



# **Governor's Honors Program**

**2025**

## **Coordinator Handbook**

# Table of Contents

<b>Program Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Qualities/Characteristics of a GHP student .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>GHP Selection Process.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Online Application System .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Application Process.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Semifinalists Level.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Finalists and Alternates.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Appendix A: GHP 2025 Timeline	
Appendix B: GHP 2025 Areas of Nomination	
Appendix C: GHP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	

# Program Overview

## Purpose Statement - What is GHP?

The Governor's Honors Program (GHP) offers instruction that is significantly different from the typical high school classroom and that is designed to provide students with academic, cultural, and social enrichment necessary to become the next generation of global critical thinkers, innovators and leaders.

## Program Overview:

The Georgia Governor's Honors Program (GHP) is a residential summer program for gifted and talented high school students who will be rising juniors and seniors during the program (place new def of GHP student).

GHP is held in midsummer (June 15- July 12, 2025) as a premier residential educational experience at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. Students attend classes in the mornings in their major areas of study and afternoons in various other areas of study. They participate in a wide variety of instructional, leadership and social opportunities every evening. Meals and lodging are provided by the program, with the only required/expected costs to the students being travel to/from the interviews, and program itself; a few basic school supplies; basic supplies for their dorm rooms; and spending money as desired during the program (note: every GHP finalist is given \$25 on their flex/GHP ID card to use on campus).

## Coordinator's Role:

- Ensure the local selection process is aligned with GHP's descriptions and criteria for areas of nominations Guide the selection process at the local level
- Follow guidelines in *Coordinator's Handbook, Description and Criteria*
- Share information
- Ensure fairness/equity in local selection process
- Provide support at the local level for administrators, counselors, teachers and students
- Submit nominees through the GHP online system
- Provide guidance and support to semifinalists and finalists throughout the selection process

## Qualities/Characteristics of a GHP Student

### Who is a GHP Student?

A GHP student is a rising junior or senior that exhibits an undeniable level of passion in their preferred subject, and an appetite to learn on a deeper level that cannot always be fully satisfied in a high school classroom. GHP caliber students will find ways to study and explore their subjects independently from a classroom environment, at times despite a lack of resources.

The most important aspect of the selection process is identifying students who possess the characteristics to be successful in the summer program. Teachers are almost always the most knowledgeable, but do not always understand the qualities of a GHP student.

The ideal candidate is not always the student with the best grades. GHP students are **passionate** about their intellectual and/or artistic pursuits.

GHP students:

- Develop interests in activities that foster cooperation, collaboration and humility.
- Demonstrate a willingness to challenge preconceived notions and understandings.
- Explore their area of nomination outside the classroom environment, in most cases independently.
- Exhibit the social and emotional maturity necessary to thrive in a rigorous classroom environment, and residential settings.
- Can interact respectfully, cooperatively and appropriately with their peers, instructors, program staff and administrators.

These students share some common qualities that teachers do not always view as gifted/talented, or as a good fit for the program.

Common qualities of GHP students:

- Inquisitive
- Unusual capacity for processing information
- Think and learn rapidly
- Reason and synthesize well
- Heightened capacity to analyze and/or think abstractly
- Alert observer of others
- Voracious consumers of subject area text, literature and films, etc.
- Sometimes prefers conversations with adults over peers in the same age range
- Easily bored and/or disengaged outside preferred subject areas, or if not adequately challenged
- Often dislikes group work; prefers to work independently
- Prone to procrastination, and self-criticism due to a desire for perfection

## GHP Selection Process

The student selection process has several steps, the first of which varies by local school districts, state charter schools and independent schools (hereinafter referred to as “local districts”). Each local district may create its own process for choosing nominees to GHP.

Attending GHP is a privilege and not a right. Local district nominees should demonstrate creativity, superior ability in area of nomination, and the social and emotional maturity required to thrive in an intensive, residential setting for the entire four weeks of the program.

