IVCC Honors Program Student Handbook

I. Mission
The Honors Program promotes the identification and achievement of education and/or career goals for its participants by offering specially designed honors curriculum, by providing stimulating academic and social program events, and by facilitating and recognizing student pursuits in community involvement, campus leadership, and experiential learning.

II. Admission
a. Qualifications
The admission decision for all applicants is based primarily upon the application essay explained in the following section. There is no minimum ACT or SAT score or minimum high school class rank for admission, but the information is considered as a complement to the application essay, and is requested on the application form mentioned in the following section. Students who have prior college credit will have their cumulative GPA taken into consideration. Once admitted to the program, a student must maintain a GPA of 3.25. Part-time IVCC students must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours in order to be eligible for the Honors Program. Early Entry College/Dual Credit students are eligible upon high school graduation. Students still in high school are not eligible until high school graduation.

b. Application
Students need to submit the following, all of which can be found at www2.ivcc.edu/honors:

- Honors Application Student Information Form
- Honors Application Essay Form

Additionally, all Honors Program applicants applying for a tuition waiver must submit a FAFSA application, if they have not yet done so, to the federal Department of Education. For more information about the FAFSA, please contact the Financial Aid office in C-223 or www.fafsa.ed.gov/

Program materials are usually due the second Friday of the entrance semester, though deadlines will be announced for each semester. Students may e-mail, mail, or personally deliver their program application form, application essay, and tuition waiver application to:

Adam Oldaker, office A-317
Illinois Valley Community College
815 N. Orlando Smith Avenue
Oglesby, IL 61348
adam_oldaker@ivcc.edu

The Honors Program Director will review the application form and essay with the Honors team, and will notify the applicant about the admission decision.

III. Program Requirements
a. Maintaining Eligibility
Students must do the following to remain eligible for the Honors Program:
- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25
- Show progress toward satisfying the program’s requirements by enrolling in an honors credit-earning class each semester in the program (this includes Honors independent projects).
Students who do not maintain the above eligibility requirements may remain in the program for one probationary semester, and will receive a document explaining their probationary status and outlining the requirements that must be met to be removed from probation. If the eligibility requirements are not met by the end of the probationary semester, the student will no longer be enrolled in the Honors Program and will not be able to re-enroll.

b. Honors Orientation Course
Students are required to complete a two-credit hour Honors Orientation course, which is designed to help students identify, plan, and achieve education and/or career goals. Students pay no fees or tuition for the course and are required, except under extenuating circumstances, to enroll in the course during their first semester in the Honors Program. The culmination of the course is the presentation of the Honors Plan at the fall Honors gathering (Honorspalooza). The Honors Plan states students’ educational and/or career goals along with their plan for how they will help to achieve their goals through community involvement, campus leadership, and experiential learning while members of the IVCC Honors Program.

The Honors Plan is a “living document,” and it is intended to guide students through their time at IVCC by focusing the pursuit of their goals; however, this does not mean that they cannot change their goals or ideas in their Honors Plan over the course of their time at IVCC.

It is important to note that the Honors Portfolio, the final class in the program, will ask students to collect evidence of their pursuit/achievement of community involvement, campus leadership, and experiential learning opportunities and to reflect upon the product of these endeavors. So, in essence, the Honors Plan is almost a proposal for a student’s Honors Portfolio. More about the Honors Portfolio is explained in Section IIId.

c. Two Honors sections of IVCC Courses
Students are required to complete two Honors-designated sections of IVCC courses, including Honors Project (HON 1003). All Honors sections of IVCC courses will conclude with a capstone project that is based on guidelines outlined by the instructor. Capstone projects in Honors Courses will engage students in the subject matter of the course and contain community involvement, campus leadership, and experiential learning components. Exemplary projects will be presented at the end-of-semester Honors gathering. Students are advised to take one Honors course in each of their first two years in the program. For students starting in a fall semester and aiming to graduate in two years, the program is designed with the intention that they take their first Honors Course during their first year spring semester and the second Honors Course during their second year fall semester.

Honors sections of courses may be offered each semester and students must take two of the offered section(s) in order to graduate. In extenuating circumstances, upon approval of the Honors Team, students may complete an Honors independent project in one of their regular courses and then receive honors credit for that course. The intent of this option is to avoid students taking classes that are inapplicable to their program or are redundant.
d. Honors Portfolio Course
Aside from completing the Honors Orientation Course and two Honors courses (including Honors Project), students will compile a portfolio during a one credit hour, tuition free, Honors Portfolio course. The student’s portfolio will demonstrate evidence of completing the following requirements:
- Community Involvement
- Experiential Learning
- Campus Leadership
Students are to demonstrate in their portfolio presentations how their experiences in the three above areas have helped them work toward achieving their education and/or career goals they established (or have revised) in their Honors Plan. Students are expected to fulfill the requirements by independently pursuing individually relevant opportunities in the above areas and by documenting their experiences with artifacts (photographs, fliers, letters of reference, reflective journals, etc. pertaining to activities). Therefore, students should include activities in addition to their Honors Course capstone project experiences when compiling evidence for the three above requirements. Students will present their portfolios at the end-of-semester Honors gathering during their graduation semester.

