

Honor Code: University of Evansville Academic Honor System

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Academic Honor Code

In its mission, the University clearly states the intention to be value-oriented in all endeavors. The Academic Honor Code was created by the University community, students, and faculty alike, to create an atmosphere conducive to this high ideal and to academic integrity.

The primary purpose of the Academic Honor Code is to enable students and faculty to conduct their academic duties in an atmosphere of freedom – an ideal which requires the commitment of both students and faculty. Student commitment to the Academic Honor Code is implied by his or her matriculation at the University of Evansville. Members of the faculty affirm a commitment to the Academic Honor Code by clearly defining what is or is not unauthorized aid. Student commitment to the Academic Honor Code is implied by his or her matriculation at the University of Evansville. The code, which follows, is appropriate for all academic work which is to be submitted for credit.

I understand that any work I submit for course credit will imply that I have adhered to this Academic Honor Code: I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.

The Honor System

Under the honor system, faculty often utilize honor-based testing devices, such as the take-home exam and examinations without a proctor. Each instructor is obligated to clearly define unauthorized aid as it relates to assignments within his or her specific course(s). Instructors should discuss the importance of academic integrity, review related items in the syllabus, and clarify the definitions of cheating and plagiarism. When in doubt, the student is obligated to obtain an understanding of the instructor's use of the term. Ignorance is not accepted as a valid excuse for a violation of the Academic Honor Code.

The non-tolerance clause ("nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid") is integral to the Academic Honor Code as the honor system relies on the active participation of all students. Each student, therefore, is responsible for his or her own personal honor and the academic integrity of the University community. The academic honor system functions only when students value their personal honor and that of the community enough to guard it. This is not to say that students must constantly watch for violations. However, it is the student's responsibility to uphold the integrity of the Academic Honor Code. Any observations or knowledge of misconduct should be reported immediately.

Faculty Responsibilities

The following is offered as a guideline to the faculty's responsibilities in promoting and implementing the Academic Honor Code.

1. Refer to the Academic Honor Code in each class syllabus.
2. Provide a clear, written definition of class expectations in the syllabus, including such items as writing style, citations, plagiarism, etc.
3. Devote some time in the first class meeting to explaining the importance of academic integrity, reviewing related items in the syllabus, and clarifying the definitions of cheating and plagiarism
4. On examinations, faculty may wish to include the honor code statement and require students to sign their reaffirmation.
5. On class papers and projects, faculty may wish to ask students to include a simple, signed statement reaffirming their adherence to the honor code.
6. For group projects, group papers or group presentations, clearly define the appropriate level of collaboration, the levels of group and individual work to be submitted, and the criteria for grading. This may be included in the syllabus or in handouts describing the parameters of a group assignment.
7. In the classroom, establish an academic environment that supports academic integrity based on fair evaluations and the assumption that all students enrolled are honest.
8. In all cases of possible dishonesty, the faculty member should confront the individual student. If the student does not believe he or she has violated the honor code, or if the student does not agree with the action proposed by the faculty member, the student has the right to due process by requesting an Honor Council investigation.
9. Disposition of a suspected Honor Code violation should take place within 10 business days of its detection either by (a) dismissing it, (b) settling it informally through a letter signed by the student and forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students, or (c) requesting an Honor Council investigation of the alleged incident.

See "Violations of the Honor Code" for the process to follow. All letters documenting the informal resolution of Honor Code violations must be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students immediately after signing to ensure accurate institutional records of the number of Honor Code violations on file.

10. When there is an Honor Council hearing, be prepared to present evidence and testify as needed.
11. Be willing to serve in the pool of faculty to be called upon for Honor Council hearings.
12. Participate in educating new faculty (full-time and part-time) about the honor system. The honor system and the implementation of its procedures fall under the administrative jurisdiction of the faculty and the president. The Office of the Dean of Students keeps records of violations and hearings, and may be consulted by the Honor Council chair regarding procedures and past violations

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The Pledge of Honor

The Pledge of Honor Form must be signed and returned to the University by every new student – both freshmen and transfers. This pledge signifies that each student is familiar with the Academic Honor Code at the University of Evansville and will comply with the terms of the code.

