**In-Course Contract (ICC) Overview and Structure**

Students may choose to enroll in a University Honors course through an In-Course Contract (ICC) when there is neither an available Honors course nor a particular Honors section of acourse at any level for their sequence of study. When this instance is satisfied, students may use an ICC to earn University Honors credit.

ICC work should be *qualitatively* different to standard coursework, or it should allow a student to explore a topic of special interest in-depth. The expectation is that ICC Honors projects should approximate professional academic work and include an engaged-learning component, extra meetings with the faculty member, and achieve an outcome that matches the level of expected work from a regular University Honors seminar or mini-section. Refer to the ICC Rubric for detailed criteria for ICC acceptance.

Examples of value-added ICC output include:

* Sustained writing assignments leading up to or forming a portion of a final assignment
* Advanced readings that take a student in-depth on a particular subject and subsequent critical analyses
* Oral presentations or performances in a formal setting that enable the student to benefit from honing presentation skills
* Advanced lab work or an enhanced project with accompanying readings and discussion
* Analysis of related media or documentary topics with accompanying readings and discussion
* Attendance at outside of the classroom enrichment activities. For example, students might be required to attend lectures, theater productions, conference(s), workshops, exhibits, and/or special events and write a reflection or report about the experience
* A journal leading up to a final project or paper with evaluative progress during the semester
* An additional exam specifically designed for Honors students

An ICC is an opportunity for a student and faculty mentor to advance a student’s learning to new heights through personalized and unique approaches to their studies. We hope that both the student and faculty will benefit from this relationship.

**Regardless of the mode of delivery for an ICC, sustained faculty interaction with students is a key element of the University Honors experience.**

**In-Course Contract (ICC) Procedure**

**Step 1. Workshop Attendance**

The University Honors Program offers regularly scheduled workshops on the logistics of enrolling in ICCs. Prior to enrollment, students must attend one of these workshops or schedule an individual advising appointment to learn important logistics, review ICC examples and understand the rubric used for evaluation.

**Step 2. Faculty Consultation**

The student must meet with the faculty member teaching the class in which they wish to pursue an ICC. Some topics during this initial meeting might include, but are not limited to:

* Topic(s) to explore during this experience
* The number of one-on-one meetings to be scheduled during the semester
* An overview of requirements/responsibilities of each individual
* Expectations/Evaluation of the student’s ICC output

**Step 3. ICC Proposal (Due Sunday after week #2 of the semester for Fall and Spring, Due Sunday after week#1 for Summer)**

By the aforementioned due date, the student must complete and submit an Honors in-course contract proposal at [go.niu.edu/honorsicc](http://go.niu.edu/honorsicc). The proposal includes a typed synopsis of the work to be done and evaluative criteria. This proposal should clearly define:

1. The topic(s) of the project
2. The method(s) of completion for the project
3. The specific outcome(s) of the project
4. How the student will be evaluated on the project in relation to the larger class structure
5. How the project enriches the academic experience of the student beyond a regular course

**Step 4. Final Approval from University Honors**

The student will receive an email if the proposal is denied by the faculty, department chair, or the University Honors Program. If the proposal is submitted by the deadline and denied by the faculty, department chair, or the University Honors Program, the student may resubmit the proposal once. The denial email sent to students will include the denial reason and resubmission deadline.

The student and faculty will receive an email once the proposal is approved by the University Honors Program. If approval is granted, a student may **NOT** drop the “H” component of the course without it impacting their future participation in Honors (e.g., future ICCs, scholarship eligibility, etc.), except in cases where one formally withdraws from the overall course.

**Step 5. Completion and Evaluation**

During week #14 of the semester, the University Honors Program will send an ICC Honors Evaluation Form to the faculty member overseeing the project. If a student successfully fulfills the terms of the ICC and earns at least a “B-” gradefor the semester, University Honors credit for the course will be earned.



 **In-Course Contract Rubric**

Proposals submitted after the deadline (Sunday after week #2 of the semester for Fall and Spring, Sunday after week #1 for Summer) will not be accepted.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Excellent** | **Acceptable** | **Unacceptable** |
| **Criteria** | **5** | **3** | **1** |
| #1 Topic (s) | Topic clearly stated and adequately described.  | Topic stated but description vague or may focus on other aspects of proposal. | Topic statement not included or statement does not describe topic. |
| #2 Method (s) for Project Completion | Delineated steps for project completion. Includes a minimum of 3 types of output (e.g., research, interview, advanced lab work, attendance at outside of classroom activities, project, presentation, performance). Unique project outside the scope of the typical student experience. Faculty participation clearly identified (i.e., number of meetings over the course of the semester).  | Delineated steps for project completion. Includes one or two types of output (e.g., research and presentation). Minimal faculty participation included. | Steps for completion unclear or does not list method for completion. May only restate topic. Faculty participation not included. |
| #3 Specific Outcomes | Detailed list of requirements for completion. Includes minimum number of references, approximate length of paper, specific description/dissemination modes of project. Evidence of significant effort toward professional academic work (i.e., research or artistry based) and includes an engaged-learning component. | General list of outcomes but not specific and detailed. Some evidence of effort toward professional academic work or includes an engaged-learning component. | Lists only one or two outcomes requiring minimal effort (e.g., reflection paper) does not include an engaged-learning component. Outcomes not related to topic. |
| #4 Evaluation Criteria – in Relation to Larger Class Structure | Specific descriptive information about evaluation (i.e., how project will be graded – with grading system included). Rubric may be attached. How project will be evaluated within larger class structure is clearly defined. | Description of general evaluation criteria. Does not explain how project will be evaluated in relation to larger class structure. | Criteria for evaluation not listed or criteria does not describe evaluation of project. |
| #5 Benefit(s) of Project to Student | Lists a minimum of three examples that clearly explain the personal benefits of participation in this project. | Lists only one or two benefits, may not be clearly explained or related to project. | Benefits not listed or list repeats previous descriptions (from sections #1- #4). |
|  Mechanics | No errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling. | Minimal errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling do not interfere with proposal understanding.  | Errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling interfere with proposal understanding.  |
| **Score** | **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |

**Approved = All criteria are scored as excellent or acceptable**

**Denied = One or more criteria scored as unacceptable. Student may resubmit for review, provided instructions/timeline adhered to in correspondence from University Honors Program.**