

## **TU/e Honors Academy Regulations for Bachelor Honors Tracks based on Art. 7.9b of the WHW**

The Executive Board of Eindhoven University of Technology resolves to adopt on April 25, 2024, the TU/e Honors Academy Regulations for bachelor's Honors Tracks.

These TU/e Honors Academy Regulations, which entered into force on September 1, 2017, read as follows:

### **Art 1 TU/e Honors Academy**

1.1 The overall aim of the TU/e Honors Academy is to prepare students for personal leadership as well as scientific, societal and/or industrial leadership in a knowledge-intensive economy and society.

1.2 The TU/e Honors Academy offers cross-departmental, institution-wide honors programs to bachelor's students, which are called 'Honors Tracks'.

1.3 The TU/e Honors Academy has a Dean, who has the overall responsibility for the vision on and policy related to contents, offer and set-up of Honors Tracks, the assessments included, and for the quality assurance system (see Art. 10 and Appendix 1). The Dean is advised by the Scientific Council, consisting of the Dean of the Bachelor College, Dean of the Graduate School and the Rector Magnificus.

1.4 The TU/e Honors Academy has an Honors Student Council in which every track is represented by one of its students. This council fulfills the role of monitoring the execution of the programs provided by the Honors Tracks from a student perspective (see Art. 10 and Appendix 1).

1.5 If a pilot is initiated, in the context of educational innovation, that derogates from one or more of the stipulations of these regulations, an addendum will be added to these regulations. For the duration of the pilot, students who are not part of this pilot may not claim any rights from this.

### **Art 2 Honors Tracks**

2.1 Each Honors Track has a track coordinator who is responsible for operationalizing the overall vision and policy for the Honors Track. Track coordinators have final responsibility for the assessment of students in their track.

2.2 The students can be coached by the track coordinators themselves or by one or more individual coaches for the students within the Honors Track.

2.3 Honors coaches coach students with respect to their personal development goals and/or honors work and, if applicable, teamwork.

2.4 Honors Tracks offer open-ended projects or challenges that are related to TU/e Strategic

Areas and other multidisciplinary research themes. These open-ended projects open up opportunities for students to create their own challenges and to be in the lead of their own personal and professional development.

2.5 For students' personal and professional development a common TU/e Honors Academy competence framework has been established: Academic competences for TU/e Honors students (see Appendix 2).

### **Art 3 Workload**

3.1 Students participating in an Honors Track have a workload equivalent to 15 credits per academic year. This honors workload is on top of students' workload of 180 credits in their regular bachelor's degree program. For students pursuing an internal double or multiple-diploma degree program (hereafter: double diploma students) the honors workload is on top of the workload for those degree programs.

3.2 Students do their honors work parallel to their second and/or third year of their bachelor's degree program. Transfer students, as referred to in article 1.2 under dd of the Program and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's Program TU/e, do their honors work either parallel to the first and second year or to the second and third year of their new bachelor's degree program.

3.3 Students can choose between doing either one year or two years of honors work. This implies that students who want to start their honors work in their third year of their bachelor's degree program can only do the first honors year.

### **Art 4 Application, selection and admission to the first honors year**

4.1 Early in the second semester, first-year students who are studying at a nominal rate will be invited to apply for a position in an Honors Track. Studying at a nominal rate means that students have actually passed all the study components that they should have passed according to the program of examinations.

4.2 Students who have not received such an invitation but believe they qualify for participation in an Honors Track are also allowed to apply for a position in an Honors Track.

4.3 In order to apply for a particular track the student is required to submit an application letter together with a resumé to the coordinator of the Honors Track involved.

4.4 If the application letter is convincing, the coordinator of the Honors Track involved will invite the student for an application interview.

4.5 Students who satisfactorily support their application and show their suitability as well as assets for the Honors Track involved during the application interview are admissible to the track involved.

4.6 The Dean of the TU/e Honors Academy, taking into account the advice of the track

coordinators, decides which candidates will be conditionally accepted to the Honors Track they applied for. This decision is based on:

- whether students have shown convincing motivation and suitability for both the TU/e Honors Academy in general and for the Honors Track they applied to, and
- the Honors Track specific capacity.

Students that are not conditionally accepted by the track they applied for but have shown convincing motivation and suitability for the TU/e Honors Academy in general, have a right to apply for a position in another Honors Track provided that that Honors Track has enough capacity.

4.7 Students who are conditionally accepted will be finally admitted to the first honors year if they have obtained at least 60 credits in their regular bachelor's degree program in the academic year preceding their intended first honors year. Transfer students who have not obtained at least 60 credits in curricular educational activities in the academic year preceding their first honors year will have to submit a motivation letter in which they substantiate why they are able to do the honors program on top of their regular bachelor's degree program. Based on this motivation letter the Dean of the Honors Academy will decide whether they are allowed to start in the Honors Bachelor's Program.

