**College of Media James Scholar Procedures/Rules**

**Becoming a James Scholar:**

- Students will be invited to become a James Scholar for the upcoming fall semester after the summer academic review is completed.
- Those eligible to join:
  - Current College of Media students who are already certified as a James Scholar.
  - Current College of Media students who have completed less than 75 hours, are included on the spring Dean’s List, and who have at least a 3.5 overall GPA.
  - Students who are on-campus fall or spring transfers into the College of Media and are certified by their previous college as a James Scholar.
  - The top 20% of the college’s incoming freshman class. The top 20% is based on a combination of a student’s ACT/SAT score, high school GPA, application essays and related involvement.
  - Off-campus transfers with at least a 3.75 transfer GPA may request to join the program. Please speak with your advisor.
- On-campus students who transferred into the college during a spring term fall under the rules of a current student.
- Qualifying students may enter the program for either the sophomore or junior year but not for the senior year alone.
  - A student must have a minimum of four semesters (two academic years) remaining to complete his/her primary degree in be invited to join the program.
  - Exception: A rising senior that previously completed two years in the James Scholar program before being dismissed and then meets the requirements to rejoin the program for senior year will be invited during the summer review period. S/he would then need to make up an honors activity to account for the missing year in the program.
- If invited to become a James Scholar, you must notify the James Scholar coordinator of your acceptance or denial of the offer by the date specified in your notification letter.

**Remaining in good standing as a James Scholar**:  
*Students have been made aware of all requirements by nature of their publication. It is each student’s responsibility to read and understand all requirements for remaining in the program and should contact their academic advisor with any questions. Regardless of whether the rules are read, a student will be charged with knowledge of them. Citing ignorance of the rules will not be considered sufficient justification for an appeal of being dropped from the program.*

To remain in the James Scholar program students must**:

- Maintain on-campus semester and cumulative GPAs of 3.5.
- Take a minimum of **14 graded credit hours** each fall and spring semester **on the Illinois campus**.
  - Illinois online courses taken as part of the traditional fall or spring term count in this total; self-paced online courses do not.
  - Winter Term and Summer courses do not count toward the 14 graded hours needed each fall and spring.
  - As a pass/fail graded class, College of Media internship seminar courses (ADV, JOUR, or MACS 495) also do not count in this total.
- Complete at least one honors option/project **each academic year** (see options below).
- Students who are dismissed from the program during a summer review period must sit out from the program for at least one calendar year even if they earn a spot on the College’s Spring Dean’s List in the same calendar year.
  - Students cannot be readmitted into Media’s James Scholar program during the same year that they failed to meet requirements to remain in the program.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is each student’s responsibility to be sure they are meeting all requirements. Students who choose to take a course credit/no credit must still be enrolled in **14 graded credit hours at Illinois**, no exceptions. Coursework taken at Parkland or at another institution does **NOT** count toward the **14 graded credit hours required or toward the semester or overall GPA.**

All requirements must be completed in order to continue as a James Scholar for the following academic year and to receive the James Scholar notation on the academic transcript each academic year.

**Study Abroad Information:**

Students who are studying abroad are exempt from the credit hour and GPA requirements during the semester(s) they are abroad. However, students abroad are expected to take the equivalent of full-time enrollment at their host institution. The honors project requirement must be completed the semester a student is on campus. James Scholars are not allowed to complete this requirement while abroad. Students who are abroad for both the fall and spring should speak with their academic advisor about options for completing the yearly honors requirement.

**Additional Information For:**

**Freshmen:**

- College of Media freshmen James Scholars will be allowed to earn a GPA of 3.3 in the fall term. However, a student’s overall GPA must reach a minimum of 3.5 by the end of the spring term in order for him/her to remain in the James Scholar program for his/her sophomore year.
  - This is an exception for a student’s freshman year alone.
  - Students in all other years must maintain semester and cumulative GPAs of 3.5.
- Freshmen James Scholars must meet all other requirements to continue as a James Scholar in the sophomore year and to have the James Scholar notation on the academic transcript for the freshman year.
- Most freshmen choose to pursue the honors requirement during the spring semester.
- It is strongly encouraged that freshmen attend as many James Scholar seminars and/or trips as possible during the fall and spring terms. Seminars are offered to help students better acclimate to the college, opportunities on campus, and to career possibilities in their chosen field. In most cases, these opportunities do not constitute completion of the required honors project. They should be considered enhancements to the program.
**Graduating as a James Scholar:**

