Introduction and Overview

The **Honors Program** offers academically talented and highly motivated students like you an opportunity to enjoy the best education A&T has to offer regardless of your academic discipline. What makes the **Honors Program** experience superior is the blend of low enrollment courses coupled with a wide range of enrichment activities that promote the following: intellectual growth; cultural awareness; leadership development; professional enhancement; preparation for graduate/professional school; and enhanced career and professional preparation. Every aspect of the Honors Program provides special opportunities for qualified students to grow intellectually through contact with a community of Honors students and faculty scholars.

This handbook contains a description of the **Honors Program** and covers the rules and regulations governing your participation in it as well as the privileges earned by **Honors Program** members. If you have any questions after reading this guide, do not hesitate to contact any of the following administrative staff members:

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Each administrative staff member may be contacted at (336) 285-2030. Faxes should be forwarded to (336) 256-2468. Also, please visit our website at ncat.edu/~honors for further information about the program and for all Honors-related documents. General inquiries may be sent to our Program’s e-mail address which is honors@ncat.edu.

**Why Should I Join the Honors Program?**

The most important reward that you will get from the **Honors Program** is an outstanding undergraduate experience that develops your academic skills and prepares you for success beyond A&T. Although a great education is its own reward, there is a practical side which comprises an important benefit to **Honors Program** graduates. That is, your transcript will show that you were a member of the **Honors Program** by identifying all of the courses you took for Honors credit, thereby giving you a competitive edge when applying to graduate or professional school. Those seeking immediate employment will find that prospective employers view participation in the **Honors Program** as indicating that you are capable, disciplined, highly motivated, a self-starter, and intellectually curious. No matter what your future plans, participation in the **Honors Program** is a mark of distinction that gives the Honors graduate a competitive edge.
There are other benefits, too, for taking part in the **Honors Program**. For instance, the Program will make available each semester special opportunities for you to attend cultural events, travel to conferences, and take part in leadership training activities, all at little, or no, cost. In addition, to ensure that there is no digital divide within Honors, we can loan you a laptop to use during the school year if you do not have a computer of your own. Moreover, you will be able to register before the rest of the student body so that you can get the classes you need before they fill up. As an Honors Program member, you will also be granted library privileges similar to graduate students. Thus, you can take out an unlimited number of books, keep them for a longer period, and request books through Interlibrary Loan.

Many of our members, however, find that the most important benefit of the Program is Honors housing. Since the 2005-2006 school year, McNeil Hall has become the campus Honors residence hall. This provides about 200 of our members with a living environment that is not just conducive to working in their rooms. It also enables members to form study groups with their Honors friends who are taking similar classes. To top things off, some Honors courses are taught right in the building.

### Admission Requirements

In addition to the respective admission requirements, all students must complete and submit the following: (1) Application to the Honors Program and (2) University Honors Agreement Form. The Application and Agreement Form are located on our website at [www.ncat.edu/~honors](http://www.ncat.edu/~honors); or you may request each from the Honors Program office. Please complete the Application that identifies your status (i.e., incoming freshmen, transfer, or an existing/continuing student). The completed Application and Agreement must be submitted as a packet when applying to the Honors Program. No student will be considered fully enrolled in the Honors Program without having the signed Honors Agreement on file. This form is your pledge to comply with all expectations for members in the Program. Failure to adhere to the Agreement will forfeit student’s eligibility as a member in good standing.

#### Incoming Freshmen

In general, incoming students must meet the following criteria in order to be invited to join the Honors Program:

1. A cumulative unweighted high school GPA of 3.75 on a 4.0 scale.

2. SAT scores of at least 1160 on the traditional math and verbal sections of the test. We do not use the score on the Writing section for admission purposes.

3. If you take the ACT, instead of the SAT, you must earn a minimum score of 26.

#### Students on the Cusp
If you are an incoming freshman who is close to qualifying for enrolment for honors, but might not automatically qualify, you may send in an essay describing why you want to be in honors and why you should be a part of honors at NCA&T. Further, it is recommended that the students find letters of recommendation from faculty who may be able to write them.

**Current A&T Students**

If you are already attending NCA&TSU you may join the Honors Program if you have a Cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above and have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours. However, new members are only accepted through the first semester of their Junior year.

