

Frequently Asked Questions about Academics

◆ *Website: Registrar.hollins.edu* ◆

What is ESP? Why do I have to take all these perspectives and skills?

Education through Skills and Perspective (ESP) is Hollins' unique general education program. It is designed with breadth across the curriculum and maximum flexibility for students in mind. Students are required to fulfill eight different perspective requirements from at least seven different disciplines (these are the "lenses" through which we hope students will view the world) and seven skills (these are the practical applications that everyone needs in order to be successful in college, life, and future careers). It sounds like a lot, but a course can count for up to one perspective and two skills at the same time. For instance, a student might take HIST 111 and it will satisfy the Social and Cultural Diversities perspective and a first-year writing (expository) requirement. This program allows students to become familiar with at least seven different disciplines during the course of their undergraduate studies. Many times, this exposure to multiple disciplines is what leads students to find their majors and minors. For more detailed information about the ESP program, please visit the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services website* and click on Policies, Information and Forms and then click on ESP.

How can I change my advisor if I'm not ready to declare a major?

First year students change advisors any time between the end of the first term and when you declare a major (at the end of your sophomore year). Transfer students may change advisors at any time between enrolling and declaring a major. In order to change an advisor, ask a faculty member who you know and like if he or she would be willing to serve as your advisor until you declare a major. If the faculty member agrees, have him or her sign an "Advisor Change Form" available from Registrar's Office/Academic Services (lower level of Main). You will also need to secure the signature of your former advisor before dropping the form by the Registrar/Academic Services Office. If you do not know a faculty member who you would like to be your new advisor, but would still like a new advisor, please contact the dean of academic services at x6333, or the registrar at x6016, who would be happy to serve as temporary advisors.

How many classes should I take each term?

The minimum number of credits to remain a full-time student at Hollins is 14. If a new student takes 16 credits each semester for 8 semesters (plus four short terms), she would graduate on time with 128 credits and four short terms (for the BA). The maximum number of credits a student can take each term is 22. An overload of more than 18 credits must be approved by both your advisor and the dean of academic services. Short term credits are NOT counted in the overall 128 required credits.

How do final exams work at Hollins?

There are two types of final exams at Hollins: Independent exams and scheduled exams. Faculty members can decide which system they want to use, or they may opt for a final project or paper that has to be completed during the final exam period. Please check your syllabi or ask your instructors which exam system they are using in your individual classes.

Scheduled exam days and times are set by the Registrar's Office and are posted on the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services website* under the Schedule of Classes link. When you retrieve the matrix, look for the days/times when your class normally meets and find the scheduled day/time for your final exam.

Independent exams afford students maximum flexibility. These exams are run by the student Academic Policy Committee in conjunction with Academic Services and provide three testing times (9:00am-12:00pm; 2:00pm-5:00pm; 7:00pm-10:00pm) each day of exams with the exception of the last day when there are only two sessions (9:00am-12:00pm and 2:00pm-5:00pm). There is no evening exam on the last day of exams. You must arrive at Dana 142 (the room where exams are distributed) 15 minutes prior to the beginning of an exam period. If you arrive late, you will not be allowed to take the test during that exam period.

After students have completed their independent exams, they must not talk about the content of the exams with any other students. This is a violation of the Honor Code.

Refer to the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services website* for specific dates of exams. Also, information will be available through my.hollins, HUTV, and postings around campus.

Do I have to take Physical Education classes?

Yes, every non-Horizon student must take two physical education classes in two different terms in order to graduate from Hollins. One course taken should contain the wellness component and must be completed by the third semester. Horizon students are exempt from the requirement, but are more than welcome to take Physical Education courses. Please refer to the online catalog for the specific requirements regarding PE.

Do I have to study the language I studied in high school to fulfill the language requirement?

