Faculty-Student Agreement
A How-To Guide

The purpose of this document is to serve as an in-depth review of the purpose of and the application process for an Honors College Faculty–Student Agreement. This document is a great resource for students, instructors, and advisors to learn more about the entire process.

Submission of the Faculty–Student Agreement (FSA) Google Form is required to pursue an FSA. More information is available below. Due dates for the FSA Google Form are:

- Fall or Spring term: 11:59 pm on the Friday of the 3rd week of classes
- Winter or Summer term: 11:59 pm on the Friday of the 1st week of classes

General Information
A Faculty–Student Agreement is a way to earn honors credit in Element Two: Disciplinary Depth and Element Three: Transdisciplinary Capabilities within the Honors Laureate Diploma structure. There is no limit to the number of FSA honors credits students may count toward their Honors Laureate Diploma.

An FSA is a coursework contract between the course instructor and an honors student. The agreement stipulates if a student completes mutually agreed upon coursework in addition to the already established course syllabus, and the instructor confirms that the work is completed to their satisfaction, then the Honors College will award honors credit for the course to the student. The number of honors credits awarded is equal to the number of academic credits for the course on a transcript.

Any non-honors course at the university is eligible for an FSA. Courses taught by graduate students are also eligible for an FSA. Honors College (“UH”) courses and Departmental Honors (XXXXH) courses are ineligible. Other existing ways to earn honors credit are also ineligible (e.g., a research course, independent study course, professional work course). However, an FSA may be applied to a study abroad course to earn both study abroad honors credit and FSA honors credit simultaneously. The study abroad course must appear on the VT transcript.

Purpose and Process
The purpose of an FSA is to allow students to go deeper into the content and experience of a course and discipline. It is also an excellent way to establish a collegial relationship with an instructor. Therefore, the course should be chosen carefully and the additional work should reflect a student’s interests.

There are no specific requirements for the type of additional FSA coursework. This decision is intentionally left open to students and instructors to allow students in any major to pursue an FSA based on the characteristics of any individual course syllabus and experience. Any written work should be at least 10-15 pages total. All other types of FSA coursework should be comparable in intensity and commitment to this requirement to ensure an equivalent level of rigor across the spectrum of diverse FSAs.

The Honors College facilitates administration of the process but does not control the details of the agreement between the instructor and the student. The course instructor serves as the advisor,
consultant, and evaluator of the FSA coursework as outlined in the agreement. Instructors reserve the right to decline collaboration on an agreement or awarding honors credit for any reason at their discretion. Students who wish to cancel an FSA should notify their instructor and the Honors College.

More FSA information is available below and in the Honors Credit Tracker in Canvas. Please email honors@vt.edu with questions not addressed in this document or in the Credit Tracker.

The Process
The following is a step-by-step student guide to completing an FSA:

1. Before each term, review your schedule and determine which course(s) seems particularly interesting and is/are best suited for an FSA given your plan to earn an Honors Laureate Diploma.
   a. In addition to your primary major checksheet, the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) in Hokie Spa can help to determine whether an FSA-activated course counts in Element Two: Disciplinary Depth (E2) or Element Three: Transdisciplinary Capabilities (E3).

2. Reach out to the course instructor as soon as possible to propose pursuing an FSA in a course. It is your responsibility to present preliminary ideas for the FSA coursework based on your review of this document and the course syllabus. Although you will work together with your instructor to determine the additional coursework and deadline expectations, your instructor has final say on all FSA plans.

3. Once you have established an instructor-approved agreement, you may then complete the FSA Google Form in the Credit Tracker. See the first page for due dates.

4. Immediately after the due date, the Honors College reviews all submissions and will reach out to you with any questions.
   a. Providing as much detail as possible on the FSA Google Form and ensuring the course is correctly categorized as counting toward E2 or E3 will greatly expedite this initial review process.

5. The Honors College will email both you and your instructor to confirm the details as submitted in the FSA Google Form so you both have the details for your records, and so you may proceed confidently with your FSA.

6. You must submit all FSA work to the instructor by the last day of classes each term.

7. The week before the last day of classes the Honors College will reach out to your instructor as a reminder to confirm by the last day of classes whether you completed the agreement to their satisfaction, and whether they wish to award you honors credit. Honors will follow-up with instructors after the last day of classes as well.

8. At the conclusion of the term, the Honors College begins awarding FSA honors credit in your Credit Tracker equal to the course credit on your transcript.
More Helpful Information

FSA Google Form
The FSA Google Form requires the following information:
- Primary major
- Course prefix and number (ex. MATH 2375)
- Course title and number of course credits
- Instructor first name, last name, and email address
- Detailed explanation of instructor-approved FSA coursework
- Whether the course applies to E2: Disciplinary Depth or E3: Transdisciplinary Capabilities in the Honors Laureate Diploma (HLD) structure

Examples of FSA Coursework
There are no specific requirements for the type of FSA coursework. This decision is intentionally left open to students and instructors to allow students in any major to pursue an FSA based on the characteristics of any individual course syllabus and experience.

*Any written work should be at least 10-15 pages total.* All other types of FSA coursework should be comparable in intensity and commitment to this requirement to ensure an equivalent level of rigor across the spectrum of diverse FSAs.

The following are examples of the most popular types of FSA coursework:

- a hands-on project related to course content
- Participating in a professional or academic conference related to course content
- a presentation to the instructor and/or the class related to course content
- written work on course content, including but not limited to: a literature review, a research paper, essays, journal entries, etc.