

IAS Honors Program

To graduate with departmental honors you must complete a year-long seminar, write a research paper (generally 75 pages or longer), and work independently with a Faculty Thesis Advisor. The seminar, IAS H102 (fall only) and H195 (spring only) provide structure, feedback, and guidance in a classroom setting. The Faculty Thesis Advisor guides the research on your specific research topic. Honors must be completed in residence at UCB.

Who is eligible

To apply for the IAS Honors Program, you must:

- be declared in one of the IAS majors: PE, DS, PACS, MES, LAS.
- have completed 90 units
- have completed the 100-level required course in your major: PE 100, DS 100, PACS 100, or for MES and LAS, several upper-division courses.
- have a GPA of 3.6 in the major (upper-division courses only) and 3.5 overall. Only courses taken at UCB count toward the major GPA.

Preparing for Honors: Spring semester, junior year

1. Begin to explore thesis topics in the spring semester of your junior year. The most successful topics arise out of something you have studied or have been interested in for some time.
2. Determine who your Faculty Thesis Advisor will be. Your topic will determine who you ask to be your Faculty Thesis Advisor. Most faculty will only advise on topics in their subject area and prefer to work with students they know or have taught. Many will limit the number of students with whom they work.
3. Attend an Honors Workshop. This is a Q & A session with faculty and students in the current honors class. They will answer your questions about the experience of writing a major thesis, the pros and cons, and how much work it really is. Misassumptions abound about doing honors and this is an opportunity to learn the real story. Workshops are held only once in the spring semester. Watch for the date in the IAS email announcements.

The Seminar: IAS H102 and H195

IAS H102, Scope and Methods of Research in IAS, provides an introduction to research methodology. Enrollment is by Class Entry Code only. If eligible, you must attend the first class and submit an honors proposal, a 750-1000 word typewritten document describing the topic.

The quality of the thesis proposal is a critical part of the application. Having met the GPA standards, your admission to the honors seminar will be based on how well conceived out your honors proposal is. See "Some Advice for Writing a Thesis."

(Note: IAS H102 will fulfill the methodology requirement for PACS, DS, LAS, and MES majors.)

H195, Senior Honors Thesis Seminar, in which you will present weekly progress reports on your thesis writing. Enrollment is by Class Entry Code. To be admitted, you must meet the minimum honors GPA requirements, you must be recommended by the IAS H102 instructor, and you must have a viable hypothesis for your research papers (as determined by the instructor).

Completed honors theses are read and graded by the H195 instructor, the Faculty Thesis Advisor, and the faculty advisor for MES (if appropriate). The instructor will determine the final grade for the course.

Funding for honors

There are various opportunities to receive funding for writing an honors thesis. Please refer to the handout on funding sources.

Graduating with honors

The level of honors you receive (Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors) is determined by three factors:

- overall GPA
- GPA in the major
- thesis grade

Students who complete honors are eligible to wear gold honors cords at Commencement and Departmental Honors will be noted on your transcript and diploma. All completed theses are considered for the IAS Outstanding Honors Thesis Award, which is bestowed at the Commencement ceremony.

Incompletes in honors

An honors thesis must be completed on time in order to graduate with honors. If you take an incomplete in honors but do not postpone graduation, you will graduate without honors. If you postpone graduation by removing your name from the Degree List, you may still graduate with honors once your thesis is completed.

Other forms of honors recognition

Distinction in General Scholarship. All students with high GPAs automatically graduate with Distinction, High Distinction, or Highest Distinction (comparable to *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *summa cum laude*). Distinction levels are set by the Registrar and vary slightly each year, but are approximately 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9. To earn distinction, a minimum of 50 units must be taken at UCB (including EAP and UC in DC) and no less than 43 units must be taken for a letter grade (not including Phys Ed courses).

Dean's Honors List and Honors to Date are additional ways students can gain recognition. See the L&S Undergraduate website for more info: <http://ls-advise.berkeley.edu/honor/honor.html>.