Once the nominees have been selected at the local district level and submitted to [Trevor Cason](#) (**by email before deadline Nov. 15**), an email with details regarding the online application process will be sent to each student nominee (see GHP timeline for specific dates). The students, counselors, and recommending teachers will then complete the appropriate sections of the application according to the published GHP timeline.

### Selecting Students at the Local Level:

While local districts may devise their own processes and procedures to select their nominees, all applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the GHP Course Description and Criteria.

Students should **not** be selected based on their gender, race, school, district or geographic area. The state selection process does not have a bias for juniors over sophomores, although local districts may choose to consider the students’ grade levels in their own selection processes.

The GHP [webpage](#) contains useful information to support the selection and nomination processes, some of which will provide information specifically for the nominees and their parents. Content will be updated throughout the year.

### Requirements for Participation:

- Students shall be nominated to the state in only one area of nomination with the approval of the student and parent/legal guardian following the local district nomination process. Qualified students may be nominated in consultation with their private teachers in subject areas the school does not offer (dance, piano, strings, etc.). Students nominated at the school level in more than one subject should be allowed to choose the area in which they prefer to be nominated. Parents/legal guardians of home school students may serve as the nominating teacher.
- Students nominated for the 2024 program as sophomores who did not participate in the program last summer may be nominated for the 2025 program. This includes students who were selected as finalists in 2024 but voluntarily declined the opportunity to participate before last summer’s program began. Local coordinators should indicate this information on their nomination form/spreadsheet.

- Students shall participate in GHP one time, i.e., students who attended the 2024 program (**for any length of time**) as sophomores may not be renominated for the 2025 program. Students whose offer/acceptance was revoked by GHP before the start of the program are disqualified from renomination.
- A transcript of each nominee's high school grades must be submitted electronically by the school counselor or administrative designee.
- Coordinators have **two additional allotments in each of the following areas** that will not count against their total allotments:
  - Computer Science
  - Music: Jazz
  - Dance: Male Nominees
- **Standardized test scores (PSAT, SAT, ACT, etc.) are no longer required and the application will not have a space to enter them.**

**All students must first be nominated by the local district and:**

- Be a current sophomore or junior in a school that is located within the state of Georgia.
- Have demonstrated high aptitude, social and emotional maturity, giftedness/talent, and sincere passion for their area of nomination.
- If selected as a state semifinalist students must commit to participation in the state level interviews and auditions.
  - The Semifinalist Event for all areas (except music) will be held on **(March 1, 2025, at Georgia Southern University)**.
  - The Semifinalist Event for music will be held on **(March 15, 2025, at Georgia Southern University)**.
- Commit to participation in the program for **the entire four weeks of the program (June 15- July 12)** if selected as a state finalist, **including opening and closing days**. Students are not permitted to arrive late or leave GHP early. Inability to meet the attendance requirement will result in disqualification for consideration, and, if selected for participation, **can result in dismissal** from the program. Exceptions to the attendance requirement will be rare, limited to true emergencies, and will require approval by the Governor's Honors Program Director.

**Program Limitations and Allotments:**

- Local district coordinators should be aware that each area has its own numerical limitations based on the specific components of its discipline. Music, for example, must limit its finalists to the specific size of each performance group. Therefore, nominators should carefully consider their internal selection processes.

### **Local District Allotments:**

- Every local district receives an allotment of total nominations that may be used for any area of nomination based on its population of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders from the previous year; therefore, allotments can change from year to year. Coordinators must keep an accurate list of nominated students based on their allotment.
- Each local district will be provided with their nomination allotment through a separate email.

### **Home School Students:**

Home school students interested in participating in the GHP nomination process will be directed to the GHP coordinator of the local school districts in which they reside. The home school student's parent/legal guardian will submit a copy of their Declaration of Intent to Home School (DOI) to the local district to verify that the home school student is compliant with Georgia's home study law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690. Upon verification, the student will be eligible for consideration for local nomination to the Governor's Honors Program. Each local district will receive a home school allotment based on district student population. Home school nominations within this allotment will NOT count against the system nomination totals. Home school allotments will be included in the total allotment email to coordinators. Unused home school allotments **CANNOT** be used for local district nominations.

