



Academic Ethics

for

Undergraduates

*A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS, PROFESSORS,
AND THE COMMUNITY*

*UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ETHICS BOARD
KRIEGER SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
WHITING SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY*

WWW.JHU.EDU/ETHICS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This document summarizes policies found within the constitution of the Undergraduate Academic Ethics Board. It does not act as a substitute for the constitution, which can be found at the board Web site: www.jbu.edu/ethics. The board and the Office of Academic Advising authored this guide to help the community better understand ethical principles and procedures.

The policies in this guide apply to all undergraduates in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering, even when they take courses in other university divisions. Students from other divisions enrolled in courses at Homewood are expected to follow the same principles of ethics included herein. They are punishable by the Homewood Ethics Board, as well as by their home institution. Professors are encouraged to contact the associate dean of student life to discuss options for handling violations that involve multiple divisions.

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INTRODUCTION

The Johns Hopkins University was the first research university in the United States. Founded in 1876, it was an entirely new educational enterprise. Its aim was not only to advance students' knowledge but also to advance human knowledge generally, through discovery and scholarship. The university's emphasis on learning and research—and on how each complements the other—revolutionized American higher education.

This fusion of research and learning has become a hallmark of study at Johns Hopkins. As a result, the Hopkins community has earned a reputation for academic excellence, new discovery, and independent thought. The strength of this community lies in the academic integrity of its members. Because our work in the academy builds on the work of others, and because this is how knowledge proceeds, a commitment to the principles of truth and honesty is essential to achieving the goals of the university and to the advancement of the entire academic community. Only through truth and honesty can the university continue to thrive.

It is the personal responsibility of all members on the Homewood campus—students, faculty, and staff—to uphold the ethical standards of the university.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Students come to Johns Hopkins not only to improve their minds and to gain knowledge and skills but also to build character. The goal of Hopkins is to teach you to be innovative and truthful, insightful, and respectful. To be part of the university community, we must be honest with others in every aspect of our lives.

Without honesty—which is central to a culture of trust—collaboration cannot exist and is replaced with unfair, suspicious competition. We can all celebrate the rigor of a Hopkins education, but cheating renders that education meaningless and undermines the entire community. This is why the university cannot tolerate cheating.

The university will punish cheaters with failure on an assignment, failure in a course, permanent transcript notation, suspension, and/or expulsion. Offenses may be reported to medical, law, or other professional or graduate schools when a cheater applies.

Federal government agencies will not give security clearance to anyone with ethical violations.

Undergraduates are expected to understand the ethical standards of the university, holding the highest standard of integrity for their own work and avoiding academic dishonesty in any form. Ignorance of ethical rules is no excuse for cheating.

It is the further responsibility of every student to report to professors or deans any suspected violations of academic ethics by their peers. Enforcement of our code of ethics is a shared responsibility and cannot depend on the university alone.

The university invites students to join this community of scholars by respecting that research and learning are cooperative ventures that require honesty and integrity.

NOTE TO FACULTY

You should stress the importance of honesty and trust on the first day of your classes, as well as in your syllabi. Be certain your teaching assistants understand that they must be as fair, consistent, and vigilant as you are.

Faculty members should clearly specify the basic rules and procedures for all course work, examinations, or other academic exercises. Failure to do so creates confusion and unnecessary temptation among students.

In the “Resources” section of this guide, you will find a syllabus insert that reaffirms the university’s stance on academic ethics and gives space for you to include unique information for your particular courses. For example, you can explain your policy regarding collaboration on assignments.

Please report all pending or resolved violations, no matter how minor,

to the associate dean of student life (410-516-8208). Such enforcement contributes to the seriousness of ethics at Hopkins, and it allows the fairest environment for all students.

An instructor should not tempt students to cheat by reusing exams or assignments unless these materials are accessible to all students. **You should submit all exams to the MSE Library to be placed on reserve.** See your department administrator for details.

Students must sign an ethics pledge attached to every exam; failure to do so invalidates the exam. That pledge reads: *I agree to complete this exam without unauthorized assistance from any person, materials, or device. [Signed and dated].*

Your system for accepting and returning assignments outside of class must be secure (e.g., requires a sign-in sheet with times and signatures and prevents students' assignments from being removed).





