

ABOUT ACADEMICS ADMISSION RESEARCH CAMPUS LIFE ATHLETICS

WILLIAM
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DEAN OF STUDENTS

Student Center

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The Honor Code & Honor Councils

A Revised Honor Code

In August 2013, President Reveley approved the first substantial revisions to the Honor Code since 1997. The revised Code provides for clarified definitions, a new Early Resolution process for certain cases, the creation of an Honor System Advisory Committee, and sanction guidelines to provide for more tailored sanctions. A direct link to the new Code is available [here](#).

The Honor Code

Among the most significant traditions of the College of William and Mary in Virginia is its student-administered honor system. The essence of the honor system is individual responsibility. We entrust students to maintain the Code and adjudicate matters involving alleged violations of the Code.

The Honor Code is an enduring tradition at the College with documented history that originates as far back as 1736. Today, students administer the Honor pledge to each incoming student and educate faculty and administration on the relevance of the Code and its application to students' lives at the College. Students administer the Code through six Honor Councils and the Council of Chairs.

The Honor Code prohibits lying, cheating, and stealing. For definitions of each offense, view [Honor System, Section 2: Infractions](#) of the [Student Handbook](#).

- [Read the Honor Code](#)
- [Report a Violation](#)

The Pledge

"As a member of the William and Mary community, I pledge on my honor not to lie, cheat, or steal, either in my academic or personal life. I understand that such acts violate the Honor Code and undermine the community of trust, of which we are all stewards."

The Honor Councils

William and Mary's Honor Council consists of [six councils](#): Undergraduate, Education, Law, Marine Sciences, Business, and Arts and Sciences. The governing bodies of each of these entities determine the criteria for selection/election of their officers and council members. Please navigate to each council's page using the link above.

Honor System

This document does not, and shall not be interpreted to limit the authority of the President of the College.

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Section I: Purpose

A. The College's Honor Code is based upon the premise that a person's honor is his or her most cherished attribute. In a community devoted to learning, a foundation of honor among individuals must exist if that community is to thrive with respect and harmony among its members. An Honor System is an ideal mechanism to ensure such a state of affairs. With it, students and faculty are afforded a freedom that otherwise may not be available. With this freedom comes each individual's responsibility to conduct himself or herself in such a way that the spirit of mutual trust which sustains the system is not compromised.

B. While we endeavor to create a climate of honor that is self-sustaining, it is imperative that all members of the community work to uphold the Code. Reasonable precautions by instructors to deter violations are not incompatible with the letter or spirit of this Code provided that they respect students' right to privacy and non-discrimination. Students, faculty, administrators and other members of the community are encouraged to take action when they believe that any person may have violated the Honor Code; although failure to take action is not, in itself, a violation of the Honor Code, it detracts from the community of trust.

Section II: Authority

A. Jurisdiction of the Honor Code. The Honor Code applies to alleged acts of lying, stealing or cheating that adversely affect the College community, whether committed by a student on campus or elsewhere.^[FN 20] For reported behavior that alleges possible violations of either the Honor Code or the Code of Student Conduct or both, the Dean of Students/designee will determine which process, Honor or Student Conduct, is appropriate to resolve the matter.^[FN 21]

B. Honor Council with Authority for Review. When a student is alleged to have violated the Honor Code, the Honor Council for the academic unit in which the student is enrolled as a degree candidate will have authority to resolve the case.

1. ***Non-Degree-Seeking Students.*** A student who is not enrolled as a degree candidate in any specific academic unit will be subject to the Honor Council associated with the course in which the violation is alleged to have occurred, if the alleged violation is associated with a particular course, or the Undergraduate Honor Council if the matter is not associated with an academic course.

2. ***Joint Degree-Seeking Students.*** For students declared as joint degree seeking, the matter will be subject only to the authority of the Council in which the alleged violation occurred, if the violation is an academic matter. If the violation is non-academic, the joint degree Respondent may elect to have the matter referred to the Honor Council of either of the academic programs in which he or she is enrolled.

^[FN 20] See Section I of the Code of Conduct for the definition of "student."

^[FN 21] For matters referred to be resolved via the Code of Conduct, the Code of Conduct's resolution process will apply.