**Transfer Students**

The A&T Honors Program gladly welcomes eligible transfer students into its ranks. If you were a member of the Honors Program at another institution at the time of your transfer to A&T, you are automatically eligible to join the A&T Honors Program. Honors courses earned at your previous institution will be counted towards completing one or more Honors Program tracks here at A&T. If you were attending a community college and were a member of Phi Theta Kappa, you are eligible to join the Honors Program upon admission to A&T. Otherwise, you must wait until you have earned a minimum of twelve credit hours at A&T with a 3.5 cumulative GPA.

Transfer students may be admitted to the A&T Honors Program through the second semester of their junior year.

**Retention in the Honors Program**

At the end of each semester, the Director of the Honors Program will review the academic records of each member to determine if any student no longer qualifies for the program. The criteria are as follows.

**GPA Requirement**

You must maintain a Cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above at all times. If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.5, you should consider yourself on Honors Probation. While on Honors Probation, you may register for Honors classes and may participate in all Honors activities. But, you only have one semester to regain full eligibility by pulling your cumulative GPA back up to at least 3.5. However, if your Cumulative GPA is below 3.5 for two consecutive semesters, you will be given a vacation from the Honors Program. Students on vacation from Honors are only permitted to take Honors classes or live in Honors housing if they registered for the class or housing while still in the Program. Students on Honors vacation are not eligible to participate in any event designed just for Program members. Students on Honors vacation may rejoin the Honors Program as soon their cumulative GPA returns to a 3.5.

**Course Completion Requirement**
A large proportion of all Honors courses are General Education classes offered through University Studies and are designed for freshmen and sophomores. In order to maximize the benefits you can derive from taking these classes, we expect all incoming Honors freshmen to complete a minimum of twelve hours of Honors credit during their freshman year. We encourage you to take even more, if possible. Classes taken for Honors credit during the summer after your freshman year may be counted towards meeting this requirement.

Students at the sophomore level and above must take a minimum of one course for Honors credit each semester to maintain their membership in the Honors Program. Students who fail to take a course for Honors credit are given a vacation from the Honors Program. However, they may regain their membership if they still have a cumulative 3.5 GPA by submitting an application for readmission to the Honors Program Director and enrolling in an Honors class or entering into an Honors contract in one of their non-Honors classes.

**University Honors Agreement**

Members in Honors must comply with the University Honors Agreement. Failure to adhere to the prescribed expectations will be basis for forfeiting membership in the Program. The Honors Program staff will monitor student compliance. Students should maintain a copy of the signed Agreement and familiarize themselves with the expectations.

**Academic Honesty**

As an Honors Program student, you are expected to adhere to the highest standards of both academic honesty, as detailed in the current Undergraduate Bulletin, and of student conduct, as discussed in the current Student Handbook. Students who do not comply with these standards may be dismissed from the Honors Program by the University Honors Council, upon the recommendation of the Honors Program Director. Students may appeal their dismissal in accordance with procedures found in the Student Handbook.

**Methods of Earning Honors Credit for a Class**

The **Honors Program** offers you five ways to earn Honors credit that are discussed below. The five categories are:
1. Honors sections of General Education and some major classes
2. Honors Seminars
3. Contract courses
4. Special projects that merit Honors credit
5. Credit for Advanced Placement classes

**Low Enrollment Honors Courses**

As a member of the Honors Program, you are eligible to take low enrollment Honors sections--capped at about 20 students--of regular courses which are taught by some of A&T’s best faculty members. Honors courses provide close intellectual interaction between you and your instructor, as well as between you and your Honors classmates. Honors sections provide a deeper understanding of the subject matter and challenge you to produce a higher quality of work than students in a non-Honors section of the same course do. Such classes encourage the development of your independent, creative and critical thinking skills. They provide opportunities for substantial student participation in class discussion, group projects, and other forms of engagement with the materials being studied. Essay tests and other writing assignments are stressed rather than objective or short answer exams. Where possible, the course content includes substantial use of primary and interdisciplinary sources.

**Honors Seminars**

Honors Seminars are generally experimental classes with a global and/or interdisciplinary focus. In some cases, rarely taught Department classes are also offered as Honors seminars if they can be enriched to include global and/or interdisciplinary components. Honors seminars are capped at 20 students and are open only to members of the Honors Program. Honors Seminars are cross-listed in each semester’s Schedule of Classes under both the Department offering the course and in the Honors Program section of the course schedule brochure.