WHAT IS CHEATING?

Cheating is the act of stealing ideas, information, and words. Any act that violates authorship or takes undue advantage is cheating. Although no list can be entirely comprehensive, the following non-exclusive examples are the most common types of cheating:

CHEATING ON EXAMINATIONS

- Use of unauthorized materials (e.g., notes, books) during an in-class or take-home examination
- Consultation of unauthorized materials while excused (e.g., on a restroom break) from an examination room
- Discussion of an exam's contents during its administration
- Copying answers from another student
- Obtaining an examination or answers to an examination prior to its administration
- Studying from an old exam whose circulation was prohibited by the instructor
- Improper use of electronic devices:
 - Consultation of unauthorized electronic devices (e.g., calculators, mobile phones, computers, PDAs) during examinations

–Use of electronic devices to communicate within or outside an examination room

–Storage of test answers, class notes, and other references in electronic devices for use during examinations

- Alteration of graded assignments: submission of an examination or assignment for regrading after making changes to the original answers or test

PLAGIARIZING

Plagiarism is representing someone else's information, ideas, or words as your own by failing to acknowledge the source.

- Submission of the same or substantially similar work of another person, whether an author or a classmate, as your own
- Representing the results of another student's work (e.g., exam, homework, computer code, lab report) as your own
- Improper documentation of quotations, paraphrased passages, information, or ideas taken from published sources, unpublished sources, or Internet sources

- Improper use of the Internet:
 - Unacknowledged use of an Internet source
 - Pasting all or part of an Internet source into your document without quoting or citing the source
 - Use of paper-writing services or paper databases on the Internet
- Attributing to a source ideas or information that is not included in the source
- Citation of nonexistent sources or creation of false information in a written assignment

LYING

- Request for special consideration from professors or university officials based upon false information or deception
- Claiming falsely to have completed and/or turned in an assignment
- Falsification or invention of data in a laboratory experiment
- Submission of the same or substantially similar assignments to fulfill the requirements of more than one course
- Fabrication of a medical or emergency excuse as a reason for needing an extension on an assignment or for missing an examination
- Falsely reporting an ethics violation by another student
- Forgery of university documents, such as letters or transcripts

FACILITATING CHEATING

- Intentionally or knowingly aiding another student to commit a violation of academic conduct
- Collaboration when solving homework problems or writing lab reports, computer programs, or papers unless explicitly approved by the professor (see the Note on Collaboration, on page 7; consult a course syllabus for specific guidelines)
- Allowing another student to copy from your examination paper during its administration
- Providing copies of course materials whose circulation was prohibited (e.g., exams or assignments) to students enrolled in or planning to take that course
- Taking an examination or completing an assignment for another, or permitting one to do so

UNFAIR COMPETITION

- Willfully damaging the academic efforts of other students
- Stealing another student's academic materials (e.g., books, notes, or assignments)
- Denying another student needed resources, such as hiding library materials or stealing lab equipment

NOTE ON COLLABORATION

Collaborating with other students can be a healthy and effective way to learn. The university values teamwork and encourages students to help each other. For example, some instructors assign problem sets or laboratory projects with the intention that students will work together or form study groups.

But it is important to remember the distinction between collaborating and copying. It is cheating to copy another's work and turn it in as your own. In contrast, instructors may encourage students to com-

pare solutions or class notes with each other, to analyze differences in outcomes, to discuss methods, and to ask for explanations. Cheating is passive and requires no engagement or understanding. Collaboration is active and promotes interactive learning.

Because collaboration is an area that prompts many concerns and questions, instructors should provide guidelines in their syllabi and discuss them when appropriate. If these guidelines are missing or ambiguous, students should ask for clarification.





ETHICS PROCEDURES

REPORTING

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Allegations of academic misconduct are investigated and resolved in a standard procedure. Generally, professors initiate investigations, either by detecting cheating themselves or by receiving reports from teaching assistants, students, and/or university staff members.

