



WHAT IS THE  
HONORS  
CAPSTONE?

A UNIQUE PROJECT  
CREATED BY THE STUDENT  
AND BASED ON THEIR  
MAJOR, INTERESTS, CAREER  
GOALS, AND MORE.

Capstone Toolkit and Guidelines

# Honors Capstone Toolkit and Guidelines 2026

## Table of Contents

| Pages   | Contents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 – 3   | <b>Honors Capstone Overview</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4 – 6   | <b>Writing Your Proposal: Proposal Components and Expectations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|         | Components <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal Form</li> <li>• Cover Page</li> <li>• Abstract</li> <li>• Part One: Overview and Goals</li> <li>• Part Two: Specifics</li> <li>• Part Three: Evaluation of Resources</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                             |
|         | Expectations for the Capstone Proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 7       | <b>Honors Timeline</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 8 – 13  | <b>Capstone Options</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracted Courses               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Examples</li> <li>b. Nuances for Specific Courses and Majors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors Topics Courses (HON 491C)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently Arranged Units               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Research (485)</li> <li>b. Internships (408)</li> <li>c. Independent Studies (497)</li> <li>d. Legislative Internship (466)</li> <li>e. Directed Readings (475) – rarely used and likely being removed</li> <li>f. Thesis (490) – infrequently used</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 14 – 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Abroad               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Semester(s) Abroad</li> <li>b. Global Research and Internship Program (GRIP)</li> <li>c. Interdisciplinary Global Programs (IGP)</li> <li>d. Faculty-Led Programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                   |
|         | <b>Instructor of Record and Mentor Selection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|         | <b>Next Steps</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Enroll in Capstone Coursework</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 16 – 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors Contracts</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors Independently Arranged Units</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earning Honors Credit Abroad</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Component</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capstone Changes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

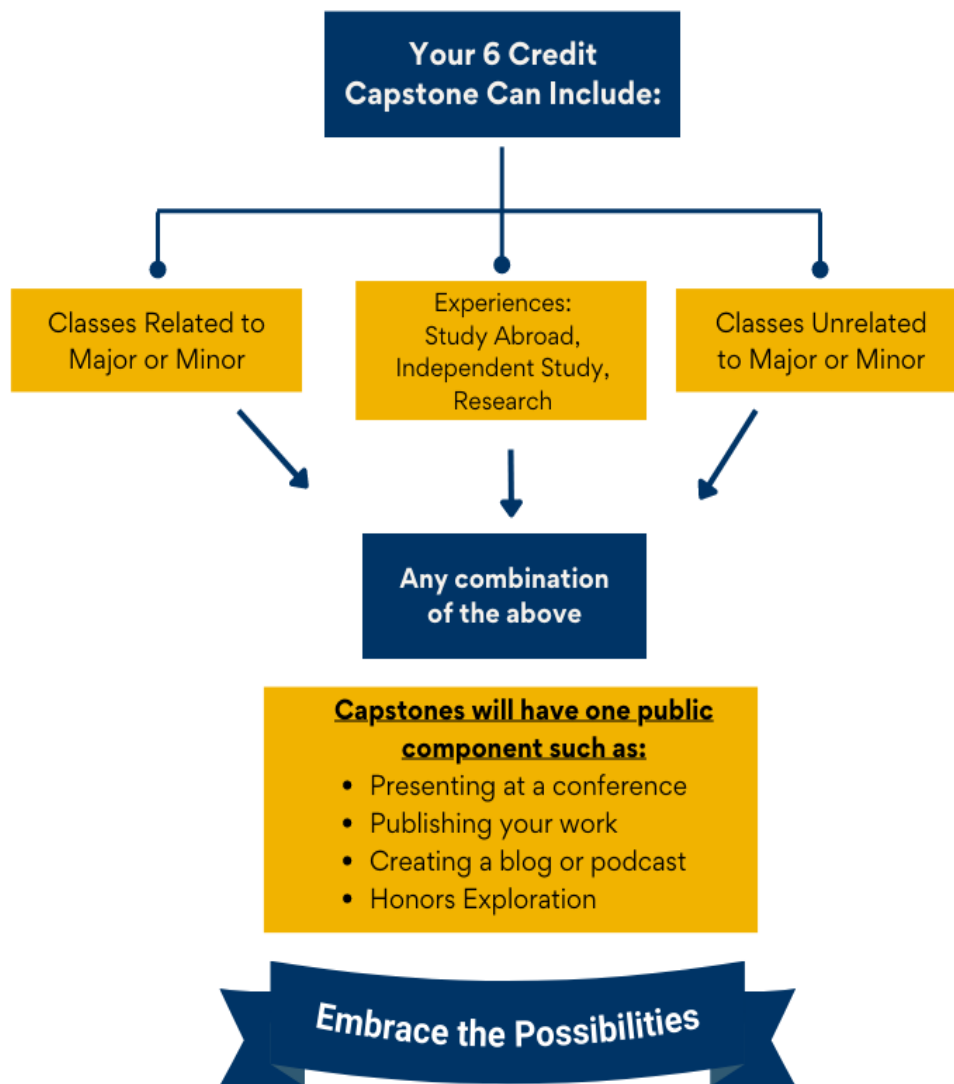
Honors Capstone website:

