

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

When will the new model be implemented?

The Major/Minor model will be in place through the remainder of the 2018-19 school year. Current seniors who meet the requirements will graduate this year with an AMSE Major or Minor distinction.

Is there anything I need to do now?

For the majority of students, no action is required. Since enrollment in the new model is passive, current freshman, sophomore and junior students will be automatically transitioned into the new model as an AMSE Honors participant beginning in the 2019-20 school year. No new application or action is necessary for those transitioning to the new model. Current senior students who meet the requirements will continue in and graduate under the current Major/Minor structure and also are not required to do anything at this time.

Students interested in pursuing AMSE Artist Honors status must complete a separate application, available [here](#).

Students who would like to stay under the Major/Minor model through graduation must contact the AMSE office at amse@vcs.net by March 1, 2019.

Why are you changing from the current Major/Minor model?

We received a significant amount of feedback and found that the major/minor terminology was confusing to college admissions professionals, external counselors, and potential applicant families. "Major" and "Minor" are not terms typically used in a high school, and our wording was clouding the water rather than helping our students. In addition, access to certain programs under the Major/Minor model were restricted by course requirements that were difficult for students to achieve within their schedule. The new model reduces the required co-curriculars students need to achieve in order to participate.

What are some advantages for students transitioning to the new model rather than finishing out their years at VCHS under the old major/minor model?

We found that the majority of our AMSE students were exceeding the current major/minor requirements, yet not receiving any additional recognition or benefits. It is our desire to honor these outstanding students. By switching to the new model and completing the requirements (many of which they were already doing), students earn the distinction of "Honors," which has more meaning to college admissions professionals and external counselors than the major/minor nomenclature currently in use.

Under the new model, qualifying students will receive AMSE Honors recognition at the end of their junior year. This distinction will be noted on students' official transcripts and can be used during the college admission process.

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How do I meet the program requirement?

Program participation is required for student involvement at the Honors and Honors Fellow levels. AMSE currently offers 7 programs: Astronomy Research, Hydroponics, ISS, Math Team, Ocean Discovery, Robotics and Rocketry. In addition, credit is available for BEI Programs. Please note: beginning in the 2019-20 school year, some programs will be offering semester based participation options. The AMSE Program requirement credit will be determined on a semester basis. Only one participation credit will be required over the course of high school, not one credit per year.

Will AMSE students still receive credit for participation in BEI Clubs and Programs?

Under the new model, AMSE students will receive credit for participation only in BEI programs, not clubs. BEI programs that will receive credit include DECA and the Quest Incubator.

Are clubs and programs different? Which do I need under the new model?

Clubs and programs are different and not interchangeable. Clubs are student run and meet for short periods of time, usually at lunch time. Programs are faculty led and involve significant, after-school time commitment. We will no longer be requiring club participation to be an AMSE Member, Honors, or Honors Fellow; however, club participation is still encouraged to enhance the overall high school experience and build a well-rounded college application.

I see that the AMSE Seminar (*Quest for Excellence* Speaker Series) Requirement has been removed, will you still be offering these?

Yes, we will still be providing our students the opportunity to hear from high-caliber speakers, but we will no longer be tracking attendance. This year, both the quality of speakers and student attendance at these events has skyrocketed, and we are excited to continue this trajectory in the coming years.

Can you clarify participation options for students who are active in both AMSE and the Conservatory?

In order to encourage students to pursue a broad range of interests, the AMSE Institute and the Conservatory will continue to collaborate on these new models and will work closely together to ensure their success. Students have several participation options:

AMSE Member + Conservatory Member

AMSE Honors + Conservatory Member
AMSE Fellow + Conservatory Member

Conservatory Honors + AMSE Member
Conservatory Fellow + AMSE Member

For students pursuing AMSE Honors + Conservatory Honors, a new AMSE Artist Honors track is now available. Please see the requirements below:

AMSE Artist Honors Graduation Requirements

AMSE Artist Honors Requirements	Number
Conservatory Declaration of Area of Emphasis	Yes
Years of Science	3
Years of Math	4
AP Courses (STEM)	2
Discipline Specific Conservatory Courses	3
Discipline Specific Conservatory Extra-Curriculars (Shows, private lessons, etc.)	4
AMSE Program	1
Blended AMSE/Conservatory Project	1
GPA	3.6

In regards to the new AMSE Artist Honors model, how do I apply?

Students interested in pursuing AMSE Artist Honors status must complete a separate application. The application for AMSE Artist Honors can be found [here](#).

What are the “AMSE Approved Research Projects”?

Under the new model, several options are available to fulfill the AMSE Approved Research Project requirement. These include the Synopsys Science Fair, ASGSR Research Project and Presentation, select regional and national math research competitions, astronomy research projects, pre-approved research and development projects and summer internships.

Which AP courses fulfill the requirement?

All courses with an Advanced Placement (AP) distinction in the VCHS Course Catalog will fulfill the Honors and Fellow requirement.

How and when will the GPA be calculated?

GPA's will be weighted and cumulative from freshman year. GPA's will be reviewed at the end of a student's junior year. An “AMSE Honors” distinction will be added to qualifying students' transcripts so that this information can be cited on college applications. GPA's will be reviewed again during senior year to confirm AMSE Honors (or Fellow) eligibility for graduation, where qualifying students will receive a diploma seal and cord of distinction.