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Undergraduate Honors Programs

Most students are confused about the difference between an Honors College and an Honors Program. A simple way of understanding the two academic options is this: an Honors College is typically a separate undergraduate college within a larger university, and an Honors Program is a set or range of coursework that a student completes while part of an existing undergraduate School or College within their institution. Either way, the student will receive an Honors designation on their diploma. An Honors Program typically doesn't offer separate housing but is still selective in its admission. Students may have the option of submitting a supplemental application during the initial application period, or they may be invited to apply when they are offered admission, or they may apply after their first semester on campus. Students may need an additional letter of recommendation and display strong academic potential when applying, and are often required to maintain a higher than average GPA. Check college websites for up-to-date information.

It is important to understand that there are not only requirements for admission into an honors program, but typically there are requirements for remaining in an honors program. Students offered admission into an honors program may find that a sizeable scholarship is also awarded along with that offer. This will require that you not only achieve a specific GPA but that you maintain that GPA throughout your years at the university. You are also likely to be offered your choice of housing, class registration before the rest of the student body, expanded access to academic ad-

vising, career services, and undergraduate research, and even extended library hours. It is also exciting to note that honors courses are frequently offered in smaller size classes, often taught by top faculty, or they may also offer academic opportunities with visiting scholars. Here are a few outstanding honors programs at well-known universities that you may wish to consider:

- American University: [AU Honors](#)
 - California Polytechnic State University: [University Honors Program](#)
 - Colorado School of Mines: [The Thorson First-Year Honors Experience](#)
 - Fordham University: [The Honors Program at Fordham College Lincoln Center](#)
 - George Washington University: [University Honors Program](#)
 - Muhlenberg College: [The Dana Scholars Program](#)
 - Rice University: [Century Scholars Program](#)
 - Santa Clara University: [The University Honors Program](#)
 - Syracuse University: [The Renee Crown University Honors Program](#)
 - Tulane University: [The Newcomb-Tulane Honors Program](#)
 - University of California Santa Barbara: [Letters and Science Honors Program](#)
 - University of Connecticut: [The Honors Program](#)
 - University of Denver: [The Honors Program at DU](#)
 - University of Georgia: [The Honors Program](#)
 - University of Kansas: [KU University Honors Program](#)
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December 2021

Check College Board and ACT websites for available test dates and sites in your area

Underclassmen — Review PSAT report (if available) with advisor and map out a plan for test preparation

Schedule spring SAT/ACT testing dates

Seniors — File any additional college applications before deadline dates

January 2022

Check College Board and ACT websites for available test dates and sites in your area

Seniors – Search and apply for scholarships that match your qualifications

Seniors – File any additional college applications

Career Paths for Cybersecurity Majors

- *Chief Information Security Officer*
- *Cryptographer*
- *Forensics Expert*
- *Incident Responder*
- *Penetration Tester*
- *Security Administrator*
- *Security Analyst*
- *Security Architect*
- *Security Auditor*
- *Security Consultant*
- *Security Director*
- *Security Engineer*
- *Security Manager*
- *Security Software Developer*
- *Security Specialist*
- *Vulnerability Assessor*

Learn more about what individuals in these careers do at <http://www.cyberdegrees.org/jobs>



Majoring in Cybersecurity

It seems that every month new data breaches expose consumers' personally identifiable information at an alarming rate, putting close to three hundred million people at risk of identity theft and fraud. Cybercriminals also focus their time on other lucrative cyberattacks, such as ransomware, phishing attacks and malware. These and other cybercrimes have created a huge demand for cybersecurity professionals who have the skills and knowledge needed to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the data and information systems that keep businesses, governments, and other enterprises humming. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, jobs in the information security field are expected to grow 28% through 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also notes that the median pay for professionals in this field is over \$92,000 a year.

Responding to this demand, a growing number of colleges and universities have launched undergraduate majors in cybersecurity. Although there can be differences among programs, the typical major includes classes in digital forensics and cyber investigation, cryptology, ethical hacking, software development, database design and Internet law and ethics. Internships in the field are often a key component of the major. At some schools, the major is offered as part of the computer science program, while at others it is offered in the school of engineering or business.

Cybersecurity is a key concern for the United States government. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency jointly sponsor the National Centers of Academic Excellence (CAE) in Cyber Security education programs. The programs that have received the CAE designation have under-

gone a rigorous review and met NSA standards for training professionals. Students and parents can find a list of CAE designated programs at [DHS and NSA Designated CAE Cyber Defense Schools Guide by State \(cyberdegreesedu.org\)](#).

At certain colleges, cybersecurity majors also have a unique scholarship opportunity, called the CyberCorps Scholarship for Service. Funded through the National Security Agency, this scholarship covers full tuition for three years at participating universities and colleges, and also pays a stipend of \$25,000 a year. In exchange, recipients must agree to work in a cybersecurity position after graduation for a period equal to the length of the scholarship. Students in the program also do a 10-week paid summer internship before graduation. A list of colleges and universities participating in the CyberCorps Scholarship for Service program is available here: [CyberCorps@Scholarship for Service \(opm.gov\)](#). In addition to the CyberCorps Scholarship, some colleges and universities also offer institutional scholarships for students majoring in cybersecurity.