<https://in.nau.edu/honors-college/student-experience/academics/honors-capstone/>

### What is the Honors College Capstone?

Your [Honors Capstone](#) is a rigorous culminating project that represents a sustained academic experience at NAU. Depending on your major/minor, interest areas, and personal and career goals, your Honors Capstone may look very different from other students' Honors Capstones. The unifying thread for all Honors Capstones is that they contribute to the development of disciplinary knowledge or practice, and that they result in a public presentation component where you share what you have learned.

### What are the Options?



- Honors Capstones generally fall into one of three categories:
  - All six units can come from Capstone or other classes that have been contracted for Honors units or have Honors-specific seats.
  - All six units can come from one or more projects or experiences by enrolling in Honors or departmental (contracted) independently arranged units (BIO 408H, HON 497, CCJ 485H).
  - The six units can come from a mix of classes, projects, and/or experiences.
- The Honors Capstone can be related to your academic plans or not.
- All Capstones will result in the completion of a public component where you share information with a larger community. You might consider a poster that you present at the [Undergraduate Research Symposium](#) (spring-only) or the Honors Symposium (fall-only), the creation of a website or a blog, writing a book or novel, presenting at a regional or national conference, or other options. Remember that you only need to have one public component. So, if you do more than one project for the six units (a class and a research project, for example), you do not have to complete more than one public component.
- Students must complete HON 303 (Advanced Honors Scholarship) with their approved Capstone proposal before taking classes towards their Honors Capstone.

### What is the Best Option?

This will depend on your educational goals and objectives, as well as available coursework and opportunities.

Some possible questions you may ask yourself in preparation for designing your Capstone are:

- What are your major capstone requirements? Do you want to incorporate your Honors Capstone while also fulfilling your major capstone?
- Do you want to take coursework in your major or minor to fulfill part or all of your Honors Capstone?
- Do you want to have an experiential Capstone where you are working on an independent project, completing research, or participating in an internship?
- Is there a passion or interest area you have not been able to develop but would like to?
- Is there a faculty member with whom you are interested in working on a project?
- Do you have a professional or career aspiration outside of your major that you would like to focus on?

## Proposals:

The proposal should be specific, clear, and succinct: your Capstone focus and scope, how you will complete this project, and why it is meaningful and worth producing.

The proposal should be minimally five to seven pages (double-spaced) with resources of at least five sources.

## Finished Proposal Components:

You will include each of these areas in your proposal with the specified sub-headings:

1. **Completed Proposal Form:** Please fill it out accordingly and sign. This will be signed by your HON 303 instructor after you have completed the course requirements.
2. **Cover Page:** see cover page template.
3. **Abstract:** You will develop a coherent abstract which explains, in 150 words or less, the scope of your project and the intention behind it. You will write this portion of your proposal at the end of the process once you can articulate your ideas concisely.
4. **Part One: Overview and Goals**
  - Overview: You will frame the scope of your Capstone and articulate the path your Capstone will take. This section should be a bit biographical and explain who you are as a student and whether your Capstone is focused on your personal, academic, or career goals. This section serves as the “what” of your project.
  - Project Goals: This section will clarify the “why” behind your project. You will articulate the goals and aims of your project and the larger impact. This section should include:
    - a. The significance of your Capstone: why is it important to you, and how it will contribute to a larger community?
    - b. Minimum two questions shaping your project
    - c. Limitations
    - d. Potential problems or issues impacting your Capstone and possible solutions.
5. **Part Two: Specifics**
  - Specifics: You will clarify how you plan to complete your Capstone and the steps necessary to take. The specifics section will identify the “how” of your project. This section should be in narrative form except for the schedule and timeline for completion, which should be bulleted. This section needs to include:
    - a. Course sequence
    - b. The schedule and timeline for completing your Capstone (in bulleted form)
    - c. The research methods and ethics for your Capstone if needed (such as [IRB](#))
    - d. Budget and materials for your Capstone
    - e. Deliverables or products generated: i.e., final academic paper, reflective synthesis paper, research poster, film script, creative writing, or other culminating materials
    - f. Public sharing component: this could overlap with your deliverables.