In theory, all rarely taught courses in the Undergraduate Bulletin could be enriched in ways that qualify them to be taught as Honors Seminars. In practice, however, only lower level Departmental courses and special topics classes are offered as Honors Seminars. This is because upper level Departmental courses tend to focus on skills and content that both build upon lower level classes and are designed to meet the needs of majors in a particular field. Honors students, however, come from majors all across campus. Thus, in most cases, only classes that neither require substantial prior knowledge in the field nor have prerequisites will be taught as Honors Seminars.

**Honors Contracts**

The Honors Contract is a mechanism for adding an ‘honors dimension’ to a class which is not already an Honors course. The Honors Contract is a way that you can help design your own
educational experience in consultation with the instructors of the classes you take. Only full-time faculty members are eligible to supervise Honors contracts.

The Honors Contract process is designed to foster creativity in projects which are acceptable to both you and your instructor. Any number of enhancing activities and projects are possible. The underlying goal of the exercise is for you and your instructor to develop proposed projects or activities that add value to your academic experience, not merely more work. The enriching activities listed on the Honors Contract Form should require about 20 hours of work beyond that required by the regular course assignments.

It is your responsibility to approach a faculty member about the possibility of earning Honors credit in a class by means of an Honors Contract project. Although faculty members are not required to enter into an Honors Contract arrangement, most are willing. Once you and your instructor agree on the terms of an Honors Contract, you should fill out the appropriate portions of the official "Request for Honors Credit by Contract" form and have your instructor sign off on the proposed contract where indicated. Once the form is properly signed, you should submit it to the Director of the Honors Program for final approval. For information purposes, a copy of the "Request for Honors Credit by Contract" form is at the end of this Handbook.

Honors Contracts will only be approved under the following situations:

1] When there are no Honors courses offered that fit into your degree program requirements.
2] When you are already enrolled in an Honors course and would like to take one or more additional classes for honors credit that are not offered as Honors courses.
3] When the courses you are required to take conflict with available Honors classes and no schedule adjustments are possible.
4] Finally, no Honors contracts will be approved for a course that is being offered as an Honors class, unless the Honors class is full.

The deadline for submitting the signed Honors Contract form to the Director of the Honors Program is no later than by the first day of class for the given semester. Therefore, students should negotiate and complete their Honors contract during the semester before classes begin.

The Honors Contract does not affect your grade in the course. To receive Honors credit for the course, however, you must earn a final grade of "A" or "B" in addition to completing the contract. The deadline for completing the Honors Contract work is the end of the semester or summer session in which the course is taken. The only circumstance in which an "incomplete" Contract is permitted is if the student receives a grade of ‘I’ in the course. The Contract, then, must be completed at or before the time the professor removes the ‘I’ grade. Students who complete the course, but not the Honors Contract, by the end of the semester or summer session will not receive Honors credit for the course. At the end of the semester, the faculty member needs to contact the Director of the Honors Program only if you either did not complete your project, or if the work you carried out was not of sufficient quality to merit Honors credit.
If you are in a major that normally awards academic credit for completing off-campus internships or cooperative learning activities, you may earn Honors credit for these experiences by using the Honors Contract process. You must file the properly completed and signed Honors Contract form prior to beginning the internship. Your Honors credit would be awarded through the course number normally used in your major for giving students course credit for off-campus internships. However, you may earn no more than six hours of Honors credit by means of internship experiences. No Honors credit will be awarded for an internship if your Department does not normally award credit towards graduation to students for these experiences.

If you take part in an exchange program with another institution, you may earn Honors credit by using the Honors Contract process. Likewise, if you spend a semester studying abroad, Honors will award you six hours of Honors credit for the experience. A copy of the "Request for Honors Credit by Contract" form appears in the Appendix. It is also available at the Honors website. Copies are also available in the Honors Program office.

**Special Projects that Merit Honors Credit**

The Honors Program encourages its members to take part in imaginative academic and professional enrichment projects that may not be directly related to a course they are taking. Such projects may include research you are conducting in cooperation with a faculty member in your department, special community service activities where you are taking a leadership role, or some other activity that falls into none of the above categories. To have the activity you are involved in count for Honors credit, you must consult with, and obtain the approval of, the Director of the Honors Program. Such special projects may be used to meet the requirement that you take a minimum of one course for Honors credit each semester. The Honors Program will keep track of such special projects so that you will receive proper credit towards the completion of one, or both, Honors tracks.

