

## Honors-in-Astronomy - Guidelines

**Honors-in-Astronomy (department honors)** is an opportunity for senior undergraduates in the Department of Astronomy to conduct in-depth research in the field and to be more fully involved in the intellectual life of the Department. It is one of the most stimulating intellectual enterprises in which an undergraduate can engage, demanding dedication and the ability to exercise independent judgment.

To graduate with Honors-in-Astronomy, a student must: author a well-written thesis; give a public presentation based on the thesis, and; take an oral examination about the thesis with a committee of the Astronomy faculty. In addition, the student must, for at least one semester, regularly attend and participate in one of: the Space Physics Seminar Series, the Astrophysics Seminar Series, the Space Physics Journal Club, or the Astrophysics Journal Club. The Astronomy faculty committee will consider the quality of the written thesis, the quality of the presentation, the result of the oral examination, and the participation of the student in the Seminar or Journal Club series to determine whether the student will be awarded Honors-in-Astronomy. A grade of B+ or better in both semesters of AS401/402 ("Senior Independent Work") is also required to receive Honors-in-Astronomy.

### GPA Requirements and Evaluation Semesters

Minimum grade point averages of 3.40 overall and in the courses comprising one of the Astronomy Department's three majors are required for students seeking to pursue Honors-in-Astronomy. This evaluation takes place after the Fall semester of the student's Junior year. In exceptional cases, evaluation may take place after the Spring semester of the Junior year, at the discretion of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with the Department Chair.

### Honors-in-Astronomy Project Proposal Submission

After ascertaining that your GPAs overall and in the major meet the standard listed above, complete the attached Application for Honors-in-Astronomy, in consultation with your Astronomy faculty project advisor. Your faculty advisor must be a full-time CAS Astronomy faculty member and that faculty member must agree to serve as your advisor.

The materials to be included in your Application are listed on the second page of the application.

1. The faculty advisor must complete the attached Faculty Reference Form, evaluating the student's potential success in the project. This Form should be returned to the student in a signed and sealed envelope.
2. The Application form is to be signed by the student and by the faculty advisor.
3. The Application plus Faculty Reference are to be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Studies for initial approval, and then sent on to the Department Chair for final approval.
4. Each applicant will be notified of acceptance or rejection by email.
5. If approved, the AS401/402 course(s) will be added to the student's schedule by the Department Administrative Coordinator.
6. The Astronomy Department will retain the original Application and Faculty Reference Forms and will return copies of the Application to the student and to the faculty advisor.

**Deadlines to submit applications for Honors-in-Astronomy, for a project beginning:**

**FALL - May 15** (If you need an extension, see the Astronomy Department Director of Undergraduate Studies)

**APPLICATION FOR PURSUING HONORS-IN-ASTRONOMY**

**Student Information** (Please print all information)

First and last name: \_\_\_\_\_

ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Minor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Expected graduation date (month/year): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Point Averages:

Overall: \_\_\_\_\_

In Major Courses: \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Project Advisor information** (Please print all information)

First and last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Proposed Project:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Initial Submission to Astronomy Director of Undergraduate Studies:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Application Check List**

**Please include the following materials in your Application.**

1. A description of your proposed project. Outline the significance of the proposed work, the methods of investigation that will be employed, and the ways the results of the investigation will be analyzed and interpreted.
2. A timeline of the project, with major and minor milestones included. This should be developed jointly with your faculty advisor and should be presented with details at the 2-week level.
3. Whether publication of the results are planned or not. Note that publication (or submission for publication) is NOT required to earn Honors-in-Astronomy.
4. A bibliography or reference list of readings relevant to the proposed work.
5. A description of how this project fits into your academic and career goals.
6. An unofficial copy of your BU transcript.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval Signatures:**

Director of Undergraduate Studies \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Astronomy Department Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Faculty Reference Form

**To be completed by the faculty project advisor and returned to the student in a sealed, signed envelope**

[Alternatively, faculty may supply their reference in the form of a letter that addresses the criteria listed below.]

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

How long and in what capacity have you known the student?

Please evaluate the applicant's aptitude for research according to the criteria listed below. Please add any applicable comments.

	Exceptional	Good	Fair	Poor	Unable to judge
_____					
Native intellectual ability					
Breadth of knowledge in subject					
Written communication skills					
Ability to work independently					
Level of initiative					
Level of motivation					
Laboratory skills (if applicable)					

Comments:

*I have read the student's proposal and recommend that it be accepted as a suitable project for his/her pursuit of Honors-in- Astronomy.*

Faculty Project Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_