**6. Part Three: Evaluation of Resources**

- Evaluation of Resources: You will craft an annotated bibliography that identifies at least five works or resources (two must be academic in nature, and one must be a peer-reviewed article) and frames them in relation to your own Honors Capstone topic. Sources should be related to your topic of interest; they may provide insight or inform your understanding of your project.
  - a. A separate “Works Cited” page with your (minimum) five sources will follow your narrative. This adheres to MLA style guidelines.
  - b. If you will be studying abroad, please include the following items. These websites will not count as separate sources. You can use the following websites to equate as “one source” and will still need to provide 4 more sources:
    - NAU’s Education Abroad [website](#)
    - Department of State’s website specifically for [students studying abroad](#).
    - If you have already identified a country, the [travel advisory](#) page that you will monitor while planning for your time abroad
    - Highly recommended: [enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) and include on your timeline (Part Two)
    - Any other pages that you feel are particularly important for your time abroad

**Expectations for the Capstone Proposal:**

Your Capstone Proposal should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Use [MLA formatting](#)
- Double-spaced
- 12-point Times New Roman
- 1" margins
- Last name and page numbers in the upper right-hand corner

Your HON 303 instructor will review the final draft of your Capstone Proposal before signing your Capstone Proposal Form. You are responsible for ensuring that you address all of your instructor's editorial comments and made the necessary revisions. Additionally, you may want to have your Capstone instructor of record/mentor look over your proposal because they may suggest aspects or components that have not been outlined above.

**Before Submitting:**

Keep in mind that the Capstone Proposal you submit to the Honors College is more than a class assignment. Your submission will be a permanent record that is your culminating experience as an Honors student. All Honors Capstone Proposals are kept on file for consultation by future students who want to see an example of what constitutes an Honors-worthy Capstone. For this reason, you should strive to make it the best presentation it can be, with careful attention to organization, writing, and overall presentation. The Honors College will review your submission carefully and will return it to you for revision if it does not meet the College's expectations regarding format, writing, and production.

**Timeline for the Honors Capstone Process:**

The timeline for your Honors Capstone will vary based on your major and other coursework. However, most students should aim to complete their Capstone in the manner listed below:

**Sophomore Year to early Junior Year:**

- Take HON 303
- Submit Capstone Proposal document to the Honors College for approval
  - If Capstone Proposal is approved, you can move forward on starting your experience
  - If Capstone Proposal is not approved, revise and resubmit utilizing the feedback from the College

**Late Sophomore Year through Senior Year:**

- Complete your Honors Capstone
  - Please note that approval of your Capstone Proposal does NOT ensure enrollment, and you will still need to enroll in your coursework. Please see “Next Steps” for information on what to do for course enrollment.
- Verify completion of your Capstone and public component with the Capstone Coordinator.

Students can use a combination of coursework or experiences to compose their Capstones. Below are options.

### **1. Contracted Courses**

[Honors Contracts](#) allow students to enroll in an upper-division, non-Honors class and turn it into an Honors class by working with the professor to identify an Honors component. This does not mean *more* work; it means different work, as students are encouraged to modify or add a component to the class that will enrich their overall experience. Students should think creatively about what this might be and how the Honors component might give them a richer understanding of the material in the class, how it might provide an opportunity to learn some different material or enhance their future ambitions or goals. Students may only contract classes at the 300-level or above. These classes do NOT have to be Capstone (-C) classes, although many students do choose to contract major Capstone classes. Contracted elements generally represent 10-20% of the total course grade.

**Please note:** Students will need to go through a process to contract and enroll in the (-H) version of the course, where their proposal will become more specific. This occurs before or at the beginning of the semester that the student wants to contract the course. Please see “Next Steps for Students” for more information on how to contract a course.

#### **Examples of Honors Contracts:**

##### **ENG 300**

Proposed to extend an existing assignment by adding on a teaching component. Student taught a lesson to the class and created an annotated bibliography on the sources used in the class lecture. Student met with the professor twice to rehearse and ensure understanding of course material. The Honors contract represented 20% of the total course grade.

##### **SOC 360**

Student attended, guided, and instructed a mandatory in-service training session for all volunteers in the Senior Corps Civic Service Institute. Student also interviewed and shadowed a volunteer throughout the semester. The Honors contract represented 20% of the total course grade.

##### **BIO 322**

Proposed to help grad student two hours a week with his thesis research by dissecting Uls beetles, pinning and displaying insects, imaging insects, and logging specimens into public database. Student wrote additional essay about the experience and how it related to the regular portion of the class. Student attended every field trip available to gain more knowledge of collecting and field experience, to be prepared to take on future research opportunities. The Honors contract represented 20% of the total course grade.