- Local nominations shall be conducted without regard to the public or home school enrollment status to provide a fair and equal opportunity for all nominees.
- **NOTE:** If the home school parent does not have a copy of their Declaration of Intent (DOI), they may contact the Georgia Department of Education.  
<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx>

### **IMPORTANT!**

**Please do not notify students and their parents, or publicly release the names of nominees, until they have been verified by the GHP office.** GHP office staff will notify all students by email after the nomination deadline (please refer to the timeline for exact dates).

## Online Application System

The online system uses the student applicant's email address to create a student application account. Students **must** provide coordinators with **valid** email addresses to access the state-level application, and they must notify the GHP office if changes occur in their email addresses. Students **must** use an email account (such as free accounts from Google, Yahoo, etc.) that **belongs to the student** and not the parent/legal guardian. Parents/legal guardians **must** have a separate account in the online application system, due to parent/legal guardian-specific requirements.

- The first online application task of all state-level nominees is providing the name and email address of their primary parent/legal guardian. Completion of this task automatically triggers an email to the primary parent/legal guardian requesting permission for the student to apply at the state level.
- It is critical that all **local districts collect the email address of each student's primary parent/legal guardian**. GHP will notify both the student and primary parent/legal guardian of this process by email before the application is activated, and before the student receives the application login information.
- **Students may not submit the GHP online application until permission is granted** in the parent/legal guardian section of the online application by their parent/legal guardian. It is **critical** that all primary correspondence occur directly between the students and the GHP office. Therefore, we also request that local districts provide mobile numbers (if available) for each student nominee and the primary parent/legal guardian. We will not share this information, as it will only be used internally to send text reminders/updates and/or to make direct contact when there is no response through email. GHP will share critical communications with the students, parents/legal guardians, and their local coordinators.

### Application System Emails:

All students, parents/legal guardians, and local district coordinators must also ensure that their security system and filter for the email account has been adjusted to accept email from the online application system, especially if students will be required to use the school email domain. Coordinators will have access to a list of domains and URLs to whitelist through their information technology departments by accessing the [Coordinator Webpage](#).

### Student Responsibilities:

- Students track the status of their applications and acceptances via their online GHP accounts. Nominees are responsible for monitoring their accounts and contacting the GHP office if the process seems to be delayed, or if there are questions about specific application requirements.



- GHP does not use or rely on social media as the primary avenue to share updates. Any questions about the application and GHP should be directed to the GHP Office. While we do have an official GHP Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/GovernorsHonorsProgram>), there are several groups/pages created by alumni that are not linked to the program. There will be no exceptions or special considerations to any part of the process due to misinformation students may receive through social media.

# Application Process

## Parent/Legal Guardian Permission:

- The students' first task is providing their primary parent's/legal guardian's name and email address. This will trigger an email sent directly to the parent/legal guardian requesting permission for the student to apply.
- Each student **must** receive permission from a parent/legal guardian to apply to the Governor's Honors Program. This permission must be granted through the online application. Students will **not** be able to submit their completed application until a parent/legal guardian completes the permission section.
- Parents/legal guardians will be required to provide responses to several items through the online application, including permission to attend the program.
- Parents/legal guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their child's application and acceptance processes.

## Recommendation In Area of Nomination:

- All applicants must request a written recommendation as a required component of their application.
- The recommendation may come from a current/former teacher, adult tutor, professor, or professional who is not related to the student.
  - The recommender must have enough knowledge about the student and his/her subject specific strengths and abilities to articulate how the student stands out in their area of nomination.
- Recommendations serve as evidence of the student's level of ability and strengths in their area of nomination. Subject specific details and examples are important.
- It is important that students discuss the requests with their recommender **before** submitting their names within the online application. The online application system immediately contacts the recommender by email after students submit their names and email addresses. It is best if the recommender anticipates this request.

