

**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY**

HONOR CODE

Article I. Purpose

Faculty and staff should aspire to promote appropriate conduct in the professional academic program, including informing students of any specific expectations for academic integrity which may be unique to the course, laboratory, or clinic (preferably in the course syllabus). Individual faculty members should provide a testing environment which discourages academic misconduct to the best of his/her ability.

In summary the Honor Code seeks to:

1. Encourage the highest standard of personal conduct,
2. Promote the highest quality professional education,
3. Promote the highest quality of patient care, and
4. Establish a system to resolve allegations of academic and professional misconduct.

Article II. Jurisdiction

This Honor Code shall apply to all students enrolled in the professional optometry program of the College of Optometry. Allegations of misconduct by optometry students associated with any University course (Optometry, Vision Science or otherwise) shall be adjudicated by means of the procedures outlined in this honor code. Students enrolled in the graduate school (MS or PhD in Vision Science) will follow the honor code administered by the University.

Article III. Affirmation of the Honor Code

All students must sign the Honor Code statement following admission to the College of Optometry, and the signed statement will be kept as part of the student's academic record.

Article IV. Rules of Conduct

Students in the College of Optometry are expected to maintain a high standard of both personal and professional conduct including but not limited to the following:

1. Students in the College of Optometry are honor bound to abide by the Honor Code.
2. A student shall not give or receive aid on assignments or during examinations unless collaborative work is part of the exercise and approved by the instructor.
3. A student shall follow the rules of a course as described in the course syllabus or other course information provided to the student. The student should assume that all assignments are to be completed individually, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.
4. A student shall be responsible for the content of his/her work and shall not misrepresent the work of another as his/her work.
5. A student shall not serve as a substitute or attempt to enlist a substitute in the taking of examinations.
6. When examinations for individual students are given early or late, a student shall not intentionally offer, give, or receive information contained in the examination which would provide unfair advantage, or was not authorized by the instructor.
7. A student shall not falsify or alter any University or College documents, including but not limited to a patient's medical record, clinic log, or clinic service sheet.
8. A student shall not misrepresent himself/herself or his/her optometric knowledge, status, or training level to patients.
9. A student shall not practice optometry without a license or examine a patient without direct supervision and prior approval from an optometrist.
10. A student shall not intentionally or recklessly misuse, damage, or remove without authorization the property of another individual, organization, the College, or the University.
11. A student is prohibited from unauthorized entrance to or presence in or on College facilities (e.g. for the purposes of gaining academic advantage).
12. A student shall not violate any applicable University policies, regulations or guidelines, or relevant federal, state, or local laws.
13. A student shall not participate in any activity that tends to compromise academic integrity or subverts the educational process.

14. A student shall not knowingly make a false allegation of an Honor Code violation against another student.
15. A student shall not retaliate against those who make an allegation of an Honor Code infraction or those that participate in the allegation process outlined in the Honor Code.

Article V. Honor Code Administration

Section 1. Composition of the Honor Council

1. The Honor Code shall be administered by the Honor Council.
2. The Honor Council will be a standing committee appointed annually by the Dean.
3. The Honor Council shall consist of seven members, the student-elected vice president from each class and three faculty members appointed by the Dean annually.
4. The Honor Council will elect a chair during autumn quarter annually.
5. A regular-track Full Professor or Associate Dean, appointed annually by the Dean, shall serve as Coordinator and non-voting secretary of the Honor Council. He or she can bring matters to the Honor Council and conduct hearings and administrative business in the absence of the chair if necessary.

Section 2. Terms of Appointment on the Honor Council

Student members are appointed following annual class elections each year.

Faculty members are appointed in autumn quarter with no restriction on reappointment.

1. The Dean shall have the authority to appoint faculty and student replacements to the Honor Council if existing members cannot complete the term of appointment. In the event a student vice president is not able to attend an Honor Council meeting, the class president, class secretary, or class treasurer (in this order) are the preferred alternates (appointed by the Dean) as needed.
2. All members of the Honor Council (with the exception of the Coordinator) will be voting members. All members will have an equal vote.
3. The Honor Council shall investigate reported violations of the College of Optometry Honor Code and conduct hearings to determine the validity of the reported violations.