Students who witness violations should report to professors but may consult beforehand with the associate dean of student life or the chair of the Ethics Board.

The associate dean of student life may refer information from any source to the Ethics Board for investigation and resolution.

Both students and instructors should follow these procedures:

1. In the case of a suspected academic ethics violation, a professor should meet with the student or students involved in the incident to discuss the accusation.
2. If the professor believes a student is guilty after this meeting, he or she must notify the associate dean of student life (410-516-8208).
3. The dean will determine if this is the student's first offense, a fact that will affect the resolution of the case.
4. If a student has a prior offense, the Ethics Board must resolve the case in a hearing (*see next section*).
5. If the student has no prior offenses:
 - The professor and student may reach a settlement directly. The professor can propose a sanction no more severe than failure in the course in which the incident occurred. (More severe sanctions may be appropriate but must be referred to the Ethics Board.) The course cannot be repeated to replace a failing grade given as sanction.
 - If a student accepts this settlement, the resolution must be recorded in writing, with the signatures of both the professor and the student. A copy of this document must be sent to the associate dean of student life.
 - A settlement reporting form for professors can be found on the Ethics Board Web site: www.jhu.edu/ethics.
 - When a professor and student cannot reach a settlement, due to disagreements over a student's guilt or over potential punishments, the case must be

resolved in an Ethics Board hearing. Either the student or professor may request an Ethics Board hearing in this situation.

Students and professors must notify the associate dean of student life of the need for a hearing. A hearing request form can be found on the Ethics Board Web site.

ETHICS BOARD HEARINGS

After receiving a request, the associate dean of student life initiates an Ethics Board hearing with the chair of the board.

The board's Web site has full details of the procedure for hearings in the constitution, which is the official source of all ethics policies. Here is a summary:

1. The hearing panel consists of two faculty members and three undergraduate student members of the Ethics Board.
2. All evidence for the hearing must be placed on file in the Office of the Dean of Student Life. Students and professors can submit evidence directly to the associate dean of student life or indirectly through their assistants or the chair.
3. The Ethics Board hearing is an orderly discussion, not a legal proceeding. Legal representation is not permitted. The hearing proceeds in this manner:
 - The party initiating the complaint will present an account

of the events and produces evidence leading to the charge of academic misconduct.

- Witnesses will be called to testify. Hearing panel members, initiating parties, and the accused students may ask questions.
 - The accused student may refute the charges and may call witnesses.
 - The initiating party and the accused student will be allowed to make a closing statement.
 - At the conclusion of the hearing, all parties will withdraw, and the deliberations of the hearing board will be held in private.
 - The accused student will be informed in writing of the decision of the hearing board as promptly as possible.
4. Any student found not guilty is exonerated of all charges.
 5. Students found guilty face the following potential sanctions, among others:
 - Focus papers and community service
 - Failure on an assignment
 - Lowering of a grade or failure in a course
 - Notation on a student's transcript of an ethics violation
 - Suspension or expulsion from the university

Sanctions depend on the mitigating circumstances of each case.

6. In the case of students with prior offenses, the minimum sanction a hearing panel may impose is failure in a course with a notation on a student's transcript, which states that the grade resulted from a violation of academic ethics.
7. After the hearing, the associate dean of student life implements the Ethics Board's decision.
8. Students may appeal decisions by the Ethics Board to the dean or associate dean of their school (Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, or Engineering) within 10 business days.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Being accused of an ethics violation is a stressful and uncomfortable process. Students can help themselves by being completely honest in their discussions with professors, deans, and Ethics Board members.

Repeated lying will be uncovered by the Ethics Board and will result in more severe punishments. The Ethics Board and the community hope that students will learn from their mistakes, a process that can only begin by admitting them.

Students should take advantage of the available resources:

- The associate dean of student life will provide advice about how to deal with accusations, including direct settlement with professors and preparation for an Ethics Board hearing.
- The Counseling Center can help with personal difficulties relating to the accusations.
- The Ethics Board chair provides a confidential source of advice from another student's point of view. He or she is the primary contact person for accused students.