## High School Transcript:

- GHP requires a school official to upload a transcript(s), via the GHP online application that covers all years of each student's high school/secondary school education. The transcript(s) must include an explanation of the school's grading system and include grades from the most recent school term. Transcripts must be uploaded by a counselor or administrative designee.

## **Student Application:**

- All application tasks will be submitted in the online application system, WizeHive.
- The first tasks in the student application are providing contact information for their parent/legal guardian, recommending teacher/professional, and counselor/administrative designee.
- Students will then be prompted to complete their “student profile” and a short response section.
- The final task is separate and specific to each major/subject. For example, students nominated in social studies will provide a written response to one or more current issues, while a dance nominee will submit a short video of their dancing technique.
- Once the student applications have been completed and verified by the GHP office, they will be submitted to content area experts for review. Reviewers for each content area will use a scoring rubric to rate each application. Once all applications have been reviewed, the scores will be tabulated, and this process will generate a list of semifinalists to be invited to the state-level interviews.
- All students who submit an application in the online system will be recognized for their achievements as a GHP state-level nominee. Semifinalists will receive notice of an invitation to the state-level interview via their online application account in late January. GHP is not responsible for missed deadlines, or failure to respond within required timelines for students who do not adequately monitor their emails and online portals

## Semifinalists Level

### Notification:

Semifinalists are those students who have been selected to attend the state-level interviews and auditions. These students have been nominated by their local district, have successfully completed the application process, have had their online applications scored, and have obtained an application score that moves them to semifinalist status.

- Applications will be reviewed by college faculty, high school teachers, retired subject educators, Georgia Department of Education and Regional Educational Service Agency staff, industry professionals, and current/former GHP staff members from all over Georgia, under the direction of GHP staff. All decisions (invitation to interview, acceptance, etc.) are communicated via the student's online application account portal which is accessed directly by the nominee. Local district coordinators will be notified as well.
- Semifinalists will receive notice of an invitation to the state-level interview via their online application account portal in early February. GHP is not responsible for missed deadlines or failure to respond within required timelines for students who do not adequately monitor their email or online application accounts or the online application process.
- Parents/legal guardians of semifinalists (students who are selected to attend the state-level interviews and auditions) will select their interview/audition time on February 13, 2025. GHP's goal is to ensure that families are provided with the ability to make the most appropriate plans for their individual situations and to allow students the time and rest needed to prepare for the actual interview event. It is the responsibility of the student and their parents/legal guardians to be aware of their selected interview/audition time.

### Preparing Students for Interviews/Auditions:

Make sure that every semifinalist is aware of the GHP [webpage](#), where information will be posted as appropriate.

- Schools are encouraged to support semifinalists by conducting mock interviews to give students experience before they participate in the actual GHP state-level interviews.
- Local district coordinators are advised to assist students in preparing for the state-level interviews by reviewing the interview day packet and then ensuring that students both read the interview/audition requirements and practice/rehearse.
- Coordinators are strongly advised to contact the GHP Office with any questions or concerns regarding how to prepare students for semi finalist interviews and auditions.

## Finalists and Alternates

### Finalists:

Finalists are those students who have been selected to attend GHP. Finalists will be notified through their student account in the online application system on March 21, 2025, and will be provided with instructions to complete the acceptance process. The deadline for acceptance (via the GHP online application site) is April 4, 2025. Finalists who fail to complete the acceptance process by the deadline will forfeit their invitation to attend GHP. Students who decline their invitation (or miss the deadline) will be removed as a finalist, and the alternate with the highest score in that subject will be invited instead.

Coordinators will receive a list of their finalists and alternates, along with a generic press release, to be used at their discretion.

