

The Concordia University Honor Code

The Honor Pledge

“As a student of Concordia University Chicago and a member of the larger society, I pledge to uphold an academic honor code that supports serving and leading with strong personal integrity. Specifically, this includes not cheating or using inappropriate or dishonest means in the completion of academic requirements. This also includes not giving unauthorized assistance to others. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with this honor system.”

- Every student will sign this honor pledge before being admitted to Concordia University Chicago.
- Every syllabus will include the statement, “In accordance with the honor code that you have signed, turning in any piece of work with your name on it constitutes your pledge that you have not given or received any unauthorized aid.”
- Continued participation in a program also affirms a student’s upholding of the pledge in all non-course related requirements of the program.

Categories of Unauthorized Aid

Though impossible to outline all forms of unauthorized aid, the following serves as a general guide, so that all in this community may better understand what is expected in a community of scholars. It is understood, however, that each class is different, and each instructor will delineate what constitutes authorized aid for each class.

- Cheating: cheating includes, but is not limited to, the surreptitious use of prepared answers, notes, or other aids on exams that are not explicitly sanctioned by the instructor; the copying of the work of others with or without their knowledge; any unauthorized collaboration on assignments; ghost-written assignments, the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence bots, use of exams, or comparable projects; the obtaining of testing materials in advance not explicitly sanctioned by the instructor; the unauthorized, after-the-fact revising of assignments or exam responses; the unsanctioned use of the same materials to satisfy requirements in more than one course; and any scheme or device to obtain an unfair advantage over other students acting in accordance with the specified policies and instructions for any assignment.
- Plagiarism: plagiarism is a special form of cheating – the simultaneous theft and cover-up of intellectual property. There are many reasons why student scholars should give

credit to the work of others: 1) it shows their gratitude to the efforts of others before them; 2) it provides readers with the opportunity to consult the source to further their own understanding and inquiry into the subject matter; 3) it demonstrates that the author has conscientiously examined the views of others in the field, and 4) it identifies which work is original to the author and which work was reported by someone other than the author. The failure of a student to cite explicitly the source or sources of words, images, and ideas used in any formal work is a breach of integrity. Plagiarism can be willful or careless; certainly the more deliberate and knowing the offense, the greater is its seriousness. Students must use the accepted method of quotation and citation prescribed in the particular course or generally used in the relevant discipline.

- **Tampering with Records:** a serious form of academic misconduct is any attempt to create, change, or delete records bearing on a student's course evaluation or overall academic performance, whether it be altering written remarks on the evaluation of individual academic tasks, the altering of academic records in the possession of the university faculty, the altering of records connected to university internships, the altering of academic transcripts, and the altering—or entire creation—of letters of recommendation. All media in which records are kept are equally protected.
- **Intimidation:** in all academic settings, students ought to consider and treat one another as colleagues. An attempt to pressure other students to engage in unethical behavior or to impede their academic progress is academic misconduct. Any attempt to influence university faculty, staff members, or supervisors of internships to engage in unethical behavior or to gain an unfair advantage or dishonest evaluation is likewise academic misconduct.

Honor Code Judicial Protocol

Step One: When an infraction is suspected.

1. Student response:
 - a. If a student suspects that another student is preparing to or is in the process of some form of academic dishonesty, he/she should, in some way, encourage the student to do the work honestly and with integrity.
 - b. If an act of academic dishonesty comes to the awareness of a student, she/he can go to the instructor of the course or to the Director of the Honor System and report, in writing, the suspected academic dishonesty. This may be done confidentially; only the instructor, the Director of the Honor System, and the members of the Honor

Council that work on the incident need to know the identity of the student who reports the incident.

2. Faculty Response

- a. If a faculty member suspects that a violation of the honor code may have occurred, the instructor shall discuss the issue with the student.
 - b. If a violation of the honor code is confirmed and uncontested, the instructor must levy the appropriate academic penalty and immediately report the incident and the penalty levied to the Director of the Honor System.
 - c. If the Director of the Honor System determines that the student has had a prior Honor Code violation, he/she shall take this to the Honor Council for determination of appropriate further sanctions.
 - d. If the student contests the allegation, the case will proceed to Step Two of the process.
3. Violations must be reported no later than 30 days past the end of a semester or, in the event of an incomplete grade, no later than 30 days after the date in which the incomplete grade was removed.