Particular course and major contract nuances: (this list will be updated as needed)

- **PSY 408C Capstone Contract:** Contracted elements must be driven by student interest and benefit the host site where the student is interning. Students must meet with Dr. Walters and let him know that they are in Honors before moving forward in their internship placement.
- **Exercise Physiology Capstone Contract:** Students must complete two-three semesters of Exercise Physiology research with Dr. Jarvis, Dr. Traustadottir, or Dr. Duke prior to taking the course. Students should review the Exercise Physiology research opportunities and contact the appropriate researcher listed above for approval to contract classes. Research opportunities are very limited, and Exercise Physiology faculty cannot always agree to contract major classes. Students should plan ahead and have an alternative Capstone plan in mind.
- **Education Capstones:** The major capstone for Education majors is student teaching. Due to state certification requirements, students cannot contract this course and change the class number. Instead, Education students can think about contracting a different academic class for the remaining 3 units of their Honors Capstone. They might also consider an internship, research, or independent study. Students should not contract practicum courses.
- **Engineering Contracts:** Engineering capstones vary from 3-5 units total over two semesters. Most majors include a semester of planning for 1-2 units (xxx 476, e.g., ME 476, CS 476, CENE 476, etc.) and a semester where student teams carry out the project for 3 units (xxx 486C, e.g., ME 486C, CS 486C, CENE 486C, etc.). Most Engineering faculty approve of students contracting the 3-unit spring capstone course (486C courses or CM 490C), but few will agree to contract a 1-2 credit planning course (476). Instead, Engineering students should think about contracting the 3-credit major capstone class and a different (non-capstone) major class for the remaining 3 units of their Honors Capstone. They might also consider an internship, research, or independent study for the remaining 3 units.
- **Communication and Science Disorders Contracts:** CSD faculty do not recommend contracting CSD 460 (Clinical Practicum).
- **Nursing:** Students can take the four courses listed below (\* = Capstone), directly offered by the College of Nursing as a co-convened Honors course. Students do not need to contract the NUR class:

| Course:    | Topic:                                        |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| NUR 330H   | Intro to Nursing as Discipline and Profession |
| NUR 390WH* | Evidence-Based Practice                       |
| NUR 422H   | Nursing Informatics and Innovation            |
| NUR 450CH* | Nursing Leadership                            |

## **2. Honors Capstone Courses**

The Honors College offers three Capstone courses, and this list may grow depending on need and availability. Apart from repeating Study Abroad, students can take multiple HON 491C classes.

**a. HON 491C: Topics in Biology** (Dr. Melissa Schonauer)

In this Honors Capstone course, we will explore such topics as molecular mechanisms of disease, genetics, genomics, and translational medicine. Students will perform individual and group literature-based research on topics of interest and will complete a public presentation. Requirements: Junior or Senior status with Honors College consent and pre- or co-requisite of HON 39X. This class will fulfill three units of the Honors Capstone requirement. This course is geared toward Biological Science majors (Biology, Biomedical Science, Exercise Physiology, Microbiology, and Secondary Education – Biology) and students who have taken extensive Biology coursework for their major, e.g., Nursing, Public Health, etc. *This class is only taught during fall semesters.*

**b. HON 491C: Calderwood Seminar – Ease and Dis-ease** (Dr. Melissa Schonauer)

This writing-focused Honors Capstone course aims to teach students how to think and write about biology, and to recognize how often biology is all around us via things that are visible to the naked eye and things that are not visible. It also aims to develop a sense of awareness of the general public's perception of biology and of the degree of control they have over their own health, regardless of their level of education. Through regular writing assignments and group discussions, students will learn to communicate complex, specialized ideas to a non-specialized audience. In essence, students will work to take something that is invisible (incomprehensible) and make it visible (comprehensible) to the general public. Requirements: Junior or Senior status with Honors College consent and pre- or co-requisite of HON 39X. This course is geared toward Biological Science majors (Biology, Biomedical Science, Exercise Physiology, Microbiology, and Secondary Education – Biology) and students who have taken extensive Biology coursework for their major, e.g., Nursing, Public Health, etc. *This class is only taught during spring semesters.*

**c. HON 491C: Study Abroad** (Education Abroad staff)

In this Honors Capstone course, we will explore the value of place to gain greater cultural understanding while studying abroad. This course is geared toward all majors and will be taken on-line during the semester students are abroad. Students will perform individual research projects, interpret their experiences and observations through a variety of perspectives, and complete a professional travel journal to be shared with the Education Abroad, NAU, and Honors communities. Three units can be used in fulfillment of Honors Capstone requirements. Required: pre- or co-requisite of HON 39X. Learn more about this option under "Study Abroad". *This class is only offered fall and spring semesters and cannot be repeated. The required blog cannot be used to fulfill the Capstone public component.*

Some Colleges also offer Honors Capstone (-CH) courses that students can enroll in without needing to contract. These vary by semester, but past courses commonly offered include BIO 444CH and BIO 488CH. If a Capstone course is offered as an Honors section that students can automatically enroll in, they do not need to add a contracted element as the syllabus already reflects the Honors experience.

### 3. Independently Arranged Units:

Honors Independently Arranged Units (HON 408, HON 466, HON 475, HON 485, HON 497, and HON 490) allow students to design a course around their interests. Students work directly with a faculty member to design a course of study, grading procedure, and timeline for the scope of an independent project. These units can come from research, an internship, or an independent study course. Keep in mind that the course must fulfill 45 hours of academic or experiential work per unit.

