# Table of Contents

President’s Message.......................................................................................................................3

Program Outcomes .......................................................................................................................4

Honors Program Experience and Requirements.................................................................5

Graduation from the Honors Program....................................................................................6

Scholarships and Partnerships...............................................................................................7

Leadership and Engagement....................................................................................................8

Frequently Asked Questions....................................................................................................9-11

Contact Information................................................................................................................12
Dear Honors Student,

Welcome to ECC! I am excited and pleased to welcome you into the Honors Program at Elgin Community College. We appreciate that you have chosen to come here, and I know ECC will meet (and exceed!) your expectations.

ECC offers you many benefits, and I hope you will take advantage of all of them. Whatever field you choose to enter, you will find experienced, qualified, and proven faculty ready to help you reach your potential. Get to know your professors; visit them in their offices. They all maintain office hours, and that is truly your time!

Extracurricular activities are a wonderful way to meet other students. The Office of Student Life coordinates countless activities and clubs. No matter what interests you, you can find a group of like-minded students and join them—or start your own club.

You are an excellent student and that is why you have qualified for this program. New challenges often bring an adjustment period and ECC is here to help. If you are worried or stressed, let your professor know or see an academic advisor; they'll provide you with guidance and resources to work through your challenges and achieve success. You are the reason we are here, and we are ready and eager to offer any help we can.

Feel free to contact me with your concerns and ideas. I look forward to meeting you personally in the weeks ahead!

Sincerely,

David Sam, PhD, JD, LLM
President
Program Outcomes

The Honors Program at Elgin Community College challenges highly motivated students to achieve their learning potential as leaders in a global community.

Through your involvement with the program you will:

- Research, analyze, synthesize, and share your findings from a broad range of material.
- Independently and critically examine your learning from different disciplines/perspectives.
- Explore alternative and global perspectives.
- Reflect on the consequences of ideas and actions—for yourself, for others, and for society.
- Participate in learning experiences beyond the classroom that include service and leadership opportunities.

Honors Courses

The ECC Honors Program can offer you rich and challenging classes to cultivate your potential and help you prepare for transfer to a four-year college or university. Course offerings are designed to allow students to meet general education requirements in smaller classes, creating an honors community that values innovative scholarship, leadership, and service experiences in and out of the classroom.

The Honors Program is committed to providing students with an annual schedule of honors classes for the upcoming summer, fall, and spring terms. Courses were selected to satisfy the general education requirements for most programs of study, allowing students the opportunity to include honors courses as part of their educational plans.

All students are strongly advised to complete an educational plan with an academic advisor who can assist you in mapping out which courses you need to complete your ECC degree. An academic advisor can also help you select the right courses to ensure you graduate from the Honors Program.

For a list of courses offered during the next year, visit elgin.edu/honors. Register for honors courses at elgin.edu/accessecc.
Honors Program Experience

To get the full Honors Program experience and become an Honors Program Graduate you must:

• Complete at least 15 credit hours of honors coursework with a minimum 3.25 GPA.
• Maintain a cumulative 3.25 GPA for all ECC coursework.
• Demonstrate leadership and service to the college.
• Complete the Honors Program Capstone Portfolio.

Honors Program Requirements

Minimum Honors Program Expectations

To maintain membership in the Honors Program, you must:

1. Enroll in at least three credit hours of honors coursework within the first two semesters enrolled in the program. Three additional credit hours are required during each additional year enrolled. Students are strongly encouraged to enroll in more honors courses than this minimum requirement.

2. Join ECC’s honor society, Phi Theta Kappa (PTK). PTK will help you to participate in leadership and service roles on campus.

3. Maintain a 3.25 GPA each semester. Students falling below a 3.25 will be permitted one probationary semester and must return to a 3.25 GPA by the end of the probationary semester.

Students who fail to meet the 3.25 grade point average after the allowed probationary semester will be deactivated from the honors program. However, students may immediately re-apply to the program once the eligibility requirements have been met.
Graduation from the Honors Program

Students who have met program requirements will be recognized as Honors Program Graduates. The designation is noted on your ECC diploma and transcript.

