

HONOR CODE

The Concept of Honor at Ross University School of Medicine

The Honor System at Ross University School of Medicine is a deeply cherished obligation founded upon the personal integrity of each individual member of the University community. It requires that all members of this community conduct themselves honorably at all times and in all dealings with others. This shared commitment to high ethical standards creates an atmosphere of trust and respect vital to the unique sense of community which characterizes the institution.

Authority for the maintenance and operation of the Honor System is delegated directly by the Board of Trustees to the students through the Executive Dean, with concurrence of the faculty. It is the students who are responsible for determining when a breach of honor has been committed, and it is they who are entrusted with enforcing the system. Accordingly, every member of the student body has the responsibility, not only for understanding the provisions of the Honor Code, but also for maintaining at all times the highest possible degree of personal integrity. Moreover, every student must realize that acceptance of admission to Ross University School of Medicine includes the explicit agreement to abide by the provisions of the Honor Code as contained in the Honor Constitution.

The presence of the Honor Code and its provisions does not in any way abridge or subrogate the responsibilities of the faculty in monitoring the student body in all areas herein identified, and in bringing actions through previously adopted mechanisms if incidents occur which are not brought to the attention of the School by the Honor Council.

THE HONOR CONSTITUTION

Introduction

The Honor System applies to every student who is enrolled at Ross University School of Medicine. Accordingly, every student shall be required to verify acceptance of the Honor System by signing the following Honor Pledge:

"I, as a student at Ross University School of Medicine, do hereby accept the Honor System. I have read the Honor Constitution, understand it, and agree to abide by its provisions. Accordingly, I resolve to refrain from giving or receiving academic material in a manner not authorized by the instructors, from illegally appropriating the property of others, and from deliberately falsifying the facts. I acknowledge that, in support of the Honor System, it is my responsibility to report any violations of the Honor Code of which I am aware, and that it is my duty to participate as an honor trial juror if called upon to serve, unless officially excused. I realize that, in the event of a violation of the Honor Code, a plea of ignorance will not be acceptable, and that such a violation could result in my permanent dismissal from the University. I further pledge that I shall endeavor at all times to create a spirit of honor, both by upholding the Honor System myself and helping others to do so."

(adopted by the SGA May 28, 1996)

Registration as a student at Ross University School of Medicine is not complete until signed verification of the Honor Pledge is on file, and no grades can be recorded until this is done. If the Pledge is not signed by the end of the fourth week of the semester the students matriculation will be cancelled and all fees paid will be forfeited in accordance with the withdrawal policy described in

the catalogue. The ultimate responsibility for signing the Honor Pledge rests with each individual student.

Article I: Scope of the Honor Code

Section 1. The violations of the Honor Code are lying, cheating and stealing in all their various forms. These terms are briefly explained as follows:

- A. Lying: a deliberate misrepresentation of the truth. This violation includes, but is not limited to, forgery and the falsification or misuse of the student identification card by using another's card or by allowing another to use one's own card, falsification of documents concerning sickness or physicians visits, financial documents or transcripts, or deliberately spreading or repeating false statements about another individual.
- B. Cheating: an intentional misrepresentation of another's work as one's own, or a misrepresentation of the circumstances under which the work was done. This violation includes, but is not limited to, copying, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration and unauthorized divulging of test contents or other information.
- C. Stealing: the taking of the property of another person, or of the University, without authorization or consent. This violation includes, but is not limited to, the theft or mutilation of library material, the unauthorized use or duplication of a key belonging to the University or the unauthorized entry into any office or other University facility by any means.

Section 2. In order to reaffirm commitment to the Honor System, the student shall write out in full and sign the Honor Pledge, in abbreviated form, on all quizzes, examinations, papers, and other assignments, as appropriate. The Pledge verifies that the work submitted is the student's own and has been done in accordance with the requirements set forth by the instructor. The Pledge: **"I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work."**

Article II. Organization

Section 1. The Honor Council is a judicial body designed to try specific cases brought to it regarding possible violations of the Honor Code.

Section 2. The Honor Council consists of a president and eight other members.

- A. The Honor council president is elected at large by the entire student body from among currently enrolled students.
- B. The eight other members consist of two representatives each from the first, second, third and fourth semester classes, elected by currently enrolled students in the respective semester.

