have acquired at CMU into a project of particular interest to you. Many Honors students have highlighted their capstone project to enhance their employment, graduate school, and assistantship and fellowship prospects.

What if I have no idea what to do for my Honors Capstone Project?

It is best to contact a faculty member in your major or minor department who taught a class you enjoyed and who shares your research or creative interests. Your first meeting with this faculty member could help pinpoint an area you would like to explore. Please write down ideas about areas you would like to explore and take them with you to that first meeting. The faculty member may agree to be your advisor, or they might suggest another faculty member whose research or creative interests more closely align with your interests. **If you cannot identify a faculty member to contact, then set up a meeting with the department chairperson who can assist you in finding an advisor. Also, feel free to schedule an appointment with the Honors Director, who can also help guide you in the development of project ideas.**

What if I have an idea for my project topic but have no idea who should be my advisor?

See above for advice or contact the Honors Program Director or the appropriate department chairperson.

Does my advisor have to be a CMU faculty or staff member?

Yes, because you are getting a letter grade for this course your advisor must have an academic connection to the University. Students must seek a full-time tenure track or tenured professor for their advisor. Exceptions may be granted by the Director of the Honors Program only under extenuating circumstances. Students completing their

projects at off-site locations may opt to have two advisors, one CMU advisor and one on-site advisor. Example: A student who is traveling with a political campaign doing research might choose to have the campaign director be their on-site advisor, but they must also have a CMU faculty/staff member such as a political science professor who will be their main project advisor and the person who will determine the letter grade.

Where can I get the format expectations for my project proposal?

The Honors Capstone Proposal Format Guide provides information about format expectations.

How long does the proposal have to be?

The length will vary depending on the nature of your project, the expectations of your advisor, and the acceptable standard format employed by your discipline. (Refer to the Honors Capstone Proposal Format Guide).

Can I use the Honors student listserv to recruit students for my project?

In some cases, the Honors student listserv can be used to recruit students to participate in your project, however, you must discuss this with the Honors Program Director and the request must be approved prior to completing your proposal. Priority will be given to projects that have direct relevance to Honors students and that benefit the Honors community. Projects will rarely be approved that designate their sample population to be Honors program students at CMU.

When is my proposal due?

Your proposal must be turned in to the Honors Office, at the latest, by the last day of classes, the second semester of your junior/third year (we DO NOT count summers in determining the semesters). If you anticipate a delay, please notify the Honors Director as soon as possible.

How will I know if my proposal has been approved by the Honors Program?

Once the Honors Program receives your proposal it will take approximately one week to review it and then contact you as to its status. If your proposal is approved, you and your advisor will each receive an email confirmation. If the Director of Honors does not approve your proposal, you will be contacted by our office to for clarification and/or to develop modifications.

Do I need CMU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for my Project?

If your project involves human subjects, vertebrate animals, recombinant DNA, blood borne pathogens and biological, chemical, or radiation hazards **you must get IRB approval for your project before you begin gathering any data**. You can submit your Honors Capstone Project Proposal prior to getting IRB approval but you must include submitting an IRB application in your proposal timeline. The IRB is a federally mandated on-campus committee composed of 14 CMU staff and faculty members whose task is to enforce federal regulations and to protect the rights of human subjects and vertebrate animals. More information, instructions, and IRB forms can be found at the [Office of Research Compliance](#). The Office of Research Compliance is in Foust 251 or phone 989-774-6401. NOTE: Depending on the review category (e.g., exempt, expedited, full board review) to which you apply, the time frame for receiving IRB approval will vary. Apply for IRB approval well in advance of the time you want to begin collecting data. It is important to note that projects which include any international or high-risk component (see protected population regulations on the IRB website) will result in a lengthy approval process.

Can I work on a collaborative project for my capstone project?

The Honors Program recognizes that many research projects are collaborative and that this occurs organically in many disciplines. You may participate in a collaborative project for your capstone project that might involve other students and faculty members, but you must be able to distinguish the precise contributions that you made to the project and your advisor must be able to verify that what you submit to the Honors Program for your capstone requirement is in fact your own work.

What is HON 499?

HON 499 is the course in which you enroll to complete your Honors Capstone Project. The class does not have scheduled meeting times. The instructors for HON 499 are your advisor and the Director of the Honors Program.

