



Handbook



College of Nursing

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

Welcome to the College of Nursing Honors Program!

Welcome to the University of Colorado College of Nursing Honors Program. We are delighted that you will be participating in this exciting experience.

You will be a part of a small group of selected students mentored by faculty members in regular meetings and seminars. You will get to know students from every level in the nursing Honors Program. Students will share experiences, and complete leadership opportunities such as conducting important research projects.

In the program, you will work with scientists on their studies and complete and disseminate a scholarly research thesis of your own. In addition, you will take six extra seminar credits to prepare for advanced studies and expose you to nursing leaders.

The Honor's Program benefits are numerous. It is challenging, requires work beyond the usual curriculum, and prepares students for graduate study and leadership in the profession.

My best to you as you begin this fulfilling journey.

Sincerely,

Catherine Jankowski, PhD
Co-Coordinator, Nursing Honors Program

Madalynn Neu, PhD, RN
Co-Coordinator, Nursing Honors Program

**University of Colorado
College of Nursing**

I. Honors Program Description

A. Program Goal

Participants in the Honors Program are prepared for active engagement in research with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values predictive of successful graduate study. They also will have enhanced personal growth in preparation for successful careers that demonstrate leadership and excellence in nursing.

B. Specific Aims

Upon completion of the Honors Program, students will have:

1. Identified a substantive area of nursing that has the potential to be the focus of graduate study
2. Produced an honors thesis demonstrating the science of nursing
3. Actively disseminated their research findings
4. Completed educational experiences that enhances their nursing scholarship
5. Participated in experiences that promote leadership capability

C. Benefits of the Program

The CU Nursing Honors Program includes many advantages for students, future employers, nursing, and society. As a part of enhanced academic learning, the honors research experience offers students the opportunity to explore in depth the theories, concepts, literature and published research in their specific area of interest. Students are guided by faculty and mentors to integrate knowledge from scholarly literature and apply critical thinking skills to the development of a testable research hypothesis. This program provides many opportunities to develop and refine scientific writing and speaking skills.

An expectation of students in the Honors Program is to pursue doctoral education soon after completing their Baccalaureate degree. As a result of the exposure to research and mentoring opportunities, students in the Honors Program are more prepared to pursue PhD education. The Honors Program includes events and structured supervised activities in which to interact with research faculty and PhD students. Individualized mentorship in scholarly inquiry facilitates professional partnerships and the student's research focus thereby supporting admission to doctoral education and progression of a career in science.

Students who successfully complete the program will be acknowledged at the CU College of Nursing Convocation. Graduates of the Honors Program will be accepted into the PhD Program at the College, should they apply for admission.

D. Selection of Candidates

Application to the Honors Program is by invitation. Newly admitted College of Nursing Traditional Program students are invited to apply based on their GPA, interest or experience in research, leadership capability, and recommendations by faculty and research advisors. Applications are then reviewed by faculty. Selected applicants will be invited for an interview with Honors faculty. Following these interviews, finalists are selected for the Honors Program. Students begin the Honors seminar courses in their Junior year.

II. Structure of the Program

A. Program Overview

The Coordinators of the Honors Program will organize and oversee the Honors Program. Upon entering the Honors Program, students progress with their cohort through the Junior and Senior years of the BSN Program.

Honors Coursework

Students will participate in **NURS 3216 and NURS 3226 (Honors Seminar I and II)** during the junior level, and **NURS 4236 NURS 4246 (Honors Seminar III and IV)** at the senior level. This series of four required seminar courses is designed to introduce students enrolled in the Honors program to mentorship opportunities, leadership experiences, inquiry regarding research and ethics, and the plethora of career opportunities in nursing available to them.

Students will be matched to a faculty research mentor in the fall of junior year and will continue to collaborate with the mentor through the junior and senior years. As seniors, students must take 2 credits of **(NURS 4727), Independent Study: Honors, 1 credit in each of the fall and spring semesters**. The final Thesis of this experience comprises a scholarly paper and a poster or oral presentation at an extramural research conference. Courses are described below:

NURS 3216 NURS Honors Seminar 1 (1 credit hour)

This is the first in a series of four required seminar courses designed to introduce topics relevant to development of the senior thesis proposal and broader discussions and readings related to ethical and leadership roles in the profession of nursing.

By the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Identify a research problem of interest in nursing and initiate a plan for in-depth study with a faculty mentor
2. Begin a focused literature search using relevant electronic data-bases
3. Develop a research question with related hypotheses
4. Review exemplars of leadership in nursing and the community
5. Understand the ethical codes and regulations for the responsible conduct of research

NURS 3226 NURS Honors Seminar II (1 credit hour)

This is the second in a series of four required seminar courses designed to continue to explore of topics relevant to development of the senior thesis proposal and broader discussions and readings related to ethical and leadership roles in the profession of nursing.

By the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Develop a plan for in-depth study of a researchable question including hypothesis testing
2. Complete a thorough literature search on topic of interest using relevant electronic databases
3. Communicate research concepts and goals to faculty and other students
4. Describe characteristics of leaders in nursing and the community
5. Implement as required the ethical codes and regulations for the responsible conduct of research

NURS 4236 NURS Honors Seminar III (1 credit hour)

This is the third in a series of four required seminar courses. Topics are relevant to the senior thesis and students' career development as leaders in nursing. This seminar provides opportunity for students to share progress and insights with peers and to engage in topical discussions.

