



# SOCIAL WORK HONORS STUDENT HANDBOOK



**School of Social Work**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

# WELCOME

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Social Work James Scholar Program.

Your James Scholar status recognizes your hard work and the potential you hold to be a leader in the Social Work field and your community.

The Social Work James Scholar requirements are designed to challenge and enrich your time at Illinois as you build the skills you need to achieve your individual goals. They are also designed to encourage you to find your balance in your everyday life – to commit to your own overall health and well-being alongside your academic and extra-curricular commitments. We hope you will use these requirements as motivation to complete experiences already in your plan as well as to explore experiences you have not yet considered.

You will notice the requirements encourage you to form deep connections with your campus and the Champaign-Urbana communities in a variety of ways. These communities will give much to your time at Illinois, and we hope you will give just as much back.

Social Work James Scholars take on ambitious endeavors and work hard to keep their commitments, but we know unexpected challenges will arise. Social Work staff are here to advise and support you throughout your Illinois experience. Please use this handbook regularly to guide you through the expectations of the program, but also know we are here to help you navigate those situations that are beyond what can be anticipated in these pages.

# MISSION

The mission of the James Scholar Program within the School of Social Work is to empower our students to be global citizens and global stewards; to enlighten them with deeper understanding of the diverse world in which they live; and to engage with the core values and responsibilities of moving toward a sustainable future.

We strive to assist our students in defining their role as active learners, critical thinkers, and influential leaders. The Social Work James Scholar Program provides the best of the social work education tradition with the resources, facilities, and opportunities of a flagship state university. From studying abroad to working one-on-one with faculty members, SSW Honors provides and supports ways for our students to do more, go farther, and become their very best.



# REQUIREMENTS

## **Full-time Students**

Students must be full-time (12 credit hours per semester) to retain eligibility in the James Scholar Program. One underload (semester below 12 hours) is allowed if approved by the School of Social Work.

## **GPA Requirement**

Students must have a cumulative University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign GPA of 3.50 at the end of every academic year to meet the GPA requirement of the James Scholar Program in Social Work. At the completion of their first semester at Illinois, first-year Social Work James Scholars must have an Illinois cumulative GPA of at least 3.25 in order to continue as a James Scholar.

Academic Integrity James Scholars and nominees are held responsible for adherence to the rules for Academic Integrity at Illinois (Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to all Students, Article 1, Part 4). Students who are found to have been penalized within the scope of Article 1, Part 4 will automatically forfeit their Social Work James Scholar membership and privileges.

## **Honors Points**

Students must earn honors points each year they are a Social Work James Scholar. Additional details about the honors point system are provided in the following pages.



# POINTS SYSTEM

James Scholars must earn at least 4 points for each academic year they are a Social Work James Scholar. The number of years you are a Social Work James Scholar before graduation will determine the number of honors points you need to earn.

Annual James Scholar Certification is completed at the end of spring semester each academic year. To retain their standing as a James Scholar, student must follow the requirements listed previously, and meet the required 4 point benchmark for their year.

End of first year as Social Work James Scholar: **4 points**

End of second year as Social Work James Scholar: **8 points**

End of third year as Social Work James Scholar: **12 points**

End of fourth year as Social Work James Scholar: **16 points**

With these milestones in mind, students should be able to be proactive and plan ahead.

## Summer experiences

Summer experiences are eligible for honors points in limited categories. Summer experiences will only count toward point requirements for the academic year following the summer in which the experience was completed (they cannot be used for certification consideration at the conclusion of the spring semester just prior to the summer experience).

## How to plan ahead

Using this points system, you can be proactive. You can “bank” points, but you cannot borrow them. This means that if you earn points early in your college career, you can save them to complete the point requirements you must reach later in your college career.

**Example:**

Samwise earned 6 honors points during his first year as a James Scholar.

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Points earned this year	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	6	6	✓

Samwise then earned 2 honors points during his sophomore year as a James Scholar

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Points earned this year	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	6	6	✓
Year 2	8	2	8	✓

However, you cannot borrow.

**Example:**

Merry earned 6 honors points during her first year as a James Scholar.

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Points earned this year	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	4	4	✓

Merry then earned just 2 honors points during her sophomore year as a James Scholar, and planned to earn 6 honors points during her junior year. However, because she did not reach the required points by the end of her sophomore year, she was not certified as a James Scholar.