Step Two: Once the allegation is reported to the Director of the Honor System for handling by the Honor Council, a letter is sent by registered mail or delivered in person from the Director of the Honor System notifying the student of the allegation(s) as well as the procedure and the rights of the student. The student must respond to this letter within 14 calendar days of the date of the letter. If the student admits to the honor code violation, this case proceeds to step four. If the student does not admit to the honor code violation or does not make a reasonable attempt to respond to the Director, the director will determine if the case should proceed to step three or be dismissed.

Step Three: Investigation of an Alleged Violation

1. The honor code director appoints an investigative team that interviews the incident reporter, the accused student, pertinent instructors, and other people as appropriate; gathers other information; and submits a written report to the director. If any members of the investigative team have a dissenting opinion, they may file a minority report.
 - a. If the investigative team determines that there is not sufficient evidence, the director drops the case, all records are shredded, and the alleged student is notified in writing.
 - b. If there is sufficient evidence of an honor code violation, the director proceeds with the case to step four.

Step Four: Honor Code Panel Procedure

1. Undergraduate Honor Panel Membership: the director appoints a panel which consists of the student chair of the investigation team, who chairs the panel as a non-voting member, 3 honor council students, and 2 faculty members. The accused student may opt to bring his or her own advocate to the hearing. This advocate can be a faculty or staff member or another student only but may not be of familial relation.
2. University College and Graduate Honor Panel Membership: the director appoints the investigative team chair, who chairs the panel as a non-voting member, and three other faculty members from the appropriate pool.
3. The Honor Code Panel reviews all documents and hears from the appropriate individuals, and then deliberates in private with the director. If guilt is found, the director informs the panel of any documented history of academic misconduct by the student and precedents for punishment or procedure that have been set in cases that are similar. The panel then determines the appropriate consequence. If guilt is not found, the case is dropped and all records shredded and expunged. The Director notifies the alleged student in writing of the panel's decision and applied consequences, if any, within 48 hours. All panel decisions are binding to all parties.

Honor Code Violation Consequence Recommendations

Consequences can range from a formal warning and reprimand to expulsion from the university. Normal consequences should be dealt with based on the number of previous offenses and on the following guideline:

First Offense: Failure of the assignment on which the violation took place.

Second Offense: Failure in the course in which the violation took place.

Third Offense: Failure in the course and suspension from Concordia University.

Fourth Offense: Failure in the course and expulsion from Concordia University.

Should the offense concern something other than an assignment or test, the consequences will be of an analogous nature as determined by the panel.

If the offense is of sufficient seriousness, the panel may enforce a harsher consequence than the guidelines suggest, ranging from moving to the next level of consequence to expulsion. Similarly, if there are mitigating circumstances and the offense appears to be minor and easily correctable, then the consequence could be less than the proscribed normal sanction. The University reserves the right to revoke a degree in the event of a serious honor code violation.

Appeal

Only the student found guilty of academic dishonesty or the instructor involved in the case may appeal a decision. Appeals may be granted for the following reasons:

1. Mishandling of the case from a procedural standpoint.
2. New evidence not reasonably available at the time of the hearing.

Appeal Procedure

1. An appeal, including rational, may be made to the Director of the Honor System within thirty days of the receipt of the verdict notification letter for a procedural error and within ninety days of the receipt of the verdict notification letter because of new evidence.
2. After the student appeals, and if the Director of the Honor System determines in his/her sole discretion that the appeal is warranted, he/she appoints a new committee to reassess the offense.
3. The committee then reinvestigates and rehears the case and reaches one of three decisions: the committee may uphold the original decision, reduce the original consequence, increase the original consequence, assess a consequence if one was not previously given, or expunge the entire record.
4. Only one appeal may be made for each violation.