



# X-STYLE

## GUIDE OF THE X-HONOURS PROGRAMME

2023-2024



university of applied sciences

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**X-HONOURS**

## GUIDE OF THE X-HONOURS PROGRAMME 2023-2024

This document describes the mission, vision and study process of X-Honours, the honours programme of NHL Stenden University of Applied Science. It starts with the basic principles followed by a description of the X-Honours course, the credits, the process of certification and the role of coaching. The related pillars and competence levels are discussed and explained. This document replaces previous guides and is applicable regardless of the year of commencement. This guide is intended to provide basic information about the programme. Detailed information can be found in the dedicated MS Teams environment for students.



## 1. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF X-HONOURS

### 1.1 Mission

X-Honours provides a challenging environment and community within NHL Stenden for students who want more, are able to do more, or want to be able to do more than their study programme has to offer. This in order to develop individually and professionally, broaden and/or deepen their expertise and skills complementary to their programme, with the aim of developing competences that go beyond those of their studies and domains.

### 1.2 NHL Stenden's vision on honours education

Our vision on honours education is as follows:

- Honours students define their own learning outcomes. They shape and conduct their own learning process and assess themselves accordingly to their own set requirements.
- Honours students are continuously developing themselves and purposefully seek appropriate learning activities: projects and activities that match their goals and ambitions, and that yield growth within the X-Honours pillars.
- Students acquire expertise and skills that lie beyond the scope of their study programme by collaborating with students and professionals from other study programmes and domains.
- Students and lecturers/coaches learn from and with each other, inspire each other, and challenge each other.

### 1.3 Study process

The following principles are applied to achieve the Honours vision:

- We provide a community of learning in which students, lecturers, and other professionals from different study programmes learn and share knowledge together. In this way, students from various study programmes and domains learn from and with each other, inspire each other, and challenge themselves and each other.
- Students learn to assess issues from various perspectives in an interdisciplinary setting, keeping in mind different interests.
- Students develop learning outcomes that lie beyond their study programme and/or require a bigger effort than needed for their study programme.
- X-Honours provides students the opportunity to build a network with a range of expertise (students from their own and other study programmes and domains, external parties, lecturers, etc.).
- In X-Honours, students continuously develop competences that are linked to the six pillars; personal leadership, value driven vision, entrepreneurial behaviour, interdisciplinary collaboration, innovative behaviour, and a free pillar being a topic of the student's own choice.
- Lecturers coach the individual and group learning process, participate in developing for challenging activities with the students, and provide input. In this way, students and lecturers contribute together to challenging, meaningful, extracurricular honours education.
- Students acquire systematic and professional working methods in projects, that reinforce and complement regular education.

X-Honours is not just about mastering competences, but it particularly focuses on the learning process during the projects/activities and the student's individual role to and the related activities. In order to go through a meaningful and effective process, students set themselves challenging learning goals. Figure 1 represents this cycle.

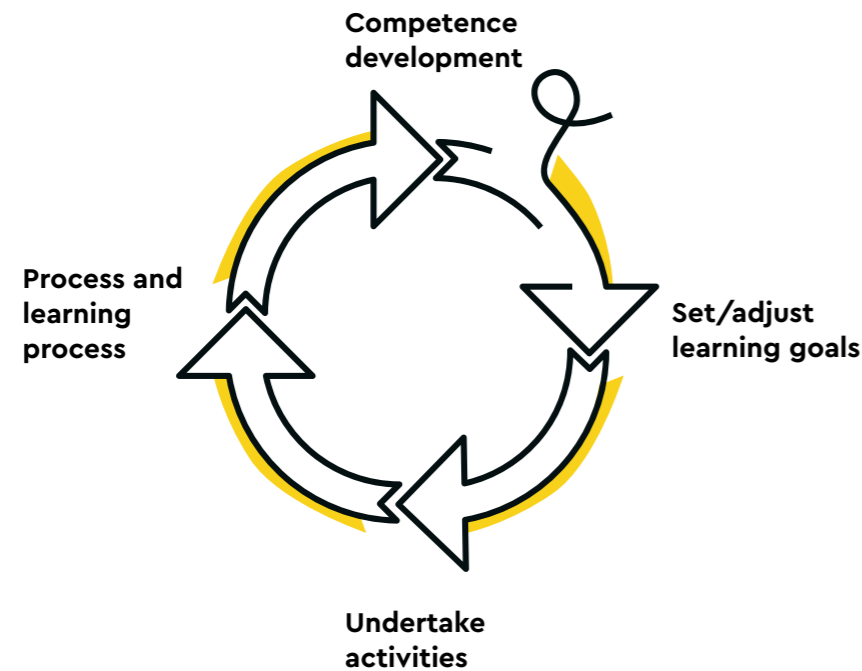


Figure 1. Vision on development of competences in X-Honours

## 2. THREE BOXES AND LEVELS

In the honours programme, students develop within three boxes in which ECTS can be obtained per box: explore, execute and experience. The number of ECTS depends on the level of the study: Associate degree 15 ECTS, Bachelor 30 ECTS and Master 10 ECTS.

