



Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal

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Summary

This policy requires medical students to adhere to professional and ethical standards and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, failure to observe course-specific rules of academic integrity, and unprofessional conduct or misconduct related to patient care.

Related LCME Standard: 9.9 Student Advancement and Appeal Process

A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single set of core standards for the advancement and graduation of all medical students across all locations. A subset of medical students may have academic requirements in addition to the core standards if they are enrolled in a parallel curriculum. A medical school ensures that there is a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.

Applicability & Scope

This policy applies to students in the MD and MD-PhD programs. Undergraduate and graduate students within the College of Medicine – Tucson are guided by separate academic integrity codes.

Definitions

Advisor – A faculty member, staff member, or other individual selected by a student to support the student during a hearing conducted by the Honor Code Committee. Unless the Advisor is an Attorney, the Advisor may not speak for or on behalf of the student unless the Chair asks the Advisor to address the Committee.

Attorney – An individual licensed to practice law in the State of Arizona.

College, COM-T – The University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson.

Conduct Dismissal – Dismissal from the COM-T for lack of professionalism, Honor Code violations, lack of academic integrity, or other violations of the Arizona Board of Regents Student Code of Conduct (ABOR Policy 5-308). If a student is suspended or expelled by the University of Arizona Dean of Students Office, the Conduct Dismissal from the College is automatic and the student is not entitled to a hearing before the Student Progress Committee or Honor Code Committee.

Dismissal – Terminating the student’s enrollment at the College. Once dismissed, a student must reapply for admission through the standard admission procedures. Dismissal occurs at the written direction of the Vice Dean of Education or a designee.

Notice, Notify – A written communication emailed to the recipient using the recipient’s official University email address. Recipients may identify an alternate email address to the Chair. All time limits are calculated using calendar days, including weekends and holidays. A Notice is deemed received the day after the email date stamp.

Quorum – One-half of the eligible voting members of the Committee. A voting member is not eligible if the member recuses him or herself from the vote due to a conflict or leave of absence. To conduct business under these procedures, a quorum must be present at the beginning of a presented issue and must remain present throughout the vote on that issue.

Policy Statement

A. Honor Code Principle

- 1) Society entrusts the physician with vital responsibilities, including maintaining his or her patients’ health and preventing, diagnosing and treating disease. In accepting this trust, the medical profession expects its members to act honorably in all endeavors. Practicing physicians, faculty members in academic medical centers, house officers and medical students must adhere to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. This Honor Code is intended to promote an atmosphere of confidence and trust among students. The governing philosophy and premise of this Honor Code is that students striving to enter the medical profession are required to adhere to professional and ethical standards.
- 2) Conduct prohibited by this Honor Code consists of all forms of academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to:
 - a) Cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism as defined in ABOR Policy 5-308(F);
 - b) Modifying any academic work to obtain additional credit in the same class unless approved in advance by the faculty member;
 - c) Failure to observe rules of academic integrity established by a faculty member for a particular course;
 - d) Engaging in unprofessional conduct or misconduct related to patient care; and
 - e) Attempting to commit an act prohibited by this Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308.

Any attempt to commit an act prohibited by these rules will be subject to sanctions to the same extent as completed acts. It also is a violation of this Honor Code to intentionally falsely accuse a student of an Honor Code violation, to fail to cooperate with an Honor Code Committee investigation or hearing or a Student Progress Committee (SPC) proceeding or hearing, or to make any intentional misrepresentations in the Honor Code process.

B. Student Responsibility

- 1) Students engaging in academic dishonesty or unprofessional conduct diminish their education and bring discredit to the academic community and to the medical profession. If a student has reason to believe that another student has violated this Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308, he or she has an obligation to report the incident to the Chair of the COM-T Honor Code Committee, as set forth below.

C. Faculty Responsibility

- 1) If a faculty member has reason to believe that a student has violated this Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308, he or she has an obligation to report the incident to the Chair of the COM-T Honor Code Committee.

D. Dissemination of this Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal

- 1) This Honor Code Policy will be sent to all accepted applicants to the COM-T and published on the COM-T website. The Policy will be disseminated during Orientation and Transition to Clerkships. Copies of this Honor Code also will be provided to new COM-T faculty members at the time of hire.

Procedures

A. Functions and Membership Requirements of the Honor Code Committee

- 1) The Honor Code Committee is responsible for investigating allegations of academic dishonesty and violations of the Honor Code Policy. If the Honor Code Committee determines that it is more likely than not that a student violated the Honor Code Policy, the Committee may impose the following (this list is not exhaustive):
 - a) Issue a written warning;
 - b) Require that the violation be reflected in the student's summative letter.
 - c) A grade of "fail" on a particular examination or assignment;
 - d) A grade of "fail" in a course (block) or clerkship;
 - e) Recommend to the Vice Dean of Education that the student be issued a Conduct Dismissal from the COM-T;
 - f) Require the student to complete additional assignments, work with a mentor, or meeting with the Professionalism Committee.
- 2) The Honor Code Committee is not required to impose progressive discipline or consider lesser action before recommending more serious action.