e. Honors Course Selection
Honors courses are chosen with input from students, faculty, and counselors on the best courses for any particular cohort of Honors students. However, it is possible that courses may be offered that do not transfer to some institutions or that do not count toward a particular student’s degree. The Honors Program believes in the value of such courses, even if they do not transfer or are not required for a degree, and strongly encourages Honors students to consider taking such courses regardless of their program of study.

f. Honors Program Evaluation
After successfully presenting their portfolio at the end-of-semester Honors gathering, and prior to graduation, students will submit an evaluation of the Honors Program and have a final, reflective meeting with the Honors Program Leader.

g. Active Participation
Members of the Honors Program will be expected to actively participate in the program during each semester of their membership. This includes attending meetings, participating in Honors projects on campus and in the community, and seeking ways to explore the 3 pillars of the program: campus leadership, experiential learning, and community involvement. Since the Honors Portfolio course asks students to reflect on their experiences with the 3 pillars, Honors students are expected to actively pursue such experiences, in regular and Honors courses and in their personal pursuits, during each semester at IVCC.

IV. Honors Program Benefits
a. Trustee Tuition Waiver
There are 28 half-time Trustee Tuition Waivers available to Honors Program students who are in good standing in the Honors program. Approximately 14 waivers are awarded in the fall semester, and approximately 14 waivers are awarded in the spring. In order to be eligible for a half waiver, a student must have earned 12 hours of IVCC credit, attained a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25, successfully completed Honors Orientation, and submitted a completed Trustee Tuition Waiver application, which will become available only after Honors Orientation is successfully completed. If more than 14 people are eligible for the waivers in a given semester, they become competitively available, and the Honors Team
will disburse them. Trustee Tuition Waiver applications become available after successful completion of Honors Orientation.

b. Honors Program Transfer
Students interested in transferring into a university’s honors program need to discuss their intent early on with the Honors Director. In some cases, special arrangements can be made to help the student qualify for their intended university honors program. However, some university honors programs are more difficult to enter as a transfer student. The Honors Director and Honors Team want to help students get the most possible credit for their Honors Program experience, and will help interested students work toward their individual needs in this area.

c. Honors Team
The Honors Team is comprised of the Honors Program Director, all Honors faculty, and the Dean of English, Mathematics, and Education. The Honors Team meets with the Honors Director on an as-needed basis to help with the administration of the program. Responsibilities of the Honors Team include:
- Advise the Director
- Review applications to the Honors Program
- Assist in selecting the Honors Program Essay winners
- Assist in selecting the Outstanding Honors Program Student awards
- Assist the Director in securing Honors faculty and determining Honors courses
- Represent the Honors Program at recruiting events and other functions
- Act as mentors to Honors students

Honors students are welcomed and encouraged to contact any Honors Team member to discuss a particular program issue.

d. Honors Transcript Designation
Students who successfully complete all requirements of the Honors Program will receive the designation of Honors Scholar on their transcript. This distinguished designation gives formal evidence of successful completion of the entire program. Completing students also receive a special designation on their diplomas. Students who do not complete all requirements of the Honors program will not receive the designation of Honors Scholar. Any Honors classes that are successfully completed will be designated by the passing grade and Honors course title on transcripts.

VI. Social Gatherings
The Honors Program periodically offers social events, which may include:
   a. Field trips
   b. Honors Program end-of-semester gathering
   c. Brown bag luncheon discussions
   d. Honors conferences
   e. Honors banquet
   f. Pre-graduation family get-together
VII. Typical Program Progression

Fall Admission

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Spring Admission

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Fast Track Structure
Under extenuating circumstances, students may complete the entire Honors Program in 2 semesters upon approval from the Honors Director, usually structured in the following manner:

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VIII. Contact Information

Program Web address: [www2.ivcc.edu/honors](http://www2.ivcc.edu/honors)

**Director Adam Oldaker**

Email adam_oldaker@ivcc.edu
Work Phone 815-224-0326
Office Location A-317
Link [http://www.ivcc.edu/oldaker](http://www.ivcc.edu/oldaker)

**Professor Nora Villarreal**

Email nora_villarreal@ivcc.edu
Work Phone 815-224-0331
Office Location A-312
Link [http://www.ivcc.edu/villarreal](http://www.ivcc.edu/villarreal)