Is a career in cybersecurity right for you? Successful professionals in this field are usually highly curious, enjoy solving complex problems, and have a strong sense of ethics. Most undergraduate programs require good math skills and familiarity with computers. A good way to find out if cybersecurity might be a match is to attend a GenCyber Camp. Funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Security Agency with the goal of encouraging more students to enter the cyber-security profession, these free camps are designed to help students learn more about cyber-security careers. For information on GenCyber Camps, visit [GenCyber \(gen-cyber.com\)](#).

Financial Matters: “Great Money” or “Not So Great Money”



If you're the parent of a high school senior and you're thinking about how to pay for college without going broke, it's a whole new, expensive world out there. In this world there are just two kinds of money: “Great money – or Free money” – and “Not-so-Great-money”.

Free Money

Free money is a grant or scholarship that does not need to be paid back. There are two types of “Free money”: 1. Need-based aid and 2. Merit-based aid. The amount of need-based aid a family will receive is determined by the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid – www.fafsa.ed.gov) and sometimes by the CSS Profile (www.collegeboard.com/profile).

Merit-aid in the form of tuition reduction, grants and scholarships is a tool used by most private colleges and many public universities to entice the

strongest students to apply and attend. Students can receive scholarships for their athletic, artistic or debate talents as well as for demonstrated scholarship – great grades and strong standardized test scores. Many public universities have also created prestigious Honors Colleges, and these opportunities often come with a variety of perks including early class registration, smaller classes, honors dormitories and attractive scholarships.

The Ivy League colleges as well as a few of the most selective colleges in the country, including Stanford, MIT and Georgetown, do not offer any form of merit aid, but typically have very generous need-based aid.

If a student has what it takes to be accepted to any of these colleges or universities, and the family isn't able to pay full-freight – typically \$70,000-\$80,000 per year, finances are not likely to be a barrier. According to Harvard's website, “parents making less than \$65,000 are expected to contribute \$0, 20% of Harvard undergraduates pay nothing to attend, and 90 percent of American families would pay the same or less to send their children to Harvard as they would a state school.”

The big discrepancy comes when families fall into the “gray zone” – they earn too much to qualify for need-based aid, but not enough to pay a college's sticker price.

Loans

Often, parents are so afraid of disappointing their children that they “will do whatever we need to do to make it happen.” Frequently, this means taking out loans in both the student's name and the parents' names, cashing in policies early, paying penalties and even forfeiting their own retirement money.

It would be unwise to attend a high-priced private institution at \$65,000/year if the family must borrow substantially. This is especially true if the student is undecided about a major. A student's college education should not be allowed to disrupt a family's normal spending patterns and it's unwise for parents to abandon their own needs.

Remember, there is no one perfect college; most students can be happy at a variety of schools. Parents need to be the responsible ones here and consider future employment opportunities and future debt responsibilities.

Undergraduate Honors Programs (continued from p.1)

University of Mary Washington:
[The UMW Honors Program](#)

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: [Honors Carolina](#)

University of Texas at Austin: [The Plan II Honors Program](#)

University of Virginia: [Echols Scholars Program](#)

University of Wisconsin-Madison: [L&S Honors Program](#)

If you are interested in honors at other colleges, just search their websites for information.

You may already be enrolled in honors level coursework in high school. Those classes are usually more rigorous, advanced and require more of your focused time and attention. And it's worth it! Colleges love to see that applicants have done well in the most challenging coursework available at their individual schools, because this demonstrates that the applicant is more prepared for the more advanced rigor of the university classroom. Honors programs are designed to attract those same academically-motivated students and offer the opportunity of a

deeper dive into their chosen field of study among a smaller cohort of students. Some honors programs will require a senior thesis, completion of a research project with senior faculty, and some form of internship. There may be special events or activities for honors students, and that special designation on their diploma and richer undergraduate resume will help ensure that they stand out within the job market or graduate school admission offices. So set the bar and aim high – honors can be yours!

What to Do if You've Been Deferred

The month of December brings the first round of college decisions. If you applied either Early Decision, Early Action, or through some sort of Priority application, you will likely begin hearing from colleges this month.

Some decisions will bring joy and relief—acceptance to your ED college means that you can wear that college sweatshirt with a sense of pride and ownership. A denial, while disappointing, will allow you to rethink the other colleges on your list and move on with your life. And then there's the deferral—a kind of non-decision that gives you a second chance at acceptance. But if you really want to have that second chance, you'll need to take a proactive approach and do what you still can to influence the final decision.

First, think about the likely reasons for your deferral. Does your transcript show a rising trend in grades and might the college be waiting for mid-year grades to confirm that the trend is continuing?

Make sure it does. You might even consider asking a senior year teacher to write a letter on your behalf, affirming your strength in the classroom or your unusual intellectual curiosity. Perhaps you simply did not demonstrate enough interest in your early action college—a campus visit (if possible) or an interview might strengthen your case.

Treat your deferral as an opportunity to tell them more about who you are and why you believe that their institution is a good match. At the very least, you'll want to write to the appropriate admission officer at Deferral U, affirming your continued interest in attending that institution and expressing your hope for acceptance in the regular round of admissions. Follow up with a phone call to ask what you might do to improve your standing and then follow through on their suggestions.

Don't give up on this college, but rethink all of your college options—there are many colleges that can provide a perfect fit.

College Expert

3588 Woodland Trail
Eagan, MN 55123

651-263-5925

sue@collegeexpert.net

ryan@collegeexpert.net

www.CollegeExpertmn.com