Depending on the level at which the student wishes to complete the honours programme, the duration varies and coincides with the duration of the study programme: level 5 (Associate degree) is 2 years, level 6 (bachelor) is 4 years and level 7 (master) is 1 year.

Study	Credits	Credits Honours	Box 1 Explore	Box 2 Execute	Box 3 Experience
Ad	120	15*	Onboarding: 4 Assessment 1: 2 Assessment 2: 2	3/4	4/3
Bachelor	240	30**	Onboarding: 4 Assessment 1: 2 Assessment 2: 2 Assessment 3: 2	10/13	10/13
Master	60	10***	Onboarding: 4 Assessment 4: 2	2/4	2/4

Figure 2: The Honours Credit System

### 2.1 Box 1: Explore

In Box 1, explore, students immerse themselves in the Honours programme and are taught the basics needed to succeed. This part includes a compulsory onboarding that will result in 4 ECTS. The remaining ECTS are credited when the other boxes are completed by presenting the showcase and portfolio.

### 2.2 Box 2: Execute

In box 2, execute, students develop and/or participate in activities that contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The focus of this box is: doing! These may be projects, courses other than the student's own programme, organising inspiration sessions for the Honours learning community, contributing to and/or assisting with university or Honours-related activities such as marketing, open days, social media, etc.. In order to obtain the credits, the student must submit a plan of approach for each component to the coach, stating the intended number of ECTS to be obtained.

### 2.3 Box 3: Experience

In box 3, experience, the student undergoes and creates experiences that contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. In Box 2 the emphasis is on doing, in Box 3 the emphasis is on experiencing. This includes participation in conferences, RUN-EU projects, Grand Tour participation or exchange programmes. Of course, these are activities that are outside the own curriculum or a broadening/deepening of the own curriculum. In order to obtain the credits, the student must submit a plan of approach for each component to the coach, stating the intended number of ECTS to be obtained.



### 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES, NLQF AND DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS

Student activities at all levels revolve around six pillars: five fixed pillars (personal leadership, value driven behaviour, entrepreneurial behaviour, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovative behaviour) and a pillar defined by the students themselves, for which they formulate a theme/subject to which they can link short-term and long-term objectives for their development.

The X-Honours programme has three output levels. The intended learning outcomes must be in accordance with these levels. The levels that are maintained are formulated according to the NLQF and the Dublin descriptors. In Box 1, explore, students are trained during the onboarding component to formulate learning outcomes in accordance with the described levels. Students enrolled for the Associate degree are required to describe learning outcomes at level 5. Bachelor at level 6 and Master at level 7. The description of the NLQF and the Dublin descriptors can be found for students in MS Teams of X-Honours.

## 4. CERTIFICATION

Certificates will be awarded twice a year at a celebratory gathering. To attain a certificate, students must perform the following:

### 4.1 Showcase (formative assessment)

Students must organise a showcase meeting where they demonstrate the activities in which they engaged and the outcomes of these (regarding the project results and the individual learning process). During the showcase, the student will collect feedback from at least three relevant people, one of which being the coach.

The objective of the showcase is twofold:

1. To show over the underlying period:

- one or more projects/activities (the task)
- what has been achieved, or not (the results)
- how the student handled it (the process)
- how this all relates to the pillars
- some information about what is learned

2. To gather feedback and input (for the portfolio)

The student is responsible for gathering feedback in a format of their own choice. Important is that feedback is recorded or captured. The main points of feedback/feedforward that is gained in the showcase, should be integrated in the portfolio and reflected on, even if the information is not relevant according to the student.

X-Honours will organise one general showcase day, usually at the end of each semester. Students can sign up for this day, but may also plan and organise their showcase on another date. They are free to choose an individual format that suits their style. For their showcase, students should at least invite their coach and two or more relevant people who can provide them with meaningful feedback. These relevant people are e.g. fellow students, experts from a project, a mentor or study career counsellor, or an internship supervisor. During a showcase, the student is in the lead, which means that they are hosts; they prepare the setting and take care of time management.

