



## **AGGIE HONOR SYSTEM OFFICE**

### **TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**

## 20.2.4 Adjudication Process

- 20.2.4.1 Student Rights
- 20.2.4.2 Autonomous Process
- 20.2.4.3 Honor Council Proceedings
- 20.2.4.4 Appeals Process

### 20.2.4.1 STUDENT RIGHTS

All charges shall be presented to the accused student in written form. The accused student will be given at least 3 university business days to prepare for Honor Council proceedings. In all Honor Council proceedings, the accused student shall be presumed not responsible until it is proven that a violation of the university rules occurred by a preponderance of the information standard.

Honor Council proceedings which may result in university mandated separation from the university shall be conducted by the following guidelines. Accused students subject to less severe sanctions may, at the discretion of the Director of the Aggie Honor System Office, be afforded but are not guaranteed the same guidelines. These guidelines are as follows:

1. Honor Council proceedings typically shall be conducted in private and may involve joint conferences where two or more students are charged in the same fact pattern.
2. In Honor Council proceedings involving more than one accused student, the Director of the Aggie Honor System Office or that individual's designee may permit the Honor Council proceedings concerning each student to be conducted either separately or jointly.
3. There will be no finding of responsibility solely because a student remains silent during an Honor Council proceeding.
4. The accused student has the opportunity to be assisted by an advisor of their choice, at their own expense. Students who are charged in the same fact pattern, or who are not in

good standing with the university, are not eligible to serve as an advisor at Honor Council proceedings. The advisor may not be a witness or otherwise have any conflicting role in the process. The accused student is responsible for presenting their own information. Therefore, a student should select as an advisor a person whose schedule allows attendance at the scheduled date and time for the Honor Council Proceedings. Honor Council Proceedings will not typically be delayed due to scheduling conflicts of an advisor. There is no restriction on who a student may consult or seek advice from the restriction pertains to the proceedings only.

5. The accused student and their advisor, if any, shall be allowed to attend the entire portion of the Honor Council proceedings at which information is received (excluding deliberations) provided the accused student and their advisor appear at the designated time and do not inhibit the proceeding. Admission of any other person to the Honor Council proceeding shall be at the discretion of the Director of the Aggie Honor System Office or designee.
6. The reporting party/parties who initiated the report shall be allowed to attend the entire portion of the Honor Council proceedings at which information is received (excluding deliberations) provided they appear at the designated time and do not inhibit the proceedings. If the reporting party/parties are not available at the scheduled time, they may submit a written statement detailing facts, classroom procedures, preferred sanctions, and any other information relevant to determination of responsibility and sanctions.
7. The accused student and the Director of the Aggie Honor System Office may arrange for witnesses to present factual, relevant information to the Honor Council. Witnesses may provide this information to and answer questions from the Honor Council and accused student.
8. Pertinent records, exhibits, student impact statements and other written statements may be accepted as information for consideration by an Honor Council at the discretion of the chairperson. Student impact statements and other documents determined at the discretion of the chairperson shall be reviewed by the Honor Council during the sanction phase only.
9. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the Director of the Aggie Honor System Office or their designee.
10. After the portion of the Honor Council Proceeding concludes in which all pertinent information has been received, the Honor Council shall deliberate in private to determine whether the accused student has violated each section of the Aggie Honor System Rules for which the student is charged.
11. The focus of inquiry in Honor Council proceedings shall be the determination of whether a violation of University rules occurred. In all initial Honor Council proceedings, the

burden of proof shall rest with the Reporter of the violation, and said burden of proof shall be by a preponderance of the information. Preponderance of the information is defined as the greater weight and degree of credible information admitted in the conference. The Honor Council Panel's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the accused student violated the Aggie Honor System Rule(s) for which they are charged.

12. There shall be a single verbatim record, such as a tape or digital recording, of all Honor Council proceedings. Deliberations shall not be recorded. The record shall be the property of the university.
13. If an accused student with notice, does not appear at an Honor Council Proceeding, the information in support of charges shall be presented, considered, and a decision may be made. The Director of the Aggie Honor System Office may also make reasonable accommodations to provide access for students with disabilities.

#### 20.2.4.2 AUTONOMOUS PROCESS

##### **Step 1**

Upon encountering alleged academic misconduct, the instructor may engage the autonomous process or refer the case to the Honor Council. Under either option, a report must be filed with the Aggie Honor System Office. Additionally, students may also choose to move a case from the autonomous process into the Honor Council process by selecting that option on their Student Response Form to the Aggie Honor System Office. Students choosing to move their case from the autonomous process into the Honor Council process should have significant, relevant information they believe the panel would utilize to draw a different conclusion than the original decision of the instructor. This information will be provided to the Aggie Honor System Office along with the Student Response Form.

##### **Step 2**

If the instructor engages the autonomous process, the instructor may meet with the Alleged Violator. In this meeting, the instructor shall inform the student of the charge(s) and give the student an opportunity to respond. If the allegations are delivered to the student in writing (on paper or email) in advance of the meeting,

the space is to be designated a Concealed Carry Weapons Restricted Space. The Aggie Honor System Office's process for requesting this designation is located at <http://ccrr.tamu.edu>.