4.8 For students who want to apply for one year of honors work parallel to their third year of their bachelor's degree program the same procedure and requirements apply, with the exception that a requirement for final admittance is that they must have studied at a nominal rate in the previous two academic years. This means that regular bachelor's students must have obtained at least 120 credits in the two academic years preceding their intended honors year. Transfer students who have not obtained at least 120 credits in the two academic years preceding their intended honors year will have to submit a motivation letter in which they substantiate why they are able to do the honors program on top of their regular bachelor's degree program. Based on this motivation letter the Dean of the Honors Academy will decide whether they are allowed to start in the Honors Bachelor's Program.

## **Art 5 Admission to the second honors year**

5.1 Students are admitted to the second honors year if they meet the following two conditions:

- successful completion of the first honors year, which means they have passed the annual assessment and have obtained 15 credits;
- they have obtained at least 60 credits in curricular educational activities in their regular bachelor's degree program in the academic year preceding the second honors year. Or they have obtained at least 120 credits in their regular bachelor's degree program in the two academic years preceding the second honors year.

## **Art 6 Switching Honors Track**

6.1 Students have the right to apply for a different Honors Track in their second honors year. Students who wish to change track must follow the application procedure as

described in Articles 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6. Deadlines for the application procedure can be found in the digital education guide.

6.2 Students who have been provisionally admitted to the Honors Track to which they wish to switch must meet the conditions stated in Article 5.1 to definitively be admitted to the second honors year.

### **Art 7 Annual assessment**

7.1 Students are assessed once per honors year, at the end of the academic year. For this annual assessment the process and procedure are laid down in a common assessment framework, as established by the Dean of the Honors Academy. All honors coaches and students have access to this assessment framework via the learning management system (Canvas).

7.2 The assessment includes students' personal and professional development, content-related understanding of their honors work, and, if applicable, students' contribution to team process and team deliverables, as well as the quality of the results delivered during the year as part of the Honors Track. In addition, the student's professional conduct will be assessed, i.e. the timely submission of the written component of the assessment and presence at the final assessment interview.

7.3 The assessment consists of both written and oral components.

7.4 The minimum student submission for the written component is a project report, a reflection on their development and – in case of team collaboration – a reflection on their contribution to the process and results achieved by the group.

7.5 The oral component is an assessment interview conducted with the student by two assessors: the student's coach and a coach from another Honors Track.

7.6 The two assessors jointly determine the result of the assessment based on the written and oral components.

7.7 The assessment can be graded as 'Insufficient', 'Sufficient', 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

7.8 Students with an assessment graded 'Sufficient' or higher have successfully completed the honors year involved and will be awarded 15 credits. Students with an assessment graded 'Insufficient' will be awarded 0 (zero) credits.

7.9 Students can view their assessment form and feedback in the learning management system.

### **Art 8 Completion, certificate and statement on degree certificate**

8.1 Students who only successfully complete the first Honors year and do not continue into the second year, will be awarded 15 credits. The aforementioned students who additionally meet the requirements set forth in Article 5.1 will be awarded a certificate, provided that they have submitted a request as such to the Honors Academy. This request must include documentary proof that the requirements of Article 5.1 have been met.

8.2 Students who successfully complete two honors years will be awarded 30 credits.

8.3 Students who have completed two honors years and the final bachelor's exam within 48 months of the start of the degree program will have "honors" mentioned on the bachelor's degree certificate. They will also receive a letter, signed by the Dean of the Honors Academy, describing the content and importance of the honors program. The letter also explains that the honors program is taken alongside the student's regular curriculum, which is a remarkable achievement.

8.4 In derogation of Article 8.3, double diploma students who have completed two honors years and the final bachelor's exam within the time limit laid down in Article 6.5 paragraph 3a of the PER for bachelor's, will have "honors" mentioned on the bachelor's degree certificate. They will also receive a letter of recommendation signed by the Dean of the TU/e Honors Academy.

### **Art 9 Unreasonable hardship**

9.1 In the case of acknowledged personal circumstances (as referred to in Art. 8.7 par. 3 of the PER of the bachelor's degree program) that would lead to unreasonable hardship if they were not taken into account, the Dean of the TU/e Honors Academy may derogate from the stipulations in Articles 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 8.3 and 8.4 of these regulations and set an adapted study progress norm for the student including possible other conditions. The decision of the Dean of the TU/e Honors Academy shall not be taken before the advice of the academic advisor (see Art. 9.6) has been taken into account.

