

Undergraduate Honors Program in the E&PS Department

As part of a diversified, rigorous and thorough program of undergraduate study in the geosciences or environmental sciences at UNM, the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences offers a Departmental Honors option. The program is available to both E&PS (BS & BA tracks) and Env Sc majors, and requires independent research in collaboration with a faculty member. The option is available to students who have maintained a GPA averaging 3.0 in lower-division geology courses, as well as the required lower-division courses in mathematics, chemistry, and physics. See the Departmental Honors Advisor regarding your eligibility. This option is strongly recommended for students who intend to pursue graduate studies. The purpose of this program is to introduce undergraduates to independent research; its methods, data analysis and written preparation. Students are encouraged to meet a standard of excellence that can lead to the publication or formal scientific presentation of their results.

The guidelines and requirements for graduation with Honors in Earth & Planetary Sciences are:

1. Students should enter the program as early as possible in their undergraduate program, no later than the end of their junior year. The student is encouraged to contact the Honors Advisor if the student requires advice on the selection of a research topic or a research advisor. Other faculty and the Departmental Undergraduate Advisors may also be consulted.
2. The student should contact a potential research advisor who is an expert in the field of the proposed research project and design a realistic, meritorious research program. The Research Advisor will play a strong role in developing the student's academic plan of study (E&PS as well as supporting science electives). The student must also contact the Honors Advisor to formally enter the program (see downloadable Honors Application Form).
3. A short (one or two-page) research proposal (including project goals, methods to be used, and a timetable) should be submitted to the Research Advisor and the Honors Advisor for their approval. The Department can provide limited funds to support the research program. A budget should be attached to the proposal.
4. During the course of study, the student should enroll in EPS 493 (Independent Study) and 495 (Senior Thesis) with the Research Advisor for a total of 6 credit hours. These hours **do not count toward** E&PS electives required for the major(s), but are in addition to ALL other degree requirements. They do count toward the total 128 hours required for graduation, and the upper division hours requirement.
5. On completion of the research program, the student will submit a completed thesis to the Research Advisor for approval, and a copy to the Honors Advisor. The thesis must be orally defended during a formal presentation, of approximately 20 minutes in length, to undergraduate colleagues, graduate students, research staff and faculty of the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences. Copies of the thesis (paper and an electronic version) should be left on file in the Department office and with the Research Advisor.
6. Upon successful completion of the requirements (which will be assessed by the Honors Advisor), the Honors degrees will be awarded on the basis of GPA in the E&PS courses and associated supporting sciences: 3.2-3.6 Honors (*cum laude*); 3.6-3.9 High Honors (*magna cum laude*); 3.9 and above Highest Honors (*summa cum laude*).

For additional information, please contact the Honors Advisor, Laura J. Crossey (lcrossey@unm.edu; 277-1641, room 141 (Chair's Office)).