Alternatively, the instructor may notify the student of the allegation through email and the student may respond to the instructor through email. Prior to making a final decision as to whether academic misconduct occurred, the instructor should wait five (5) University business days for a response from the accused student. If the student responds within the five (5) university business days, the instructor will consider that information in determining if a violation occurred and what an appropriate sanction is for that behavior. If the student expresses a desire to meet to discuss the allegation instead of responding through email, the instructor may accommodate this request and the meeting space will be designated as a Concealed Carry Weapons Restricted Space and a request for such a space must be submitted through <http://ccrr.tamu.edu>.

If the student does not reciprocate contact or respond with additional information after five (5) university business days, the instructor will file the [Honor Code Violation Report online](#) autonomously with the notation "student was not available for a response" in the student response section. Reporters should be prepared to detail any attempts to contact the student and secure a response from them. If the student does not respond or reciprocate contact, skip to Step 5 of this process.

### **Step 3**

During the meeting with the alleged violator, or after considering the response from the student through email, the instructor will determine if academic misconduct occurred. If no violation is found, the process concludes and no action is taken. If the instructor determines that there has been a violation of the Aggie Code of Honor, as demonstrated by a preponderance of the information, the instructor may either file the report autonomously following the steps below or file the report and refer the case to the Honor Council for adjudication. At any point and for any reason, an instructor may forward a case to the Honor Council for adjudication.

### **Step 4**

If the instructor determines that there has been a violation of the Aggie Code of Honor and wishes to engage the autonomous process, the instructor determines

the severity of the Aggie Code of Honor violation and assesses a sanction using the sanction options provided by the Aggie Honor System rules.

The instructor may impose the following sanctions, which are fully described in the [Honor System Rules](#):

1. [Academic Sanctions](#)
2. [Educational Sanctions](#)

If, after meeting with the student and/or communicating with the student about the allegations through email, the instructor is still unsure of whether a violation has been committed, or is not comfortable with the sanctioning process, the case can be filed online through the violation report process and forwarded to the Honor Council for adjudication as soon as practicable, preferably within five (5) university business days.

If, in the opinion of the instructor, the violation is so egregious that it deserves a sanction of separation from the university, the case may be referred to the Honor Council for adjudication.

## **Step 5**

Once an instructor determines that it is more likely than not that a violation occurred, based on the preponderance of the information standard, and the sanction is determined, a report will be filed with the Aggie Honor System Office.

## **Step 6**

Accused students will be contacted by the Aggie Honor System Office through their university email and informed of their rights and responsibilities by AHSO staff. The student will fill out a student response form in order to respond to the charges, indicate their understanding of their rights in the process, and confirm their response to the instructor's allegations. The student's options are to:

1. Agree with the charges and the applicable sanction(s),
2. Indicate their agreement that a violation occurred but intention to appeal the sanction only through the Honor Council appeals process, or
3. Move the allegation into the Honor Council proceeding and provide significant, relevant information they believe a panel would utilize to reach a different conclusion than the original decision of the instructor.

Students will be informed of possible outcomes of each of these options.

### **Step 7**

Once an instructor identifies potential academic misconduct, they have 10-business days to file a report with the Aggie honor System Office. The Director of the Aggie Honor System Office has the option of extending this deadline as determined to be appropriate.

## **20.2.4.3 HONOR COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

The Aggie Honor System Office facilitates two processes that address allegations of academic misconduct through the Honor Council. These two proceedings are Honor Council conferences and Honor Council hearing panels. The Director of the Aggie Honor System Office or their designee shall determine which process the AHSO shall utilize in addressing an allegation within the jurisdiction of the Honor Council.

The Honor Council hearing panel process shall be utilized only when it is determined that the accused student has a previous finding of responsibility for academic misconduct on file with the AHSO or the Director or their designee determines the alleged behavior is particularly egregious and warrants consideration of suspension or expulsion from the university.

### **Honor Council Conference**

#### **Step 1**

A student or instructor may call the Aggie Honor System Office staff for clarification of alleged academic misconduct. If the student or instructor (hereinafter referred to as the "reporting party") decides an alleged violation may have occurred, the [Honor Code Violation Report form found on the Honor System website](#) is completed. This report becomes a part of the case file. The reporting party shall file the Honor Code violation report online with the AHSO no later than 10 university business days or as soon as practicable.

#### **Step 2**

AHSO staff confirms the accused student does not have a previous finding of responsibility for academic misconduct on file. If the accused student has a previous finding of responsibility for academic misconduct, the case must move through the Honor Council hearing panel.

#### **Step 3**

The AHSO appoints an Academic Integrity Administrator (AIA) to facilitate the case. Accused students are directed to arrange a first-contact meeting with this staff member or otherwise familiarize themselves with the Honor Council conference process. The accused student is

advised of the charges they are initially facing, their rights as an accused student, and the process moving forward. Students are also notified that they may be assisted by an advisor, consistent with 20.2.4.1 during the Honor Council conference.

#### **Step 4**

The AIA gathers information from involved parties and creates the case file. Any information an accused student or reporting party wishes to be included in the case file for consideration during the Honor Council conference shall be provided to the AHSO at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled start time of the Honor Council conference. Any information from any party not provided at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled start time of the Honor Council conference may be accepted for consideration at the discretion of the chair of the Honor Council conference.