Honor Council

The Honor Council is composed of students and faculty members, both with full voting power. Eight faculty members, one from each academic governance unit, are appointed by the Faculty Senate. Six students are appointed by the Student Government Association, and six students are then appointed by the president of the University. At least one student of the 12 must represent each of the eight teaching academic governance units. For a hearing, a panel of five students and two faculty members is randomly selected from the appointment pool to serve as the hearing panel. The chair of the Honor Council will be appointed by the Faculty Senate chair in consultation with the vice president for academic affairs. In addition to those members selected from the appointment pool, the Honor Council chair will serve as a non-voting facilitator for each hearing panel. The dean of students will serve as an ex-officio non-voting member of each hearing panel.

If necessary, members of the University Judicial Board may serve on the Academic Honor Council if there is a scheduling conflict or potential bias of the appointed members for a particular hearing.

Due Process

Alleged violators of the honor code, in accordance with due process, will have the following rights:

- The right to be faced by one's accuser
- The right to have charges against one given in writing 72 hours prior to the hearing
- The right to a hearing
- The right to have witnesses speak on one's behalf
- The right to appeal the decision of that hearing to a higher level

The chair of the Honor Council sees that the case is processed with correct procedures and with the stated elements of due process.

The University of Evansville's discipline system does not include the right to have representation, including but not limited to legal and/or parental representation, at the Honor Council hearing. The University of Evansville, as a private institution, is free to devise a disciplinary procedure relevant to its lawful mission.

Violations of the Honor Code

The honor system is based on the assumption that students are the first to protect the environment of honor. In code violations, the council holds by the principle that students should not receive credit for dishonest work.

- **Initial Action.** Where appropriate, suspected honor code violations should be reported to the dean of students, who will keep records of honor code violations. The dean of students will determine if this is the student's first offense. If a student has committed one violation of the Honor Code and is suspected of a second violation, the second case will be heard by the Honor Council. If the student is found responsible for a second violation, the Honor Council will impose the appropriate penalty while giving primary consideration to the recommendation of the faculty member involved

with the case. Second offenses will automatically be referred to the Honor Council for action. A student found responsible for a third violation will be expelled from the University.

Once an honor code violation has been submitted by a faculty member, a student is not allowed to withdraw until the Honor Council is concluded.

If a violation of the Academic Honor Code comes to the attention of a student or faculty member, he or she is encouraged to positively influence the student in question to change the current course of action or to self-report the violation. Some honor code violations may be handled informally between student and faculty (see below for procedure).

- **Informal Resolutions.** Many first offenses can be handled between the student and the faculty member once the Office of the Dean of Students has verified that no previous offenses have occurred. This process often works best with cases that are fairly straightforward

1. The faculty member should confront the student about what appears to be a violation of the honor code.
2. The faculty member should emphasize to the student that he or she has the right to have the case investigated through the Honor Council as outlined in the Student Handbook if the student does not believe he or she has committed a violation of the honor code.
3. If the student admits to the violation, the faculty member should discuss appropriate sanctions. If both parties concur with the sanctions, the resolution should be documented. Suggested elements to include in the documentation are:
 - a. A description of the violation
 - b. A description of the sanctions imposed
 - c. The following statement: "This letter will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students as part of the documentation process of an Honor Code violation."
 - d. The following statement:
"By signing this letter, you acknowledge your waiver of an Honor Council investigation and hearing, accept your responsibility in this incident, and accept the sanctions as prescribed."

Student Signature

Date

4. Provide the student with a signed copy of the letter. The instructor should keep a copy of the letter and all original materials relevant to the case, and should forward the original signed letter to the Office of the Dean of Students. The letter will be kept on file for the remainder of the student's academic career at the University of Evansville.

If there is no agreement on the violation or the sanction, the case will be forwarded to the Honor Council via the Office of the Dean of Students.

In the event that the accused student reports himself or herself, the dean of students should be contacted. Subsequently, the Honor Council will evaluate the case.

