

**5 October 2016**

## **Questions and Answers for Honors Program**

### **Who can apply?**

Students in the First or Second Year of the four year BScN Collaborative Program and who are attending the main University of Alberta Campus can apply to the Honors Program.

After Degree students can apply beginning in the 2016 – 2017 academic year.

Students studying at the Camrose site or other Collaborative sites are not eligible.

### **Can I apply as an After Degree Student?**

Yes. AD students will be able to enter the Honors Program in the 2016-2017 academic year.

### **I am in the Camrose Program. Can I apply?**

Students in the Camrose Program are not eligible at this time.

### **How do I apply?**

There are three easy steps to applying to the Honors Program. First, contact the Honors Coordinator ([jaspiers@ualberta.ca](mailto:jaspiers@ualberta.ca)) to discuss whether Honors is a good option for you. The Coordinator will give you the Honors Program application form. The deadline is MARCH 31. When you are advised you have been accepted into the program, you will then meet with the Student Advisor to complete the program change form (\$75) and to revise your program plan to include the Honors courses. Lastly, once you are admitted you, with the help of the Honors Coordinator will identify a Supervisor.

### **When can I apply?**

BScN Collaborative students can apply at the end of the Year 1 or up to the end of Year 2. The application deadline is **March 31** of each year. AD students need to apply BEFORE they start their program. AD students apply to the AD program and indicate via the Honors application form that they want to enter the Honors program. Upon acceptance, your program will be changed to Honors.

### **Why should I apply at the end of my First Year of the Collaborative Program?**

There are many advantages to entering Honors at the end of Year 1. You will have more time to:

- Get to know your supervisor
- Work on developing your project ideas
- Have the option of completing your Honors project early
- Gain more research experience on a range of projects. This can lead to publishing and presenting opportunities.
- Supervisors often employ Honors Students as Research Assistants during the summer vacations or throughout the academic year. There are a number of awards undergraduate students can get to provide your salary during summer work.

You can choose to start your research experience immediately or wait until Year 3 of your program. There are no Honors course expectations until you start N399 in Fall Term of Year 3.

Students entering Honors at the end of the first year have the option of completing their Honors project earlier which allows them to complete the fast-track completion option.

### **Is Honors just extra courses or a separate degree in Nursing?**

The BScN – Honors Degree is a distinct program and you will have BScN-Honors on your Baccalaureate Parchment. The Honors Degree contains all of the core theoretical and clinical courses but includes a special focus on extended learning about nursing knowledge development and completion of an Honors research project.

### **Do I have to take extra courses in the Honors Program?**

There is an additional three credits in the Honors BScN compared to the Collaborative BScN but two of the Honors courses replace two Collab program electives. There are two Honors courses - NURS 399 and NURS 499, weighted for three and six credits. The Honors project is part of the NURS 499 course and is completed over the summer months between years 3-4.

AD students will complete NURS 399 in their first year, complete their research project in summer between year 1 and 2 and complete NURS 499 in Fall of Year 2. The Honors courses are extra to the standard AD program

### **What GPA do I need to apply to Honors?**

Collaborative program Students: You need to have an average GPA of 3.3 (a grade of B+) in the last 24 credits of your program up to the time of application – whether that is in Year 1 or 2.

AD student applicants must have a GPA of 3.5 in their prior degree and must have completed the following prerequisite courses: English (★3), Human Anatomy (★3), Human Physiology (★3), Medical Microbiology (★3), Psychology (★3), and Statistics (★3). Applications are competitive.

NOTE: Acceptance is dependent upon obtaining approval from a potential research supervisor by August 31 prior to starting NURS 399.

## What GPA must I maintain in the Honors Program?

Honors Program Students must maintain A GPA of 3.0 throughout their program. Most Honors students say that the organisation required to complete their work helps improve their grades overall!

## Can I switch back to the BScN Program if I do not like Honors?

Yes, if you find that the Honors Program is not the right match for you, you can request a change of Program status through the Student Advisor. The credits completed go toward your Collaborative BScN program.

## Can I complete the Fast Track Option as a Collab Honors Student?

No, Collaborative students cannot take the fast track option as an honors student. You must choose between fast track and Honors Program.

AD students are in a condensed program so fast track is not a consideration in the AD program.

## Will I need to extend my nursing program?

No, all Honors Program requirements are designed to be completed within the standard four-year BScN Collaborative Degree Program or two years for the After Degree Program. Collab need to be able to work on the Honors research project during the summer between Year 3 and 4 in your program. AD students need to be able to work on their research project between Year 1 and 2 while also doing NURS 309 and NURS 310.

Students can choose to extend their program and there is an application for this completed with the Honors Coordinator and Student Advisor. Collab Students with extended programs have up to six years from the time of original admission to the Faculty of Nursing to complete the degree requirements. AD students have up to three years to complete the requirements for this program.