Students continuing as James Scholars into their last year on campus will be able to graduate with College of Media James Scholar Distinction if they complete all James Scholar requirements **during the fall term of their graduation year.**

- **These rules apply no matter the student’s graduating semester, Fall, Spring, or Summer**
- The required credit hours and GPA rules are relaxed in the final spring term to allow a graduating spring or summer student the opportunity to be a part-time student
- A student must complete a minimum of four semesters (two academic years) as a James Scholar to graduate as a James Scholar
- In a James Scholar’s year of graduation, s/he must earn at least a 3.5 on-campus GPA in the fall semester while taking 14 graded credit hours on the Illinois campus, maintaining an on-campus cumulative GPA of a 3.5, and completing the last of the four required honors projects
  - All requirements are waived for the spring term if the student is graduating in the spring or summer
- You may NOT repeat a previously used activity unless it is noted as a repeatable option
- If all conditions are not met during the fall semester, the James Scholar notation will not be included in the college’s May convocation program nor listed on the student’s transcript for the final academic year
- Students will be notified by mid-February if they will be listed as a James Scholar at graduation
- If a graduating senior studies abroad in his/her final fall term, s/he may petition to complete the final honors project in the following spring. Students in this situation may NOT complete their senior year honors project during the preceding spring term.
- Students must complete a minimum of four honors options in order to be certified as a James Scholar at the college’s graduation ceremony in May
  - Students joining the James Scholar program during the sophomore or junior year (seniors who have not previously been a James Scholar are not accepted) will need to make up an honors activity in order to graduate with a minimum of four, or one for each academic year
    - There is not a maximum number of activities that can be completed
    - All four honors activities must be completed by the end of the fall term of the student’s graduation year. The fourth project may not be pushed into the spring term.
- A student who completes multiple activities in one year and who has reached the four activity minimum before his/her graduation year still MUST complete an honors activity in each remaining year in order to be re-certified for the following academic year. Each year a student is in the program, s/he should be completing at least one honors activity.
- One activity per year completed while in another college on the Illinois campus may count in this total. Even if multiple honors options were completed in one academic year while in another college, only one per year will count toward the four required.

**Honors Options/Projects:**

Media has a strong commitment to professional development, service learning, college leadership, and research and to helping our students develop in these areas. As such, a list has been created to allow each James Scholar the opportunity to pick the attribute they would like to build upon in each given year. The options include existing programs and resources available on campus and in the community while taking into consideration James Scholar principles of academic supervision, one-on-one interaction with a University of Illinois professor or staff member, and a minimum of 15 additional hours of project work.

Students continuing as James Scholars must complete at least one of the honors options below each academic year. Additional information and/or applicable deadlines for honors form submission are noted. You should speak with your academic advisor by the 10th day of classes in the spring semester if you have not yet decided on an honors option. **All forms should be submitted to the College of Media Student Services Center in 18 Gregory Hall by the listed deadlines.** If questions remain, students should speak with their academic advisors. Please note some of the listed options require additional paperwork or the submission of a project in order for the honors requirement to be considered complete. **Students will need to choose a different option during each academic year.** Only options noted below as repeatable will be counted multiple times.

**No matter the Honors option chosen, an HCLA form MUST be submitted to indicate completion of a project.** Assumptions will not be made that completion of an activity on the HCLA form without receipt of the form was for the purpose of complete a James Scholar project.

Please note, not all options will include Honors notation on a student’s transcript. Those that qualify for Honors notation are noted as such.