### Alternates:

Alternates will be alerted of their status as an alternate on March 21, 2025. If a finalist does not accept or is unable to attend, the GHP Office will contact the alternates on a rolling basis. No alternates will be invited after April 30, 2025.

### Acceptance:

- It is the responsibility of the finalists (applicants who are offered admission to the summer program) to formally accept or decline the offer via their GHP online application account.
- The Acceptance Checklist, containing specific information regarding GHP acceptance, will be available through the application resources' link.

### Accepted Finalists:

- GHP will communicate directly with all accepted finalists and their primary parent/legal guardian.
- All deadlines must be met by students and parents/legal guardians.
- Students must have a current physical and **GHP medical form** completed.
- The legal agreement must be signed by both the student and a parent/legal guardian, and it must be notarized.
- Students must adhere to all rules while attending summer program.

GHP cannot be successful without the efforts of local coordinators, and we are extremely grateful to the coordinators, teachers, counselors, and administrators for their hard work and dedication to GHP. Do not hesitate to contact us if questions arise.

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## Appendix A: GHP 2025 Timeline

August 19, 2024	Information email to superintendents, independent heads of school and GHP coordinators.
August – November, 2024	Local selection processes occur during this time. Nominee selection at the local level will include internal deadlines that are not listed here. Please contact your local school admin for specific dates and deadlines.
November 15, 2024	<b>Deadline</b> for submission of 2025 GHP student nominations by independent schools, state charter schools, and public school districts.
November 18, 2024	Online application opens for student nominees.
November 30, 2024	Online Information Session: GHP Application
December 7, 2024	Online Information Session: GHP Application
January 10, 2025	<b>Deadline</b> for completed online applications, including recommendations and records.
February 7, 2025	<b>Notification</b> of 2025 Semifinalists.
February 13, 2025	Semifinalist Event interview/audition time selection by parents.
March 1, 2025 March 15, 2025	<u>All Areas (except music) Semifinalist Event at Georgia Southern University.</u> <u>Music Semifinalist Event at Georgia Southern University.</u>
March 21, 2025	<b>Notification</b> of 2025 Finalists and Alternates.
April 4, 2025	<b>Deadline</b> for Finalists' acceptance.
April 14, 2025	Parents/legal guardians emailed link to required online student forms.
April 30, 2025	Last day for GHP to invite alternates.
May 9, 2025	<b>Deadline</b> for parent/legal guardian completion of required online student forms.
June 15 – July 12, 2025	2025 Governor's Honors Program at Georgia Southern University.

## Appendix B: GHP 2025 Areas of Nomination

Agricultural Research, Biotechnology & Science	Music*
Communicative Arts	Science*
Computer Science**	Social Studies
Dance**	Theatre Performance
Engineering*	Visual Arts
Mathematics	World Languages*

*\*These areas of nomination have subcategories provided below.*

*\*\* District coordinators may submit 2 male dance nominees without impacting allotment number.*

*\*\* District coordinators may also submit 2 computer science nominees without impacting allotment number.*

*\*\* District coordinators may also submit 2 music jazz nominees without impacting allotment number.*

### Engineering:

- Mechanical & Aerospace
- Electrical & Computational
- Civil & Environmental

### Music:

- Brass: Euphonium, French Horn, Trombone, Trumpet, Tuba
- Jazz: Electric or Acoustic Bass, Drums, Guitar, Piano, Saxophone, Trombone, Trumpet, Vibraphone
- Percussion
- Piano
- Strings: Cello, String Bass, Viola, Violin
- Voice: Alto, Bass, Soprano, Tenor
- Woodwind: Bassoon, Clarinet, Flute, Oboe, Saxophone

### Science:

- Biology/Environmental Science
- Chemistry
- Physics

### World Languages:

- Chinese
- French
- German
- Latin
- Spanish



## Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Q: What are some qualities of GHP Students?**

**A:** A GHP student is a rising junior or senior that exhibits an undeniable level of passion in their preferred subject, and an appetite to learn on a deeper level that cannot always be fully satisfied in a high school classroom. GHP caliber students will find ways to study and explore their subjects independently from a classroom environment, at times despite a lack of resources.