- 3) The Honor Code Committee is responsible for conducting a periodic review of the Honor Code Policy and, when necessary, recommending changes to the Policy or Honor Code Committee Procedures.
- 4) The Honor Code Committee is composed of three medical student representatives from each class, and two members of the COM-T faculty, one from a basic science department and one from a clinical science department. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs may attend the Honor Code Committee's hearings as an advisor to the Committee if requested, but does not vote. Each class will elect its student representatives. The COM-T faculty will elect the faculty representatives.
 - a) Students on Academic Probation or who were found in violation of the Honor Code Policy at any time are not eligible to serve on the Honor Code Committee.
- 5) A quorum of one-half of the eligible voting membership of the Committee, including at least one faculty member, is required to conduct any meeting or hearing of the Honor Code Committee.
- 6) If a member of the Honor Code Committee is unable to review a matter objectively then the member may be recused from the matter under consideration and will not be counted as an eligible voting member for purposes of calculating quorum.
- 7) The Honor Code Committee will select a Chair who must previously have served as a member of the Honor Code Committee and who is either a third-year or fourth-year student. The Chair will preside at formal Committee hearings.

B. Preliminary Meeting

- 1) If a student, faculty member, or staff member has reason to believe that a student's behavior constitutes a violation of this Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308, that person will promptly prepare a written statement and deliver it to the Chair of the Honor Code Committee.
- 2) The Chair will meet with one faculty member on the Committee and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs no later than seven days after receipt of the written statement, unless those individuals are unavailable, in which case, the meeting will occur on the next available work day when all parties are able to meet.
- 3) If the consensus of the Chair, the faculty member and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs is that the allegation, if true, would constitute prohibited conduct under this Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308, then the matter will be referred to the Honor Code Committee for a hearing. The deliberations in this meeting are confidential.
- 4) If the consensus of the Chair, the faculty member and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs is that the allegation, as presented, would not constitute prohibited conduct under the Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308, then the matter will not proceed further. The Chair of the Committee will notify the student who is the subject of the charge and the person providing the written statement that the matter is closed and will not proceed further.
- 5) Any matter referred for a hearing may be resolved by agreement with the student who is the subject of the complaint.

C. Pre-Hearing Procedures

- 1) If the Chair refers the matter to the Honor Code Committee for a hearing, the Chair of the Honor Code Committee will notify the student who is the subject of concern. The Notice will include:
 - a) The date, place, and time of the hearing;

- b) A statement of the issue before the Committee;
 - c) The student's right to have an Advisor present;
 - d) The names of the members of the Committee who will hear the matter;
 - e) The name of the student, faculty member, or staff member who identified the concern;
 - f) The date on which documents must be provided to the Committee for review; and
 - g) A link to these Procedures on the COM-T website.
- 2) A student is entitled to no less than 14 days' notice of the hearing date. The notice period may be shortened at the student's request.
 - 3) A student may challenge the participation of any member of the Committee on the grounds of personal bias or conflict by submitting a written statement to the Chair no less than seven days before the hearing. The Chair will make a determination regarding that member's participation. The decision is final.
 - 4) By the date identified in the hearing notice letter, the student must provide the Chair with any documents or other materials to be considered by the Committee during the hearing process. These materials may include a written statement from the student, letters of support, or other relevant documents. The Chair may exclude any document the Chair determines is irrelevant or repetitious.
 - 5) By the date identified in the hearing notice letter, the student must provide the Chair with the names of any person who will appear as a witness at a hearing and a short description of the information the witness will provide to the Committee. The Chair may exclude irrelevant or repetitive witnesses or request that witnesses who will provide only general character statements about the student provide a written statement in lieu of appearing.
 - 6) At least one day prior to the hearing, the Chair will provide voting Committee members and the student with all documents the Committee will consider in making its determination. These documents will include the documents submitted by the student, documents from the student's educational record, or written statements from unavailable witnesses.
 - 7) At least one day prior to the hearing the Chair will provide voting Committee members and the student with a list of all witnesses who will appear at the hearing along with a brief statement of what the information the witness is expected to provide.
 - 8) If the student intends to have an Advisor present, the student must inform the Chair of the name of the Advisor no less than seven days before the hearing. If the Advisor is an attorney, the administrator representing the College may also be represented by an attorney selected by the University's Office of the General Counsel.
 - 9) A representative of the University's Office of the General Counsel may attend the hearing and advise the Honor Code Committee on procedural matters.
 - 10) If the student does not appear for the hearing, the Honor Code Committee will make a decision based on the available information.

