

FACULTY HANDBOOK TO THE WHEATON COLLEGE HONOR CODE



As members of the Wheaton community, we commit ourselves to act honestly, responsibly, and above all, with honor and integrity in all areas of campus life. We are accountable for all that we say and write. We are responsible for the academic integrity of our work. We pledge that we will not misrepresent our work nor give or receive unauthorized aid. We commit ourselves to behave in a manner, which demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights and freedoms of all members of the community. We are respectful of college property and the property of others. We will not tolerate a lack of respect for these values.

I accept responsibility to maintain the Honor Code at all times.

PRODUCED BY THE HONOR CODE COMMISSION

We have abided by the Wheaton College Honor Code in this work.

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PREFACE

This handbook is designed to provide faculty with essential information and helpful suggestions regarding faculty's role in helping to teach, promote, and administer the Wheaton College Honor Code. The set of procedures and guidelines collected here is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, it is meant to serve as an initial resource for faculty with questions about the Honor Code and its administration. The focus of this handbook is limited to those aspects of the Honor Code bearing on academic issues. Faculty who find themselves confronted with possible social violations of the Honor Code should contact the Dean of Students or Associate Dean of Students.

When Wheaton students created the Honor Code, they claimed for themselves responsibility over their actions within the Wheaton community. Each class of students since then, by signing the Honor Code during Orientation, has reaffirmed that claim of responsibility. With respect to the academic aspects of students' lives, this means that they have taken responsibility for their own academic integrity. Faculty do not proctor exams at Wheaton out of respect for the students' affirmative commitment to academic integrity: faculty leave the room where an exam is taking place or allow students to take self-scheduled exams on their own because the students have claimed the responsibility of policing themselves with respect to their academic pursuits.

It is helpful in this context for faculty to view the students' claim of responsibility as a request to be full participants in the academic enterprise and to be treated accordingly. In the context of a liberal arts college, whether students realize it or not, in making such a request they are asking for the opportunity to pursue their educations in much the same way faculty pursue their scholarship: by working with mentors who guide them and facilitate their learning, but mostly by engaging with the subject matter honestly and striving to contribute something of one's own to the field. Of course most undergraduates are not prepared to contribute substantially to a field of research, but in just the same way scholars take responsibility for representing their ideas and the ideas of others honestly, students under the Honor Code seek to take responsibility for producing academic work honestly, for producing academic work that is their own. If it is right for faculty to view students under the Honor Code as proto-scholars in this way, then it is incumbent upon faculty to help students understand fully what scholarship means and entails so that students can meet its standards.

I. FACULTY BEST PRACTICES WITH RESPECT TO THE HONOR CODE

A. Including a section on the Honor Code on all course syllabi:

A primary way of emphasizing the importance of the Honor Code in a given course is to include a section on the Honor Code on the syllabus, and in that section remind students that they are expected to write out and sign the honor pledge (“I have abided by the Wheaton College Honor Code in this work.”) on all written assignments. In this section, it might also be appropriate to lay out some more specific expectations for standards of academic integrity in a given discipline or course.

B. Requiring students to sign the honor pledge:

In 2003, the students on the Honor Code Commission asked faculty to require students to write out and sign the honor pledge (see A., above) on all written assignments. The students’ goal in making this request was to guarantee that students had regular exposure to the Honor Code throughout their years at Wheaton and not just during new student orientation. In response to that request, faculty added the following section Part Three, Section C. of Faculty Legislation:

Required Honor Pledge:

For all course work students will write and sign the following:

I have abided by the Wheaton College Honor Code in this work.
(Student Signature)

Despite the straightforward language of this section, faculty members employ a number of different approaches to the honor pledge. While some faculty members simply refuse to accept unpledged assignments, others accept unpledged assignments but ask students who do not write out and sign the pledge to explain why they did not. While the honor pledge was intended to be an empowering symbol and reminder of students’ commitment to their academic integrity, the value of the pledge to the Wheaton Honor Code continues to be a matter of debate. Accordingly, the Honor Code Commission is reluctant to stipulate any one particular faculty approach to the honor pledge. Instead, the Honor Code Commission simply implores faculty to require the pledge on written assignments and to engage students in conversation about the value of the pledge to the Wheaton Honor Code.