While there is no set list of qualities, most gifted students tend to exhibit one or more of the following attributes:

- Inquisitive
- High level of language ability
- Unusual capacity for processing information
- Think and learn rapidly
- Reason and synthesize well
- Heightened capacity to analyze and/or think abstractly
- Alert observer of others and texts (literature, film, etc.)
- Sometimes prefers adults' company to peers'
- Sometimes easily bored and/or disengaged
- Sometimes dislikes group work; prefers to work independently
- Sometimes prone to procrastination and self-criticism

### **Q: How will home school students know who to contact for assistance?**

**A:** All interested students and parents/legal guardians (regardless of public/home school) are directed to contact their local school district GHP coordinators for assistance. Home school parents/students/legal guardians should contact the public school which they would attend for nomination information.

### **Q: Are local district GHP coordinators responsible for recruiting home school students?**

**A:** No. GOSA notifies home school community groups. That stated, once a home school student or parent/legal guardian contacts the local district GHP coordinator, it becomes the coordinator's responsibility to assist the student in the same manner that would be provided to public school students.

### **Q: Does the number of homeschooled students affect my nomination allotment?**

**A:** No, homeschooled students have their own allotments for the program

### **Q: Who is the "Nominating Teacher" for a homeschooled student?**

**A:** The nominating teacher is the individual who serves as the student’s primary instructor for the subject area of nomination. This may be the nominee’s parent(s)/legal guardian, or someone involved in a home school consortium.

**Q: Can we request the student’s application scores if they are not chosen as a semifinalist?**

**A:** Applications are scored and evaluated by GHP content area educators/experts according to a predetermined rubric. This process is not designed to provide individual student feedback.

**Q: Can a local district send an alternate if the original nominee declines to participate in the state-level interview?**

**A:** No, local districts are not allowed to substitute students once the online application opens.

**Q: If a student is selected to attend GHP, does he or she have to pay tuition?**

**A:** No, there is no charge for tuition, room, board or classroom materials. Participants will be responsible only for transportation to and from GHP and for any personal expenses, such as snacks, laundry detergent, general school supplies, etc. There is no charge for use of any of the recreational facilities, libraries, washers/dryers, or attendance at special events held during the summer program. Every student is given \$25 by GHP to use on campus via their flex/ID card.

**Q: Are students provided grades or academic credit for attending GHP?**

**A:** No, students are provided with an intensive academic environment without the pressure of grades. Students are encouraged to become increasingly self-motivated throughout the program, and instructors provide constructive feedback that is designed to guide future studies and development. All students who successfully complete the program receive a certificate of merit. Students deemed GHP nominees, GHP semifinalists, and GHP finalists should be proud to use such language on future higher education applications.

**Q: Can students with disabilities be nominated?**

**A:** Yes, any student who meets the criteria for the subject area is qualified as a nominee. GHP requires that the local selection process be fair, equitable, and comply with any state or federal requirements for those with disabilities.

**Q: Since GHP may conflict with other summer activities, what should a student who is selected do if there is a conflict?**

**A:** Students will need to make a choice regarding the summer activities they wish to pursue. GHP requires commitment to participate in the program for **the entire four weeks of the program (June 15- July 12)** if selected as a state finalist, **including opening and closing days**. Students are not permitted to arrive late or leave GHP early.

**Q: What qualities or criteria should we stress for our school/district-level GHP nomination process?**

**A:** Schools and districts will need to make their decisions based on what they deem best for their students. Due to the intensive academic and collaborative nature of the program, students who are most successful tend to display intellectual curiosity, significant academic or artistic talent, comfort in small and large group settings, and the emotional maturity to participate in a residential setting. Students who possess all these characteristics are typically students who matriculate through the four-week program successfully.