D. Hearing Procedures

- 1) Hearings are closed to all individuals except the Honor Code Committee, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, the student's House Dean, the student, witnesses to the alleged offense, advisors or counsel for the parties, and Committee support staff. Witnesses may be excluded from the hearing except when providing information.

- 2) The Honor Code Committee will receive information from the student, the individual(s) with knowledge of the alleged violation, and any other individuals the Committee believes would provide relevant information regarding the matter in order to make a determination whether it is more likely than not that the student violated this Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308.
- 3) The rules of court, administrative law procedures, and open meeting laws do not apply to Honor Code Committee Hearings. Immaterial deviations from these Procedures will not render a decision moot.
- 4) All students and hearing participants will be reminded that it is a violation of the Arizona Board of Regents Student Code of Conduct to provide false information to the University, including the Honor Code Committee.
- 5) The Chair will set reasonable and equal time limits on the student, administrators, and witnesses to the offense. At any time, the Chair may restrict the presentation of information that is irrelevant or overly repetitious.
- 6) The audio of the hearing will be recorded but transcribed only upon request.
- 7) The Chair will ask each witness to the offense to make a statement explaining the conduct in question. At the end of any witness statement, the student may ask questions of that witness.
- 8) The Chair will then ask the student to present an explanation of the conduct in question. At this time, the student may make a statement, reference documents, or call witnesses in the student's support.
- 9) At any time, Committee members may ask questions of the student, the witnesses, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, or the student's House Dean.

E. Deliberations and Decision by the Honor Code Committee

- 1) The student and any advisors will be excused prior to deliberations. The Committee will then discuss the information provided and presented and decide whether it is more likely than not that the student violated the Honor Code Policy or ABOR Policy 5-308.
- 2) Any decision under this section requires that a quorum of the voting members be present. Decisions require a majority of that quorum.
- 3) If the Committee finds the student in violation of the Honor Code Policy or ABOR Policy 5-308, the Committee will determine the appropriate disciplinary response.
- 4) When recommending remedial action or discipline, the Honor Code Committee may consider the seriousness of the violation, the student's state of mind, the harm done to the University, to patients or to other students, if any, and whether the student has previously been found to have engaged in conduct prohibited by the Honor Code or ABOR Policy 5-308.
- 5) The Committee will issue a written decision within one week of the date of the hearing. The decision will be based only on information presented at the hearing and must include a summary of the information the decision is based on, the conclusions of the Committee, and a statement that the decision is supported by a "preponderance of the evidence."
- 6) The Chair will sign the decision on behalf of the Committee and will provide a copy of the decision to the student, the Vice Dean of Education, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, and the attorneys representing the parties (if any).

F. Conduct Dismissal Decision by Vice Dean

- 1) If the Honor Code Committee recommends that the student be dismissed from the College, the Vice Dean of Education will decide whether to accept or modify the recommendation.
- 2) The Vice Dean of Education will give the student Notice of the decision within one week of receiving the recommendation of the Honor Code Committee.
- 3) If the Vice Dean of Education decides to accept the recommendation of the Honor Code Committee, the Notice to the student will include the basis for the dismissal, the date by which the student may appeal to the Student Appeals Committee, and the date by which the dismissal will be effective if the student does not timely appeal.
- 4) If the student chooses to appeal the dismissal, the student must submit a written statement to the Chair of the Student Appeals Committee outlining the student's position on why the student should not be dismissed.
- 5) The Honor Code Committee is responsible for providing the Student Appeals Committee with a copy of all supporting documentation considered during the hearing, a copy of the recommendation to the Vice Dean of Education, and the audio recording of the hearing.
- 6) The Student Appeals Committee will meet, review the appeal materials, and discuss the student's appeal.
- 7) Within 5 days of meeting to review the appeal, the Student Appeals Committee will inform the student of its decision. The decision will be copied to the Vice Dean of Education, the Associate Dean of Curricular Affairs, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, and the Chair of the Honor Code Committee.
- 8) The decision of the Student Appeals Committee is final and is not subject to further review. If the dismissal is upheld, the dismissal will be effective on the date of the Student Appeals Committee decision letter.

Related Information

Policies

- [Arizona Board of Regents \(ABOR\) Policy 5-308: Student Code of Conduct](#)

Revision History

2019/09/13: TEPC voted to approve a change in policy title.

2019/08/07: TEPC voted to approve revisions to the policy.

2013/06/30: Policy adopted.