No, you have a couple of options for fulfilling your language requirement. You can either continue with a language you studied in high school through the intermediate level at Hollins, or you can start a new language and study it through the elementary level. Here are a couple of scenarios that may help you to understand the requirement: You took four years of Spanish in high school, but when you took the placement test at Hollins you placed into elementary Spanish (101) or Accelerated Elementary Spanish (110). At this point, you will need to make a

decision. If you decide to pursue Spanish to fulfill the language requirement, you will need to commit to three/four semesters to make it through intermediate Spanish (101-102/110, 111-112). If you do not want to study in a Spanish-speaking country or do not have any interest in pursuing Spanish, then you may want to consider taking a new language and taking 101 and 102 to fulfill the requirement. If, on the other hand, you take the placement test and place into intermediate Spanish, then you would only need to take two terms of Spanish (111-112). If you place above the intermediate level on a Hollins placement test, you have fulfilled the language requirement. Nevertheless, you should continue to study a language in which you have already reached this level of proficiency.

Transfer students who have one year of a single college language with grades of C or higher have completed the language requirement. Transfer students who come to Hollins with no college language must complete the requirement as outlined above for first-year students.

Horizon students fulfill the language requirement by successfully completing the elementary level of any language regardless of whether it was studied previously.

Can I take the Quantitative Reasoning test more than once?

No. The QR assessment is offered twice a year: once in the summer for new students who are enrolling in the fall and once in January for new spring enrollees. It is very important to take this test before you start your first term at Hollins so you can plan how to fit in your quantitative reasoning classes.

Once you take the assessment, there are four possible scores: BQR, which indicates you have completed the basic quantitative reasoning requirement (q), or MATH 100, MATH 105, MATH 130 (all of which will satisfy the “q” requirement). Students who place into MATH 100, 105, or MATH 130 must complete that course in order to be able to sign up for an applied quantitative reasoning course (Q). So, when you’re looking at the schedule of classes, you will need to avoid “Q” classes if you have not yet satisfied your “q” requirement.

Questions regarding QR requirements should be directed to the QR Director.

When do I declare my major?

You must declare a major by the end of your sophomore year, but you are also welcome to declare before that time if you know for certain what you want to study while at Hollins. Transfer students must officially declare a major as well (not automatically done when enrolled). You may change majors after your original declaration and prior to your senior year. *See the following page for how to declare a major.*

How do I declare my major?

Approach a faculty member in the department in which you want to major and ask if he/she would be willing to serve as your advisor. If that person agrees, have him/her sign a major declaration form (available on the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services* website under Advising Information: For Students). Have your former advisor also sign the form and then drop the completed form off at the Registrar's Office in the lower level of Main. Reminder that current policy for majors and minors is: 1 major, no minor; 1 major, 1 minor; 1 major, 2 minors; or 2 majors, no minor.

How long do I have to add/drop classes?

You have one week at the beginning of the term to add classes and four weeks to drop. You cannot drop a class after the deadline unless there is a documented medical reason that has prevented you from attending a class. For specific add/drop deadlines, please refer to the online academic catalog on the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services* website.

Can I add/drop classes after online registration has closed?

Yes. Each year, we have online registration in November for the coming January/spring terms and then again in April for the next fall term, and even though we close online registration the day after all class years have registered, students can adjust their schedules by filling out an add/drop form and taking it to the Registrar's Office (as long as there are no holds on the account). You do not need your advisor's signature if you have already registered unless the course(s) that you want to add will take you over 18 total credits for the term. Online add/drop opens up again at the beginning of the term and remains open until the last day to add. During that time, you can make adjustments to your schedule online using the registration PIN you received from your advisor. **If you have lost your PIN please see your advisor.**

Can I take classes on the Pass / Fail system and how does it affect my GPA?

It is the prerogative of instructors to determine whether or not you will be allowed to take a course Pass/Fail. You can take ESP classes P/F and still receive the skill or perspective. You cannot take courses P/F that count toward your major or minor. Before making a decision about whether to take a class P/F, you should take into account that *it may affect your ability to be on the dean's list for a term or to receive Latin honors at graduation*. You must carry at least 14 graded (non P/F) credits and earn a term GPA of 3.5 in order to be considered for the dean's list for a semester. In order to qualify for graduation honors, students who came to Hollins as first-time, first-year students must earn at least 112 graded credits (leaving a maximum of 16 P/F credits).