How many credits is HON 499? 3 credits

Do I need to enroll for HON 499?

In some cases, you may request permission to substitute a departmental senior project requirement for HON 499. Conversely, in some cases HON 499 will fulfill a departmental senior project requirement. *NOTE: Any exception to enrollment in HON 499 for your capstone project must be approved in advance by the Director of the Honors Program.*

How do I enroll for HON 499?

After the Director of Honors approves your proposal, you will receive an email granting you permission to enroll in HON 499 through the Course Registration System by requesting an exception.

When do I enroll for HON 499?

Enroll in HON 499 for the semester in which you are going to complete your project.

Can I take HON 499 as a writing intensive (WI) course?

Yes, you may take HON 499 as WI if your advisor agrees to this option, and you are willing to complete the additional writing and revision requirements described below.

What are the additional requirements if I take HON 499 as WI?

If you choose the writing intensive option, you and your advisor will need to include details about the re-write process and work progress dates on the detailed timeline that is submitted with your capstone proposal. Advisors need to approve the timelines and can help structure the due dates to ensure there is enough time for revision and completion of each section. Your paper must be at least 18-pages (including references, tables, figures, etc.), and at least 50% of the formal writing will need to be revised if you are taking the WI option. Each of the five sections (e.g., introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion) of the research paper offers an opportunity for revision. The capstone proposal can be considered the first draft of the first sections of your final capstone, and as such, can be counted in the required revision process.

How will I receive my grade in HON 499?

Your advisor will record your letter grade for HON 499 on the Honors Capstone Project Faculty Grading and Assessment form. **When you submit a copy of your final project to the Honors Program, it must be accompanied by the grading and assessment form (with approval signatures). We will not accept one without the other, or approval forms without both signatures.** The Honors Program Director will then inform the Registrar's Office of your grade.

Is there funding available for my Honors Capstone Project?

You can submit an Honors Program Student Reimbursement Form to the Honors Program Office to request funds to defray some of the costs related to your capstone project. This form is available on-line at <https://www.cmich.edu/academics/honors-program/current-students>.

The maximum funding you may apply for is \$300 per project. Other sources of funding may be available across campus, and you are encouraged to apply for those funds (ORSP, Dean's Office, department funds, etc.).

When is my Honors Capstone Project due?

Your completed Capstone project must be turned in to the Honors Office by the last day of classes, the first semester of your senior/fourth year (we DO NOT count summers in determining the semesters).

Do I have to present or exhibit my Honors Capstone Project?

Like all scholarly work, one of the goals of the Honors Capstone Project is that you will share your work in a professional setting such as a conference, meeting, or juried exhibition. Submitting your work for publication, and providing documentation of the submission, will fulfill this requirement. The CMU Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition (SRCEE) provides an opportunity for undergraduates and graduates to share their research,

and scholarly and creative endeavors with a professional audience and the university community. Students may fulfill the presentation/exhibition requirement by sharing their work at SRCEE. The event occurs in Spring semester each year and **you must apply by the established deadlines**. The deadlines to apply and other important information can be found at the SRCEE website: <https://www.cmich.edu/offices-departments/office-research-graduate-studies/graduate-studies/student-creative-and-research-endeavors-exhibition>
SRCEE is coordinated by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Please direct questions about SRCEE to their office at (989) 774-1318.

What must I turn in with my Honors Capstone Project?

Your project must include the following components in the order listed.

1. The Honors Capstone Project Faculty Grading and Assessment Form -WITH APPROVAL SIGNATURES
2. Your project
 - If your project is a research paper; the length of the paper varies depending on what is appropriate for your field. Consult your advisor as to the length that is generally appropriate for your discipline.
 - If your project is a creative endeavor; a minimum 10-page paper must accompany your project submission. The paper should address the creative process through which you completed your project, including a list of any works consulted/cited.
3. Any supporting materials: charts, tables, graphs, maps, pictures, transcripts, videotapes, etc.

Will the Honors Program return my project to me?

No, the Honors Program keeps your submission permanently. Do not submit anything to the Honors Program that you may eventually want back.

MEDIA REQUEST

Any time you speak with media (*CMLife*, *Morning Sun*, other newspapers, television, etc., or display your project, please promote your project as an "**Honors Program Capstone Project**," in addition to mentioning your academic department.