

Motlow State Community College

Honors Program Student Handbook



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Mission Statement

The Honors Program at Motlow State Community College (MSCC) provides an interdisciplinary education of exceptional quality to a community of motivated students. By examining a wide array of perspectives, Honors courses promote intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and information literacy. Smaller class sizes cultivate learning communities that foster unique academic experiences. These include special topics courses, extracurricular opportunities, research projects, seminar classes, and service learning. The Honors Program mentors scholars to develop their fullest potential in their academic endeavors and beyond.

Eligibility Requirements

Students may be admitted to the Honors Program if they meet the following requirements:

- First-time students with a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher and an ACT composite score of 23 or higher
- First-time students with a high school GPA of 3.6 or higher (no ACT score required)
- Students with a cumulative collegiate GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Note: students who do not meet the requirements listed above may still enroll in an Honors course with the approval of the Honors Program Director or the individual professor teaching the course.

To remain eligible for Honors Program courses, students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative collegiate GPA. In the event that GPA falls below 3.0, the student will have one probationary semester to remain in Honors courses and bring their GPA back up to the minimum 3.0. If a GPA remains below 3.0 for a subsequent semester, the student will not be permitted to continue in the Program. Issues of academic misconduct may also result in removal from the Program.

The Honors Difference

Content

Honors courses are designed for motivated, intellectually curious students seeking a deeper understanding of course concepts without an increase in course work.

Faculty use evidence-based teaching strategies and innovative course materials to facilitate critical thinking and interactive learning.

Themed seminars and special topics courses familiarize Honors students with contemporary information and resources in their field of study.

Curriculum introduces complex methods, tools, and perspectives while preparing students to identify and analyze their own biases.

Honors enrichment opportunities and courses encourage creativity, academic freedom, and interdisciplinary collaboration among students and faculty.

Skills

The Honors Program holds scholars to a high standard of academic integrity. Academic misconduct may result in dismissal from the program.

Students build informational literacy and writing skills through original undergraduate research.

Honors courses strengthen communication and reasoning skills through discussion with peers, class projects, and presentations of research inside and outside the classroom.

Students learn to use professional tools, technology, and data through hands-on, experiential learning.

Extracurricular opportunities, service learning, and course objectives foster cultural awareness and self-discovery to support civic responsibility.

Enrichment

Gain recognition and a competitive edge when applying for scholarships, transfer to four-year institutions, and jobs.

- Students may apply for a renewable, \$1000-per-semester Honors scholarship. (To assure renewal, students are responsible for confirming they are on track to fulfill all Honors Program Completion Requirements prior to graduation.)
- Honors credits transfer to many 4-year Honors Colleges. Articulation agreements with specific colleges and universities may provide additional benefits, like guaranteed admission or housing preference.
- Faculty mentors work with students to develop academic and professional skills.

- Faculty mentors may also serve as references when students apply for transfer, scholarships, or jobs. Requests for letters of recommendation should be made well in advance of a deadline, preferably more than two weeks out.
- Receive special recognition at graduation.

Engage in Honors-sponsored field trips and professional development.

- Honors courses may include field trips that usually come at little or no cost to the student. These site visits include museums, artistic performances, ghost walks, historic locations, battlefields, and other locations that promote scholastic inquiry.
- Each semester the Honors Program hosts a joint Honors and Undergraduate Research Symposium (Moore County each Fall, Smyrna each Spring, and a Zoom option every semester). At the symposium, students have the chance to present exceptional research in front of their professors, peers, family, and friends.
- The MSCC Honors Program also participates in both regional and national conferences. In the spring, students and professors may attend and present at both the Tennessee Collegiate Honors Council conference and the Southern Regional Honors Council conference. Presenters at these regional conferences may then be eligible to attend and present at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in the subsequent fall semester.

Be a part of a highly motivated and supportive learning community.

- Honors classes are typically open only to Honors students and are capped at 18 students to foster a passion for learning, lively discussions, and more personal interactions among students and faculty.
- The campus Honors Lounge is a place to socialize, study, or recharge with other Honors students between classes.
- Course work and campus events prepare students for leadership within the college community and beyond Motlow State.

Program Completion Requirements

Eligible students may choose to complete a requisite number of Honors courses to complete the Honors Program and receive Honors Program Scholar distinction at graduation.

- Complete an Associate's Degree in any area
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher
- Complete a minimum of 15 credit hours of Honors coursework, with at least:
 - six credit hours of Honors English
 - a three-credit hour Honors Seminar course
 - at least one credit hour of any Motlow course with a Service Learning designation

**Note: there are several different ways to complete each of these sub-requirements. Honors Program Faculty can provide advisement assistance to help students select the best possible pathway.*

While 15 hours of Honors credit is the minimum to complete the Program, students are encouraged to complete as many general education requirements as possible through Honors. Eligible students are not required to complete the full program in order to enjoy the benefits of Honors coursework throughout their time at Motlow! These students will also receive Honors Program Participant distinction at graduation.



Figure 1: Honors Program participants wear gold cords and tassels at graduation. Those who complete the full Honors Program are also awarded Honors medallions.

History

Motlow State Community College's nationally recognized Honors Program dates to 1975, when Motlow State Community College began offering selected Honors courses. The Honors Program was formally established in 1998 on the Moore County campus, with its first graduates in 2000 under the leadership of Dr. Michael Bradley. The Program expanded offerings to include the Smyrna campus in 2003, the Fayetteville campus in 2011 and the McMinnville campus in 2012. In the 2025-2026 academic year, the MSCC Honors Program offered 67 course sections to over 350 students at three campus locations and online. Since its modern inception, nine professors have led the Honors Program: Dr. Michael Bradley (1998-2000), Prof. Rosie Graham (2000-2002), Prof. Wes Spratlin (2002-2006), Dr. Judith Russell (2006-2010), Dr. Scott Cook (2010-2018), Dr. Meagan McManus (2018-2020), Dr. John Hart (2020-2022), Prof. Nathan Sweeton (2023-2024), Prof. Jenna Caviezel (2024-present).

Contact Information

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Figure 2: Honors students and faculty at the 2025 TCHC conference hosted by MTSU.



Figure 3: Students who attended the 2025 Southern Regional Honors Council Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee also enjoyed a private tour of the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga Honors College.

Honors Lounge Locations

Honors lounges are a place to study between classes, connect with Honors peers, and enjoy free snacks. And don't forget to say hi to Cornelius, our Honors Lounge mascot when you stop by!

McMinnville
MC 135

Moore Co
Crouch 1042

Smyrna
HSC 357

