

Honors Faculty-Student Agreement (FSA) Guide

This document provides an in-depth review of the Honors College Faculty–Student Agreement process and is a great resource for students, instructors, and advisors. Students are required to submit the Faculty–Student Agreement (FSA) Google Form (link located in the Canvas Honors Credit Tracker) to notify the Honors College of their plan to pursue an FSA at the start of any given term.

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

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.

General Information

An FSA is a coursework contract between the course instructor and an honors student. The agreement stipulates that if a student completes mutually agreed upon coursework that is *in addition to* the already established course syllabus—and the instructor confirms that the work is completed to their satisfaction—then the student will earn honors credit for the course equal to the course credit hours.

The course instructor serves as the advisor, consultant, and evaluator of the FSA coursework. Instructors reserve the right to decline an FSA request or to decline honors credit for any reason at their discretion. Students who wish to cancel an FSA should notify their instructor and the Honors College.

An FSA is a way to earn honors credit in Element Two: Disciplinary Depth or Element Three: Transdisciplinary Capabilities of the Honors Laureate Diploma depending on whether the course is within a student’s primary major. There is no limit to the number of FSA honors credits students may count toward their Honors Laureate Diploma.

Any Virginia Tech non-honors course (or non-existing way to earn honors credit) is eligible for an FSA. An FSA may be applied to a Virginia Tech course completed as part of a study abroad program to earn honors credit for both study abroad and an FSA simultaneously.

Honors Expectations

Details on the specifics of the additional FSA coursework are left up to the instructor and the student. This allows students to pursue an FSA based on their individual interests and the existing learning outcomes of the course. **Any written work (literature review, research paper, essays, journal entries, etc.) should be no fewer than 3000 words 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 FSA coursework.

More FSA information is available below and in the Canvas Honors Credit Tracker. Please email Honors (honors@vt.edu) with any questions.

FSA Coursework Examples

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

- Project work (artwork, models, original performance, fabrication, lab work, podcast, videos, creating an app or software program, etc.)
- A (PowerPoint, poster, etc.) presentation to the instructor and/or the class on a topic related to course content
- Written work related to course content (literature review, research paper, essays, journal entries, etc.)

A Step-by-Step FSA Guide for Students

1. Before each term, review your schedule and determine which course seems particularly interesting and may be a good candidate for an FSA given your plan to earn an Honors Laureate Diploma. Honors recommends pursuing no more than two FSAs each term.
2. Determine in which element of the Honors Laureate Diploma the FSA will count.
 - a. In addition to your primary major checksheet, the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) in Hokie Spa can help you to determine whether a course is within or outside of your primary major. This will help you determine whether the FSA will count in Element Two: Disciplinary Depth or Element Three: Transdisciplinary Capabilities.
3. **Obtain instructor approval of a final plan for your FSA coursework.** It is your responsibility to present to your instructor preliminary ideas for the FSA coursework. Although you will work together with your instructor to determine the final FSA coursework and deadline expectations, your instructor has the final say on all FSA plans.
4. **Complete the FSA Google Form by the due date for the term in question** (you'll need the coursework details in order to complete the form). Due dates 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
5. The Honors College reviews all form submissions and will reach out to you with any questions.
6. The Honors College will email both you and your instructor to confirm the details as submitted in the FSA Google Form so that everyone has a record and so you may proceed confidently with your FSA.
7. **You should stay in constant communication with your instructor throughout the term as you complete the FSA coursework.** Your instructor—not the Honors College—provides final FSA approval at the end of term.
8. The Honors College will begin reaching out to your instructor during the last week of the term to inquire whether you completed the FSA to their satisfaction.
9. You must submit all FSA coursework to the instructor **by the last day of classes each term.**
10. Shortly after the conclusion of the term, the Honors College begins awarding completed FSA honors credit in the Canvas Honors Credit Tracker.