- **Reporting and Investigations.** If it is not possible to approach a student suspected of a violation or the student does not self-report to the Honor Council, then the suspicions should be reported to the dean of students. The dean of students is responsible for notifying the accused student of Honor Council procedures.
- **The Hearing.** Honor Council hearing procedures are designed to ensure due process with University policy. At a hearing the Honor Council's responsibility is to ascertain whether the accused is responsible for the alleged violation. When a student is found in violation of the Honor Code, the council will recommend appropriate penalties. A recording will be made of all Honor Council proceedings.

During an Honor Council hearing, the basic order of events is as follows:

1. The person initiating the report gives his or her version of the situation
2. The hearing panel questions the person initiating the report
3. The student(s) whose case is being heard presents his or her account of the situation, justification, and/or explanation. The Honor Council proceedings will continue regardless of whether the student chooses to participate.
4. The hearing panel questions the student(s)
5. Further comments by the student(s) and initiating person are considered
6. Witnesses are brought in, although the hearing panel can limit the number of persons who may appear
7. The Honor Council deliberates and renders a decision by applying the preponderance of evidence standard.

- **Sanctions.** The penalty for a first violation will be determined on a case by case basis by the Honor Council. The recommendations of the faculty member(s) involved in the case will be given primary consideration. Possible sanctions include: academic penalties, disciplinary action, and special conditions such as counseling. If a student has committed one violation of the Honor Code and is suspected of a second violation, the Honor Council will impose the appropriate penalty while giving primary consideration to the recommendation of the faculty member involved with the case. Penalty for a second offense may include suspension for a designated semester(s). A student found in violation of a third violation will be expelled from the University.

Honor Council Appeals

Following the determination of the Academic Honor Council, both parties have the right to appeal the determination but solely for the following reasons:

1. There is evidence that the hearing procedures outlined in the Student Handbook for Honor Council processes were not adequately followed.
2. There is new evidence that will materially impact the Academic Honor Council's decision and this evidence was not presented at the original hearing for good cause as determined by the Honor Council Chair and in consultation with the Dean of Students.
3. The sanctions imposed by the Academic Honor Council are believed to be either too severe or too lenient for the violation which the student was found to be responsible.

All appeals must be emailed within five business days to the Dean of Students (dc26@evansville.edu). All appeal requests must be accompanied by a written statement identifying the criteria for appeal (see above) and support the argument for appeal with appropriate evidence. A strong desire or need for a different decision will not be considered evidence for an appeal. The decision to hear the appeal will be made by the chair of the Honor Council in consultation with the Dean of Students and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

In the event of an appeal, a hearing panel of three students and one faculty member will be selected from the appointment pool from among Honor Council members not involved in the original hearing. The Appeals Board should make every effort to dispose of all cases before them as quickly as possible, preferably within two weeks of the time charges being brought. The decision of Honor Council may be appealed by either party (the student of the initiating/complaining party) through the Appeals Board.

Appeals Board Hearing Order

- The appeal is read.
- A tape or recording, or part thereof, of the original hearing shall be played if requested by either the violator, the original initiating agent or the Appeals Board.
- The person appealing the case gives an explanation for the appeal and then is questioned by the Appeals Board.
- The person(s) involved in the original case, who is either an alleged violator or an initiating agent who has not requested the appeal, reacts to the appeal and is then questioned by the Appeals Board.
- Summary statement(s) is(are) given.
- The Appeals Board will deliberate and make a decision.

Possible Appeals Board Decisions

- Affirm the original finding and action taken
- Affirm the finding but adjust the sanction to a higher or lower level of penalty
- Reverse the finding and acquit the student
- Reverse the finding and order a new hearing

The Appeals Board will inform the individual of its decision in writing.

Final Appeal

The University president will be the final appeal for Honor Council hearings. The final appeal to the president must be submitted in writing to the Office of the President within one week of the date of notification of the action of the first appeal. Recordings of the Honor Council hearings may be reviewed by the president after the appeals conference.

In the case of an appeal being heard by the president, the president may or may not meet with the student at his discretion. The decision on the appeal may be made based on hearing records and the student's written appeal.