

# Commonwealth Honors Program at Quinsigamond Community College—Honors Contract

This contract should be composed by the instructor and student. The student should email the typed contract as an attachment ([jkennedy@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:jkennedy@qcc.mass.edu)) for honors committee approval **by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the semester**. The coordinator will respond in a week with approval or suggestions for clarification and possible modification. **NOTE:** If you are conducting human subject research, you must also apply to QCC's Institutional Review Board (contact person is Stacey Kadish in IRaP).

Student's Name and ID#:

Instructor's Name:

Course Number and Section:

Semester and Year:

**PART I:** Describe, in detail, the project that will constitute the honors work for this course. Describe the work that will be done, the resource materials that will be used, and any end-product/results of the work. Describe the qualities of this work that make it "honors" level. What differentiates the honors component work from the normal curricular requirements of the course? If this is a second honors contract (after the successful completion of one) please include a rationale for why two honors contracts are necessary for your completion of the Program's requirements.

Instructor/student meeting schedule, dates and times:

Timeline for student to complete work:

Instructor's expectations of student time commitment:

Instructor's criteria and methods for evaluating student work to determine whether the student has successfully completed the contract and earned honors credit for the course:

**We mutually agree to work together and to meet according to the stated schedule with the common goal of the student successfully completing the work described above according to the stated time frame.**

Student e-signature  
(Please type name)

Faculty e-signature  
(Please type name)

Honors Committee Approval  
(Coordinator signature)

**PART II:** Reflective Essay: Upon completion of the honors project the student must write and submit to the Honors Program Coordinator an essay which reflects on the academic enrichment provided by the honors contract. The 500 word typed essay should address the following: How has completing this project impacted you as a learner (in terms of critical thinking and analytical skills; observational, written, and oral skills; independent thinking and problem solving skills; and in-depth perspective of a specific discipline)? Did you encounter any unexpected challenges as you completed the project? Do you have any suggestions for future honors students doing a similar contract?

# Commonwealth Honors Program at Quinsigamond Community College

## Honors Contract—Information and Instructions for Faculty and Students

### **What is an honors contract?**

An honors contract is designed to build upon the content of already existing courses by requiring such additional academic activities as independent research, a special project, or a service learning experience (service learning contracts which serve as a course requirement cannot be used for honors credit). The project is designed either by the instructor or by negotiation between the student and instructor. The student may bring ideas to the negotiation, or they may be looking for ideas from the instructor. The culminating project should not be just “more” work, but different work, work at a higher level, work that you would expect an honors level student to be able to do, but that you would not expect from all students as a regular curricular requirement of one of your courses. Another way of considering this project is to propose a question that the project will seek to answer. A summary of the project is written into a detailed one-page contract, signed by the instructor and student, and then returned to the honors coordinator. It is expected that the student will meet with the instructor periodically throughout the semester for help and guidance as he/she works to complete the project.

### **What elements should be included in the honors contract?**

Like the syllabus of a course, the honors contract is a document which describes, in detail, the work in which the student will be engaged. The contract should include:

- A detailed description of the work which constitutes the honors project
- A list or description of any resource materials which will be used (journals, interviews, etc.)
- A description of any end-products/results of the work (research paper, presentation, etc.)
- A description of the qualities of the work which make it an “honors” project (scholarly inquiry and rigor)
- The instructor/student meeting schedule
- A timeline for completion of work
- Instructor’s criteria and method for evaluating and grading the project (the student must earn a B or higher in the class and on the honors project to receive honors credit)

### **Who should write the contract?**

The contract should not be written by the student alone. It should either be written by the instructor, or it could be a collaborative effort between the student and the instructor.

### **When is the contract due?**

The typed contract, signed by both instructor and student, should be submitted to the honors coordinator as soon as possible but no later than the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.

### **How does the contract become officially approved?**

After the honors coordinator receives the contract, it will be forwarded to the honors committee for review. If the committee has any issues or questions, and does not immediately approve the contract, the coordinator will be in direct contact with the instructor for clarification and possible modification.

### **How much time should the student devote to the project?**

There are no strict guidelines to follow, but a general rule of thumb is for a student to commit at least three hours per week for a fifteen week semester.

### **How is the honors contract graded?**

The instructor’s criteria and methods for evaluation and grading should be specified on the contract form. Students must earn a “B” or higher, both in the class and on the honors project, to receive honors credit for the course. At the end of the semester, the honors coordinator will contact all faculty who are facilitating contracts to determine if honors credit should be awarded to the student. The coordinator will then submit this information to the Registrar’s Office.

### **Is there compensation for faculty?**

Faculty are compensated \$180 for facilitating honors contracts. An RTE is drawn up by the Office of Academic Affairs and faculty can expect to be compensated at semester's end.

### **Who are the people who make up the Honors Committee?**

Gaelan Benway, Bonnie Coleman, Margaret Wong, Kathy Frederickson, Michael Stevenson, Susan McPherson

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions about the honors contract, or anything else related to the Honors Program, please contact the honors coordinator:

Jean Kennedy  
Office 338A  
508-854-2744  
[jkennedy@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:jkennedy@qcc.mass.edu)

**Thank you for mentoring an Honors Program student. The Program depends on faculty like you!**

### **Some examples of past honors contract projects:**

#### PSY 101 (Introduction to Psychology)

The student will volunteer as a research assistant during summer 2008 for a Ph.D. clinical psychology candidate from Clark University. The candidate's dissertation, "Preventing Depressive Symptoms in recently Unemployed Men: Testing the Structured Written Disclosure Protocol" is a longitudinal study anticipated to conclude October 2010. Given the length of the study, the QCC student will not be able to function in the role of research assistant to completion, however, she should become familiar with many aspects of research processes. Exposure to the multitude of studies currently occurring at Clark, interactions with faculty and doctoral candidates, involvement in as many aspects of this study as possible and the typical back room occurrences that are part of all working labs is a terrific opportunity. The second part of this honors work will include giving an oral presentation to an honors psychology class introducing the student's understanding of the literature that supports the research, the basic research premise, the methods used, and any type of extraneous variables that might be possible issues.

#### ERG 211 (Introduction to Material Science)

The student will research the materials used to create three important parts of a bicycle. The material's atomic structure and atomic properties will be observed and related to the macroscopic world showing how these materials provide the properties needed in a bike. This project will produce a ten-page research paper and will conclude with a Power Point presentation to the class. Material for this project will be obtained through online databases and books.

#### ANT 111 (Cultural Anthropology)

The student will create a pictorial history (DVD with music and voice overs) of the town and people of Bolton, MA, and how the history relates to the field of anthropology. Specifically, the DVD will cover the Nashaway Tribe of the Nipmuc Nation through the Revolutionary War and will include photographs, maps, and artifacts of the times in a chronological order.

#### ACC 101 (Accounting I)

The student will read Ted Conover's *Coyote*, as well as review its website, and create an interactive learning experience for her accounting class regarding the various financial statement consequences for the ranchers who hire illegal aliens. The student will increase her presentation skills, acquire real life experience through reading and analyzing the effects illegal aliens have on the business world, and this project will also provide hands-on experience working in a classroom.