



**POLICY**

# Pharmacy Degrees with Honors and Degrees with Distinction

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Policy Owner: **Senior Associate Dean for Professional Education** | Effective Date: **April 2016** | Last Updated: **April 2016**

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1. General Provisions**

- a. The College of Pharmacy offers (i) degrees with honors plus with distinction, (ii) degrees with only honors or with only distinction, and (iii) degrees without either honor system.
- b. Degrees with honors and degrees with distinction are awarded on the basis of excellence in academic achievement as measured by the grade point average (GPA) at graduation.
- c. To qualify for either a degree with distinction or a degree with honors, a student must have completed at least 60 or more semester credits in the College of Pharmacy. For the purposes of meeting the GPA standards set forth in this policy, the only course work that will be counted is that taken while enrolled in the College of Pharmacy and either be used by the student as required and elective credits for graduation or additional elective credits that are deemed suitable for inclusion as elective credits, if the student had chosen to include them. Courses taken at other institutions, such as transfer credits from other colleges of pharmacy, will not be included.
- d. It is the expectation of the College of Pharmacy that typically no more than 15–20% of any graduating class will be awarded degrees with honors and/or with distinction.
- e. The University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy transcript will contain a brief explanation of the difference between a degree with distinction and a degree with honors.
- f. The Student Affairs Committee has oversight over the College of Pharmacy Honors Program and may review it on an annual basis.
- g. The same opportunities and criteria for graduation with distinction or with Latin honors will exist for College of Pharmacy students on both the Duluth and Twin Cities campuses.

## 2. Degrees with Distinction

- a. To graduate "with distinction," a College of Pharmacy student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.750 or higher at the time of graduation. To graduate "with high distinction," a College of Pharmacy student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.900 or higher.
- b. The GPA alone will be used in determining the granting of degrees "with distinction" or "with high distinction."

## 3. Degrees with Honors and the College of Pharmacy Honors Program

- a. The requirements for a degree with honors will not consist of only the accomplishment of a designated amount of course work or achievement of a stipulated GPA, but will also include a definite standard of excellence in scholarship with specific evidence of ability to accomplish independent or original work.
- b. To obtain a degree with honors, the student must both achieve the GPA stipulated below and participate in a fully developed College of Pharmacy Honors Program on either the Duluth or Twin Cities campus. The minimum cumulative GPA at the end of the PharmD program in courses taken while a PharmD student in the College of Pharmacy will be 3.500 to obtain a degree "*cum laude*," 3.666 for a degree "*magna cum laude*," and 3.750 for a degree "*summa cum laude*."
- c. To obtain a degree with honors, the student must complete a minimum of five Honors-designated courses or projects while a student in the College of Pharmacy on either the Duluth or Twin Cities campus.
- d. The College of Pharmacy Honors Program is a single program, but it may be administered in parallel on the Duluth and Twin Cities campuses with an Honors coordinator and possibly staff on each campus in order to provide a similar level of access and services to all students.
- e. In order to participate in the College of Pharmacy Honors Program, students must have matriculated in the PharmD program, and must self-select based on a reasonable expectation that they will graduate with a GPA of 3.50 or greater. The basis for this expectation may be their GPA at admission or at any time during their studies in the College.
- f. To fulfill the requirements of the College of Pharmacy Honors Program a student must accumulate a total of five completed Honors credits, which may be Honors-designated courses, for which a grade of A or B has been obtained, or Honors projects, with at least one of the credits being for an Honors project. Honors projects are intended to be an overload, above and beyond the regular requirements for graduation. Honors projects are expected to involve at least 20 hours effort and be a learning experience for which they did not receive credit toward graduation.

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## REASON FOR POLICY

The College of Pharmacy Honors Program provides an enriched and intellectually stimulating academic experience for College of Pharmacy students and provides a path toward graduation with Latin Honors. The College of Pharmacy Honors Program provides a unique set of experiences for students, including tailored curricular offerings, additional personalized academic advising by the Honors Coordinators and staff, and recognition for a wide variety of extra-curricular activities the student chooses to participate in. Overall, the College of Pharmacy Honors Program provides a mechanism for the faculty and administration to provide recognition of the pursuit of excellence by individual PharmD students. Students receive recognition on their transcripts and diplomas for high academic performance as evidenced in their GPA in the case of graduating with distinction, and by their GPA plus completion of the College of Pharmacy Honors Program in the case of graduating with Latin-designation Honors. The standards for graduating with distinction and/or honors need to be clearly articulated so they can be applied consistently, and so students know what is required to achieve these recognitions.

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## CONTACTS

Subject	Contact	Phone	Email
Senior Associate Dean for Professional Education	Caroline Gaither	612-626-0811	cgaither@umn.edu
Honors Coordinator, Twin Cities	Tom Shier	612-624-9465	shier001@umn.edu
Honors Coordinator, Duluth	Jon Rumbley	218-726-6047	jrumbley@d.umn.edu

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## OTHER INFORMATION

### DEFINITIONS

**Graduating with Distinction:** Degree with distinction indicates graduation with high GPA; the words “with distinction” or “with high distinction” are printed on the transcript and on the diploma.

**Graduating with Latin-designated Honors:** Graduation with Latin Honors (*cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, *summa cum laude*) is available to those students who have a GPA of 3.5 or higher and have completed the requirements of the College of Pharmacy Honors Program. Students who have met the requirements may be considered for the following Latin Honors graduation levels:

- *cum laude*: 3.50 – 3.65 GPA
- *magna cum laude*: 3.66 – 3.749 GPA
- *summa cum laude*: 3.75 GPA or higher

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. **How are Latin-designated honors determined?**

Graduation with Latin-designated Honors (*cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, *summa cum laude*) is based on the GPA for credits earned while attending the College of Pharmacy. Transfer credits are not included; transfer students must meet a residency requirement of at least 60 graded credits to graduate with Latin Honors. The College of Pharmacy GPA combined with completion of the College of Pharmacy Honors Program requirement of five , qualifies the student to be considered for the following Latin Honors graduation levels:

- o *cum laude*: 3.50 GPA or higher
- o *magna cum laude*: 3.66 GPA or higher
- o *summa cum laude*: 3.75 GPA or higher

### 2. **Can a student graduate with more than one type of honors designation?**

In the College of Pharmacy a student may earn graduation with distinction or high distinction at the same time as graduation with Latin Honors.

### 3. **How are grades considered when calculating the grade point average?**

A student's GPA is calculated with all of his/her College of Pharmacy coursework, including both required and elective courses, but not courses taken at other institutions, such as the University of Utah course on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependency.

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## HISTORY

March 15, 2016 – Approved by the Educational Policy/Peer Review Committee

Month XX, 2016 – Approved by College Assembly