

Top 35% GPA summary

Phi Alpha Honor Society is a certified member of the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) www.achshonor.org/. Certification by ACHS requires adherence to strict guidelines for organizational excellence, transparency, participatory governance, and scholastic eligibility. Certification by ACHS ensures to students, employers, graduate programs, and the public that members have distinguished themselves among their peers by being the top performers in their program.

Certification separates Phi Alpha from many other honor societies students are invited to join. Certification by ACHS requires that honor societies use the top 35% criteria. Their position is with the set GPA method, a program could have every student eligible for membership. This would be more of a recognition organization than an honor society. The major honor societies in Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice, Nursing, and many other disciplines are members of ACHS and use the top 35% criteria.

The pool to draw the 35% from is all students in the social work program. Students in the top 35% who have completed 37.5% of the required coursework toward the degree including 9 credit-hours in Social Work are invited to become Phi Alpha members.

Here are a few ideas about organizing membership:

- Maximize the potential that those who are eligible are invited and join. Consider ways to reach out to students to promote your chapter. There is a *Chapter support grant* of \$100 that is given for the purpose of holding a meeting where eligible members are invited to hear about Phi Alpha and the chapter at your school. Advisors just need to e-mail Tammy for the funds.
- Invite students to join as soon as they are eligible. Most undergraduate social work majors have the required 37.5% of course work toward the degree and 9 credit-hours in Social Work after their sophomore year. Advanced standing graduate students may be eligible after one semester. Inviting students as soon as they are eligible increases the number of students in the chapter, providing a larger pool of potential officers and service-learning volunteers. It can create a culture of students carrying over knowledge of chapter operations year-after-year.
- Identify eligible students early in the semester. This could begin when grades are posted at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Induct students each semester. The GPA separating the top 35% and the lower 65% changes every semester. A student who was not eligible one semester may be eligible the next.

- When there is a tie in the students' GPA or you round GPAs, give the benefit to the students by inviting each.
- Follow-up with eligible students who do not initially respond. Provide them with information about your chapter and/or direct them to the Phi Alpha website <https://phialpha.org>. The Chapter Handbook <https://d9v.0de.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Chapter- Handbook-November-2019.pdf> has information about chapter operations.
- Finally, encourage students to include in resumes and job/school applications that their honor society is certified by ACHS.

Phi Alpha top 35% calculation instructions

- Pull *enrollment by major* report from university system
- Select all Social Work majors
- Rank students from highest to lowest by overall GPA
- Count number of students on the report
- Calculate number of students x .35
- This sum represents the ranked number of the student on the report whose GPA is used to separate the GPA of the top 35% of majors from the lower 65% of majors

Examples

* $n = 100$ majors in your program $\times .35 = 35$
 ->the GPA of the 35th ranked student is the GPA cutoff for your program

* $n = 232$ majors in your program $\times .35 = 81$
 -> the GPA of the 81st ranked student is the cutoff for your program