C. Fostering a climate of academic integrity in the classroom:

In general, this includes modeling and promoting integrity, honesty, and mutual respect, as well as engaging students as partners in the academic enterprise (and thus as partners in creating a climate of academic integrity). More specific ways of fostering such a climate include D. and E., below, and displaying a passion for the subject matter and for students’ learning.

D. Devoting class time to discuss the Honor Code:

It is important to spend time in class discussing the Honor Code and how it bears on the work the students will do in that course and on the larger aims of the discipline. Linking the standards of academic integrity specific to a discipline and its methodological approaches affords faculty the opportunity to situate the academic expectations of the Honor Code within the larger goals of their disciplines and the academy

E. Making clear faculty's expectations on particular assignments:

Making clear the faculty member's exact expectations with regard to the academic integrity of particular assignments, either by taking time in class or by devoting space within the assignments themselves. This would include making clear whether or not students may work together on a given project (and if so, how they may do so), whether or not they may incorporate ideas from class discussions into a given project (and if so, how they may do so), and how they must cite sources.

F. Unproctored exams:

Leaving the room during an in-class or scheduled exam and allowing self-scheduled exams are courtesies faculty members extend to students out of respect for the Honor Code. The practice of leaving the room during an in-class or scheduled exam is mandated in Faculty Legislation (Part Two, Section V., B. 2.). Nonetheless, some faculty members have found this practice difficult to maintain in light of repeated incidents of cheating in unproctored exams. Such circumstances can afford faculty members an opportunity to have a focused discussion with their students about the strengths and weaknesses of the Wheaton Honor Code. However, as long as Faculty Legislation on this point remains unchanged, faculty members have the obligation to leave exams unproctored.

G. Preventing academic misconduct:

This includes creating idiosyncratic assignments, avoiding giving the same assignments in a course semester after semester, requiring drafts or outlines of essays well in advance of the essay's due date, and assigning multiple writing assignments and informal writing assignments (if possible and appropriate) so as to be more familiar with the students' writing.

H. Following procedural guidelines with respect to all possible violations:

To promote uniformity of procedure and sanction, it is important to follow the guidelines laid out in Part II (below) with respect to any and all possible violations of Wheaton's Honor Code.

II. GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY FACED WITH A POSSIBLE HONOR CODE VIOLATION

What follows is a list of faculty guidelines for dealing with possible Honor Code violations. While some of the material in this section comes from the judicial procedures of the College Hearing Board, many of the guidelines below target specific faculty issues not addressed in the judicial procedures on the Honor Code website.

A. Documenting the Possible Violation:

Once a possible violation has come to your attention, you should, of course, investigate the matter. As you investigate, it is important to document carefully any and all pieces of evidence that might pertain to the possible violation, including making a photocopy of the assignment in question and retaining the original. If there is evidence that the student may have inappropriately gathered information from the internet, print the relevant web pages along with the web address and the date printed. Save all emails and handwritten notes relevant to the case.

If another student reports having witnessed a possible violation, collect as many details as possible from that student and take careful notes during the conversation—then ask the student if she is willing to testify before the Hearing Board. These suggestions may seem obvious, but situations in which it seems that a student has engaged in academic misconduct can be quite disconcerting for faculty, and in those situations, it is easy to mismanage relevant pieces of information.