HON 408 = Fieldwork Experience (Internship)

HON 466 = Legislative Internship (Arizona Legislative Internship Program or The Washington Center)

HON 475 = Directed Readings (rarely used)

HON 485 = Undergraduate Research

HON 490 = Honors Thesis (rarely used)

HON 497 = Independent Study

Many students wish to pursue these units during the summer term. Students must be enrolled in NAU units while working on independently arranged units and will pay NAU summer tuition. The Honors College does have some scholarships available to support students if cost is a factor.

*Students can enroll in Honors Independently Arranged Units (ex: HON 408) or departmental independently arranged units (ex: BIO 408, ANT 485). If a student is enrolled in departmental independently arranged units and wants to earn HON units as well (e.g., PSY 408H), the student needs to contract the course. Please see contracted courses for more information. Students should contract independently arranged units when they want to earn units for their major (or minor, certificate, or emphasis) course and Honors at the same time.*

**Please note:** Students will need to propose and enroll in independently arranged units, where their proposal will become more specific. Please see “Next Steps for Students” for more information on how to enroll in independently arranged units.

- a. **Research Units (HON 485):** Students can use one to six units of research for their Honors Capstones. Students need to have an instructor of record on campus who will assign a grade for these units. Often, students use their presentations at the Undergraduate Research Symposium or other conference as their public presentation component for the Honors Capstone. Since students can enroll in variable number of research units, they should make sure that their project aligns with 45 hours of work per unit hour.
- b. **Fieldwork Experience (Internship) Units (HON 408):** Students can use one to six units of internship for their Honors Capstones. Though students will often have a mentor/site supervisor at their fieldwork site, they still must have an instructor of record at NAU who will assign them a grade. During the summer term, Dean Gustafson or Sarah Friedmann can serve as this instructor. As with research units, students must have 45 hours of work per unit hour. Depending on the internship, this writing may vary. Students will need to arrange internships early and secure an affiliation agreement. These units are Pass/Fail only.

- c. **Independent Study Units (HON 497):** Students can use one to six units of independent study for their Honors Capstones. Students will have an instructor of record at NAU who will assign a grade for this experience. Students have chosen an independent study to write a novel, complete an extensive service project, and more. Since students can enroll in variable number of independent study, they should make sure that their project aligns with 45 hours of work per unit hour.
- d. **Legislative Internship or The Washington Center Internship Units (HON 466):** Students accepted to the Arizona Legislative Internship Program (ALIP) or The Washington Center Internship (TWC) enroll in internship units for a supervised internship in the Arizona Legislature or The Washington Center. Students will work with Career Development to choose their department (HON, POS, JLS, etc) and determine how to enroll. TWC students typically take three to six units of HON 408 or 466 or contract departmental 408 or 466. ALIP students take twelve units of HON 466 or contract departmental 466.

#### **4. Study Abroad:**

Students have several options for using [international education](#) in fulfillment of their Honors Capstones. The best option for students will depend on the type of international education experience they pursue. Students may only use **four units** of study abroad in fulfillment of their Honors Capstone.

**Note:** All students should discuss their options with an Education Abroad Advisor before pursuing this as an Honors Capstone and particularly if they will conduct research or have an internship abroad ([GRIP](#)).

All students wishing to pursue international study will need to fill out the study abroad proposal form to enroll in units. Please see the “Next Steps” tables (pages 18 and 19) for more details.

- a. **Semesters Abroad:** Students completing an entire semester abroad can choose to take HON 491C (Topic: Study Abroad). This is an online, three-unit course that students can take concurrently with their other coursework at a host institution. **Note:** HON 491C (Study Abroad) is only offered in the fall and spring semesters, and the class blog cannot be used to complete the Capstone public component.
- b. **Research/Internships Abroad:** Students completing an internship or research abroad can earn HON 408 or contracted departmental units (up to four units when taking abroad). The number of units they enroll in will align with the number of hours they will spend in an internship. To obtain HON 408 units, students are given the following instructions in addition to the HON 408 syllabus:
- Craft 5 – 7 questions that you plan to explore and answer over the course of the internship.
  - An ongoing journal of approximately 250 words per week, or an equivalent amount of video if you would like to create a vlog (approved by instructor). You can be creative! The journal should ideally contain a mixture of observation, analysis, and reflection, both of the world around you and your feelings while abroad. It may also include the experience of returning to the United States.
  - A 5–7-page final paper that synthesizes the questions, personal observations, and reflections in your journal. You may want to address the following questions in your weekly journal and final paper: *How have your perceptions of this country and its people changed? How have they remained the same? What ideas, issues, and perspectives have you developed from this experience? In what ways has this experience related to and enriched your larger academic goals in your major, Honors, or both? What challenges did you encounter and how did you solve them? What have you learned about yourself? What did your process of re-acclimatization to the U.S. teach you?*