#### **Step 5**

The AHSO schedules an Honor Council conference. The panel shall include a chair and three Honor Council members. The chair shall be an instructor, student, or non-AHSO staff member responsible for facilitating the Honor Council conference and shall not vote in any part of the proceedings. Voting Honor Council members shall be selected from the available pool for the scheduled conference. The reporting party, witnesses with first-hand knowledge of the incident, and the accused student may also be invited to the Honor Council conference. If the panel members determine that additional charges should be considered, then this information will be provided to the accused student in the conference and the accused student will be allowed to respond, ask, and/or answer questions. When the chair determines each participant has had an opportunity to present their information and respond to questions, the conference will move into deliberations. The Honor Council members will deliberate in private and determine, by a preponderance of the information, whether or not the accused student is responsible for a violation of the Aggie Code of Honor.

#### **Step 6**

If the voting Honor Council members determine that a violation did NOT occur, the case is dismissed, and no sanctions are applied. If the student is found responsible for a violation, the voting members of the Honor Council conference may receive additional information that impacts the student's sanction(s). Voting members will deliberate in private and decide upon an appropriate sanction.

The Honor Council conference process may not assign sanctions listed in 20.1.4.1 Separation from the university. All other sanctions may be assigned through the Honor Council conference process.

#### **Step 7**

The Aggie Honor System Office notifies the accused student in writing via email of the Honor Council Conference outcome and the accused student's right to appeal as outlined below.

## Honor Council Hearing Panel

### Step 1

A student or instructor may call the Aggie Honor System staff for clarification of an alleged violation of the Aggie Code of Honor. If the student or instructor (hereinafter referred to as the "reporting party") decides an alleged violation may have occurred, the [Honor Code Violation Report form found on the Honor System website](#) is completed. This report becomes a part of the case file.

### Step 2

The reporting party shall file the Aggie Code of Honor Violation Report online with the AHSO no later than 10 university business days of the reporting party's discovery of the alleged violation. Alternatively, the reporting party may provide details about the allegation to AHSO staff and an AHSO staff member may file the violation report directly. The Director of the AHSO may extend this deadline as determined to be appropriate. The Academic Integrity Administrator issues a case number when the report is filed in the AHSO, and the report data is entered in the Aggie Honor System Office database. The instructor may choose to engage the autonomous process, if it is determined by the AHSO that there are no previous violations for the student, or the instructor may choose to refer the case to the Honor Council. Instructors must report all violations, whether adjudicated autonomously or referred to the Honor Council.

### Step 3

1. If the instructor engages the autonomous process, please [see "AUTONOMOUS PROCESS" above](#).
2. If the reporting party refers the case to the Honor Council, the AHSO starts a case file and sends an email to the alleged violator notifying the individual of the report.
3. A first-contact meeting is then arranged with the student. At the meeting the student is advised of the initial charges they are facing, their rights as an accused student, and the process moving forward.



#### **Step 4**

The AHSO appoints one student and one faculty case investigator from the members of the Honor Council and schedules a meeting with the case investigators and the reporting party.

#### **Step 5**

The case investigators meet with the reporting party to gather information that supports the allegation, including the course syllabus, assignment guidelines, and any other materials that help clarify the case. The reporting party may offer the names of others who have knowledge that could clarify the case. It is critical that all communications remain confidential (until shared with the alleged violator later in the process). The case investigators may also meet with witnesses identified by the reporting party and accused student during this step.

#### **Step 6**

The case investigators organize the information for the charges identified. Case investigators confirm which charges the alleged violator will face during the Honor Council hearing panel.

#### **Step 7**

The case investigators write a report summarizing all interviews conducted. The official report will contain all information and documents collected. They send this report to the Academic Integrity Administrator. The report becomes a part of the case file. Both the reporting party and the alleged violator can review the case file before the hearing.

#### **Step 8**

The AHSO identifies four members of the Honor Council to serve as a hearing panel. The hearing panel is comprised of two student members and two faculty members. Three of these members are voting members. The fourth member is selected as a non-voting chair. The chair position may alternate between student and faculty Honor Council members as determined by the Director or designee.

#### **Step 9**

A hearing date and time are set by the AHSO. The chair and hearing panel members receive an advance copy of the case materials just prior to the case

hearing to conduct a rudimentary preparation only. The AHSO will perform due diligence to ensure that no conflicts of interest exist during the selection of the hearing panel. However, at this point the hearing panel members inform the Director if there are any conflicts of interest. The case materials will not be shared or discussed among the hearing panel members prior to the beginning of the panel. The Case Hearing will be held at a specified time at a location disclosed only to the parties involved in the hearing. Any information an accused student or reporting party wishes to be included in the case file for consideration during the Honor Council hearing panel shall be provided to the AHSO at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled start time of the Honor Council hearing. Any information from any party not provided at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled start time of the Honor Council hearing may be accepted for consideration at the discretion of the chair of the Honor Council hearing.

### **Step 10**

The AHSO furnishes a script for the hearing procedure to the chair of the Honor Council hearing panel. Hearing panel members receive information from all participants and the case file during the hearing. They then break to deliberate in private.

### **Step 11**

During deliberations, hearing panel members first identify whether the student is or is not responsible for a violation of the Aggie Code of Honor. If the student is found responsible for a violation, then the hearing panel will return and provide this decision to the accused student. The hearing panel receives any additional information on the record that may impact the student's sanction (including previous violations, if warranted), deliberates in private, and decides upon appropriate sanctions.

### **Step 12**

The Aggie Honor System Office notifies the alleged violator in writing via email of the hearing panel decision. If the alleged violator is found in violation, directions for completing sanctions will be provided to the student in their decision letter.