Section 3. Procedures for Handling Suspected Violations

- 1.** Students, staff, and/or faculty members in the College of Optometry are honor bound to report suspected violations of the Honor Code in writing within six weeks of the date of discovery of the incident in question to the Coordinator of the Honor Council. Alternately, a student, staff member, or faculty member may report a suspected violation to the Dean or instructor of record, who then reports directly to the Coordinator of the Honor Council.
- 2.** A person who suspects an Honor Code violation has the right to clarify his/her suspicion by confronting the student immediately at the time of the occurrence and advising the student to terminate the unethical action or practice. It is recommended that this discussion take place in the presence of a witness whenever possible.
- 3.** Upon the receipt of an allegation of Honor Code infraction, the Coordinator and Chair of the Honor Council will review the allegation to determine whether it is germane to the Honor Code and, if so, the specific charge(s) to be adjudicated.
- 4.** If it is determined that a hearing is required, the Coordinator will:
 - A.** Notify the accused student and the instructor of record (if the instructor of record was not the individual reporting the suspected violation) in writing of the specific charge(s) and schedule a hearing with the Honor Council as soon as possible;
 - B.** Meet with the student to discuss Honor Council procedures;
 - C.** Schedule the hearing;
 - D.** Provide members of the Honor Council and the accused student copies of the written allegation of Honor Code infraction and any accompanying materials; and
 - E.** Notify the accused student, person submitting the allegation, and any witnesses in writing of the hearing date, time and location at least 14 days prior to the hearing (Note: The accused student may waive this 14 day notice if desired. All notifications shall be delivered in person or via electronic mail at the student's College email address.)

Section 4. Hearing Procedures

Although Honor Council hearing procedural requirements are not as formal as those existing in criminal or civil courts of law, to ensure fairness, the following procedures will apply.

1. The Honor Council Chair will conduct the hearing.
2. A quorum of four Honor Council members (two students and two faculty members) is required to conduct a hearing and vote.
3. The Honor Council will solicit, hear, and consider all relevant evidence from the instructor of record for the course in which the suspected infraction occurred, the student accused of the violation, and any other source that may bear on the suspected violation (in the judgment of the Honor Council Chair).
4. The student suspected of the violation may submit a written statement including evidence refuting the charge(s) and a list of relevant witnesses, if any, requested by the student to attend on the student's behalf. In addition, the student may ask that questions be put to witnesses called by others and be notified of potential witnesses to be called.
5. The instructor of record for the course in which the suspected infraction occurred may submit a written statement including evidence supporting the charge(s) and a list of relevant witnesses, if any. In addition, the instructor may ask that questions be put to witnesses called by others and be notified of potential witnesses to be called.
6. All written materials should be made available to the Honor Council one week prior to the hearing. The Honor Council may request additional material or interview witnesses as needed prior to or at the hearing.
7. Attendance at hearings is limited to those directly involved and those requested by the Honor Council to attend. The Honor Council Chair may take reasonable measures to assure an orderly hearing, including removal of persons who impede or disrupt proceedings.

- 8.** Because the most accurate and fair review of the facts can best be accomplished when all parties are present, the accused is expected to attend and participate. If an individual does not choose to attend a hearing, the charges will be reviewed as scheduled on the basis of the written information available, and a decision will be made. Although no inference may be drawn against a student for failing to attend a hearing or remaining silent, the hearing will proceed and the conclusion will be based on the evidence presented. No decision shall be based solely on the failure of the accused student to attend the hearing or answer the charges. Likewise, written statements by a witness may be used.
- 9.** The accused student may have one advisor present with the student throughout the hearing. The advisor may only counsel the student and may not actively participate in the hearing, unless clarification is needed as determined by the Honor Council.
- 10.** In cases requiring special expertise, the Honor Council Chair may appoint individuals with appropriate expertise to serve as consultants to the Council. The consultants may be present and provide information as called upon by the Chair during the hearing.
- 11.** A single audio recording of the hearing will be made for the purpose of maintaining a record. The audio recording will not be transcribed and will remain in the Honor Council file maintained by the Dean.
- 12.** Information regarding the identities of those involved in a hearing and all hearing proceedings shall remain strictly confidential in accordance with applicable law.
- 13.** The Honor Council will deliberate at the conclusion of the hearing in a closed session. Invited guests will be dismissed. The accused student will remain within close proximity and will be re-invited into the room to receive the decision of the Honor Council following the completion of the Honor Council deliberations.
- 14.** It is within the purview of the Chair to require verbal participation of all Honor Council members in the deliberations.

Section 4. Minor deviations from procedures

An accused student(s), in collaboration with the Honor Council Chair and the Honor Council Coordinator, may agree in advance to minor procedural deviations. Such deviations are not then subject to appeal. Other minor deviations are acceptable as long as such deviations do not materially prejudice the accused student(s).

Section 5. Voting

Voting will occur following deliberations by the Honor Council. The standard of proof shall be a preponderance of the evidence.

1. Voting will occur to determine the following:
 - A. Whether or not a violation of the Honor Code has been committed for each charge, and
 - B. If so, what disciplinary sanction(s) and/or grade change should be applied or authorized for each charge.
2. Voting will be conducted by secret ballot. A simple majority is required to find a student in violation of the Honor Code. In addition, a simple majority is required to determine the sanctions (with the exception of dismissal, which requires a unanimous vote) (See Article V. Section 6.1.D below).
3. The outcome and vote for each issue will be recorded and documented in the report of the Honor Council.