### 4.2 Portfolio (summative assessment)

From the start of the programme, the students build a portfolio that demonstrates their development and results with regard to the pillars at the required level.

The purpose of the portfolio is:

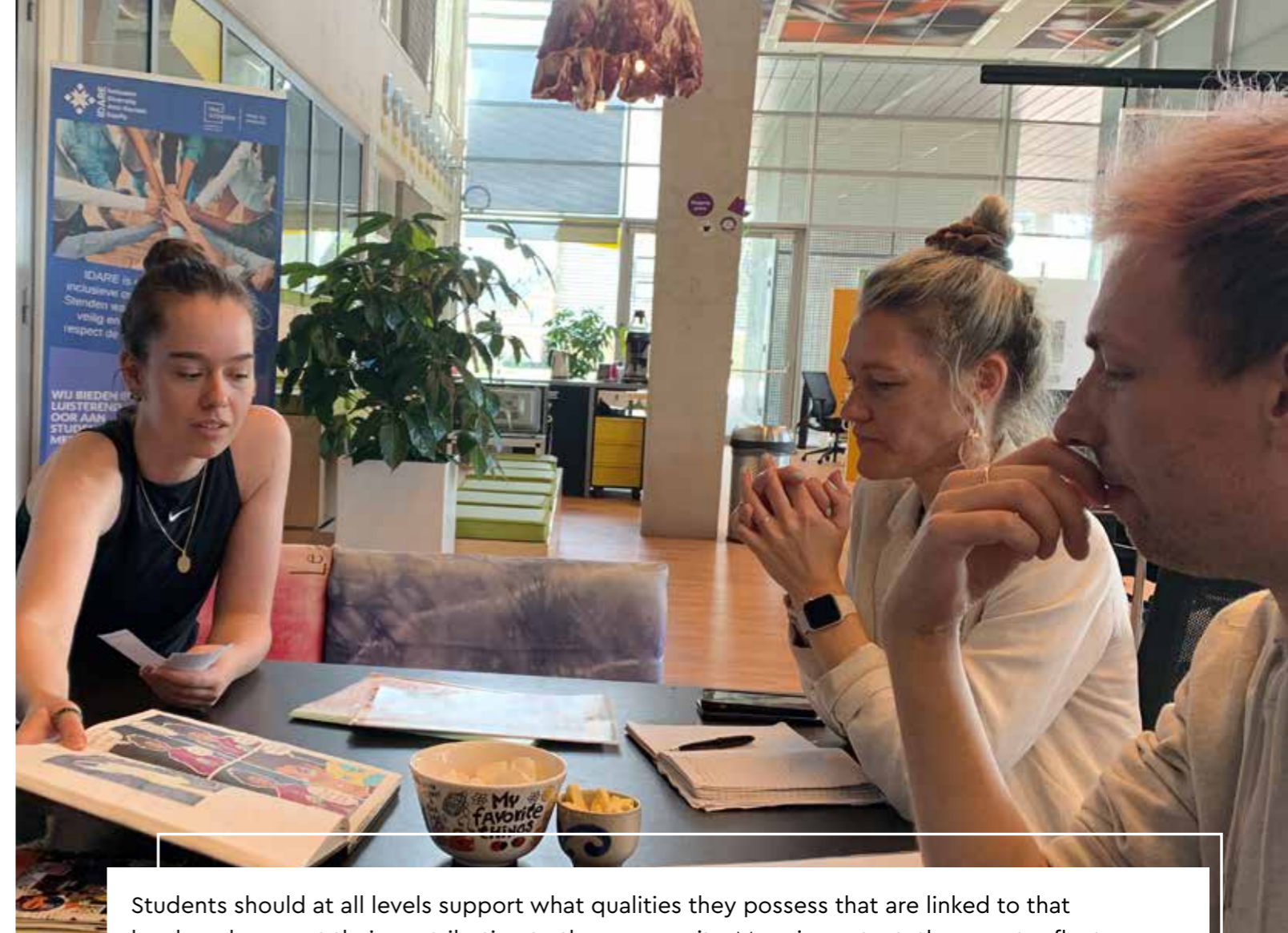
1. To reflect on goals, ambitions, learning process, feedback from showcase etc. with a relation to the previous period.
2. To show the development regarding the pillars, supported by arguments and proof that the student has reached a certain level of competence.
3. The justification for the decision to classify their own performance as fulfilled.