If you earn a grade of “Pass,” it will not affect your GPA. However, if you fail a class, it will affect your GPA negatively. You have four weeks at the beginning of the term to declare a class Pass/Fail. We urge students to consider the P/F option carefully before making a decision. You should talk it over with your instructor and advisor, and perhaps wait until you have at least one big graded assignment. If you earn an “A” in a class you have signed up for P/F, you cannot “undo” your decision after the deadline to declare a class P/F. If following the three-year accelerated plan, please see the dean of academic services regarding P/F option.

Where can I go if I'm having trouble writing papers?

The Center for Learning Excellence has a Writing Center staffed by tutors who are trained to help students at any stage in the writing process. This service is free to Hollins students. You can make an appointment or walk in during their open hours. Please refer to the **Writing Center website** for hours of operation. You will note that there are also useful handouts on the site regarding how to include citations in academic papers.

Who should I see if I want to explore different academic plans?

Your academic advisor, the dean of academic services, or the registrar should be able to help you with academic planning.

What should I do if I'm not passing a class?

You should talk to your instructor about dropping the course or declaring pass/fail (only if it is before the deadline to drop a course). If it is after the deadline to drop, you will need to work with the instructor to try to do as well as you can. Perhaps your instructor can recommend a tutor who can help you to improve in the course.

What is an incomplete?

Incompletes are extensions that may be granted at the end of a term by an instructor to give students more time to complete work. Students should not request incompletes unless there is a really good reason to do so: illness that has prevented completion of a course, an emergency that took the student away from campus at the end of the term, etc. While incompletes may seem like a good idea at the time, they can become burdensome if the student does not complete the outstanding work right away. Again, we would encourage requesting incompletes only in the most extreme situations. Incomplete forms are available at the **Registrar's Office and Academic Services** website under Policies, Information, and Forms, Academic Forms link.

Is there a dean's list at Hollins?

Yes. Each term, students can qualify to be selected for "dean's list" if they meet the following criteria: 1) successfully complete at least 14 graded credits, 2) earn a term grade point average of at least 3.5. Grades of incomplete and "Y" (for honors theses) will prevent the immediate notation of "dean's list" at the end of the term. All incompletes must be completed for honors to be determined. The notation of "dean's list" will appear on the transcript each semester the criteria listed above are met.

Can I take summer classes?

Hollins does not have a summer school program. However, many students choose to take classes at local community colleges close to their homes and transfer the credits back to Hollins. In order to have a course transfer back, you must fill out a "Transfer Course Approval" form (available online at the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services* website). In order to have non-Virginia Community College courses count for ESP requirements, students must (in addition to filling out the form mentioned above) submit course descriptions to the dean of academic services who will in turn present the courses to the Academic Policy Committee for approval. In order to receive credit for the courses taken at other institutions, students must submit an official transcript to the Registrar's Office and must have earned a grade of C or higher (C- does not work). No more than 18 summer credits can be counted toward the degree and no more than 12 credits can be counted in any given summer.

What do I do if I'm having financial trouble?

First things first, you should visit the Scholarships and Financial Assistance Office to find out if there is any more scholarship or loan money available. Another way of saving money is by considering an accelerated plan to graduation. This is not for everyone. However, if you are willing to either take summer classes at a community college (where the cost per credit hour is lower) or attempt to take overloads while at Hollins, you may be able to graduate a semester or year early, thereby saving a substantial amount of money. An accelerated plan is not a short-term solution to financial issues. It must be viewed in terms of the long-term benefits (how much could be saved over time by graduating early?). For information on the accelerated three year plan, please refer to the online academic catalog and make an appointment to meet with the dean of academic services at x6333.

Where do I get internship forms?