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- C. One Honor Council representative shall be elected by the Council to serve as vice-president. That person shall assume the duties of the president in the president's absence, and shall perform other duties as may be assigned by the president.
- D. The terms of office of Honor Council members shall begin at the beginning of each semester, and shall continue until the installation of the succeeding members the following semester. Members of the Honor Council may be re-elected.
- E. Any member of the Honor Council who fails to perform the duties or uphold the standards of office may be removed by action of his or her constituency or by the Honor Council itself, as follows:
 - 1. Upon presentation to the Honor Council of a petition signed by at least twenty percent of the member's currently enrolled class (in the case of an honor representative), or at least twenty percent of the entire currently enrolled student body (in the case of the president), the question of recall shall be considered. At least three-fourths of the Honor council must vote in favor of removal in order for the motion to be carried. If, upon petition, the Honor Council fails to remove the member in question, such action may be over-ridden upon petition of at least forty percent of the appropriate constituency followed by a majority of the votes cast by that constituency.
 - 2. Alternatively, the Honor Council itself may initiate the recall of a member by a vote of at least three-fourths of its members in favor of removal.
 - 3. Whenever a member is removed or resigns from office, an election shall be held as soon as practical by the appropriate constituent group to fill the vacancy.

Section 3. There shall be an Honor Investigator appointed by the Honor Council president whenever an alleged honor violation has been reported, and it shall be the duty of this person to gather information from both the accuser and the accused concerning the alleged violation. This information shall be presented to the Honor Advisory Board (see below, Article II, Section 4). The duties of the Honor Investigator shall ordinarily be carried out by the vice president of the Honor Council, but may be assigned to another member of the Honor Council at the discretion of the president. Whoever serves as Honor Investigator shall not be eligible subsequently to participate in any trial which may result from the investigated incident.

Section 4. There shall be an Honor Advisory Board consisting of the president of the Honor Council (as chair), the president of the Student Government Association, and the Chairman of the Grievance Committee. It is the responsibility of this body to receive information from the Honor Investigator and, on that basis, to determine the appropriate dispensation of the alleged violation.

Section 5. There shall be two Student Honor Advisors appointed by the Student Advisor Coordinator from among student applicants.

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- A. The Student Advisor Coordinator, chosen by the Honor Council president from among student applicants, will appoint two Student Honor Advisors to each trial.
- B. At each trial, one Student Honor Advisor will serve as advisor for the accuser and one will serve as advisor for the accused.

Section 6. There shall be seven non-voting faculty advisers to the Honor Council, two of whom shall be present at each trial.

- A. Faculty advisers shall be appointed for staggered three-year terms by the Executive Dean of the School in consultation with the Honor Council.
- B. Faculty advisers shall be selected in such a manner that there is at least one representative from each of the five semester's faculty and the library.
- C. Prior to each honor trial, one faculty adviser shall be available to assist the accuser and one to assist the accused, but neither shall participate in the conduct of the trial itself.
- D. Faculty advisers shall meet periodically with the Honor Council to review matters of function and practice, and shall report to the general faculty at least once per semester concerning such matters.

Section 7. There shall be an Honor Contact within each semester, to be elected by the students in that semester, to serve as liaison between the Honor Council and students.

Article III: Procedure

Section 1. Investigation

- A. The Honor Council operates on the premise that every person is deemed innocent until proven guilty.
- B. All members of the School of Medicine community should feel obligated to investigate as quickly and discreetly as possible any suspected violation of the Honor Code. If it is apparent that no honor violation has in fact occurred, there shall be no further proceedings. If, however, it is believed that a violation has occurred, the person suspected of the violation should be approached with a request for an explanation of the suspected violation. If the explanation is deemed satisfactory, there shall be no further proceedings. If the explanation is not satisfactory, an accusation should be made and the accuser must notify the president of the Honor council in writing within three academic days.
- C. The Honor Council president shall meet with the accuser to provide procedural information and shall appoint an Honor Investigator to gather information from both the accuser and the accused.

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- D. Within five academic days, the Honor Investigator shall report to the Honor Advisory Board, unless granted an extension by the Honor council president. Based on the Honor Investigator's report, the Honor Advisory Board shall make one of the following determinations:
1. If there is no evidence that a violation has occurred, the process shall end.
 2. If the evidence presented is insufficient, or the grounds inappropriate, to warrant further adjudication, there shall be no further proceedings although, at the discretion of the Board, a letter of reprimand may be issued to the investigated student. Such reprimand, if issued, shall not be entered on the student's official academic record.
 3. If there is evidence of a violation, but not one which involves an infraction of the Honor Code *per se*, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate body for adjudication (e.g., Grievance Committee).
 4. If there is evidence of an Honor code violation, the accused student shall be given the option of withdrawing from the School of Medicine or standing trial before the Honor Council.
- E. Voluntary Withdrawal
1. An accuser cannot withdraw a charge of an honor violation upon the agreement of the accused to withdraw from the college.
 2. If the accused elected to withdraw voluntarily:
 - a. the Honor Council shall take appropriate action to record the facts as they were presented;
 - b. the Honor Council president shall notify the Executive Dean and other appropriate administrative officers of such action; and
 - c. the following entry shall be made on the student's official academic record: "Withdrew voluntarily from Ross University School of Medicine on (date) under accusation of an Honor Code violation of (name of violation).
- F. If the accused student elects to stand trial, the president of the Honor Council shall arrange for a jury trial. No trial shall be scheduled between the beginning of the week prior to Final Examinations and the end of the Examination Period. Case which arise within this time frame shall be tried as soon as possible, but ordinarily no later than the end of the second week of classes during the subsequent semester; in the event if extenuating circumstances, the president of the Honor Council may grant a postponement.
- G. Admission of Guilt
1. The accused student may plead guilty at any point prior to convening the actual honor trial. When doing so, the accused shall forego the right to jury trial, and instead, shall appear before a review and sanction hearing. The purpose of the hearing shall be to determine an

