Joining Commonwealth Honors College as a Current UMass Amherst Student

Application Process

A competitive application process is used to select students who demonstrate outstanding academic performance, are prepared for the rigors of an honors curriculum, and can contribute to the diversity of thought necessary to create an inclusive honors college community. If you are a UMass Amherst student ready to maximize your academic experience and engage in the process of completing an Honors Thesis or Project, we encourage you to apply to Commonwealth Honors College.

Application Cycle

The application is currently closed. Please check this page in late March for information about the next application cycle.

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Learn More

Before applying, learn more about the benefits of Commonwealth Honors College, the honors curriculum and requirements, the Commonwealth Honors College fee, and the credentials earned by graduating with honors.

Eligibility

Current UMass Amherst students are eligible to apply to Commonwealth Honors College if they have completed one full-time semester of 12 or more graded credits and earned an overall GPA of 3.400 or above at UMass Amherst. Admission is highly competitive so meeting minimum eligibility requirements does not guarantee admission to CHC. Your application will be rated on a) the quality and content of your answers to application questions, b) your writing skills, and c) the strength of your GPA.
**Current Academic Status**

- First-year student
- Undeclared major
- Pre-major (e.g., ISOM, ENGIN, Pre-Med)

**Application Eligibility**

Should apply to the full curriculum with Advanced Scholarship in Multidisciplinary Honors

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**Current Academic Status**

- Sophomore, junior, or senior with a declared major

**Application Eligibility**

Should apply to

- the full curriculum with either Multidisciplinary Honors or Departmental Honors

OR

- one of the partial curriculum options:
  - Multidisciplinary Honors Only (MH)
  - Departmental Honors Only (DH)

*Students applying for Departmental Honors must contact the Honors Program Director in their department to confirm eligibility and read carefully Departmental Requirements prior to applying for the DH track. DH track requirements can be found at the link below: [https://www.honors.umass.edu/Departmentalhonors](https://www.honors.umass.edu/Departmentalhonors). You will need to explain your plan for completing DH in your department in the application.*

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**Curriculum Overview**

See curriculum and requirements for details on each component of the Honors College curriculum. Depending on your academic status, you may choose to apply for entry into the full curriculum or into one of the Depth of Study options. Consider your options carefully. It may not be possible to switch plans without reapplying to CHC.

**Application Instructions**

The Honors College application asks questions about your academic history, academic plans, and your interests in becoming a member of Commonwealth Honors College. Paying careful attention to the quality of your writing and the word counts, respond to each of the following questions.

1. Use one or two relevant examples to inform us if you have engaged in any leadership
activities, community service, student organization(s), or volunteer opportunities at UMass Amherst, if possible. What have you learned from your involvement in those experiences that are applicable to your Commonwealth Honors College scholarship? (150-200 words)

2. Using your UMass Amherst experience, tell us what course, or lecture, or co-curricular event, was intellectually rewarding and motivating for you. Why? Tell us something new and different that you've learned. (200-250 words)

3. What excites you about the opportunity to engage in research and complete an Honors Thesis/Project? What topics might you investigate or if possible, with which faculty member(s) would you like to work? (If you are applying to Departmental Honors, you must answer this question with as much detail as possible to explain your plan to do this work either working with faculty in a lab, or with an individual faculty in your major or enrolling in a course based seminar. For example, Biology states 'Please list the name of the faculty member with whom you will be working; if you plan to complete a thesis by enrolling in a course based thesis seminar, indicate the course in which you plan to enroll'). (250-300 words)

Your answers are an opportunity to articulate your commitment to the pursuit of academic excellence and are the only sample of your formal writing available to the application review committee. The review committee will expect clear, well-developed writing with compelling examples. The committee will also expect carefully proofed work that includes cohesive sentences and paragraphs. All applications are reviewed by a committee of Honors College Faculty and Deans.

**Acceptance**

Decisions will be sent to students by email, name@umass.edu which is your UMass official correspondence. Admission to Commonwealth Honors College will be recorded on SPIRE shortly after the decision is made. All accepted students must attend a CHC Orientation Session to learn more about their membership, curriculum requirements, and benefits, and to sign the CHC Terms of Agreement. The Commonwealth Honors College Fee will be assessed for every semester in which you are enrolled in Commonwealth Honors College.