For all internships, please visit the *Career Center's website* where you can find an entire packet of information on applying for internships. During open registration you will need to register for the ADM 399 placeholder course in order to register for an internship (this applies for fall, short and spring terms). The ADM 399 placeholder course will be removed from your

registration if the internship falls through. You must be certain to maintain all your full-time status for financial aid purposes. All internship paperwork must be completed and submitted to the Career Center (located in the lower level of West) by the set deadlines.

How do I calculate my GPA?

Please visit the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services* website and click on How to Calculate Your GPA under Advising Information: For Students.

How do I earn graduation honors?

In order to earn graduation honors, a student must earn a 3.5 in all work at Hollins, must complete her senior year at Hollins, and must complete a required amount of Hollins work. Three levels of recognition of honor will be awarded at graduation:

Summa cum laude: 3.85 with at least 112 graded credits (at least 84 graded credits for 3-year transfer students)

Magna cum Laude: 3.70 with at least 112 graded credits (at least 84 graded credits for 3-year transfer students)

Cum Laude: 3.50 with at least 112 graded credits (at least 84 graded credits for 3-year transfer students)

Additional information regarding honors is located in the online academic catalog.

Who should I see if I have time management issues?

For help with time management issues that are affecting academic success, please talk to your advisor or the dean of academic services who will attempt to help you set reasonable goals, get organized, and stay focused.

Who should I see if I have trouble with Math?

Hollins has a quantitative reasoning center staffed by student tutors. The service is free to current Hollins students. Please see the *Quantitative Reasoning Center website* for hours of operation and more information.

If I think I want to transfer from Hollins, what do I need to do?

First of all, please make an appointment to talk with your academic advisor or the dean of academic services to discuss this. This decision should be made only after careful thought and

having weighed the pros and cons of staying or leaving. If you decide you do want to transfer, you have two different options: 1) Go on a leave of absence for a term or a year. This course of action allows you to step back into Hollins after the conclusion of the leave without having to reapply. In fact, while you are on a leave, you are still considered a Hollins student and are entitled to continue using your Hollins e-mail. 2) Ask to be withdrawn from Hollins. This course of action is more permanent and indicates that you have no intention of returning to Hollins in the future. Regardless of whether you decide on a leave or a withdrawal, you must meet with the dean of academic services who will conduct an exit interview with you. You should also meet with the director of financial aid to find out if there are any financial implications to taking a leave or withdrawing. Please contact the dean of academic services at x6333.

Where do I find academic forms?

Academic forms are available on the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services* website. You can also stop by the Office of the Registrar and Academic Services (lower level of Main) where forms are available for pick-up in the hallway outside of the offices.

What do I do if I want to take more than 18 credits in a term?

In order to take more than 18 credits, you must fill out an add form with the course(s) that take(s) you over the 18 credits you cannot register for online. Take the form to your academic advisor and secure his/her signature on the form. Bring the form over to the dean of academic services (office 6, lower level of Main) for the dean's signature.

Where can I find a closed course list?

The Closed Course List is published by the Registrar's Office and is available along with the schedule of classes on the *Registrar's Office and Academic Services* website. It is also posted on the bulletin board outside of the Registrar's Office (lower level of Main).

When do I need my advisor's signature on forms?

- a) On an add/drop form when you are taking more than 18 credits.
- b) On a pass/fail/audit form.
- c) On a major/minor declaration form or an Advisor Change form.
- d) On independent study, internship, and thesis forms.

- e) On add/drop forms after deadlines for adding and dropping (these would also require the signature of the dean of academic services and are only approved in the most extenuating circumstances).
- f) On a Transfer Course Approval form.
- g) On a registration form (if you have not registered online). You must include your registration PIN on the form to register manually or secure advisor's signature on form.
- h) On the Roanoke College reciprocal forms.
- i) On a summer reading form.

Which forms require an instructor's signature?

- a) An add/drop form when the class is closed or to waive a prerequisite.
- b) On add/drop forms after deadlines for adding and dropping (these would also require the signature of your advisor and the dean of academic services and are only approved in the most extenuating circumstances).
- c) On a pass/fail/audit form.
- d) On independent study, internship, thesis forms.
- e) On a summer reading form.