

Graduation with Distinction – Program Guidelines

Template: Specific standards to be established by departments (or colleges that are non-departmental), subject to the following University-wide minimums and requirements.

To enter the program, the department typically requires:

1. Minimum GPA in the major with overall minimum GPA 3.3
2. Major requirements to be completed before undertaking the senior thesis
3. Written sponsorship agreement between the student and the faculty mentor

Departments typically require:

1. Several courses beyond the basic or general major requirements (as some majors already offer an intensive major), e.g., 500 level courses. Course requirements should include:
 - a. A research methodology course or a one-credit Junior year course preparing for the senior thesis,
 - b. 3-6 hours of senior thesis (the resulting product approved by the faculty mentor and thesis committee)
2. Public presentation of the final product at appropriate public venue (e.g., professional conference or meeting, USC Discovery Day, departmental showcase, recital, or submission to professional journal)

Criteria for graduation with “Distinction in [major]”:

1. Completion of course requirements
2. Presentation of product
3. Final GPA in major courses and overall of at least 3.3

NOTE: South Carolina Honors College students taking this route would graduate with both Honors in SCHC and Distinction in [major]

Appropriate student activities are discipline specific; the form of a student’s activity should resemble the research/scholarship/performance activities of faculty members in that particular field as expected for tenure and promotion.

This program is meant to be an optional opportunity, and not mandated for every major. While it is intended to augment regular departmental major programs, in some cases a department may propose to allow non-majors to complete the track in their department. This must be carefully justified.

Process for creating and establishing “Graduation with Distinction” within a department:

1. Requirements and guidelines to be established by department
2. Approval by College/School
3. Approval by Associate Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies (Office of the Provost)
4. Final submission to and approval by Committee on Curricula and Courses and Faculty Senate

Each Department, overseen by the College, determines the specifics of the general program requirements and the acceptability of student activities. Department are also responsible for monitoring the quality of the program and student projects.

Graduation with Distinction – Proposed Template for Bulletin

Degree with Distinction

Available to students majoring in _____ who wish to participate in significant research activities of the major field in collaboration or under the supervision of a faculty mentor.

Prerequisites: A minimum GPA of ____ in major courses, 3.3 overall

Courses: _____

Written sponsorship agreement from the faculty mentor on file in the department or college office.

Requirements: _____ courses in addition to the general major requirements, including: [research methodologies course or a 1 credit Junior year course preparing for the Senior Thesis work]; ____ hours of Senior Thesis; Other required courses, if any: _____

[Description of the required product and the required presentation or display in an appropriate public venue.]

Students who successfully fulfill of these requirements with a GPA of at least 3.3 in all major courses and overall, will be awarded their degree with “Distinction in (major)” upon graduation.