Students can decide freely on the portfolio format and are invited to choose a creative approach. A portfolio (or portfolio attachment) must at least contain:

- Their objectives, reasons, ambitions, talents, expectations, etc. For this, students start each level by filling in a starting document (or growth document)
- Information about activities, projects and their relations to their progress within the pillars.
- Collected feedback (at least the feedback on the showcase, but other responses as well, such as 360o feedback, testimonials, etc.).
- Reflection on the learning process: attained learning objectives, collected feedback, revised learning objectives, and X-Honours objectives (in line with mission and vision).
- A self-assessment (including arguments and support of the attained and outstanding competences, student activities that go beyond those usually required by the study programme, and the way in which they have developed themselves complementary to their study programme (activities and projects)).
- A reflection on their role in and contribution to the learning community.

For students in the X-Honours programme there's a separate document in MS Teams (section Files) about the X-Honours portfolio with the above for mentioned tools/forms, more explanation and tips and tricks. Students are asked to take note of this document.

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Students should at all levels support what qualities they possess that are linked to that level, and support their contribution to the community. More important, they must reflect on their learning process in the underlying X-Honours programme and indicate which activities/projects were undertaken in this context. Furthermore, they must have invested a significant amount of time in addition to the time that is required for attaining the ECTS in their regular study programme.

We encourage students to view their individual development and activities in a wider perspective than that of X-Honours projects. Their regular study programme itself usually also offers opportunities for activities that broaden or deepen the student profile, but are not compulsory. Also, students frequently engage privately in activities that can be linked to the pillars too. Such activities may all be included in the student portfolio as.

Students attain credits when they meet the above requirements and when they are able to demonstrate that they:

1. have made a significant time investment in individual and professional development complementary to what is required by the study programme, or that can be seen as an effort that is not a compulsory part of the study programme
2. have made a demonstrable contribution to the learning community
3. have challenged themselves.

## 5. COACHING

After having obtained the Onboarding level, students will continue in the Advanced part 1 and 2 level. In this stage, students will be placed in a basecamp with a coach. The coach is their primary contact and provides individual and group coaching. The coach relies on the students' initiatives and their self-management. This implies, for example, that students come forward with their coaching needs and jointly or alternatively ensure meaningful basecamp sessions.

Students are expected to dedicate their Wednesday afternoons to the programme. If this is impossible, for example because of classes or an internship, they must report this to the coach. Absent students are expected to participate and contribute to the learning community and basecamp in a different way.

### X-Honours credits system

Study	Credits	Credits Honours	Box 1 Explore	Box 2 Execute	Box 3 Experience
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Master	60	10***	Onboarding: 4 Assessment 4: 2	2/4	2/4

\* The credits in boxes 2 and 3 are optionally 3 or 4 per box.

\*\* If the student moves on from Ad to Bachelor in the honours programme, the credits from the Ad level can be taken. The remaining 15 credits must be completed at Bachelor level. In this case the onboarding and assessment 1 credits will be replaced by extra credits in box 2 and 3.

\*\*\* If the student moves on from Bachelor to Master in the honours programme, the onboarding credits will be replaced by extra credits in box 2 and 3.

#### Note

<sup>1</sup> Explanation of the concepts multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary (Huibers et al., 2012, p. 16): "In a multidisciplinary collaboration, all partners work and think based in their own profession and expertise (...) The results of which are collated at a certain moment (...) The disciplines can be clearly distinguished in the [presentation of the] results. Interaction is limited to reflection on, exchange of, and building on the mutual ideas."

"In an interdisciplinary collaboration, the disciplines need one another to solve an issue. The content is determined by reciprocal influence. The resulting insights exceed the boundaries of the individual subject. The disciplines have merged and are difficult to discern in the (...) final product. The interplay is increasingly visible in the joint reflection and creation."

Reference: Huibers, J., Luitwieler, M., Martinot, N., & Meijers, A. (2012). Begrippen en definities van interdisciplinair werken [Concepts and definitions of interdisciplinary work]. Retrieved from [http://finals2012magazine.artez.nl/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CSP\\_BOEK\\_ArtEZ\\_2012-H2.pdf](http://finals2012magazine.artez.nl/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CSP_BOEK_ArtEZ_2012-H2.pdf)

### Assessments

Students can sign up for an assessment consisting of a showcase and a portfolio twice a year. Showcases can be presented in weeks 2.8 and 4.8 of the academic year. The corresponding portfolio should be presented for assessment within two weeks after 2.8 and 4.8 to the coach who also attended the showcase.

All components have a second chance opportunity, and this is in weeks 3.2 and 1.2 of the following semester. For submission of the portfolio, the deadline is the end of weeks 3.4 and 1.4. Coaches will announce the outcomes of this summative portfolio assessment within 14 days.



## Contact

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