B. Dealing with Students Who Report a Possible Violation to You:

When a student comes to you with information regarding a possible violation, it is helpful to keep in mind that many students find it difficult to report other students. That being the case, it is important to be positive and supportive of the reporting student and her decision to come forward, and to avoid coming across like a prosecutor putting together a case against a defendant. In the process of gathering information from the reporting student and documenting it (see A., above), it is best to avoid prompting the student so as to avoid possibly influencing the exact content of the information that student provides. For reasons cited above, it may be helpful to assure the reporting student that you will try to avoid identifying her as the source of that information as you confront the accused student, but that the matter may ultimately come to a hearing, at which she may be asked to testify as to the information she has provided.

C. Confronting the Student:

This is inevitably an uncomfortable interaction with a student, but it is crucial. Even if you decide not to pursue the case further, your confronting the student demonstrates to that student (and others to whom she will inevitably speak) that you and that faculty are committed to the Honor Code and are vigilant with respect to violations of it.

The appropriate approach to this meeting depends a great deal upon the kind of evidence you have been able to gather. If the evidence is conclusive, then confronting the student with that evidence will likely focus less on determining guilt than on soliciting an admission of guilt. If the evidence is inconclusive, then confronting the student is likely to serve more as a means for gathering more evidence, mainly by assessing the student's response to the allegation and evidence. Keep in mind, however, that dealing with the case will be much easier if the student admits to the violation. This does not mean you should badger a student into an admission of guilt. In fact, one of the worst things you can do is to put the student on the defensive and cause her to pull back into an uncooperative posture. Instead, consider approaching the student in such a way as to invite the student to be forthcoming.

Depending on the information you glean at this stage in the process, you may or may not feel that you have enough evidence to go forward. It is important to note here that the College Hearing Board decides cases on the basis of the preponderance of the information. (This is not nearly as high a standard as the beyond a reasonable doubt standard familiar in criminal trials.)

D. Contacting the Dean of Students' Office:

Before you continue to steps E. or F. below, you should contact the Dean of Students' Office about the violation. Contacting the Dean of Students' Office at this stage allows the Dean of Students to make sure that the accused student does not have any prior Honor Code violations and to advise you on how best to handle the case. Checking the student's file for other violations is crucial, since it would be inappropriate for a faculty member to sanction the student directly (without going before the College Hearing Board) if that student has been found guilty of an Honor Code violation before. Finally, it is important to note that the Dean of Students' Office is the best resource a faculty member has in dealing with Honor Code violations.

E. Sanctioning the Student Directly:

Faculty members have the discretion to sanction students rather than taking the case to the College Hearing Board. Even though you may sanction the student yourself, it is very important to talk to the student about the sanction and your reasons for applying it. The standard established by the College Hearing Board for first offences of academic violations of the Honor Code is to have the student fail the assignment on which the student engaged in academic misconduct. If the student does not feel that your sanction is appropriate, the student may request that the case come before the College Hearing Board (though it is important to note that such a request does not, in and of itself, guarantee that the CHB will grant the student a hearing). **When sanctioning the student directly, faculty members must apprise accused students of their right to request that the case come before the College Hearing Board.**

In cases in which the student admits to the violation, it is most appropriate for you to sanction the student yourself, and ideally the student will agree to the sanction.

In cases in which the student does not admit to the violation, you may still sanction the student yourself, but the student may nonetheless request that the case come before the College Hearing Board.

When you sanction a student yourself, it is crucially important to write a letter to the Dean of Students detailing the facts of the case, as well as the nature of and reasons behind the sanction you give. It is also important to indicate to the student that you will write such a letter. If this is a first violation, the letter will go in the student's file and remain there until graduation, at which time it will be removed and destroyed. If it is a second violation, the Dean of Students office will contact you and the student about bringing the case before the College Hearing Board. If you do not send such a letter when you have sanctioned a student, that student may be able to commit multiple violations of the Honor Code without suffering the appropriate sanctions for them.

F. Referring the Case to the College Hearing Board

If you need to refer the case to the College Hearing Board, you should submit a written, dated and signed report of the alleged violation to the Dean or Associate Dean of Students. Sometimes circumstances are such that you may not be able to approach the individual directly or to submit a written statement (say, if you discover the violation after the end of final exams in the Spring semester, or if you are out of the country at the time). In such a situation, you should consult with the Dean or Associate Dean of Students.