To be considered for Honors Program Graduate status, you must submit an application by November 1 for fall graduation and April 1 for spring or summer graduation. The application can be downloaded at elgin.edu/honors.

To graduate from the ECC Honors Program, you must:

1. Complete at least 15 credit hours of honors coursework with a minimum 3.25 GPA.
2. Maintain a 3.25 cumulative GPA for all ECC coursework.
3. Demonstrate leadership and service to the college outside of the classroom through completion of one of the following options. You must submit your co-curricular transcript as part of the Honors Program Graduate application.
   a. Achieving Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Level III (3) enhanced membership status by participating in PTK-sponsored events and serving in a leadership role.
   b. Actively participate in the ECC or local community through the following options:
      • Participate in the Honors in Action project.
      • Complete a project of service to the Honors Program.
      • Serve in a leadership position for a campus club/organization.
      • Demonstrate leadership in your local community.
      • Engage in and reflect on discussions on campus, such as campus speakers related to global issues/diversity, or other organized conversations.
4. Complete your Honors Capstone Portfolio after you have completed your honors classes. In the portfolio, you will reflect on your honors program experience as well as synthesize your learning across your honors classes in relation to the following Honors Program learning outcomes:
   • Research, analyze, synthesize, and share your findings from a broad range of material.
   • Independently and critically integrate cross-disciplinary knowledge.
   • Explore alternative and global perspectives.
   • Reflect on the consequences of your ideas and actions—for yourself, for others, and for society.
   • Participate in learning experiences beyond the classroom that include service and leadership opportunities.

If a student has any special circumstances or concerns regarding meeting any of the requirements stated above, he/she may contact the Honors Program director to discuss alternative requirements.
Scholarships

ECC offers many scholarship opportunities. There are over 200 awards available via the ECC Foundation scholarship application form annually. The typical award amount is $900. See elgin.edu/scholarships for more details.

A student who graduates from an in-district high school and is ranked in the top 10/20 percent of his or her class may be eligible for a non-competitive award. Visit elgin.edu/scholarships to learn more about the Board of Trustee Top 10/20 Percent Academic Scholarship.

Honors Tuition Waiver

The college encourages students who have successfully completed an honors class to pursue additional honors classes. As an incentive, students who earn an “A” or “B” grade as well as a cumulative 3.25 GPA will be able to apply for a tuition waiver. The waiver will cover in-district tuition for the number of hours for the completed honors course. To request a waiver, you must complete the “scholarships/waiver activation form” in the Financial Aid Office (Building B, Room B156) after you have completed an honors class. The waiver is valid for one year from the date you completed the honors class and may be used in any semester. Honors tuition waivers will be awarded for up to 15 credit hours per student (approximately five, three-credit-hour classes). The waiver does not include fees, books, or classroom supply costs.

Partnerships

The ECC Honors Program has specialized partnerships with Elmhurst College and Western Illinois University (WIU). The Elmhurst partnership provides one full-tuition transfer scholarship to an Honors Program Graduate. The WIU agreement allows program graduates to directly enter the WIU Honors Program. Contact the ECC Honors Program director with questions.
Leadership and Engagement

**Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society Membership Requirement**
The Honors Program is rooted in principles of the national Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society, which include the hallmarks of scholarship, leadership, service, and fellowship.

As a member of the Honors Program, you are expected to join Phi Theta Kappa (PTK). You may join PTK as a provisional member during your first semester (see page 6). To gain full membership, you must complete 12 college level credits with a minimum 3.25 GPA. There is a one-time membership fee.

You may also be interested in joining the PTK officer team or serving as a chair. PTK partners with the Honors Program to strengthen the honors community. There is a wide range of activities offered every semester that will meet your interests as well as fit your schedule. Membership also gains you access to hundreds of scholarship opportunities.

For more information, contact Amybeth Maurer at amaurer@elgin.edu.

**Student Government**
This is the governing body for ECC students with jurisdiction over matters of student welfare and financing of college groups and organizations. For more information contact the Office of Student Life at 847-214-7370 or studentlife@elgin.edu.