Section 6. Disciplinary Sanctions and Grade Change Authorization

If the Honor Council finds a violation, disciplinary sanctions related to the violation, including but not limited to authorization of a maximum grade change, will be imposed. If a violation is not affirmed, the matter will be considered concluded. All sanctions require a majority vote by the Honor Council except a vote for dismissal, which requires a unanimous vote. In all cases, the accused shall be verbally informed of the decision in front of the Honor Council at the conclusion of the voting.

1. **Disciplinary Sanctions:** Options available to the Honor Council for disciplinary sanctions include but are not limited to the following:
 - A. Warning: A written warning stating the decision of the Honor Council.

- B. Probation:** The probation is for a specific time period. In addition to a written warning, the Honor Council may stipulate loss of privileges and specific restrictions concerning activities. Failure to meet these specifications will constitute an additional violation of the Honor Code.
 - C. Suspension:** The student's enrollment at the College is suspended for a period of time to be determined by the Honor Council. The student is eligible for re-enrollment after the expiration of the term, but satisfactory completion of specified stipulations may be required for re-enrollment.
 - D. Dismissal:** The student is terminated from the College of Optometry. This action requires a unanimous vote of the Honor Council. After one year, a student may petition for re-enrollment. A decision to re-enroll the student requires a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee of the College.
 - E. Other sanctions:** The Honor Council may impose other appropriate sanctions singularly or in combination with any of the above-listed sanctions, including, but not limited to community service, restitution, loss of specific privileges, and make-up assignments.
- 2. Grade Change Authorization:** Change in either an individual assignment or test grade and/or course grade by the instructor of record may be authorized by the Honor Council. It is the purview of the instructor of record to implement the authorized action, but the instructor of record cannot impose a harsher penalty than that authorized by the Honor Council. The resulting action may result in further academic disciplinary action (e.g. academic probation).

Article VI. Records

- 1.** The Coordinator of the Honor Council may keep written records of the activities of the Honor Council.
- 2.** The separate, official Honor Council file will be kept in the administrative office of the Dean. Documents related to the Honor Council will be maintained in this location and include but are not limited to written complaints, audio recordings of hearings, Honor Council assignments, Honor Council reports, and notifications of outcomes.

3. All records of the proceedings of the Honor Council will be made available to the Dean and the Executive Committee.
4. Information regarding the identities of those involved in a hearing shall remain strictly confidential. Release of information should be done with discretion by the Dean in consultation with the Honor Council and the Executive Committee, and should be based on a justifiable, need-to-know basis in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Article VII. Reporting

1. A written report prepared by the Honor Council Coordinator will be submitted to the Dean in the event of a violation after the decision(s) has been reached. A copy of the report will be kept in the Honor Council file in the administrative office.
2. The Honor Council Coordinator will notify the instructor of record and the accused student of the outcome in writing. A copy of the notification will be kept in the Honor Council file in the administrative office.
3. In the event of a violation, a copy of the notification letter from the Honor Council Coordinator will be placed in the student's record at the College.

Article VIII. Procedures for Appeal

Section 1. Appeal Process

A student found in violation of the Honor Code has the right to appeal (based on criteria outlined in section 2 below) the decision and/or the authorized sanction(s) of the Honor Council to the Dean in writing within 14 calendar days of the written notification of the decision of the Honor Council.

1. The Dean and Executive Committee shall automatically review all Honor Council authorizations for either suspension or dismissal. This review shall constitute the student's appeal.
2. The Dean and Executive Committee will meet to review a student's request for appeal as soon as possible, within the confines of their regular meeting schedule. The Executive Committee may review the initial written materials, the proceedings of the Honor Council hearing, and the written statement of appeal from the accused student(s). The accused student(s) (or any other non-Executive Committee member) is not entitled to attend this meeting unless approved by the Executive Committee.

3. In an appeal, the Dean may uphold, dismiss, or alter the decisions/sanctions rendered by the Honor Council. Altered decisions/sanctions may be lesser or greater than those imposed by the Honor Council. The Dean may also remand the matter to the Honor Council for a new hearing for the accused student(s).
4. Except where a matter is remanded to the Honor Council for a new hearing, the decision of the Dean as to the determination of violations and authorized sanctions shall be final and binding.
5. The Coordinator shall inform the accused student as to the outcome of the appeal in writing (delivered in person or via electronic mail at the student's College email address.).

Section 2. Grounds for Appeal

An appeal may be based only upon one or more of the following grounds:

1. Procedural error that materially prejudiced the accused student(s);
2. Misapplication or misinterpretation of the Honor Code;
3. Findings of facts not supported by a preponderance of evidence;
4. Discovery of substantial new facts that were unavailable at the time of the Honor Council hearing; or
5. That the disciplinary sanction imposed by the Honor Council is grossly disproportionate to the violation committed.

Article IX. Revisions

Students and faculty members may propose a revision to the Honor Code. Proposed revisions should be directed to the Coordinator of the Honor Council and the Dean in writing. Revisions to the Honor Code must be approved by a simple majority vote of the regular faculty of the College after consideration of Student Council input.