## 20.2.5 Appeals

- 20.2.4.3 Basis of Appeal
- 20.2.4.4 Appeals of Sanctions Other than Separation from the University
- 20.2.4.5 Appeals of Separation from the University
- 20.2.4.6 Format
- 20.2.4.7 Evaluation
- 20.2.4.8 Disciplinary Action Pending Appeal
- 20.2.4.9 Limits per Case
- 20.2.4.10 Honor Council Assistance

### 20.2.5.1 BASIS OF APPEAL

There are four bases of appeal for Honor Council proceedings:

- Substantial new information not available at the time of the original hearing: To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original hearing.
- A violation of due process rights: To determine whether the original hearing was conducted fairly in light of the charges and information presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving the accused student a reasonable opportunity to prepare and present rebuttal of allegations.
- The sanction is not commensurate with the violation: To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the Aggie Honor System Rules which the student was found responsible.
- The finding of responsibility is inconsistent with the facts presented in the hearing: To determine whether the decision reached regarding the accused student was based on a preponderance of the information, that is, whether the facts in the case were sufficient to establish that a violation of the Aggie Honor System Rules occurred.

There is one basis of appeal through the autonomous process:

- The sanction is not commensurate with the violation: To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of

the Aggie Honor System Rules which the student was found responsible.

#### **20.2.5.2 APPEALS OF SANCTIONS OTHER THAN SEPARATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

The following process shall apply to appeals for a sanction not involving separation from the university through the autonomous process or Honor Council proceedings. A student has five (5) university business days from the date of notification of the sanction to file an appeal with the Aggie Honor System Office.

If the Director or designee finds that there is adequate basis for an appeal, the Director or designee will appoint a group of three Honor Council members to review the written appeal. Appeals not involving suspension or expulsion from the university will be a file review only. Appeal reviews for findings of responsibility and sanctions that do not include separation are scheduled by the director or their designee.

Decisions of the appeal reviewers, director, or designee are final.

A course grade assigned as the result of a sanction cannot be appealed through the grade dispute process described in Student Rules 48 or 59.

Additional information about appeals for students facing separation and the associated review processes may be found in the section below.

#### **20.2.5.3 APPEALS OF SEPARATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

The following process shall apply to an appeal of a decision of separation. A student who has been assessed a disciplinary sanction of expulsion or suspension from the university by the Honor Council has five (5) university business days from the date of notification of the sanction to file an appeal online to the director of the AHSO. The format for the appeal may be found at <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>. If the director or designee finds that there is adequate basis for an appeal, the appeal will be reviewed by members of the Aggie Honor System Separation Appeals Panel.

An evaluation of the written appeal by the Director or designee will determine whether a separation appeal hearing is warranted. The Director's decision

regarding the merit of an appeal is final. Students will be given the opportunity to submit one appeal and can get assistance from the Aggie Honor System Office when completing the appeal form.

The Director has the option of extending any deadline for extenuating circumstances.

Upon receipt of the written request and approval from the Director or designee for a separation appeal hearing to proceed, the Academic Integrity Administrator shall set a time and date for the separation appeal hearing as soon as practicable. Appeal reviews for findings of responsibility and sanctions that do not include separation are scheduled by the director or their designee.

The chair shall sit as a hearing officer and shall not take part in the vote.

The proceedings of the appeal process shall be informal in nature and need not comply with the formal processes associated with the criminal and civil courts.

The student shall have the right to have one person serve as a personal advisor/counselor to consult during the student proceedings. (Students who are charged in the same fact pattern, or who are not in good standing with the university are not eligible to serve as an advisor/counselor at proceedings). A personal advisor may appear at the proceedings with the accused student to provide advice but may not represent the accused student or directly question or cross-examine witnesses, except in a case where the university is represented by an attorney. There is no restriction on who a student may consult or seek advice from, this restriction only pertains to the Honor Council and appeal proceedings.

An Aggie Honor System Office representative and the appealing student shall be afforded the opportunity for a reasonable oral presentation and shall be permitted to file typewritten or reproduced material. Original panel members and the reporting party may be invited to attend and/or provide a written statement with information about their decisions.

The chair shall cause all portions of the separation appeal hearing to be recorded, except for the panel's deliberations.

The separation appeal panel may take any of the following actions in response to an appeal: it may review the case and uphold the findings and/or sanctions from the previous level; it may review the case and reduce the sanction(s); it may review the case and require that it be heard again by the original hearing body.

After hearing an appeal, the separation appeal panel will go into closed session to deliberate. Upon conclusion of its deliberation, the panel shall inform the student of its decision. A letter outlining the decision of the separation appeal panel shall be sent to the appealing student through email.

#### **20.2.5.4      FORMAT**

Appeals should be submitted through the Aggie Honor System Office appeal form on the AHSO website. In the event that additional documentation needs to be submitted or if the appeal form is inaccessible for some reason, students must contact the AHSO for further guidance.

#### **20.2.5.5      EVALUATION**

An evaluation of the written appeal by the Director of the AHSO or designee will determine whether a review of the appeal by the appropriate appellate body, is warranted. For an appeal to be considered valid at least one basis of appeal must be cited and appropriately supported in the written appeal. The Director's decision is final.

#### **20.2.5.6      DISCIPLINARY ACTION PENDING APPEAL**

Following the notification of intent to appeal and/or pending the appeal hearing, any sanctions issued by the instructor or Honor Council shall be stayed until the appeal process is complete unless the university has determined, in a case involving suspension or expulsion, that the continued presence on-campus of the charged student poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process.