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Points earned this year	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	4	4	✓
Year 2	8	2	6	✗

To earn your required points and remain a James Scholar, you are not required to earn honors points every semester. You are simply required to earn the specified number of points by the end of each year. Keep in mind that even if you have banked points, you still must earn at least one honors point each year to maintain your status.

**Example:**

Frodo was eager to earn all his required points during first semester of his first year and kept earning points throughout his second, third, and fourth years. Wanting to complete his points before graduation, Frodo completed his final points in the fall semester before beginning his internship.

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	5	0	5	✓
Year 2	8	1	2	8	✓
Year 3	12	2	3	13	✓
Year 4	16	3	0	16	✓

**Example:**

Eowyn kept up with her James Scholar points each semester and studied abroad in spring of Junior year. However, she only completed one point her senior year, got off-track and lost her James Scholar status.

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	3	1	4	✓
Year 2	8	3	3	10	✓
Year 3	12	0	2	12	✓
Year 4	16	0	1	13	✗

**Example:**

Aragorn self-nominated as a James Scholar after his first semester at the University of Illinois and needed to earn points for only three academic years.

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	1	3	4	✓
Year 2	8	2	3	9	✓
Year 3	12	1	2	12	✓

**Example:**

Gimli transferred to the University of Illinois from another school and joined the James Scholar program before his Junior year. Because he only had two years as a James Scholar before graduation, he had to earn four points by the end of his Sophomore year, 8 points by the end of his Junior year, and 12 points by the end of his senior year. He was able to graduate as a certified James Scholar with a total of 13 points.

Year in Social Work Honors	Honors points required	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Total points earned	
Year 1	4	2	2	4	✓
Year 2	8	2	3	9	✓
Year 3	12	4	0	13	✓

# JAMES SCHOLAR POINTS

James Scholar points develop critical thinking skills, broad intellectual curiosity, and deep understanding of a discipline or disciplines. James Scholar points are earned through challenging yourself in honors courses or honors credit learning agreements, deepening your understanding of your discipline through undergraduate research activities, and earning recognition of your academic accomplishments.

Listed on the following pages are the areas where James Scholar points can be earned, as well as how many points each experience is worth, how many total points you can earn using that experience, and what documentation is required at the beginning and the end of the semester to earn points for that experience.

**Preapproval:** Experiences below that require preapproval must be submitted through the HCLA form online by the specified date. This final date is the end of the fourth week of class for fall and spring semesters. Note that these experiences may still require documentation of completion be submitted by the end of the semester in order to receive honors points.

# Denotes that this category is eligible to be used for a summer experience.

Honors courses are available either through taking an Honors Integrated Course or working on projects with faculty. Any course in which the student is currently enrolled can potentially be turned into an Honors Course with the of the faculty member. This agreement is called an Electronic Honors Credit Learning Agreement, and outlines all requirements and expectations for the Honors project. The student must submit the HCLA form by the end of the fourth week of the semester, and the instructor can complete their portion of the form at a later time.



# JAMES SCHOLAR POINTS

Experience	Description	Point value per experience	Total points possible	Preapproval required	Final documentation required
2 credit-hour honors course	These courses may be integrated honors courses or be an HCLA course, students must earn a B- or higher in the course to earn an honors grade. An honors or "H" grade must be reflected on the student's record before honors points will be awarded for this experience	1	2	Submit the HCLA form	None, earn a B- or higher in the course to be eligible for an honors grade
3 credit-hour honors course	These courses may be integrated honors courses or be an HCLA course, students must earn a B- or higher in the course to earn an honors grade. An honors or "H" grade must be reflected on the student's record before honors points will be awarded for this experience	2	8	Submit the HCLA form	None, earn a B- or higher in the course to be eligible for an honors grade

Research experiences are encouraged and available for honors points as well. Want to learn more about getting involved in research at U of I? Starting to think about presenting or publishing your work? Check out the resources available through the Illinois Office of Undergraduate Research or contact Dr. Jan Carter Black to learn how to reach out to faculty about potential research opportunities.

