**Becoming a James Scholar:**

- 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
  - On-campus transfer students into the College of Media who 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. Students are automatically considered for admission upon application to the University. There is no separate application.
  - Off-campus transfers with at least a 3.75 transfer GPA may request to join the program. Please speak with your advisor.

- Students who meet the above requirements will be invited to become a James Scholar for the upcoming fall semester after the summer academic review is completed. There is no self-nomination process.

- 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 order to 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 count toward the 14 graded hours needed each fall and spring
- 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 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 exception is for the freshman year alone; a 3.5 term and overall GPA must be maintained in all future semesters
- 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
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 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 to be certified as a James Scholar at Media’s May graduation ceremony
  - 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 commitment to professional development, service learning, 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. The academic year refers to the fall and spring terms; Honors projects cannot be completed over the summer. Additional information and/or applicable deadlines for Honors form submission are noted. 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 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 (Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded)

- Complete an Honors Course Learning Agreement (HCLA) 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 fall or spring term class
  - Courses taken during the summer term are not eligible to count as a student’s Honors project
• Complete a Campus Honors course or other course designated for James Scholars in a fall or spring term (repeatable; Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded)
  o 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 course in a fall or spring term (repeatable; no Honors notation listed on transcript)
  o 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:

• Participate in the spring Undergrad Research Symposium (not repeatable; no Honors notation listed on transcript)
  o HCLA form must be submitted by the end of the 4th week of spring classes

Service Learning or Global Studies (No Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded)

• Participate in a Global Studies Seminar Abroad course -GLBL 298 (not repeatable; no Honors notation listed on transcript)
  o HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of the class session in the semester the course is completed
  o Several courses are offered each academic year and are held as either 1st or 2nd 8-week sessions with travel to a pre-determined location either over Spring Break, after May Commencement, or during Winter Break
  o Please see the class schedule for additional information on these courses:

• Participate in the Honors section of a College of Media international study course (ex. ADV 399; not repeatable; Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded)
  o HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of the class session in the semester the course is completed
  o The course must travel internationally; Study Domestic (Immersion) courses offered by Media do not qualify
  o In order to qualify for the Honors credit, students must take the Honors section of the course and complete an additional Honors project revolving around the international experience as determined by the professor

• Participate in an Honors Abroad course through the Honors Living Learning Community (not repeatable; Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded)
  o HCLA form must be submitted by the 10th day of the class session in the semester the course is completed

• Attend a College of Media James Scholar Study Abroad Spring Break Trip (may not be available every year; not repeatable; Honors notation on the transcript may be awarded if a course is associated with the trip)
  o HCLA form must be submitted by March 1st
  o 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

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

• Complete a College of Media approved semester-long internship (fall or spring only; summer internships do not apply; not repeatable)
  o HCLA form must be submitted two weeks after start of the internship in the semester of the internship
  o The internship must be pre-approved by Media’s Director of Career Services
  o 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
  o If the internship is not in the campus area and the student is not registered in courses on the Illinois campus, s/he must complete the internship seminar 495 course offered by his/her major in the semester immediately following 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. Students who have not complied may be denied the completion of this Honors option.
  o An “S” grade for a 495 course must be received, indicating completion of course requirements to receive Honors credit

• Serve as an Ebert Fellow in Media Criticism for an academic year (not repeatable)
  o Supporting document verifying the student’s acceptance into the Fellowship and HCLA form must be submitted two weeks after notification of the position
  o Students must apply for an Ebert Fellowship and will be notified by the Journalism Department if chosen
  o Ebert Fellows work with a Chicago-area writer on their critical writing skills
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
  - Courses were chosen from the Leadership Minor and or the Leadership Certificate
  - Only courses on the following list will count for Honors credit: AGED 230, 260, 340, 360, 380, or 480; BADM 310 or 314; CMN 321; GE 462; PS 453; or SOCW 321
  - No additional courses outside the list above will count toward this option

- Serve as a College of Media student representative on a University or Media appointed campus committee (not repeatable)
  - Supporting documentation verifying the student's role on the committee and HCLA form must be submitted by the end of the 6th week of classes, preferably in the fall unless a student's service does not begin prior to this date. In this case, the HCLA form should be submitted at the beginning of the spring term.
  - Students must be appointed either by the College of Media or a University office, such as the Dean of Students office, to this committee in order to qualify; students will be serving on these committees with University faculty and/or staff
  - This option does not include participation in Registered Student Organizations

- Serve as a College of Media representative on the Student Senate (not repeatable)
  - Supporting documentation verifying the student's role on the Senate and HCLA form must be submitted by the end of the 6th week of classes, preferably in the fall unless a student’s service does not begin prior to this date. In this case, the HCLA form should be submitted at the beginning of the spring term.

- Complete a Leadership Portfolio including a Personal Development Plan as required for the Leadership Certificate (not repeatable)
  - HCLA form must be submitted by December 1st or April 1st depending on the term of completion
    - As seniors must complete Honors projects in the fall, spring completion for graduating seniors is not an option
  - 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

Additional Requirements and Information:

- 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 Honors project. Please email media-ssc@illinois.edu for additional information.
  - 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 before the next fall term begins. Because James Scholar review takes place once a year, a student who does not meet the requirements in the fall semester will remain in 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 a fall or spring course
    - Honors credit cannot be earned for summer coursework
  - 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, attach the approved project proposal, and have the professor sign it
  - 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 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 project are many and you should base them on your areas of interest.
    - Consider personal or career interests; use your project as an opportunity to research an area of personal interest, make professional contacts, enhance your resume, etc.
    - 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 matter addressed in class and the areas you would like to expand your knowledge.
    - Think about how you could use your media skills to producing an extraordinary Honors project; produce a piece you could put into a portfolio.
  - 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.