## What does the Honors Coursework involve?

The two Honors Seminar courses are a mixture of discussion and practical activities. Student groups determine learning needs and strategies to achieve learning goals.

In N399, we focus on research skills to prepare you for your project. Students also talk to beginning and established researchers to discover the variety of career pathways open to them and how clinical experiences shape a researcher's approach to knowledge development through their research. Students develop their research proposals with their supervisors and explore a scholarly topic of their own interest.

In 499 we focus on topics of interest to the group – which might range from talking with Nurse Practitioners, to learning how policy is created in CARNA, to the pros and cons of graduate education, the evidence base for using humor as a therapeutic strategy in health care or a critique of biomedical versus social models of disability in health care. **Students decide!**

Students choose topics they would like to focus on and create/facilitate a seminar. Lastly, students present their research in a public presentation and a written report.

Honors students may also seek opportunities to present their work and idea to their peers and other students in the Collaborative Program.

## What about Clinical Time?

Clinical time is protected as much as possible, depending on course configuration. Students are supported in attending scholarly events such as our local conferences as attendees or presenters and this may replace clinical time with the support of the clinical instructors.

## Is the class grade curved?

No, each student has the opportunity to work closely with their Supervisor and Honors Coordinator to set learning goals and to challenge themselves. Personal goals and the opportunity for repeated submission and feedback cycles for assignments allow students to reach high levels of accomplishment.

## How does Honors benefit me?

Here are some of the benefits Honors Graduates identify:

- You will have diverse skills that set you apart from other BScN Graduates.
- Employers want nurses who have demonstrated the capacity to extend their knowledge and skills in a wide range of competencies in evidence-informed practice, project work and presentation/writing skills.
- Honors is a safe way to see if you like research and whether you would enjoy graduate studies or academic career. It consists of two courses and a project – ample opportunity to see if a longer graduate program is for you.
- ***Imagine knowing you have contributed to improving nursing practice and policy.*** Graduates have a huge feeling of accomplishment – completing their own research, contributing to a larger program of research, not to mention the pleasure of seeing their name listed in publications and in conferences!
- Excellent preparation for Graduate School. Your competitiveness is exponentially increased because you have actual research experience, presentation experience and opportunities to work toward publishing your work.
- If you imagine your future career including leadership in clinical practice, education, or administration, you will need graduate school at some stage. The Honors Program is a significant launching pad for your success.
- You will be eligible for a range of grants and awards to fund and support your research. Great for your résumé.

- Imagine presenting your work at local, national and international conferences. Our graduates have been funded to present at many conferences, including the International Council of Nurses Biennial Conference.
- Reduce time spent in Graduate School. Honors helps you complete the Master of Nursing By-pass program – just one year in Master’s and then transferring into the PhD Program.

## What kind of research will I do?

Students engage in a wide variety of research, depending on their interests and match with a supervisor. You create a project with your supervisor that might:

- Be part of the supervisor’s existing research
- That will extend or contribute to their research program,
- Be a project entirely designed by you.
- Focus on one part of a research process (e.g. developing surveys or conducting interviews) or
- Consist of an entire research process from start to finish (from ethics through data collection and analysis).
- Find ways to translate or implement research findings and determine how successfully that occurs.

You, with your Supervisor, will determine what goals and skills you want to learn and build your project around those goals. The project is structured so that it can be completed within one summer (four months).

You are an apprentice in your Supervisor’s research team. You are supported and guided throughout all phases of your project. Imagine getting a grade for a proposal that you wrote with your Supervisor!

You will be able to work with other researchers including graduate students, Postdoctoral Fellows and other researchers.

The kind of study is unlimited. Recent examples include projects in:

- clinical trials
- survey research
- observations and interviewing people in qualitative approaches
- arts-based research
- analysing published research to answer questions
- Knowledge translation activities such as creating and evaluating the effectiveness of clinical tools.
- The research context can range from acute care situations, to community health care contexts, education curriculum and from babies and new mothers, to new immigrants, health care workers, supporting caregivers and innovative ways to track arts based knowledge translation activities.

## But how can I do my own research? I am not a researcher.

As an Honors student you are in a mentored relationship. Your Supervisor supports you throughout your project. This is what one Honors student commented about the experience:

*"I was a beginner at research, and the great part about being in the Honors program is that you have so much support and mentorship: your supervisor and their team (which can include graduate students, other undergraduate students, or other faculty members), your supervisor's network, your Honors instructor, and your fellow classmates. This support network truly facilitates learning, and everyone recognizes that you are an undergraduate and don't have a lot of experience."*

## **How do I find a supervisor?**

The Honors Coordinator will help you identify Faculty who do research that match your interests. You will have the opportunity to interview them to determine if there is mutual interest and compatibility. Most matches are between a supervisor and one student, but there are opportunities to develop group based projects with 2 or more Honors students.

## **More Questions?**

Please email the Honors Program Coordinator Jude Spiers at [jaspers@ualberta.ca](mailto:jaspers@ualberta.ca).