**Research or Honors Coursework (Includes the Traditional Honors Course Methods; Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded)**

- Complete an Honors Course Learning Agreement (HCLA) during the academic year in a regular course on the Champaign-Urbana campus (this is the traditional honors option; repeatable; Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded).
  - Project proposal and HCLA form must be submitted by the end of the 6th week of classes in the semester the course is completed.
  - See Information for Students Completing an Honors Course below for more information.
  - Chosen course must be taken for a minimum of three credit hours and be a full semester course.
- Complete a Campus Honors course or other course designated for James Scholars (repeatable; Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of class in the semester the course is completed
- Work as a research assistant or complete an approved three-hour independent study (repeatable; no Honors notation listed on transcript)
  - HCLA form and a project proposal approved by the participating professor must be submitted along with an approved Independent Study form by the 10th day of class in the semester the course is completed: [http://www.media.illinois.edu/forms-and-petitions](http://www.media.illinois.edu/forms-and-petitions)
- Participate in the Undergrad Research Symposium hosted by Illinois each spring semester (not repeatable; no Honors notation listed on transcript)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by the end of the 4th week of spring classes.
Leadership (No Honors notation on the transcript will be awarded)

- Complete a Leadership Portfolio including a Personal Development Plan as required for completion of the Leadership Certificate (not repeatable)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of class of the 2nd 8-week session
  - Upon completion of the 2nd 8-week course, students visit a pre-determined location during winter
  - Please see the class schedule for additional information on these courses: [https://courses.illinois.edu/](https://courses.illinois.edu/)

- Participate in a College of Media international study course (ex. MACS 364, 391, JOUR 470 International Reporting; not repeatable)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of class in the semester the course is completed; depending on the course, this may be the 10th day of class after the 2nd 8-week session has begun
  - The course must travel internationally; Study Domestic courses do not qualify

- Attend a College of Media James Scholar Study Abroad Spring Break Trip (may not be available every year; not repeatable)
  - Upon return, students must complete a project (such as a blog or a college presentation) detailing their experiences as required by the trip chaperone in order to receive credit for this option
  - HCLA form must be submitted by March 1st

- Become a Social Work Community Learning Lab Partner (repeatable IF partnering with a new community agency)
  - HCLA form and project description must be submitted by the end of the 6th week of classes in the semester of participation
  - By utilizing various community partnerships, the Community Learning Lab has identified real Media-related projects for students
    - Students can help an organization improve their social media presence, develop an internet newsletter, do event planning, assist with video production or photography, etc.; available experiences vary from semester to semester
  - During the summer review period, the Community Partner will be contacted to verify that assigned tasks were completed successfully
  - Contact SSW-CLL@mx.uillinois.edu for available media-related service projects with local non-profits

Professional Development (No Honors notation on the transcript will be awarded)

- Complete a College of Media approved semester-long internship (during the fall or spring only; summer internships do not apply; not repeatable)
  - HCLA form must be submitted two weeks after start of the semester-long internship in the semester of the internship
  - The internship can either be in the Champaign-Urbana area or off-campus but it must be pre-approved by Media’s Director of Career Services
  - If the internship is in the campus area and the student is attending classes, s/he must be registered for the internship seminar 495 course offered by his/her major while completing all academic requirements for remaining in the program
    - The student must take 14 graded hours at Illinois and maintain the 3.5 on-campus GPA
    - Please note, the internship seminar course is not for a traditional letter grade, so students must be sure they are registered for 14 graded hours in addition to the 495 course on their schedule
  - If the student is completing the internship away from campus and is not registered in coursework on the Illinois campus, s/he must register for the internship seminar 495 course offered by his/her major in the semester that immediately follows the internship
    - Graded hours and semester GPA for the academic term of the internship only will be waived
    - If appropriate and/or required by the Director of Career Services, the student should remain in contact and complete 495 course requirements during the internship. This may be verified by the honors dean and students who have not complied may be denied the completion of this honors option.
  - An “S” grade for a 495 seminar course must be received, indicating completion of course requirements to receive credit for this option

Leadership (No Honors notation on the transcript will be awarded)

- Take a select three-hour academic leadership course on the Illinois campus (not repeatable)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of class in the semester the course is completed
  - Choose from the following list: ACE 199 (Agriculture Leadership & Policy ONLY), AGED 230, 260, 340, 360, or 380, CMN 230, 321, or 421, GE 462, PS 453, RST 200, or SOCW 321
  - No additional courses outside the list above will count toward this option

- Complete a Leadership Portfolio including a Personal Development Plan as required for completion of the Leadership Certificate (not repeatable)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by December 1st or April 1st depending on the term of completion
  - Due to requirements that seniors complete honors projects in the fall, spring completion for graduating seniors is not an option
  - Provide the name and email address of the Leadership Coach on the HCLA form
  - During the summer review period, the coach will be contacted to verify that the Leadership Portfolio was completed during the previous academic year

