

Resolution to Allow Administrative Resolution of First-Time Honor Code Cases

WHEREAS, both University Policy 6000 “Undergraduate Honor code” and the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Honor Code Manual establish the procedures for enforcement of the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Honor Code; and

WHEREAS, those procedures currently allow only for two resolution processes: faculty/student resolution and hearing panel resolution; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of honor code cases are resolved through hearing panels with sharp increases in the number of required hearing panels since 2020; and

WHEREAS, a hearing panel takes much time to convene and schedule, and the number of cases heard in this manner has resulted in long delays for case resolution in recent years; and

WHEREAS, the administrators in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity have the experience and scheduling flexibility to hear cases on a swifter timeline; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity has proposed administrative review as a faster option to hearing panels which have been approved by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies and by University Council;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the attached revision to Policy 6000 (Undergraduate Honor Code) allowing the option for Administrative Resolution of honor code referrals be adopted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, consistent with section 4.0 in Policy 6000, the Honor Code Manual be revised to reflect the approved changes.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Visitors approve the resolution to revise Policy 6000 (Undergraduate Honor Code) and the Honor Code Manual to allow administrative resolution of first-time honor code cases.

June 6, 2023



Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Undergraduate Honor Code

No. 6000

Policy Effective Date:
8/22/2016

Last Revision Date:
3/21/2016

Policy Owner:
Cyril Clarke

Policy Author: (*Contact Person*)
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Affected Parties:
Undergraduate
Faculty
Staff

1.0 Purpose

2.0 Policy

3.0 Procedures

**4.0 Policy Revision
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1.0 Purpose

The Board of Visitors is charged with regulating the government and discipline of students and in respect to the government of the university may make such regulations as the board deems expedient, not contrary to the law. The purpose of this policy is to establish the procedures concerning enforcement of the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Honor Code and to promote an understanding of these procedures.

The Virginia Tech Undergraduate Honor Code embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty that is central to the very nature of the university and represents the highest possible expression of shared values among the members of the university community.

The fundamental beliefs and ideals underlying and reflected in the Undergraduate Honor Code are:

1. That trust in a person is a positive force in making that person worthy of trust,
2. That every student has the right to live in an academic environment that is free from the injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty, and
3. That the honesty and integrity of all members of the university community contribute to its quest for truth.

Ethical and honorable conduct in academic and research pursuits is critical to these beliefs and ideals. The functions of the Undergraduate Honor System are to communicate the meaning and importance of intellectual honesty to the university community; to articulate and support the interest of the community in maintaining the highest standards of conduct in academic affairs; to cultivate a culture of honor and integrity through proactive and preventive educational programs; and to identify, impose sanctions upon, and educate those who fail to live up to the stated expectations of the university community with regard to these standards.

2.0 Policy

The Undergraduate Honor Code is the university policy that defines the expected standards of conduct in academic affairs. Students are expected to abide by the Undergraduate Honor Code. All students upon admission to this university have pledged to abide by the Undergraduate Honor Code. The Undergraduate Honor Code applies to all assignments, examinations, and other academic exercises. A student who has doubts about how the Undergraduate Honor Code applies to a particular assignment, examination, or academic exercise is responsible for obtaining specific guidelines from the instructor and/or supervisor before submitting the work for evaluation.



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Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute a violation of the Undergraduate Honor Code. This listing is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct.

1. **Cheating:** Includes intentionally using unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise or attempts thereof.
2. **Plagiarism:** Includes the copying of the language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's own original work or attempts thereof.
3. **Falsification:** Includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any circumstances relevant to one's academic work or attempts thereof.
4. **Fabrication:** Includes making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents, or attempts thereof.
5. **Multiple Submission:** Includes the submission for credit—without authorization of the instructor receiving the work—of substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution or attempts thereof.
6. **Complicity:** Includes intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct or attempts thereof.
7. **Violation of University, College, Departmental, or Faculty Rules:** Includes the violation of any course, departmental, college, or university rule relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Infrastructure

The specific infrastructure for maintenance of the Undergraduate Honor Code is as follows:

- a. The Director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity assumes oversight of the Undergraduate Honor Code and reports directly to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs or an administrator with a similar title and responsibilities.
- b. The Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity is charged with leading the university's efforts to promote academic integrity, adjudicate alleged cases of academic misconduct, and provide administrative oversight to the Undergraduate Honor System. The university is committed to ensuring the success of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity.
- c. The Undergraduate Honor System personnel shall consist of the faculty members and students who participate by serving as members of the Honor Council, hearing panels, case facilitators, and the professional staff in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity. The Undergraduate Honor Code Manual shall specify the composition, method of selection, and duties of the Undergraduate Honor System personnel.
- d. Students and faculty exercise leadership in the Undergraduate Honor System by assisting in communicating the Undergraduate Honor Code to the university community, providing panel members during hearings of alleged academic misconduct, investigating cases of alleged academic misconduct, and fulfilling other duties as may be necessary for the implementation of the Undergraduate Honor Code.