appropriate sanction based on the honor violation.

2. When pleading guilty, the accused student must send a signed, written statement to the Honor Council president acknowledging a plea of guilty and waiving the right to an honor trial.
3. Upon receipt of the accused student's statement, the Honor Council president shall arrange for a review and sanction hearing. At the hearing, the Honor Council shall be represented by six of its members: the Honor Council president, who is the presiding officer for the hearing, plus five unbiased Honor Council representatives. Both parties shall be entitled to have present at the hearing a Student Honor Advisor, appointed by the Student Advisor Coordinator, and a faculty advisor. Both parties shall be entitled to present a statement at the time of the hearing.

Section 2. Trial

A. Composition

1. At a trial, the Honor Council shall be represented by six of its members: the Honor Council president, who is the presiding officer for the trial, plus five unbiased Honor Council representatives.
2. There shall be a jury of nine students, chosen at random from the student body.
 - A. It shall be the duty of the Honor Council president to ensure that each juror is unbiased. Toward that end, the accuser and the accused, as well as the members of the Honor Council, shall have the right to question any one who may be biased.
 - B. Although students are normally expected to serve if called, exemptions may be made for academic reasons or other legitimate extenuating circumstances.
3. Two faculty advisers appointed by the president of the Honor Council (see above, Article II, Section 6, C) shall be present, but shall not participate in the conduct of the trial itself.
4. Two student advisors shall be present. The Student Advisor Coordinator shall designate one to serve as advisor to the accused, and one as advisor to the accuser. The accuser and the accused may each engage any person of his or her own choice to act as counsel (see below, Article III, Section 2.B.3).

B. Format

1. Attendance at the trial shall normally be restricted to those persons described above (Article III, Section 2.A). However, the accused may request an open trial, in which case additional members of the College community or other persons designated by the accused may also attend.
2. The Honor Council, with the president serving as the presiding officer, shall direct the trial process.

3. Rules of Testimony

- a. The accused is not required to testify on his or her behalf and cannot be compelled to answer questions during the trial.
 - b. Failure of the accused to testify shall not be mentioned by the accuser during the trial, nor shall it be a consideration in determining either a verdict or, in the event of conviction, a sanction.
 - c. If the accused chooses to respond to questions from the Honor Council, such responses must be made personally by the accused, not by counsel or by any other representative of the accused.
4. Upon conclusion of all testimony, the jury shall deliberate and deliver to the Honor Council president a verdict of guilt or innocence. A verdict of guilt shall be rendered only upon the concurrence of at least two-thirds of the jury.
 5. If a verdict of guilt is rendered, the five Honor Council representatives who are present shall decide the appropriate penalty, which shall be announced by the president of the Honor Council.

C. Penalties

1. Following a verdict of guilty or an admission of guilt, the Honor Council shall recommend to the Executive Dean one or more of the following penalties:
 - a. Academic violations: In a case involving academic violations, the academic sanction shall include a failing grade and may include one or more of the following:
 - i. Probation: Probation places the student on notice that any future violation of the Honor code will result in either suspension for a specified period of time or permanent dismissal from the school.
 - ii. Suspension: A suspension is the loss of registration privileges for the specified semester(s). The period of suspension must be at least one semester, and may be longer at the discretion of the Honor Council. In cases where the offense takes place in one semester, and the penalty is imposed in a subsequent semester, a failing grade may be assigned in one or more courses for the semester in which the offense took place. The assigning of a failing grade is in addition to a suspension effective in the specified semester.
 - iii. Non-academic probation is given for fifteen consecutive weeks unless otherwise stated during sanctioning. It is a comprehensive loss of social privileges for the allotted period of probation. The following events/activities are prohibited for the probation period:

1. Student Government Association entertainment events
2. University sponsored social events

The non-academic probation sanction does not prohibit participation in any events required by professors or that are considered academic service.