#### **20.2.5.7      LIMITS PER CASE**

Students are limited to one appeal per case filed against them.

#### **20.2.5.8      HONOR COUNCIL APPEAL ASSISTANCE**

The AHSO will provide assistance to students who request it, when completing appeal documentation.

## 20.1.4 General Information

20.1.5.1 Q-Drop and Withdrawal Policy

20.1.5.2 Applicable University Rules

20.1.5.3 Deadlines

### 20.1.5.1 Q-DROP AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Students who are accused of academic misconduct may not Q-drop or withdraw from the course in which the alleged behavior occurred. After a case is adjudicated and if the student is found not responsible, the student may be allowed to Q-drop or withdraw from the course. If a violation is found to have occurred in a course that the student Q-dropped or from which the student withdrew, the course will be reinstated in the student's record.

### 20.1.5.2 APPLICABLE UNIVERSITY RULES

**10.6 Grading** – Information regarding Incompletes: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule10/>

**15. Graduation with Latin Honors** – No upper-division student found responsible for academic misconduct may receive Latin Honors: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule15/>

**24.4.18 Unauthorized Recording** – Any unauthorized use of electronic or other devices to capture a digital record: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule24/>

**24.4.23 Abuse of Process** – Abuse of the student conduct, disciplinary and/or legal processes including, but not limited to, investigations, conferences, and appeals: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule24/>

**27.1 University Sanctions** – Expulsion, Suspension, and NOT in good standing status: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule27/>

**61.2.3 Expectations Regarding Student Use of E-mail** – Email is an official means of communication at Texas A&M University: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule61/>

### 20.1.5.3 DEADLINES

The Director of the Aggie Honor System Office has the option of extending deadlines for extenuating circumstances.



## 20.1.1 Functions of the Aggie Honor System Office

20.1.1.1 Mission Statement

20.1.1.2 Essential Functions of the Aggie Honor System Office

20.1.1.3 Community Responsibility

20.1.1.4 Minimum Syllabus Requirement

### **20.1.1.1 MISSION STATEMENT**

It is the Mission of the Aggie Honor System Office (AHSO) to serve as a centralized organization established to educate students, faculty, and staff about the Aggie Code of Honor, respond to potential academic misconduct by Texas A&M students, and facilitate remediation efforts for students found responsible for violations of the Aggie Code of Honor.

### **20.1.1.2 ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE AGGIE HONOR SYSTEM OFFICE**

The Aggie Honor System Office shall administer the Texas A&M University Honor System.

The AHSO shall have the authority to modify the rules set forth in this document and create new ones as circumstances change. It shall create processes and operating procedures to implement the Honor System, communicate updates to the university community, and enforce the rules described below.

The AHSO shall be the central office responsible for maintaining academic misconduct records and for coordinating communication, prevention, training, remediation, and adjudication efforts for Texas A&M University.

Additionally, the AHSO shall provide assistance to members of the university community when questions or concerns pertaining to academic misconduct arise. Students and instructors may call the AHSO staff for clarification and assistance when reporting.

Finally, the AHSO shall oversee the operations and functioning of the Honor Council, a body of students and faculty established to investigate, hear, and adjudicate allegations of academic misconduct. University staff may be trained to serve as non-voting committee chairs.

### **20.1.1.3 COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY**

**As Referenced on the Faculty Affairs Website**

"...In September 2004, Texas A&M University launched the Aggie Honor System Office (AHSO), which works in collaboration with faculty and students to ensure that Texas A&M continues to uphold high standards for academic honesty. Faculty members are responsible for addressing matters of integrity with their classes and in their syllabi to let students know that integrity is important at A&M. If a faculty member suspects a case of dishonesty, they must report it to the AHSO. The faculty member will usually have the option of engaging the autonomous process, unless the AHSO records show previous violations on the part of the student. In the case of the latter, the case will automatically be forwarded to the Honor Council for adjudication."

Academic integrity is an essential force in the academic life of a university. It enhances the quality of education and celebrates the genuine achievements of others. It is, without reservation, a responsibility of all members of the Texas A&M University Community to actively promote academic integrity. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic misconduct is not a neutral act -- failure to confront and deter it will reinforce, perpetuate, and enlarge the scope of such misconduct.

As such, a primary responsibility assumed by Texas A&M students is to promote the ideals of the Aggie Code of Honor. Various methods of encouraging integrity exist, such as setting an example for new students, education through student organizations, and student-to-student moral suasion. Students have the responsibility to confront their peers engaging in compromising situations, and if unsuccessful, to report the matter to the Aggie Honor System Office. Self-reporting is encouraged and may be considered a mitigating circumstance in the sanctioning phase of a particular case.

Collaboration and sharing information are characteristics of academic communities. These become violations when they involve misconduct or are used in ways that give a student an unfair advantage. Instructors shall make clear to students their expectations about collaboration and information sharing. Students should seek clarification when in doubt. While Texas A&M values and affirms all cultures, it is important to recognize that only one standard of academic integrity will be tolerated; this is the Aggie Code of Honor.

#### **20.1.1.4 MINIMUM SYLLABUS REQUIREMENT**

Instructors are expected to take proactive steps to promote academic integrity. **All syllabi shall contain a section that states the Aggie Honor Code and refers the student to the Aggie Honor System Rules and Procedures on the web.** Omission of the Aggie Code of Honor on a syllabus does not constitute a reason for appeal.

