



Phi Beta Kappa is the nation's oldest and most prestigious academic honor society. During academic advising, please make sure your advisees are aware of the following information. Please especially note the second, or non-native, language requirement of completion through the 201-level.

What are the eligibility requirements for Phi Beta Kappa?

Students have two occasions to be considered for election to Phi Beta Kappa: at the beginning of the spring semester of the junior year, considering five semesters of grades or at the beginning of the spring semester of the senior year, considering seven semesters of grades. Transfer students must have completed four semesters at SMCM before they are eligible for consideration. Students are elected primarily based on three elements: 1) broad cultural interests, 2) scholarly achievement and 3) good character.

Seniors may be considered for nomination to Phi Beta Kappa under the following conditions:

- The student has completed at least 48 credit hours of work in residence at St. Mary's College of Maryland and be registered to complete additional hours to total at least 64 semester hours. If a student has completed fewer than 108 credits in residence at St. Mary's College of Maryland, a review of work completed elsewhere will be done.
- The student has second, or non-native, language competency by test or course through the 201-level.
- The student has completed at least one course in math/computer science.
- The student has a grade point average of 3.75 or higher.
- The student has demonstrated breadth in coursework by the number and variety of courses taken outside their major.

Juniors may be considered for nomination to Phi Beta Kappa under the following conditions:

- The student has completed at least 80 credit hours of work in residence at St. Mary's College of Maryland, accumulated in at least 5 semesters of college enrollment.
- The student has second, or non-native, language competency by test or course through the 201-level.
- The caliber of the student's work should be of exceptional distinction, including a grade point average of at least 3.90.

What is the election process?

There is no "application" process. In early January, the Committee on Members-in-Course retrieves a list of students who meet the eligibility requirements and then gather to review the list and propose elections. Then at the annual chapter meeting in February, resident Phi Beta Kappa faculty and staff members elect 25-30 students, depending on the size of the graduating class. No more than 10% of the graduating class may be invited to join Phi Beta Kappa. Thus, it is possible that a student with a 3.75 GPA and adequate progress toward their degree may not be elected to membership. Election is by secret ballot and requires an affirmative vote by three-fourths of the resident members present at the meeting. Those elected are formally notified in mid-February and are recognized by name in the program for Awards Convocation and at graduation. The College's Zeta Chapter covers students' lifetime membership fees and gifts them with honor cords. The induction ceremony takes place in April and includes a reception.