The Dean or Associate Dean of Students will promptly inform the Chair of the College Hearing Board of alleged violations. The Chair of the College Hearing Board, in conjunction with the Dean, will then formulate the charges to be brought against the individual accused (the respondent) after reviewing the written report of alleged violations.

Once the charges have been formulated, the respondent (again, the person alleged to have violated the Honor Code) will receive written notification of the nature of the charge being brought against him and will be asked to prepare a written response to the charge, to be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students no more than three (3) academic days after receipt of the charge.

Upon receipt of the respondent's response to the charge, the Dean or the Associate Dean and the College Hearing Board Chair (or their designees) will review the allegations regarding the reported violation and the respondent's response and determine if the College Hearing Board will hear the case or if it will be resolved in some other manner. The decision to present a case to the College Hearing Board is within the sole discretion of the College, through its Dean or Associate Dean of Students (or their designees), based upon the nature of, and circumstances surrounding, the reported violation. No student has an entitlement or right to a hearing before the College Hearing Board.

If it is determined that the College Hearing Board will hear the case, the College Hearing Board Chair and the Office of the Dean of Students will determine the date, time, and place of the case hearing.

Upon determination of the date, time and place of the hearing, the Chair of the College Hearing Board or the Office of the Dean of Students will inform the Board of the date, time, and place of the hearing and nature of the case to be heard and will instruct them to read the materials pertaining to the case, in the Office of the Dean of Students, prior to the hearing. You and the respondent will both be notified in writing of the date, time and place of the hearing, and the assignment of procedural advisors to both parties. The notification will normally take place four (4) academic days prior to the hearing date in order to allow both parties sufficient time to prepare, and not more than fifteen (15) academic days from the original receipt of the respondent's statement in response to the charge.

Generally, decisions of cases involving senior students will be rendered prior to the Commencement exercises of the academic year in which the alleged violation occurred. Cases involving underclass students generally will be continued to the following academic semester if reported during final exams. In some cases, however, such as where the respondent indicates he wishes the hearing to commence even if the hearing occurs before the third academic day following receiving notice of the hearing, the College, in its sole discretion, may decide not to continue the case to the next academic semester, assuming the Board is able to be convened on short notice.

After hearing a case, the College Hearing Board will deliberate in private and will decide whether there is sufficient proof that a violation occurred and whether the respondent is responsible or not. The Board will use the standard of preponderance of information to determine whether or not the respondent should be held responsible for the alleged violation.

If the College Hearing Board finds that there is not sufficient proof that a violation occurred or that the respondent is not responsible, there will be no record that the respondent was subject to an accusation. If the respondent is found responsible for an academic violation of the Honor Code or of a College policy, the College Hearing Board may issue one or a combination of the following or similar types of sanctions:

- mandated community service or educational sanction
- loss of credit or failure for the piece of work
- loss of credit or failure in the course for the semester in which the offense occurred
- parent/guardian notification of decision
- notation in academic file in the Academic Advising Center until graduation
- permanent notation in academic file in the Academic Advising Center
- recommendation to the President for suspension from the College for a specified period of time
- recommendation to the President for expulsion

The College Hearing Board will consider the prior disciplinary record of individuals found responsible for violation of the Honor Code in determining the sanction(s) in any particular case.

Because you, the faculty member, determine the student's grade for the academic work in question as well as for the course, the Board will ask you for a recommendation on grading should the student be found responsible for an academic violation. The Board may then choose to assign additional sanctions if the student is found responsible. You may wait until resolution of the judicial proceeding before assigning a grade either for the assignment, test/exam, paper in question (INC) or the course (NG).

For a full list of College Hearing Board judicial procedures and for information on the constitution and operation of the College Hearing Board, go to the Honor Code website at: **<http://www.wheatoncollege.edu/StudentLife/HonorCode/Judicial.html>**

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