Section III: Definitions

A. Academic matter: any work, required or volunteered, that is a) submitted to a faculty member, b) submitted for publication in a College-sponsored or College-affiliated academic publication, or c) submitted for use in conjunction with a College-

sponsored event or activity.

B. Attempt: any act beyond mere preparation carried out with the intent to engage in conduct that violates Honor Code. Attempted violations may be sanctioned in the same manner as completed violations. A student need not complete the intended act in order to be held accountable.

C. Beyond a Reasonable Doubt: the amount of proof required to find a student in violation of the Honor Code. Reasonable doubt is doubt based upon reason and common sense that is based on the information presented at the hearing. Reasonable doubt is not doubt created in order to avoid the unpleasant duty of finding a student responsible.

D. Dishonorable conduct: an act of cheating, lying, or stealing that adversely affects the College community.

E. Inconsequential conduct: conduct that is of too minimal a scope to affect the College community.

F. Intent: an act that is not the result of accident. A student acts with intent if he or she carries out an act knowingly and voluntarily; one need not prove that the student intended a particular result or particular harm in order to establish intent under the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.

G. Principal parties: the Respondent and Reporting Party.

H. Respondent: the student suspected of engaging in behavior in violation of the Honor Code.

I. Reporting Party: the party reporting the matter for review by the Honor Council. The Reporting Party need not be the individual who directly witnessed, or was affected by, the alleged conduct (e.g., an instructor in whose course a student observes academic cheating or a student who discovers that a classmate has submitted an inflated grade point may serve as the Reporting Party).

Section VI: Honor Code Violations

VI. Honor Code Violations ^[FN33]

A student violates the Honor Code if the student engages in dishonorable conduct as defined below. The Honor Code will be applied reasonably in accordance with the examples below. Examples of proscribed conduct are meant to be instructive and not all-inclusive.

A. Lying: the presentation of false information with the intent to deceive. Lying includes, but is not limited to:

1. Misrepresenting oneself or one's accomplishments for the purpose of gaining an academic advantage or an advantage in opportunities for employment or other co-curricular opportunities;
2. Falsifying College documents including alteration or forgery;
3. Providing false or misleading information to Honor or Student Conduct members during the course of an investigation or hearing of an alleged violation of the Honor Code or Student Code of Conduct. Lying within this context may be charged as a separate offense.

B. Stealing: knowingly taking or appropriating the property of another, including property of the College, without the rightful owner's permission and with the intent to permanently or substantially deprive the owner of the property. One does not receive rightful permission if it is induced by fraud or deception.

C. Cheating: including, but not limited to, the following acts:

1. Plagiarism: the presentation, with intent to deceive, or with disregard for proper scholarly procedures of a significant scope, of any information, ideas or phrasing of another as if they were one's own without giving appropriate credit to the original source.

- a. One commits plagiarism when one includes the words of another without quotation or when one includes the substantive work of another without properly crediting the source with footnotes, quotation marks, or other appropriate citation.
- b. A student's intent may be inferred based on the extent and context of the improperly cited material and whether the student has provided false citation or has manipulated the original text such that a reasonable person may conclude the student did so in order to avoid detection.
- c. Disregard for proper scholarly procedure that is minimal in scope may be addressed solely as an academic matter, and the instructor may determine whether an academic penalty should be applied without pursuing resolution under the Honor Code. But any intentional acts of plagiarism or disregard for scholarly procedure of a significant scope should be treated as a violation of the Honor Code and addressed under either Sec. VIII or Sec. IX below.

2. Unauthorized Assistance/Collaboration: giving unauthorized aid to another student or receiving unauthorized aid from another person on tests, quizzes, assignments or examinations. Unauthorized assistance includes providing

information to another about an assignment or examination prior to the conclusion of the administration of such exams/assignments to all related sections of the course unless permitted by the instructor.

3. Use of Unauthorized Materials: using or consulting unauthorized materials (including electronic materials) or using unauthorized equipment or devices on tests, quizzes, assignments, or examinations.

4. Unauthorized Dual Submission of Previous Academic Work: using any material portion of a paper or project to fulfill the requirements of more than one course unless the student has received prior permission to do so from the appropriate instructor(s).