9.2 In addition to the stipulations on Art. 9.1, Art. 4.7 of these regulations may only be derogated from if:

- there are acknowledged personal circumstances, as referred to in Art. 8.7, par.3 under a, b, c and f of the PER of the bachelor's degree program, and
- the student has earned at least 45 credits in their regular bachelor's degree program in the academic year prior to the intended first year of the honors program.

9.3 In addition to the stipulations in Art. 9.1, Art. 4.8 of these regulations may only be derogated from if:

- there are acknowledged personal circumstances, as referred to in Art. 8.7, par. 3 under a, b, c and f of the PER of the bachelor's degree program, and
- the student has earned at least 105 credits in their regular bachelor's degree program in the two academic years prior to the intended honors program year.

9.4 In addition to the stipulations in Art. 9.1, Art. 5.1 of these regulations can only be derogated from if:

- there are acknowledged personal circumstances, as referred to in Art. 8.7 par. 3 under a, b, c and f of the PER of the bachelor's degree program, and
- the student has earned at least 45 credits in the regular bachelor's degree program in the academic year preceding the intended second honors program year.

9.5 In addition to the stipulations of Article 9.1, if acknowledged personal circumstances are invoked as referred to in Art. 8.7 par. 3 under d and e of the PER of the bachelor's degree program, Articles 8.3 and 8.4 of these regulations may only be derogated from if the student has as promptly as possible but no later than 6 months before the expiration of the 48-month period submitted a request to this purpose with the Honors Academy.

9.6 Acknowledged personal circumstances, as referred to in Art. 9.1, will only be taken into consideration insofar as they have been reported to the academic advisor by or on behalf of the student as soon as possible, but no later than twenty working days after the occurrence of this personal circumstance. In the case of a pregnancy, the student must report this as soon as possible after becoming aware of the fact that she is expecting, but preferably three months before the due date.

### **Art 10 Legal protection**

10.1 Students who wish to submit a complaint or disagree with a decision (e.g. a decision of the Dean or of assessors), may submit a complaint, objection or appeal through a [digital form](#) within the facility.

10.2 Objections and appeals must be received within six weeks of the publication of the decision.

### **Art 11 Quality assurance**

11.1 In order to safeguard the quality of the Honors Tracks the TU/e Honors Academy has set up a quality assurance system for which the Dean is responsible. The quality assurance system comprises the following components: accountability to the Scientific Council of the TU/e Honors Academy, external benchmarking with peers, on-going monitoring, the annual evaluation cycle and professionalization activities for the staff members involved in the Honors Tracks. The quality assurance system is described in more detail in Appendix 1.

### **Art 12 Transition regulations Quality assurance**

12.1 The requirement that the bachelor's final examination must be completed within 48 months of the start of the degree program, as referred to in Art 8.3, applies to students who started an Honors Track at the TU/e on or after September 1, 2020.

## **Appendix 1: Quality Assurance system TU/e Honors Academy**

The quality assurance system of the TU/e Honors Academy comprises several components: accountability to the Scientific Council of the TU/e Honors Academy, external benchmarking with peers, on-going monitoring, the annual evaluation cycle and professionalization activities for the staff members involved in the tracks.

### **Accountability to the Scientific Council**

At least once a year a meeting with the Scientific Council is organized to discuss developments in the TU/e Honors Academy and developments TU/e wide. Recurring topics include progress with respect to the set-up of the BSc tracks and the MSc personal leadership & professional development program, student intake, students' learning outcomes and budget. Outcomes are translated into measures to be taken at the tactical and operational level.

### **External benchmarking with peers**

Benchmarking with peers occurs at two levels. The Deans of the honors programs of Dutch universities participate in the Honors Deans Network. Experiences at the strategic level are exchanged. In addition, the TU/e Honors Academy participates in a network for policy officers involved in honors programs at Dutch universities, and in a network for all honors programs in Dutch higher education, which is a follow up of the Sirius network. As part of this network study days on specific topics are organized. Within these networks, once every four years the TU/e Honors Academy program is formally reviewed by a committee consisting of several Deans and students from other Dutch honors programs. Once a year the TU/e Honors Academy also participates in a 4TU meeting with staff members and students involved in the honors programs. These meetings focus on topics for which input from peers may provide new insights and improvements.

### **On-going monitoring**

During the academic year the TU/e Honors Academy monitors progress with the track coordinators and with the Honors Student Council. The goal of the coordinator meetings is to evaluate if there are any issues that require immediate action and to create a common frame of reference for the coordination of the Honors Tracks. At the student level similar meetings are organized with the Honors Student Council, consisting of representatives from each Honors Track. In the second meeting with this council the outcomes of the annual student survey are discussed.