This minimum requirement is considered met when an instructor uses the most recent syllabus template from Faculty Affairs.

It is further recommended that instructors print the following on assignments and examinations:

“On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.”

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**Signature of student**

Instructors should have an open discussion about academic integrity with students in their courses early in the semester. Instructors and staff share in the responsibility and authority to challenge and make known acts that violate the Aggie Code of Honor.

Additionally, instructors are expected to adhere to the policy pertaining to the reporting and adjudication of violations of the Aggie Code of Honor. Initiating formal procedures is a necessary and obligatory component of this shared responsibility.

## 20.1.3 Sanctions

- 20.1.3.1 Separation from the University
- 20.1.3.2 Academic Sanctions
- 20.1.3.3 Educational Sanctions
- 20.1.3.4 Additional Consequences
- 20.1.3.5 The "F\*" Grade Designation
- 20.1.3.6 Honor Violation Probation
- 20.1.3.7 Removal of the F\* Grade and/or Honor Violation Probation

Instances of academic misconduct represent behavior that is of an especially serious nature. Sanctions assigned in instances of academic misconduct should convey the message that this behavior can serve as a destructive force within the academic community. A wide range of sanctions can be employed in order to strike an appropriate balance between sending a message of accountability and enhancing a student's ethical and cognitive development. Sanctions in each subcategory below can be used in conjunction with sanctions from other sub-categories. While this list is not designed to be exhaustive, it demonstrates the wide range of sanctions that can be utilized to respond to findings of responsibility for academic misconduct.

### 20.1.3.1 SEPARATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY

The **Honor Council** is empowered to assign any of the following sanctions:

- Expulsion from the university – as defined in University Student Rules, section 27
- Suspension from the university – as defined in University Student Rules, section 27

**Instructors** may not impose these sanctions. The case must be adjudicated by the Honor Council if the instructor believes the alleged behavior may warrant separation from the university.

### 20.1.4.2 ACADEMIC SANCTIONS

Both the **Honor Council** and the **instructor** may assign appropriate academic sanctions based upon the specifics of the incident.

#### 1. First Violations

The standard penalty for a first violation shall be an "F\*" in the course and "Honor Violation Probation"– see 20.1.4.5.1. More severe penalties, including separation from the university (20.1.4.1) may be imposed by the Honor Council if the facts

and/or circumstances warrant such penalties. Less severe penalties may be imposed if the facts and/or circumstances warrant.

Examples of lesser penalties include:

- a. A grade reduction for the course
- b. A zero on the assignment
- c. A requirement to participate in extra requirements for a course
- d. A requirement to complete the Academic Integrity Development Program
- e. Placement on Honor Violation Probation
- f. Some combination of these

## 2. Repeat Violations

When an alleged violation is reported to the AHSO, and it is determined that the student has a previous violation on record, the case must be referred to the Honor Council for adjudication. The standard penalty for a second violation is separation from the university. The Honor Council adjudicates all such cases and may impose less severe sanctions if the facts and/or circumstances warrant.

### 20.1.5.3 EDUCATIONAL SANCTIONS

Both the **Honor Council** and the **instructor** may assign appropriate educational sanctions. Examples of educational sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- a. Completion of the Academic Integrity Development Program.
- b. A requirement to perform appropriate university or community service that directly relates to the violation committed. The provision will be clearly defined.
- c. Writing workshops supplied by the university.
- d. Reflections or reports.

Failure to complete sanctions within the time specified will result in the imposition of Honor Violation Probation and a registration hold until the requirements are completed.

### 20.1.5.4 ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCES

There may also be specific impact for a student within their academic major based upon involvement in academic misconduct. Students are encouraged to discuss their involvement in an academic misconduct situation with their academic advisor.

#### 20.1.5.5 THE “F\*” GRADE DESIGNATION

A student who is assessed a grade of “F\*” shall have it documented on their transcript with the notation “FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT” or other similar language approved by the Director for the Aggie Honor System Office. The F\* is recorded by the Office of the Registrar immediately upon a finding of academic misconduct. The grade of F\* is intended to denote that the student has been penalized for failing to uphold the values of academic integrity at Texas A&M University. An F\* shall be treated in the same way as an F for the purposes of calculating the Grade Point Average and determination of academic standing. A student with an F\* is automatically on Honor Violation Probation.

#### 20.1.5.6 HONOR VIOLATION PROBATION

Honor Violation Probation can be assessed by itself or in combination with any other sanction. Students on Honor Violation Probation are considered NOT “In Good Standing” with the University. Honor Violation Probation takes effect immediately upon a finding of academic misconduct. Removal of the Honor Violation Probation is addressed in the next section.

A student who is on **Honor Violation Probation** is subject to the following restrictions:

- Ineligibility to hold an office in any student organization recognized by the university or to hold any elected or appointed position within the university.
- Ineligibility to represent the university to anyone outside the university community in any way, including representing the university at any official function, intercollegiate athletics or any forms of intercollegiate competition or representation.
- Ineligibility to receive a university-administered scholarship or fellowship when the “Honor Violation Probation” is in place for longer than one semester. Some scholarships adhere to more strict guidelines, and, therefore, ineligibility may result from a lesser length of time on “Honor Violation Probation.”
- Ineligibility to order an Aggie Ring, to pre-register for classes, or to receive a diploma.
- Additional restrictions or conditions also may be imposed, depending on the timing, nature and severity of the misconduct. Examples are inability to receive an official transcript, inability to participate in Education Abroad programs, and/or inability to participate in commencement exercises.