## Honors College Capstone *Capstone Options*

- c. **Interdisciplinary Global Programs (IGP):** Students in IGP study abroad during their fourth year and can use up to four units of their IGP internship abroad (xxx 408H) in fulfillment of the Honors Capstone. Students will be sent unique prompts to complete an additional interview assignment with other IGP students. Students can also take LAN 450CH for three units, which already has an identified HON component built into the course.
- d. **Faculty-Led Programs:** Students can earn up to four units abroad on a faculty-led trip in fulfillment of the Honors Capstone. Students will work directly with the faculty member leading the trip to add an Honors component to turn it into an Honors course. **For students completing HON 303 spring 2025 or later**, faculty-led programs must be minimum 4 weeks to be used for Honors Capstone. Faculty-led programs that are shorter than 4 weeks can still be contracted for Honors units. For more information on contracts, please see “Contracted Courses”.

Explore your study abroad opportunities: <https://in.nau.edu/education-abroad>

## Honors College Capstone

### *Instructor of Record and Mentor Selection*

To complete your Honors Capstone, you must have instructors of record who assign grades for Honors coursework. We also recommend that you identify and develop a relationship with a mentor.

#### **What is an Instructor of Record?**

Each student must have official instructors of record who assign grades for all six Honors Capstone units. All instructors of record must be NAU faculty (full-time or part-time) and able to assign grades. NAU staff do not qualify if they do not teach any classes. Instructors of record may also act as mentors who guide you through your Capstone experience but might be just the people who grade your work. The role of instructors of record will vary based on the type of Capstone you choose. You do not need to identify a specific instructor of record at the time you propose your Honors Capstone, but you will need to have official instructors by the time you are ready to earn credit.

#### **What is a Mentor?**

To help guide and facilitate your Capstone experience, we encourage you to work with a mentor who will provide advice, support, and direction for your Honors Capstone. A mentor is someone who can be valuable to you in this project, but who also may become an important reference for future academic work or professional aspirations. A mentor can be an NAU faculty member or a non-faculty member. It is not required that you obtain a mentor for your Capstone but connecting with professionals can be very helpful.

#### **Selection Process:**

When selecting a mentor and instructors of record for your Honors Capstone, you should first think about what type of project you will complete.

**Projects ON campus:** If you choose to complete a Capstone related to your academic major or minor, you will want to find a faculty member from that department. This person will serve as your project's instructor of record and assign you a final grade for your Capstone units.

**Example:** You are a Psychological Sciences student completing an independent research project on learning theory and enroll in PSY 485 (contracted to add -H). You work with your Educational Psychology professor to design a project. That professor helps you plan, gives advice, and then grades your final paper. They serve as your instructor of record and mentor.

**Projects OFF campus:** If you choose to complete a project related to your academic major or minor but the project will take place off campus, or if you choose to complete a project unrelated to your major or minor—perhaps it is an experiential Capstone, an internship, or an independent project—you should find *both* a mentor and an instructor of record. Your mentor will help guide you through the project, but your instructor of record must be connected to NAU and will assign your grade.

**Example:** You are completing research for a genetics lab in Phoenix. The lab director will be your mentor, who oversees your project and provides guidance. However, you have a Biology professor at NAU as instructor of record for BIO 485 (contracted to add -H) who grades your final paper and assigns you a grade for your Capstone class.

## **Honors College Capstone**

### *Instructor of Record and Mentor Selection*

**Example:** You are a Mechanical Engineering student and completing a summer internship with an engineering firm in Tucson for your Honors Capstone. Your mentor is the (on-site) internship staff member who helped you find the position and monitors your participation in the internship. However, you have an Honors professor as instructor of record for HON 408 to read your internship reflection papers and assign a grade for your Capstone.

#### **Instructor/Mentor and Student Expectations:**

As an Honors student, you are responsible for:

- Keeping your instructor of record/mentor informed about Honors College timelines and due dates
- Discussing with your instructor/mentor how you plan to accomplish your Capstone
- Giving your instructor/mentor any drafts of the written project for review and editing before submission

Your mentor is responsible for:

- Helping you narrow the focus of your topic/project to something that you can complete, given the timeframe and your experience
- Giving suggestions on relevant bibliographic materials
- Providing support and advice on your project

Your instructor of record is responsible for:

- Discussing ethical considerations, such as whether you need IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval
- Reviewing and grading your Capstone project materials
- If applicable, your instructor of record can have some of the responsibilities as a mentor

## How to Enroll in Capstone Coursework:

After your Capstone Proposal has been approved, you may need to submit the appropriate paperwork to enroll in your courses. Below is information on how to enroll in contracted classes, independently arranged units, and study abroad. Some students have the option of directly enrolling in a class that is already “Capstone” and “Honors”. However, most students need to take additional steps to enroll in their Honors Capstone units.