Experience	Description	Point value per experience	Total points possible	Preapproval required	Final documentation required
# Faculty-directed independent study or research	Students who are conducting research or independent study under the supervision of a faculty member are eligible to use that experience for honors points. Complete at least 50 hours of research in a single semester to earn one point or at least 100 hours of research in a single semester to earn two points	1	4	Submit the HCLA form and the paper copy form for independent study or undergraduate research form.	None, earn a B- or higher in the course to be eligible for an honors grade
# Presentation at a regional conference	The Undergraduate Research Symposium on campus each spring is eligible in this category.	2	4	None	Submit a copy of the program identifying your presentation in the program.
# Presentation at a national conference	The national conference must be discussed with the Academic Advisor before	2	4	None	Submit a copy of the program identifying your presentation in the program.
# Publication in an undergraduate journal	To count in this category, your work should be selected for publication through a peer review process. Check out these <a href="#">undergraduate research journals</a> on campus.	1	2	None	Letter/email of acceptance or URL of publication

Study abroad experiences, short or semester-long, can be used as James Scholar points. Check out the Illinois Abroad and Global Exchange website for more information on study abroad opportunities.

Experience	Description	Point value per experience	Total points possible	Preapproval required	Final documentation required
# Short-term study abroad	Short-term studies abroad must be university sponsored experiences.	1	2	None	None. Points cannot be awarded until final grades are available for this experience
Semester-long study abroad	Students must be studying on university-sanctioned programs to count for honors points.	2	6	None	None. Points cannot be awarded until final grades are available for this experience

Leadership experiences on campus are also eligible for honors points.

Experience	Description	Point value per experience	Total points possible	Preapproval required	Final documentation required
Participate in a day-long leadership program (I-Program, for example)	Participation in a day-long leadership program hosted by the Illinois Leadership Center can earn you 1 point. Please see the I-Programs website for more information. We encourage you to register early as these programs fill up quickly.	1	2	Fill out the online HCLA form.	Completion certificate from the program.
Full participation in The Institute by LeaderShape	The application for The Institute by LeaderShape is available each fall semester through the Academic Advisor. Please see the <a href="#">LEADERSHAPE website</a> for more information.	2	2	None	Completion certificate or group photo from the program.
Become a member of Alpha Delta Mu	Join Alpha Delta Mu when you are eligible to receive 1 point	1	1	None	Forward the e-mail showing your acceptance in to ADM.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What's so special about being a James Scholar?**

- Specialized faculty engagement through honors courses and research experiences
- Individualized education and control over your own honors path
- Interdisciplinary education through honors experiences that encourage you to think across traditional academic boundaries.
- Undergraduate research is supported and encouraged, including presenting at conferences, and publishing your own work.
- Co-curricular experiences through leadership opportunities.
- Preparation for graduate and professional school.
- James Scholars get priority course registration (you can register for classes within the first two days that registration is available for the following semester).

### **What does it mean to graduate as a James Scholar?**

Graduating James Scholars are recognized with honors cords that they wear as part of their regalia at commencement. James Scholars and their families are also invited to attend a Social Work Honors Ceremony to recognize their achievements in the spring semester.

### **How many honors points do I need each semester?**

You technically are not required to earn a certain number of honors points each semester, but you must earn at least 4 honors points each year in order to reach the specified number of points needed for certification at the end of each academic year. If you have banked honors points, you must still earn at least 1 honors point each year to maintain your status.

### **How many honors points do I need each year?**

Check out the detailed description of the points system in this document.

### **Can I earn more than four honors points each year?**

Yes, students can bank points, not borrow. Students may bank more than four points in a year and that will decrease the number of points required of them in the following year. See page 8 for further information and examples.

### **What happens if I don't fulfill my requirements?**

Students may or may not be allowed to petition for a probationary semester if they did not fulfill the specified requirements for Social Work Honors. In order to be considered for a probationary semester, the student must have met at least one of the requirements for certification (either the required number of honors points, or the required GPA.) If the student met the GPA requirement and half of the number of the required points, he or she can petition. If the student achieved the required honors points, but earned between 3.25-3.49 Illinois cumulative GPA, he or she can petition. If the student only has 1 or less honors points for the year, and a GPA below 3.50 for the academic year, he or she is NOT eligible to petition for a probationary semester.

### **What if I transferred?**

If you transferred to the School of Social Work as a James Scholar, then you only need to worry about earning the required number of points for the years you have left until graduation.