#### **20.1.5.7      REMOVAL OF THE “\*” NOTATION AND HONOR VIOLATION PROBATION**

The student may have the grade of F\* removed and permanently replaced with the grade of F. The decision to remove the grade of F\* shall rest with the Director of the AHSO and is contingent upon the successful completion of the Academic Integrity Development Program (AIDP). The Director’s decision is final.

Failure to complete sanction requirements associated with Honor Violation Probation within the time specified will result in the imposition of a registration hold until the requirements are completed.

Any student who receives an F\* will not be allowed to remove the “\*” from their transcript until the successful completion of the AIDP. Both undergraduate and graduate students are not allowed to remove an F from a transcript, regardless of whether it was imposed for academic misconduct or academic failure. A student who wishes to retake the course may do so concurrently with the AIDP. The two grades (the F earned for academic misconduct & the grade earned upon re-taking the course) will be used in computing all applicable GPA calculations.

The student may have the Honor Violation Probation removed. The decision to remove the Honor Violation Probation shall rest with the Director of the AHSO and is contingent upon the successful completion of the Academic Integrity Development Program. The Director’s decision is final.

Failure to complete sanction requirements associated with Honor Violation Probation within the time specified will result in the imposition of a registration hold until the requirements are completed.

There is an automatic one-year time limit to complete the Academic Integrity Development Program. The one-year limit shall be calculated from the time that the sanction was applied, and will be the longer of one year past the original sanction date or one year past the date that the appeal is exhausted or finalized. In unusual circumstances, the Director of the AHSO may grant an extension of time. A sanction may also be imposed to specify a shorter timeline for completion of the Academic Integrity Development Program.

## 20.1.4 HONOR SYSTEM RULES

### 20.1.4.1 Introduction

### 20.1.4.2 Definitions of Academic Misconduct

#### 20.1.4.2.1 Cheating

#### 20.1.4.2.2 Fabrication

#### 20.1.4.2.3 Falsification

#### 20.1.4.2.4 Multiple Submissions

#### 20.1.4.2.5 Plagiarism

#### 20.1.4.2.6 Complicity

#### 20.1.4.2.7 Abuse and Misuse of Access and Unauthorized Access

#### 20.1.4.2.8 Violation of Departmental or College Rules

#### 20.1.4.2.9 University Rules on Research

### 20.1.4.3 Special Note on Group Projects

## 20.1.2.1 INTRODUCTION

**“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”**

Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields and assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. Living in accordance with the Aggie Code of Honor is critical to these ideals, to the goal of assuming a place of preeminence in higher education, and to the development of the whole student.

## 20.1.2.2 DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in academic work (research or scholarship) or documentation includes cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, complicity, abuse and misuse of access, or violating college, program, departmental, or course rules in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research in an academic setting. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all submitted work and documentation. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is the work of that student and/or authentic. Students must keep appropriate



records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work or documentation, should the instructor request it, is sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case.

If alleged misconduct meets the definition of "misconduct in research or scholarship" under System Regulation 15.99.03 - *Ethics in Research and Scholarship* and relates to federally funded research, either by an active federal research project or the use of data that was compiled in whole or in part with federal funds the procedures set out in 15.99.03 and University Rule 15.99.03.M1 – *Ethics in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work* will apply.

**Academic misconduct includes the commission of any of the following prohibited acts. Clarification is provided for each definition by listing examples of prohibited behaviors. Examples are not, however, exclusive of any other acts that may reasonably be called academic misconduct under the provided definitions.**

**20.1.2.2.1 CHEATING:** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise. Unauthorized materials may include anything or anyone that gives a student assistance and has not been specifically approved in advance by the instructor.

Examples:

- a. During an examination, looking at another student's examination or using external aids (for example, books, notes, calculators, conversation with others, or electronic devices) unless specifically allowed in advance by the instructor.
- b. Having others conduct research or prepare work without advance authorization from the instructor.
- c. Acquiring answers for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source. This includes, but is not limited to, using the services of commercial term paper companies, purchasing answer sets to homework from tutoring companies, using any resources that contain or generate answers to questions posed in assignments, and obtaining information from students who have previously taken the examination.
- d. Collaborating with other students in the completion of assigned work, unless specifically authorized by the instructor teaching the course. Students should assume that all assignments are to be completed

individually unless the instructor indicates otherwise. Students who are unsure should seek clarification from their instructors.

- e. Soliciting or attempting to solicit the assistance of another in the completion of assigned work, even when the solicitation did not yield actual results. For example, asking others to work together in an unauthorized manner on an exam and no one responds to the solicitation.
- f. Other similar acts.

**20.1.2.2.2 FABRICATION:** Making up data or results and recording or reporting them; submitting fabricated documents.

Examples:

- a. The intentional invention of any information on an assignment, document, or citation in any academic exercise.
- b. Using invented information in any laboratory experiment, report of results or academic exercise. It would be improper, for example, to analyze one sample in an experiment and then invent data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses.
- c. Changing information on tests, quizzes, examinations, reports, or any other material that has been graded and resubmitting it as if it were the original for the purpose of improving the grade on that material.
- d. The intentional invention of any information or citation on an assignment or document. This includes but is not limited to using generative artificial intelligence and large language models (AI) or other electronic resources in an unauthorized manner to create academic work and represent it as one's own.
- e. Inventing and/or providing a fabricated document or other information to any University employee in order to obtain an excused absence or to satisfy a course requirement.
- f. Other similar acts.