### Honors Contracts

[Honors Contracts](#) allow you to enroll in an upper-division, non-Honors class and turn it into an Honors class by working with your professor to identify an Honors component. This does not mean *more* work, it means different work, as you are encouraged to modify or add a component to the class that will enrich your overall experience. Think creatively about what this might be and how the Honors component might give you a richer understanding of the material in the class, how it might provide you an opportunity to learn some different material or enhance your future ambitions or goals. You may only contract up to 12 units of classes at the 300-level or above.

### Steps to Completing an Honors Contract:

1. Think about what you might like to add/change to the course to turn it into an Honors experience. You can consider adding on an experience, modifying an assignment, a presentation, or more. Draft a few ideas to bring to a meeting with your instructor.
2. Meet with your instructor to discuss options. Bring your ideas, and email and/or print a copy of the letter to your faculty member [from Dean Gustafson](#) explaining the contracting process.
3. Write up your proposal and complete the Honors Contract paperwork. Make sure to include:
  - a. Secured approval of faculty and department chair
  - b. A written proposal of no more than 500 words in which you explicitly state what you will be adding/changing in the class. Be specific! For example: *How long will the paper be that you write? How long will the presentation be that you are giving? How many sources are required in your paper? What is the topic you will be covering? How often will you meet with your instructor outside of class? How many hours will you be working at an internship site? When will the Honors component need to be completed?* This is NOT an exhaustive list—be as detailed as you can. If you do not know that information, outline when you will have it determined. You also need to note how many points it will be worth and how this changes the overall point value. Usually, contracts represent about 10-15% of the total course grade. Explain when you will turn in this component and how your instructor will grade it.
  - c. The original syllabus for the class
4. After your contract has been approved by the instructor and department chair, ensure that any materials are submitted to Honors. They are due by the add/drop date of that semester you are taking the class.
5. Once you submit your contract, expect to be enrolled in the Honors version of the course in 1-2 weeks. This is a manual process where we swap you from the non-Honors course into an Honors version, and then move you back into the “regular” Canvas shell for the class. This process takes time, so please be patient. You will hear from the department if there are any revisions necessary to your proposal.

### **Honors Independently Arranged Options**

#### **Steps to Completing Honors Independently Arranged Units:**

1. Work with your instructor of record to design a program of study for your course. You will need to discuss the objective, scope, and parameters of the study, the length and detail of your project, and the instructor's means of evaluation.
2. Write your proposal and complete the appropriate Honors Independently Arranged Unit [proposal form](#) (HON 485 or HON 497, HON 408 and HON 466, or HON 475). Make sure to include:
  - a. Secured approval of your instructor of record
  - b. A thorough proposal of at least two pages where you specify:
    - i. Your key objectives
    - ii. Your motivation for pursuing these independently arranged units
    - iii. What related theory and frameworks this project fits into
    - iv. Your work plan — BE SPECIFIC. This proposal serves as a “syllabus” so you must detail due dates, grading, meeting times, and resources used in class
    - v. The final project and how it will be graded
    - vi. The evaluation method for the class
3. After your contract has been approved by the instructor and department chair, ensure that your materials are submitted to Honors. They are due by the add/drop date of the semester you are taking the class.
4. Once the proposal is submitted, expect to be enrolled in the independently arranged units in 1-2 weeks. This process takes time, so please be patient. You will hear from Honors if there are any revisions or clarification necessary to your proposal. Keep in mind that this is adding on units to your semester, so if the independent study units will put you over 19 units, you will need to submit a Unit Load Override Approval in LOUIE.

How to Earn Honors Credit Abroad:

| Type of Program                                               | How to earn Honors credit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | What to submit to Honors                                                                                                                                                                        | When to submit form to Honors                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Faculty-Led Program</a>                           | Work with the faculty leader of the trip to include an HON component to the course to turn it into an Honors course.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Honors Study Abroad form</b> – please check the “Faculty Led” box.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attach a syllabus and brief proposal identifying Honors component.</li> </ul> | Four weeks prior to departure                                                                                 |
| <a href="#">Exchange, USAC, and Other Provider Programs</a>   | <u>Three-essay option:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a series of three essays documenting your study abroad experiences (4 weeks minimum). Unique prompts are sent before and upon approval.</li> </ul> <u>Designated Honors course at host institution abroad.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that very few foreign institutions offer this option.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                     | <b>Honors Study Abroad form</b> – please check the “3-Essay Option” box.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit course descriptions for your intended courses abroad.</li> </ul>    | No less than two weeks prior to departure                                                                     |
| <a href="#">Interdisciplinary Global Programs (IGP)</a>       | <u>IGP students can earn three to seven Honors units while abroad:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as a discussion leader in LAN 340H during the fall semester abroad year 5. This class is not used for Honors Capstone. (3 units)</li> <li>• Enroll in 4 Honors units of 408 during the spring semester abroad (SPA 408H, GER 408H, JPN 408H, etc) and fulfill <u>part</u> of Honors Capstone. Honors units are earned through an additional assignment emailed at the beginning of the semester. (4 units)</li> </ul> | IGP staff will confirm if a student wants to earn LAN 340H and/or Honors 408 credit while abroad during year 5 and enroll them in the class(es).                                                | Form not used for enrollment                                                                                  |
| <a href="#">Global Research and Internship Program (GRIP)</a> | Honors units may be earned while conducting research or participating in an internship abroad by earning HON 408 or contracting departmental 408.<br><u>Note:</u> students will work with Education Abroad to first enroll in CIE 499 or SA 408 (placeholder units). Class is updated to their chosen 408 after completing the internship.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Honors Study Abroad form</b> – please check the “GRIP” and “Honors Capstone” box.                                                                                                            | After meeting with Education Abroad Advisor to determine placement, submit form four weeks prior to departure |