### **Annual evaluation cycle**

The annual evaluation cycle focuses on the extent to which the overall goals of the TU/e Honors Academy are accomplished. The main input consists of the outcomes of the annual student questionnaire for the total group of honors students as well as per year group and per track. These outcomes are shared with the track coordinators. Their reflections and points for improvement are discussed in the annual one-on-one evaluation interviews between the coordinators and the Dean of the TU/e Honors Academy. The outcomes of the annual student survey are also discussed in the second meeting with the Honors Student Council. The outcomes are also described in an annual report.

### **Professionalization activities**

Every year coordinators and coaches receive an annually updated assessment guide to prepare for the annual assessment process. An assessment workshop is organized if needed. In addition, a workshop for new coaches has been set up to familiarize them with their coaching role.

## Appendix 2: Academic competences for TU/e honors students

For TU/e bachelor and master graduates a set of seven academic competences have been defined. For honors students an eighth competence has been added:

A TU/e honors student

### *1. is competent in one or more scientific disciplines*

A university graduate is familiar with existing scientific knowledge, and has the competence to increase and develop this through study.

- Has a thorough mastery of parts of the relevant fields extending to the forefront of knowledge (latest theories, methods, techniques and topical questions).
- Is able to reflect on standard methods and their presuppositions; is able to question these; is able to propose adjustments, and to estimate their implications.
- Is able to independently spot gaps in their own knowledge, and to revise and extend it through study.

### *2. is competent in doing research*

A university graduate has the competence to acquire new scientific knowledge through research. For this purpose, research means: the development of new knowledge and new insights in a purposeful and methodical way.

- Is able to reformulate ill-structured, more complex research problems. Also takes account of the system boundaries in this. Is able to defend this new interpretation against involved parties.
- Is able to produce and execute a research plan independently.
- Is able, and has the attitude to, where necessary, draw upon other disciplines in their own research.

### *3. is competent in designing*

As well as carrying out research, many university graduates will also design. Designing is a synthetic activity aimed at the realization of new or modified artefacts or systems with the intention of creating value in accordance with predefined requirements and desires (e.g. mobility, health).

- Is able to reformulate ill-structured, more complex design problems. Also takes account of the system boundaries in this. Is able to defend this new interpretation against the parties involved.
- Is able to produce and execute a design plan independently.
- Is able, and has the attitude to, where necessary, draw upon other disciplines in their own design.

### *4. has a scientific approach*

A university graduate has a systematic approach characterized by the development and use of theories, models and coherent interpretations, has a critical attitude, and has insight into the nature of science and technology.

- Has great skill in, and affinity with the use, development and validation of models; is able to consciously choose from various modelling techniques.
- Is able to document adequately the results of research and design with a view to contributing to the development of knowledge in the field and beyond; is able to publish these results.



#### *5. possesses basic intellectual skills*

A university graduate is competent in reasoning, reflecting, and forming a judgment. These are skills which are learned or sharpened in the context of a discipline, and which are generically applicable from then on.

- Is able to critically reflect on their own thinking, decision making, and acting and to adjust these on the basis of this reflection independently.
- Is able to ask adequate questions, and has a critical yet constructive attitude towards analyzing and solving more complex, real-life problems in the field.

#### *6. is competent in co-operating and communicating*

A university graduate has the competence of being able to work with and for others. This requires not only adequate interaction, a sense of responsibility, and leadership, but also good communication with colleagues and non-colleagues. He or she is also able to participate in a scientific or public debate.

- Is able to perform project-based work, also for more complex projects: is pragmatic and has a sense of responsibility; is able to deal with limited sources; is able to deal with risks; is able to compromise.
- Is able to work within an interdisciplinary team, also in teams with great disciplinary diversity; has insight into and is able to deal with, team roles and social dynamics.
- Is able to communicate about the process and results of learning, thinking and decision making with colleagues and non-colleagues.

#### *7. takes account of the temporal and the social context*

Science and technology are not isolated, and always have a temporal and social context. Beliefs and methods have their origins; decisions have social consequences in time. A university graduate is aware of this, and has the competence to integrate these insights into their scientific work.

- Is able to analyze and to discuss the ethical and normative aspects of the implications and assumptions of scientific thinking and acting with colleagues and non-colleagues (both in research and in designing); integrates these implications in scientific work.

#### *8. is competent in self-directed and continuous learning*

Developments in society are characterized by an enormous increase in complexity on the one hand and available knowledge and information on the other hand. This requires the ability to decide for yourself which knowledge, skills and attitude you need to acquire, select and use in a specific context. This, in turn, requires an attitude of openness, adaptability, self-reflection and curiosity as well as an understanding of what learning actually is.

- Takes responsibility for their own learning process and professional development.
- Designs and gives direction to and designs their own learning process and professional development.
- Has an open attitude towards themselves, towards others and towards (future) developments in society, technology and science.