**Spartan Leaders**
In this role, you will lead new students through the new student orientation experience. You will conduct presentations, campus tours, and welcome new students and their families to ECC. For more information, contact the Office of First Year Programs at 847-214-7370 or studentlife@elgin.edu.
FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Are honors classes weighted differently than regular classes?**
   
   No, honors classes receive the same credit/weight as regular classes. However, honors courses do appear on the transcript with the honors distinction, which many transfer institutions highly regard as a sign of a student’s ability to handle challenging course content.

2. **How do honors classes prepare students for transferring to a university?**
   
   Honors classes are typically modeled on university, seminar-style courses that encourage questions, debate, and in-depth discussion of course content. Students engage deeply with content and are encouraged to work closely with faculty members throughout the semester on the various assignments and projects assigned in class.

3. **Is there a specific academic advisor I should talk with to get help planning my courses and/or transferring to a four-year college?**
   
   All ECC students are assigned an academic advisor during their first semester. It is important that you work closely with your advisor during your time at ECC to plan your classes in order to meet your educational goals. As you create your long-term educational plan, be sure to include at least 15 credit hours of honors classes. You can confirm who your advisor is by logging in to the student portal at elgin.edu/accessecc then clicking on the Self-Service option for Academic Plan & Registration. To set up an appointment call 847-214-7390 or visit the Student Success Center in Building B, Room B120.

   For general advising about honors classes and requirements for graduation from the Honors Program, please contact the Honors Program director at jkane@elgin.edu.
4. **How do I get credit for my Advanced Placement (AP) scores?**

   Contact the College Board to have your official score report sent to the ECC Records Office. Upon receipt, your report will be reviewed. If you meet the minimum AP score required, you will receive credit on your ECC transcript for the appropriate course(s). Review the Advanced Placement Test information at elgin.edu/advancedtesting for specific scores needed and equivalent ECC credit.

5. **How can I get more involved with the ECC Honors Program outside of classes?**

   There are many ways to get involved. First, consider getting involved with Phi Theta Kappa. Our chapter partners with the Honors Program to provide service, leadership, and community-building opportunities. Second, contact the Honors Program director, Jason Kane, at jkane@elgin.edu to express your interest and ideas. We want your help making this an excellent program and experience for all honors students.

6. **How can I get the tuition waiver for an honors class I completed?**

   Tuition waivers are explained on page 8 of this handbook. You can download the waiver application from at elgin.edu/honors. Once you have submitted your waiver, it should take approximately one week for processing. To confirm the waiver has been applied to your student account, view your account summary via the Student Portal at elgin.edu/accessecc. You will not receive any paper notification.
7. **Can exceptions be made for the Honors Program Graduate requirements?**

Students requesting additional consideration for coursework or leadership/service experience should complete the following:

a. Requests for leadership/service experience must be outlined in a letter written by the student. The letter should describe and reflect the type of experience(s), dates of experience(s), and role student played, and reflect upon the overall service experience(s) and student’s leadership role. Supporting documentation is required.

b. Requests for course equivalency should be made in writing to the Honors Program director. The student must submit a written explanation of how the requested course meets the stated outcomes for the Honors Program (outlined earlier in this handbook). The explanation should briefly describe how the course met the stated Honors Program outcomes and reflect on the course’s impact on the student’s overall “Honors Scholar Graduate” experience. The student must also submit a copy of the course syllabus along with the written request.

Note: Course equivalency will not appear on a student’s transcript and will not generate transferable credit hours; it is used solely to determine eligibility for Honors Scholar Graduate recognition.
Contact Information

Jason Kane, MA  
Director, Honors Program  
Building B, Room B347  
847-214-7514  
jkane@elgin.edu

Student Success Center  
Building B, Room B120  
847-214-7390

Student Leadership Opportunities  
Amybeth Maurer  
Director, First Year Programs & Student Life  
Building B, Room B173  
847-214-7423  
amaurer@elgin.edu