**How to Earn Honors Capstone Credit Abroad:**

- Before submitting any of the following forms for review, students must have an approved Honors Capstone Proposal on file in the Honors College. Any coursework detailed below should be specified on the proposal.
- Students must be studying abroad for a minimum of four weeks to receive Honors Capstone units.
- Students should begin meeting with an Education Abroad Advisor and Honors staff member as soon as they choose to explore earning Honors Capstone units with a study abroad opportunity.

| Type of Program                                                            | How to earn credits that can be used to fulfill Honors Capstone requirements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | What to submit to Honors                                                                                                                    | When to submit form to Honors                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Faculty-Led Program</u></a>                                 | Work with the faculty leader of the trip ( <u>four weeks</u> minimum) to include an HON component to the course to turn it into an Honors course. You may only use up to <u>four units of faculty-led programs</u> in fulfillment of the Honors Capstone.                                                                                              | <b>Honors Study Abroad form</b> – please check the “Faculty Led” box.<br>• Attach syllabus and brief proposal identifying Honors component. | Four weeks prior to departure                                                                                                        |
| <a href="#"><u>Interdisciplinary Global Programs (IGP)</u></a>             | <u>IGP students can earn four units of Capstone while abroad:</u><br>• Enroll in 4 Honors units of 408 during the spring semester abroad (SPA 408H, GER 408H, JPN 408H, etc) and fulfill part of Honors Capstone. Honors units are earned through an additional assignment emailed at the beginning of the semester.                                   | IGP staff will confirm if a student wants to earn Honors 408 credit while abroad during year 5 and enroll them in the class.                | Form not used for enrollment                                                                                                         |
| <a href="#"><u>Global Research and Internship Program (GRIP)</u></a>       | Honors units may be earned while conducting research or interning abroad by completing HON 408 or contracting departmental 408.<br><u>Note:</u> students will work with Education Abroad to first enroll in CIE 499 or SA 408 (placeholder units). Class is updated to their chosen 408 after completing the internship.                               | <b>Honors Study Abroad form</b> – please check the “GRIP” box.                                                                              | After meeting with Education Abroad Advisor to determine internship or research placement, submit form four weeks prior to departure |
| <b>HON 491C - Honors Capstone Experience (Special Topic: Study Abroad)</b> | <u>Three</u> Honors Capstone units are earned with this online course taken during the semester abroad (fall or spring <u>only</u> and not offered over the summer). Students are enrolled in this course in addition to other classes earned abroad. <u>The required blog for the course cannot be used to fulfill the Capstone public component.</u> | <b>Honors Study Abroad form</b> – please check the “HON 491C Honors Capstone Abroad” box.                                                   | Four weeks prior to departure                                                                                                        |

## Public Component:

1. On the Capstone Proposal form, please designate which type of public component your Capstone will satisfy:
  - a. Physical or online final product (e.g., article, website, blog, vlog, podcast, etc.). **Note:** Students should meet with their instructor or Capstone Coordinator to ensure an online public component is academic in nature and adequately fulfills a robust Capstone experience. They will need to share how the online public component will be publicized.
  - b. Presentation at a conference or other academically – focused event, e.g., CUPi Expo, IGP Summit, Honors Symposium, Undergraduate Research Symposium, CCS Showcase.
  - c. Honors Exploration (must submit application to Honors for approval)
  - d. Other (confirm with instructor)
2. Presenting to the class associated with a Capstone cannot be used fulfill the public component.
3. Students taking HON 491 (Topic: Study Abroad) cannot use the required blog to fulfill the public component.
4. After completing the public component, send verification to the Capstone Coordinator. Please include any attachments or online versions that showcase your work. This can include final writing/papers, photos, posters, videos, etc.
5. If your public component needs to change for any reason, please follow the guidelines below to note that this portion of your Capstone has changed.

## Capstone Changes:

You may need to amend or change your Honors Capstones for a variety of reasons. In this case, you will fill out the [Changing Honors Capstone form](#) and receive feedback and approval from Dean Gustafson and the Capstone Coordinator.

Once approved, these changes will be reflected on your Honors College records.

## Honors Capstone website:

<https://in.nau.edu/honors-college/student-experience/academics/honors-capstone/>