The full privileges of being a Ross University School of Medicine student will be restored upon completion of the allocated period of social probation.

- B. Suspension. A suspension is the loss of registration privileges for the specified semester (s). The period of suspension must be at least one semester, and may be longer at the discretion of the Honor Council . In cases where the offense takes place in one semester, and the penalty is imposed in a subsequent semester, a failing grade(s) may be assigned in one or more courses for the semester in which the offense took place. The assigning of a failing grade(s) is in addition to a suspension effective in the specified semesters.
- C. Permanent dismissal. A student receiving the penalty of permanent dismissal is not eligible to return to the university.
- D. Cases involving actions against the community, may be forwarded to the Grievance Committee for action.
2. Any record of previous honor offenses shall not be taken into account in determining the verdict in a trial; however, the Honor Council shall consider such record in determining the penalty to be imposed in the event of subsequent conviction, as follows:
 - a. If a student, having been previously convicted and placed on probation, shall be found guilty of a second violation, the penalty for the latter violation must be either suspension or permanent dismissal.
 - b. If a student, having been previously convicted and suspended, shall be found guilty of a subsequent violation, the penalty for the latter violation must be permanent dismissal.
 3. In any trial resulting in a conviction, the sanction imposed shall be entered into the student's official academic record. (See below, Article III, Section 4.)

Section 3. Appeal

A. Appeal of Verdict

1. A student convicted of an honor offense may appeal the verdict on procedural grounds or upon the presentation of relevant new evidence which was unavailable at the time of the original trial. Such appeal must be made in writing, and may, in addition, be presented orally, to the Honor Advisory Board within five calendar days after the initial verdict is rendered; the Board shall then determine whether sufficient grounds exist for granting the appeal.
2. If the appeal is granted, a new trial is ordered. Such trial shall be conducted in accordance with established honor trial procedure (see above, Article III, Section 2), but shall include no Honor Council member or juror who participated in the initial trial.
3. If the appeal is not granted, the original verdict shall stand as rendered.

B. Appeal of Sanction.

1. A student convicted of an honor offense has the right to appeal the sanction on the grounds that the penalty is too harsh for the violation committed. Such appeal must be made in writing, and may, in addition, be presented orally, to the president of the Honor Council within five calendar days after the initial verdict is rendered.
2. The president of the Honor Council shall appoint an Honor Appellate Panel to consider such appeal. The Panel shall consist of five unbiased Honor Council members who did not participate in the initial trial.
3. The Honor Appellate panel shall review transcripts and/or tapes of the initial trial and, on the basis, determine whether to sustain, decrease, or increase the penalty imposed at the initial trial.
4. The decision of the Honor Appellate Panel shall be final, and the convicted student shall have no further right of appeal.

- C. In the event that an insufficient number of current Honor council members is available to consider an appeal, the Honor Council president shall have the right to authorize previous Honor Council members to serve at an appeal hearing.

Section 4. Record of Honor Trial

A. In the case of acquittal, all records of the trial shall be destroyed expeditiously.

B. In the case of conviction, one of the following entries shall be made on the student's official academic record, as appropriate:

1. "Placed on probation for (period of time) by the Honor Council on (date) for the honor Code

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offense of (name of violation). Probation involves (specific sanction imposed).”

2. “Suspended for (period of time) by the Honor Council on (date) for the Honor Code offense of (name of violation). Entitled to enroll no earlier than (date).”
3. “Permanently dismissed from the College by the Honor Council on (date) for the Honor Code offense of (name of violation).”

Section 5. Publication

A brief summary of every case tried by the Honor Council, whether resulting in acquittal or conviction, shall be submitted to the SGA for publication in an appropriate format. Such summary shall include the verdict and the punishment (if any), but shall not include the names of the accuser or the accused.

Article IV: Ratification

Section 1. Amendments to this Constitution may be initiated either by the Honor council itself or by the student body.

- A. The Honor Council may initiate an amendment by an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of its members. For approval, the amendment must then receive an affirmative vote of a majority of the currently enrolled student body in a referendum.
- B. The student body may initiate an amendment by presenting to the Honor Council a petition signed by at least ten percent of the currently enrolled student body. For approval, the amendment must then receive an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of the honor Council members. It must then receive an affirmative vote of a majority of the currently enrolled student body in a referendum.
- C. In the event that the Honor Council does not approve an amendment initiated by the student body, such action can be overridden if a petition, signed by at least twenty-five percent of the currently enrolled student body, is presented to the Honor Council requesting a referendum on the amendment. For approval, the amendment must then receive an affirmative vote of a majority of the currently enrolled student body in a referendum.

Section 2. Any amendment must be approved by the Board of Trustees of the university before it can become operative.