**20.1.2.2.3 FALSIFICATION:** Manipulating research and/or academic materials, documentation, equipment, or processes; changing or omitting data or

results such that the research or information is not accurately represented in the research or academic record.

Examples:

- a. Changing the measurements in an experiment for a laboratory exercise to obtain results more closely conforming to theoretically expected values.
- b. Taking a quotation from a book review and then indicating that the quotation was obtained from the book itself.
- c. Misrepresenting, withholding, and/or furnishing false information to an instructor, university official or office; the unauthorized alteration of an official document such as a medical excuse or a transcript.
- d. Other similar acts.

**20.1.2.2.4 MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS:** Submitting substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor of the class for which the student submits the work.

Examples:

- a. Submitting the same work for credit in more than one course or in the same course without the instructor's permission.
- b. Making revisions in a paper or report (including oral presentations) that has been submitted in one class and submitting it for credit in another class without the instructor's permission.
- c. Representing group work done in one class as one's own individual work for the purpose of using it in another class.
- d. Other similar acts.

**20.1.2.2.5 PLAGIARISM:** The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit; intentionally, knowingly or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own without crediting the author or creator.

Examples:

- a. Failing to credit sources used in a work product in an attempt to pass off the work as one's own.
- b. Failing to use quotation marks and citations to indicate that information is a direct quote from another source; not properly crediting the information used.
- c. Attempting to receive credit for work performed by another, including papers obtained in whole or in part from individuals or other sources. Students are permitted to use the services of a tutor (paid or unpaid), a professional editor, or the University Writing Center to assist them in completing assigned work, unless the instructor explicitly prohibits such assistance. If the student uses such services, the resulting product must be the original work of the student. Purchasing or obtaining in any way research reports, essays, lab reports, practice sets, or answers to assignments from any person or business is strictly prohibited. Sale of such materials is a violation of both these rules and State law.
- d. Failing to cite internet sites, databases and other electronic resources if they are utilized in any way as resource material in an academic exercise.
- e. Other similar acts.

**General information pertaining to plagiarism:**

- a. *Style Guides*: Instructors are responsible for identifying any specific style/format requirement for the course. Examples include, but are not limited to, American Psychological Association (APA) style and Modern Languages Association (MLA) style.
- b. *Direct Quotation*: Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and must be properly acknowledged in the text by citation or in a footnote or endnote.
- c. *Paraphrase*: Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized, in whole or in part, in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "To paraphrase Locke's comment..." and then conclude with a footnote or endnote identifying the exact reference. Guidance on paraphrasing and

avoiding plagiarism is available from the University Writing Center.

- d. *Borrowed Facts*: Information gained in reading or research that is not common knowledge, must be acknowledged.
- e. *Common Knowledge*: Common knowledge includes generally known facts such as the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, basic historical information (e.g., George Washington was the first President of the United States), etc. Common knowledge does not require citation.
- f. *Works Consulted*: Materials that add only to a general understanding of a subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography, and need not be footnoted or end-noted. Writers should be certain that they have not used specific information from a general source in preparing their work unless it has been appropriately cited. Writers should not include books, papers, or any other type of source in a bibliography, "works cited" list, or a "works consulted" list unless those materials were actually used in the research. This prohibited practice of citing unused works is sometimes referred to as "padding."
- g. *Footnotes, Endnotes, and In-text Citations*: One footnote, endnote, or in-text citation is usually enough to acknowledge indebtedness when a number of connected sentences are drawn from one source. When direct quotations are used, however, quotation marks must be inserted and acknowledgment made. Similarly, when a passage is paraphrased, acknowledgment is required.
- h. *Graphics, Design Products, and Visual Aids*: All graphics, design products, and visual aids from another creator used in academic assignments must reference the source of the material.

**20.1.2.2.6 COMPLICITY:** Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to commit an act of academic misconduct.

Examples:

- a. Knowingly allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test.

- b. Distributing, posting, or otherwise communicating test questions or substantive information about the test without the instructor's permission.
- c. Collaborating on academic work knowing that the collaboration will not be reported.
- d. Taking an examination or test for another student.
- e. Signing another's name on an academic exercise or attendance sheet.
- f. Conspiring or agreeing with one or more persons to commit, or to attempt to commit, any act of academic misconduct.
- g. Other similar acts.

**20.1.2.2.7 ABUSE AND MISUSE OF ACCESS AND UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS:** Students may not abuse or misuse computer access or gain unauthorized access to information in any academic exercise. See Student Rule 22:  
<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/>

**20.1.2.2.8 VIOLATION OF COLLEGE, PROGRAM, DEPARTMENTAL OR COURSE RULES:** Students may not violate any announced college, program, departmental, or course rules that are in compliance with other student rules relating to academic matters.

**20.1.2.2.9 UNIVERSITY RULES ON RESEARCH:** Students involved in conducting research and/or scholarly activities at Texas A&M University must also adhere to standards set forth in University Rule 15.99.03.M1 - Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship.

### **20.1.2.3 SPECIAL NOTE ON GROUP PROJECTS**

If someone in a group commits academic misconduct, the entire group could be held responsible for academic misconduct, as well. It is important to clearly document who contributes what parts of the joint project. Students in groups are responsible for knowing what group members are doing and how they are getting the material they provide. Any academic misconduct discovered should be reported immediately to the instructor or AHSO.