



The Harvard College Honor Code: What Faculty and Instructional Support Staff Need to Know

In the fall semester of 2015, Harvard College adopted an Honor Code as part of our efforts to promote high standards of academic integrity. For more information on the process and faculty legislation surrounding the Honor Code, please visit honor.fas.harvard.edu.

THE HONOR CODE

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

THE AFFIRMATION

Students will be asked to affirm their awareness of the Honor Code and adherence to the standards of academic integrity at various points during the academic semester. The goal of this affirmation is to reinforce the centrality of scholarly integrity to students' membership in our academic community, as well as to remind students that they have agreed to adhere to these standards. The Affirmation will take several forms, depending on the student's status, and particular assignments.

THE HONOR COUNCIL

The Honor Council is composed of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff who will review cases of suspected Honor Code violations, including plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, and improper use of sources. Student members are nominated annually by the community; faculty and staff have been invited by the Dean of Harvard College. The members of the 2016-17 Honor Council can be found at the [Honor Council Website](#).

HOW IS THE HONOR COUNCIL DIFFERENT FROM THE AD BOARD?

The Ad Board reviews undergraduate records and hears petitions for exceptions to various academic rules and procedures. However, it only handles disciplinary cases that do not involve academic dishonesty.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ACADEMIC DISHONESTY?

If you have a possible case, contact the [Office of Academic Integrity and Student Contact \(OAISC\)](#) at (617) 384-7239 or honorcouncil@fas.harvard.edu to discuss the options. The OAISC staff will review the situation with you, and determine if the case will go forward to the Honor Council.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE ASKED TO DO:

- Before arriving on campus, all incoming freshmen will be asked to read the Harvard College Honor Code and to write a brief response about how they will uphold the values of the Honor Code. This response will be part of their advising record and will be available to the student throughout their time at Harvard.
- Each term at registration, all undergraduates will be asked to read the Honor Code and electronically sign a statement affirming their awareness of the Code.
- At seated final exams, all students will be asked to sign an affirmation indicating their awareness of the Harvard College Honor Code.
- On culminating assignments including final papers, take home and in class exams, and senior theses, all students will be asked to sign a statement indicating their awareness of the Harvard College Honor Code.
- Students may be asked to sign an affirmation on other assignments as deemed appropriate by Faculty.

WHAT FACULTY AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT STAFF ARE ASKED TO DO:

- Include a statement about academic integrity and the Honor Code on your syllabus and course website. Sample text may be found on the [Resources section of honor.fas.harvard.edu](https://www.fas.harvard.edu/resources/honor-code).
- For the culminating assignment in your course, please prepare a statement for students to sign when the assignment is turned in affirming their awareness of the Honor Code. If the culminating assignment is a seated final exam, the Registrar will provide an affirmation slip for students to sign. All students, not just freshmen, should sign this. Sample text and further guidance may be found in the [Resources section of honor.fas.harvard.edu](https://www.fas.harvard.edu/resources/honor-code).
- Faculty should consider asking students to sign an affirmation of the Honor Code on other significant assignments, as they deem appropriate.

FACULTY AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT STAFF ARE ENCOURAGED TO:

- Talk explicitly with students about your expectations for them in class and on assignments.
- Discuss the standards of academic integrity in your field with your students, particularly before assignments and exams.

Consider how you might incorporate discussions of academic integrity as appropriate throughout the semester. What does academic integrity mean in your specific discipline, what are the standards of your field, and why is it important? What does it mean to commit to an Honor Code? There are various moments – the first class, preparing for a major research assignment or submitting proposals, as problem sets are due – when a brief conversation on the importance of submitting one’s own work might have a big impact on your students. Material on assignment design may be found on the [Resources section of the Honor Code website](https://www.fas.harvard.edu/resources/honor-code). If you’d like more guidance on how to incorporate such discussions into your class, please contact Lisa Laskin, Assistant Dean in the Office of Undergraduate Education at elaskin@fas.harvard.edu.

Visit our website for more information: [honor.fas.harvard.edu](https://www.fas.harvard.edu)