**Credit for Advanced Placement Work**

Students who earn a ‘5’ on an Advanced Placement exam will be awarded Honors credit for one equivalent A&T course. Students who earn a ‘4’ on an Advanced Placement exam may be awarded Honors credit for the equivalent A&T class if they complete an Honors course in the same discipline with an ‘A’ or ‘B’ grade. Honors contracts may not be used to earn Honors credit for courses earned by means of an Advanced Placement score. No Honors credit will be awarded for courses earned by means of a ‘3’ on an Advanced Placement test. Students will be awarded no more than eight hours of Honors credit for Advanced Placement work.

**Recognition at Graduation**
Students who are members of Honors at the time they graduate are recognized and honored in several ways. First, all courses taken for Honors credit will be identified as such on your transcript. Also, you will receive special recognition at our annual Honors banquet. Next, you will be recognized in the Commencement Bulletin for graduating from the Honors Program. Finally, all students graduating from Honors will receive at our Honors banquet one or more regalia enhancements to wear at Commencement as indicated below.

a. Students who graduate as a member of Honors: Gold Honors cords  
b. Students who complete the General Honors track: Gold Honors Stole  
c. Students who complete the Honors in the Major track: Honors Medallion

**Honors Program Tracks**

Students who complete at least 24 hours of Honors credit by the time they graduate may be honored for completing an Honors track as explained below. No one is required to complete an Honors track. Many members of the Program, however, view the completion of one, or both, Honors track(s) as a personal challenge and opportunity to enrich their education.

However, students who have not fulfilled the prescribed expectations of the University Honors Agreement may jeopardize their eligibility to be considered for recognition in either Track. The Director reserves the right to determine the final level of Honors recognition and may consider compliance and/or non-compliance with the Honors Agreement.

**Track #1: General Honors**

The General Honors Track requires 24 hours of classes, 18 of which must be General Education courses required by your major. General Education classes include all of the courses offered by University Studies and other freshmen level courses in Mathematics, the sciences, and the humanities. If you are unsure which courses you are taking are General Education classes, you can ask your advisor or the Honors Program staff. You may count towards these 18 hours both the low enrollment Honors classes you have taken and Honors credit you earned by means of an Honors contract.

To complete the 24 hours, you should take two Honors Seminars by the time you graduate. However, we realize that some students have few, occasionally no, free electives in their curricula which make it difficult to take Honors seminars. Thus, in those cases, we will substitute three hours of Honors credit that you are not counting towards completing a track as a substitute for one of the Honors seminars. You still must take one Honors seminar to complete the track. In all cases, you will only receive Honors credit for courses in which you earned a ‘B’ or better.

Students who complete the General Honors track are presented a gold Honors stole at our annual banquet to wear at graduation.
**Track #2: Honors in the Major**

The other Program Track open to students is Honors in the Major. This Track also requires 24 Honors credit hours. Students in the track must take 18 semester hours of classes for Honors credit in their major or in closely allied disciplines required by their major. In some majors, we are able to offer low enrollment classes open only to members of Honors. Otherwise, you may take regular courses in the major or closely allied disciplines for Honors credit by means of the Honors Contract process. As in Track #1, we also want you to take six hours of Honors seminars. However, we realize that some students have few, occasionally no, free electives in their curricula which make it difficult to take Honors seminars. Thus, in those cases, we will substitute three hours of Honors credit that you are not counting towards completing an Honors track as a substitute for one of the Honors seminars. You still must take one Honors seminar to complete the track. Finally, you must earn a minimum grade of ‘B’ in any course taken for Honors credit for it to count towards completing Honors in the Major.

Students who complete the Honors in the Major track are presented an Honors medallion at our annual banquet to wear at graduation.

**Completing Both Tracks**

To complete both tracks requires 42 hours of Honors credit, including: a] 18 hours of General Education classes  b] 18 hours in your major or closely allied disciplines, and  c] 6 hours of Honors Seminars. As mentioned above, however, we will substitute some other class for which you earned Honors credit for one of the Honors seminars if you are in a major that makes it difficult to take such classes.

Students who complete both tracks receive both the gold Honors stole and the Honors medallion to wear at graduation. As of Spring 2009, less than 15 students have completed both tracks.