5. Time Constraint Violation: intentionally commencing work or failing to end work on any examination, test, quiz, or assignment according to the time constraints imposed.

6. Directions Violation: failing to follow instructions for an assignment or examination despite knowing or having reason to know that such conduct would result in an unfair academic advantage.

[FN 33] Specific application of these policies may vary by department or school, and schools, departments, and/or faculty are encouraged to make all students within their programs aware in advance of the particular expectations of their students. Students are expected to be responsible for knowing College, school, departmental and individual instructor policies regarding the Honor Code.

Section VII: Reporting Violations

A. Timeline for Addressing and Reporting. Alleged academic cheating or lying violations must be addressed and reported within 30 days of discovery unless the Vice President for Student Affairs finds good cause for delay. Allegations of non-academic lying or stealing must be addressed and reported within four months of discovery unless the Vice-President for Student Affairs finds good cause for the delay and he/she determines that a fair hearing may be held despite the delay. Once a party officially reports an alleged violation, he/she may not withdraw the complaint unless the Chair agrees such withdrawal is appropriate. ^[FN34]

B. Good Faith Requirement. The Code is not designed to be a tool of harassment. The Chair of the appropriate Council may decline to pursue allegations that appear to be motivated by personal animosity, and students alleging misconduct without a good faith basis to do so may be charged with an Honor violation or with “Abusing the Conduct System” under the Student Code of Conduct.

C. Initial Discussion. Prior to formally pursuing a suspected violation under the Code, the Reporting Party must make a diligent and good-faith effort to discuss the matter with the alleged violator, preferably in person. This discussion should occur as soon as practical after the Reporting Party observes or learns about the alleged violation, as specified in Sec. VII.A. The Reporting Party should request a truthful explanation of the suspected violation, reminding the Respondent of his/her obligation to uphold the Honor Code. If the student offers an explanation that satisfies the Reporting Party that

no violation has occurred, both parties are to move forward as though there is no violation. If, however, the Reporting Party remains concerned that a violation has occurred, or if despite good faith efforts an initial discussion between the parties is not held, he or she should pursue the matter under Sec. VIII (if appropriate) or Sec. IX.

Section X: Sanctions

A. Initial Level. The presumptive initial levels of sanction for each category of violation defined in Sec. VI are established by the Honor System Advisory Committee (see Honor Code Appendix I) in consultation with the Councils. Those levels may be different for undergraduates and students in each graduate/professional program.

B. Sanction Hearing. Following early resolution of a Level II violation or a finding of responsibility in an Honor Council hearing, the panel will determine the appropriate final sanction(s) to assign. It will consider extraordinary circumstances or aggravating circumstances by evaluating the facts and circumstances of the offense, the gravity of the violation(s), the harm/potential harm created by the act, and the student's prior record of Honor or Code of Conduct violations. The Council may assign any of the primary sanctions listed in Sec. VII. of the Student Handbook and any combination of secondary sanctions including, but not limited to, loss or restriction of particular privileges, community service, an essay, restitution, or other reasonable sanctions.

C. Written Finding. All sanctions imposed by a hearing panel must be accompanied by written findings that explain why the panel determined such a sanction to be appropriate. Any significant deviation from the initial presumptive sanction level in Appendix I must be substantiated in the panel's rationale.

D. Grade Determination

1. An instructor may assign a grade penalty up to, and including, a failing course grade if the student either accepts a proposal for early resolution (Sec. VIII) or is found in violation by the Honor Council (Sec. IX). Following a hearing, the Honor Council may recommend a grade penalty, but the instructor retains the final decision regarding the student's earned grade. If the student receives a failing grade as a result of an academic integrity violation, that grade will remain on the transcript even if the student has withdrawn, or has been withdrawn from the course, and regardless of whether the student retakes the course.

2. In some cases the alleged misconduct may be found not to be a violation of the Honor Code, but instead may be considered a failure of the student to understand or abide by the instructor's directions for the assignment. In such a case, the faculty member may assign a grade penalty proportionate to the violation of directions on his/her own authority independent of the Honor Code.