In advance of an Ethics Board hearing, a student receives written notification of the hearing date, time, and location from the chair of the board. Students are required to attend the hearing as scheduled. Failure to do so results in immediate suspension from the university.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY

Faculty members should enforce violations of academic ethics equally and consistently. All suspicions of academic misconduct, no matter how minor, must be investigated.

As outlined in the procedures above, instructors must contact the associate dean of student life (410-516-8208) to discuss any potential accusations of academic misconduct. This is necessary to determine if an accused student has previous violations of ethics. In addition, instructors must submit all direct settlements and hearing requests to the associate dean of student life.

If an Ethics Board hearing is necessary, it will be scheduled to fit the instructor's schedule.

Instructors are expected to compile evidence and to present their account of a case during an Ethics Board hearing.

Faculty members are encouraged to contact the associate dean of student life or the chair of the board to discuss concerns and questions about the hearing.



RESOURCES

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dorothy Sheppard
Associate Dean of Student Life
and Adviser to the Undergraduate
Academic Ethics Board
410-516-8208
dsheppard@jhu.edu

JHU Undergraduate Academic
Ethics Board Web site: **www.jhu.edu/ethics**. This Web site contains current contact information for Ethics Board members, an updated copy of the Ethics Board constitution, and forms for reporting violations of academic ethics.

GUIDES TO PROPER CITATION

One of the primary causes of inadvertent plagiarism is improper citation of sources. The following textbooks are available in the reference section of the Milton S. Eisenhower Library and provide a thorough explanation of referencing guidelines.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 5th ed. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2001.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing. 2nd ed.

New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1998.

Various locations of the Eisenhower Library hold other helpful references:

C-Level, General Reference/Science, call number BF76.7.P83 2001; check the catalog for additional locations.

Hutzler Undergraduate Reading Room, General Reference, call number Z253.C572.

M-Level of the Eisenhower Library, General Reference, call number PN147.G444 1998. Check catalog for additional locations.

The following Web sites also contain detailed information on citing sources:

www.library.jhu.edu/rsd/useit/cite/index.html

www.duke.edu/web/HonorCouncil/citation.htm

www.ifla.org/I/training/citation/citing.htm.

This site contains particularly useful information on citing Internet sources.





SYLLABUS INSERT

Instructors need to be clear on the rules for their courses regarding collaboration on assignments and taking exams. This information should be discussed on the first day of class during each semester and explained in the course syllabus.

The following is the insert that should be copied into instructors' syllabi, reaffirming the university's dedication to academic ethics and giving instructors the opportunity to include specific guidelines for their courses:

Cheating is wrong. Cheating hurts our community by undermining academic integrity, creating mistrust, and fostering unfair competition. The university will punish cheaters with failure on an assignment, failure in a course, permanent transcript notation, suspension, and/or expulsion. Offenses may be reported to medical, law, or other professional or graduate schools when a cheater applies.

Violations can include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments without permission, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse.

In this course, [customize this section to suit your course's unique rules and to share examples of previous violations].

You may collaborate with other students in this course, but only under these conditions: [add specific rules here]. If you have questions about this policy, please ask the instructor.

On every exam, you will sign the following pledge: "I agree to complete this exam without unauthorized assistance from any person, materials or device. [Signed and dated]"

Old exams from this course may be found at [insert location here (e.g., MSE Reserves, Internet location, etc.)].

For more information, see the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" and the Ethics Board web site (www.jbu.edu/ethics).

Johns Hopkins University is committed to recruiting, supporting, and fostering a diverse community of outstanding faculty, staff, and students. As such, Johns Hopkins does not discriminate on the basis of gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or other legally protected characteristic in any student program or activity administered by the university or with regard to admission or employment. Defense Department discrimination in ROTC programs on the basis of sexual orientation conflicts with this university policy. The university continues its ROTC program but encourages a change in the Defense Department policy.

Questions regarding Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 should be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity, 130 Garland Hall, Telephone: (410) 516-8075, TTY: (410) 516-6225.

“THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE”
—UNIVERSITY MOTTO



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