- Attend The Institute™ by LeaderShape®, an I-Program offered by the Leadership Center over Winter Break (not repeatable)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of class in the spring semester of participation
Information for Students Completing an Honors Course (traditional method):

- If a student is completing one of the honors coursework options, the Honors Credit Learning Agreement (HCLA) form must be submitted by the stated deadline in order for the honors designation to be entered onto the course. Deadlines are stated above and below under HCLA Procedures.
- If a student is completing an unlisted activity s/he feels is representative of the categories represented, a petition may be filed. These activities must be verifiable, supervised by an Illinois faculty or staff member, and also conform to the Honors Credit Learning Agreement standard of approximately 15 hours of meaningful engagement.
- All requirements for remaining in the James Scholar program MUST be completed on the Illinois campus. Courses taken off-campus are NOT considered when GPAs are calculated and credit hours are counted.
- Only certain options under the Research or Honors Coursework (traditional methods) category will automatically be eligible for an honors credit listing on the transcript. Approved options are listed with an “Honors notation” statement.
- If a James Scholar wishes to complete a project using still photos or video and does not have use of a quality digital camera, s/he may request the use of a camera for the purpose of the James Scholar project. Please email media-ssc@illinois.edu for additional information and permission.
  - The student will need to provide his/her own memory card and batteries as these are not included with the cameras.
- James Scholar status will be reviewed each summer and students will be notified of their continuance or dismissal from the program. A student who is dropped during the summer review period will be dropped from the program for the program for the spring. However, s/he will be dropped during the summer review period and the James Scholar notation will not appear on the transcript for the previous academic year.

Information for Students Completing an Honors Course (traditional method):

- **HCLA procedures:**
  - Contact the professor who teaches the course you wish to use as an HCLA course
  - The course chosen must be taken for a minimum of three graded credit hours and be a full-semester course
  - Be ready to submit a proposal in which you state the project you wish to work on
  - Work with your professor to come to an agreement on a clear and approved proposal
  - Obtain an HCLA form http://www.media.illinois.edu/student-honors-and-awards and have the professor sign it
  - Attach a project proposal approved by the participating professor to the HCLA form
  - Submit both documents by the end of the 6th week of classes

- **The “H” grade reminder:**
  - During the last week of classes, remind your professor that you have been working on an HCLA and if you have successfully completed the project, s/he will need to designate an “H” grade when entering grades for the semester
  - After grades have rolled, check to be sure that you have received an “H” for the appropriate course
  - It is the student’s responsibility to check on the receipt of his/her “H” grade
  - If an “H” was not recorded, contact your professor to verify that you successfully completed the honors project. If you have, ask him/her to complete an online Grade Change Form.

- **Student expectations for completing an HCLA:**
  - Be ready to:
    - approach your professor with a clear plan describing the work you wish to complete
    - complete extraordinary work in the course; it is the discretion of the instructor to determine whether the HCLA project is in addition to regular coursework or if it is to be substituted in part for regular coursework
    - complete the project by the end of the semester the course is taken
    - meet with your professor regularly to discuss your progress
    - devote approximately 15 additional hours of work time to an HCLA project
  - Consider the following:
    - **HCLA courses are a unique way to enhance your classroom experience by collaborating with your professor**
    - **Your options for the course are many and you should base them on your areas of interest**
      - Think about personal or career interests; use your project as an opportunity to research an area of personal interest, make professional contacts, enhance your resume, or give you the opportunity to work with a prospective employer
      - Consider your professors’ area of expertise and/or research; ask to participate in their research processes in a variety of settings; be open to their suggestions on project ideas
      - Review subject material addressed in class and the areas you would like to expand your knowledge
      - **Think about how you could use your media skills in producing an extraordinary honors project; do not be afraid to go beyond an extra reading – use your skills to produce a piece you could put into a portfolio**
    - Courses taken for honors credit must be taken for a minimum of three graded credit hours and be a full-semester course
    - You cannot take an honor’s course CR/NC and must receive at least a “B-“ for your professor to assign an “H” grade for the class
    - Your instructor may decline to grant honors credit if the HCLA project has not been completed satisfactorily. The instructor is the sole judge of whether honors credit is to be granted.