3.2 Resolution of Alleged Academic Misconduct Cases

Specific details related to the procedures for handling of alleged cases of academic misconduct are specified in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual. Some core principles of this document include:

- a. All persons in the Virginia Tech academic community (students, faculty, staff, and administration) shall be responsible for reporting alleged incidents of academic misconduct that come to their knowledge.
- b. The recommended sanction for academic misconduct shall be an "F*" sanction as the student's final course grade. More severe penalties or lesser penalties may be imposed if the circumstances warrant. Examples of other sanctions that may be applied by a faculty member include: lowered final course grade, reduction of points on an individual assignment, zero on the assignment, and the Academic Integrity Education Program. Note that the



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assignment of the Academic Integrity Education Program may be required in addition to either of the previous sanctions or in lieu of any other sanctions.

- c. The Undergraduate Honor System shall have the authority to adjudicate cases when cases are brought to the system and to assign the aforementioned sanctions for those found responsible for violations of the Undergraduate Honor Code. The Undergraduate Honor System may also assign suspension and/or expulsion from the university as sanctions.
- d. A student receiving an "F*" sanction may petition the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity to have the * removed from the transcript following the completion of the Academic Integrity Education Program.
- e. The sanction for a second offense of academic misconduct committed by a student shall normally be expulsion from the university. Under rare extenuating circumstances, the Undergraduate Honor System may assign a sanction less than expulsion for a student who has a second academic misconduct offense if the circumstances warrant. If a sanction less than expulsion is assigned by the Undergraduate Honor System, a written explanation of the hearing panel's decision must be provided to the parties involved, including the reporting faculty member, the faculty member's department head, the student's department head, the student's dean, the University Registrar, and the Executive Vice President and Provost.
- f. The Board of Visitors has the authority to revoke the degree of a former student if a finding of academic misconduct is determined after the student has graduated, and if the sanction assigned for the misconduct would have caused the student to be ineligible to receive the degree at that time.
- g. Individual faculty may resolve cases of alleged academic misconduct through the Faculty-Student Resolution Process that is outlined in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual if the following criteria are met: the University Honor System authorizes the faculty member to meet with the student; it is a first-time offense for the student; the misconduct is not anticipated to require a sanction greater than an "F*" in the course; and the student does not request referral to the Undergraduate Honor System. Faculty who resolve cases of academic misconduct through the Faculty-Student Resolution Process shall report the outcome to the Undergraduate Honor System.
- h. Students may appeal a faculty member's decision to the Undergraduate Honor System within the time limits specified in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual.

~~Cases not resolved between the faculty member and student or not resolved in consultation with personnel from the Undergraduate Honor System shall be adjudicated by a hearing panel provided by the Undergraduate Honor System. (this section moved to "k" below: Hearing panels shall consist of representation from students and faculty, where students are in the voting majority. Hearing panels shall also be chaired by one non-voting chairperson who shall be a student.)~~

- i. ~~Students referred to the Undergraduate Honor System and meeting both criteria listed below may opt to have their case resolved at a hearing panel or by an administrator from the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity:~~
 - a. ~~students referred to the Undergraduate Honor System for the first time.~~
 - b. ~~students who are accepting responsibility for the violation but are disputing the sanction recommended by the faculty.~~

~~Requests for Administrative Resolution must be approved by the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity.~~

- j. ~~Administrative resolution: The cases for students electing to participate in administrative resolutions will be heard by an Assistant Director or other designated administrator from the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity. Students will retain the right to appeal an administrative decision on the basis of sanctions that are not commensurate with the violation.~~
- k. ~~Panel resolution: Hearing panels shall consist of representation from students and faculty, where students are in the voting majority. Hearing panels shall also be chaired by one non-voting chairperson who shall be a student.~~
- l. ~~A student found responsible for academic misconduct may request an appeal hearing. The request for an appeal hearing must be made in writing to the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity within the time limits specified in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual. If the appeal hearing is granted, an appeal hearing is conducted by the Honor Council. The members of the Honor Council who serve on the appeal hearing panel shall be different from the members of the original hearing panel when applicable. Students are limited to one appeal per case. The decision reached by the Honor Council in the appeal hearing is final.~~



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3.3 Revisions to the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual

- a. Minor changes to the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual that do not substantively change or place the document in conflict with this policy may be recommended by the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity to the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies if authorization is granted by the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs.
- b. If the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies deems that the recommendations do not substantively change the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual and/or place the document in conflict with this policy, the recommended changes may be incorporated into the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual.

4.0 Policy Revision Procedures

Proposed revisions to the Undergraduate Honor Code Policy shall originate from the Honor Council or a committee appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost that includes representation from the Honor Council, faculty, students, and administration. Once approved by the Executive Vice President and Provost, the committee's or Honor Council's recommendations shall be forwarded to the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, University Council, the President, and the Board of Visitors. Any substantive changes in the proposed amendments as they proceed through the governance process shall be resubmitted to the originating body for approval.

5.0 Definitions

6.0 References

Undergraduate Honor Code Manual

https://honorsystem.vt.edu/honor_code_policy_test.html

7.0 Approval and Revisions

With the adoption of the Honor Code Policy (Policy 6000), the previous Undergraduate Honor System Constitution was retired, the Honor System Review Board was superseded by the new Honor Council, and the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual was designated as the document that describes the philosophy, campus educational outreach framework, and administrative operational description of the Undergraduate Honor System.

Approved March 21, 2016, by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

Approved March 21, 2016, by President Timothy D. Sands

Revision 1

To allow administrative resolution of first-time honor code cases as recommended by the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity and approved by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies and University Council.

Approved _____ by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

Approved _____ by President Timothy D. Sands