By the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Work effectively with mentor to implement a research protocol
2. Offer reflection and critique to colleagues in pursuit of professional goals
3. Reflect on examples of key leadership demonstrations by nurses in practice and in the community
4. Implement the ethical codes and regulations for the responsible conduct of research

NURS 4246 NURS Honors Seminar IV (1 credit hour)

This is the final in a series of four required seminar courses. As a continuation of Seminar III, topics relate directly to the senior thesis and students' career development as leaders in nursing. Seminars continue to provide opportunity for students to share progress and insights with peers and to engage in topical discussions.

By the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Work effectively with mentor to complete research thesis study
2. Develop a portfolio containing a reflection of personal growth experienced through the Honors Program
3. Review and demonstrate exemplars of leadership in nursing and the community
4. Critique the current ethical codes and regulations for the responsible conduct of research and identify their limitations

B. Additional Enrichment Experiences

During the Honors Program, enrichment experiences might include opportunities to shadow specialized practitioners, attend professional meetings and presentations, participate in research team meetings with their designated faculty mentor, and/or co-author a research paper with their mentor

C. Mentored Research Experience

A major component of the Honors Program is a mentored experience with a College of

Nursing scientist. Students will register for **NURS 4727 Independent Study** during their senior year; 1 credit in the fall and 1 credit in the spring semester. The product of this mentored research experience will be the completed honors project including a scholarly paper and a poster or podium conference presentation. Students are expected to select a research mentor during their junior year. Students will complete the "Undergraduate Nursing Honors Thesis Approval Form" with a signed agreement from the research mentor. This will be submitted to Catherine Jankowski, Co-Coordinator, BS Honors Program for committee review and approval by the end of the spring semester of the junior year.

D. Honors Thesis

Students will submit a completed honors Thesis paper *to their research mentor by April 30 of the senior year*. The required poster, to compliment the paper, will be presented at an extramural professional conference in the senior year. Failure to complete the Honors Thesis or poster will result in withdrawal of the Honors Program Scholarship and any associated funding.

E. Maintaining Honors Designation

A minimum GPA of 3.0 each term must be maintained. If the term and/or cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be asked to leave the Honors Program. In addition, the failure of any course will result in a dismissal from the Honors Program. Funding associated with The Honors Program will be withdrawn if a student is asked to leave the Honors Program. Students also can be dismissed from the Honors Program by the Honors Program Coordinator for infractions related to the academic and professional code of conduct.

F. Summary of Student Responsibilities

1. Attend all scheduled Honors Program meetings and events
2. Complete all BSN and honors course requirements
3. Adhere to the "Guidelines for Undergraduate Nursing Honors Project"
4. Complete the "Honors Thesis Approval Form" before senior year
5. Work with the faculty research mentor on the proposed thesis project
6. Complete a scholarly project, including a Thesis and poster or podium presentation, under supervision of a faculty research mentor in the spring semester of the senior year.

Guidelines for Undergraduate Nursing Program Honors Thesis

I. Undergraduate Nursing Honors Thesis

Completion of an Honors Thesis is required of all Honors students. The Undergraduate Nursing Honors Thesis is an opportunity for Honor students to engage in an independent research project in collaboration with a faculty research mentor. Under the guidance and approval of the faculty research mentor, the student develops a formal proposal with a hypothesis or research question, aims or objectives, methods, results, and conclusion.

II. Procedure

- A. The student will start by considering their research interest and introducing them self to a potential faculty mentor. If the student and faculty mentor decide to pursue a research project, they will meet regularly to conduct the research. The faculty mentor will support the student's research project through the junior and senior year. The Honors Program instructors will facilitate matching each student with a suitable mentor in the fall of junior year.
- B. The student, with guidance from the research mentor and approval, will develop a brief proposal for the Thesis (approx. 2-4 pages) to include:
 - 1. Why is the question you are asking important and how does it fit in with the big picture?
 - 2. What is your hypothesis and what are the objectives or aims of the research?
 - 3. What results do you expect to find and why?
 - 4. What is the current status of knowledge in the field (i.e. current literature search)?
 - 5. What materials and methods will be needed to answer the research question?
- C. The research project should begin as early as possible to allow sufficient time for completion. Students will register for a total of 2 credits of Independent study in the Fall and Spring of senior year (NURS 4727) in addition to the seminar courses to conduct and complete the research project.
- D. In keeping with general academic guidelines, one credit hour equals a minimum of three (3) hours of study per week.
- E. The final required product will be a written scholarly paper and a poster or podium presentation, submitted during the senior year.
- F. The Undergraduate Nursing Honors Thesis will be evaluated by the research mentor and assigned a **letter grade**. Plus/minus grade designations for the grade can be used at the research mentor's discretion, in accordance with the College of Nursing Grading Policy.
- G. Federal regulations and University of Colorado policy require that all investigations of humans or animals must be reviewed and approved by an appropriate institutional review board (IRB). Most commonly, approval by the Colorado Multiple Institutional Review Board is required to conduct the research but other IRBs could be involved. In addition, the honors student investigators will complete training in the protection of human (or animal) research subjects through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online training.