

Honor System

The purpose of the Honor System is to encourage honesty and integrity for students, faculty, and staff by establishing a clear set of expectations and applying them equally and fairly. The academic integrity of Georgetown College depends on every member of the community and requires that each of us makes the personal decision to act honorably and not tolerate violations of the Honor System.

Violations

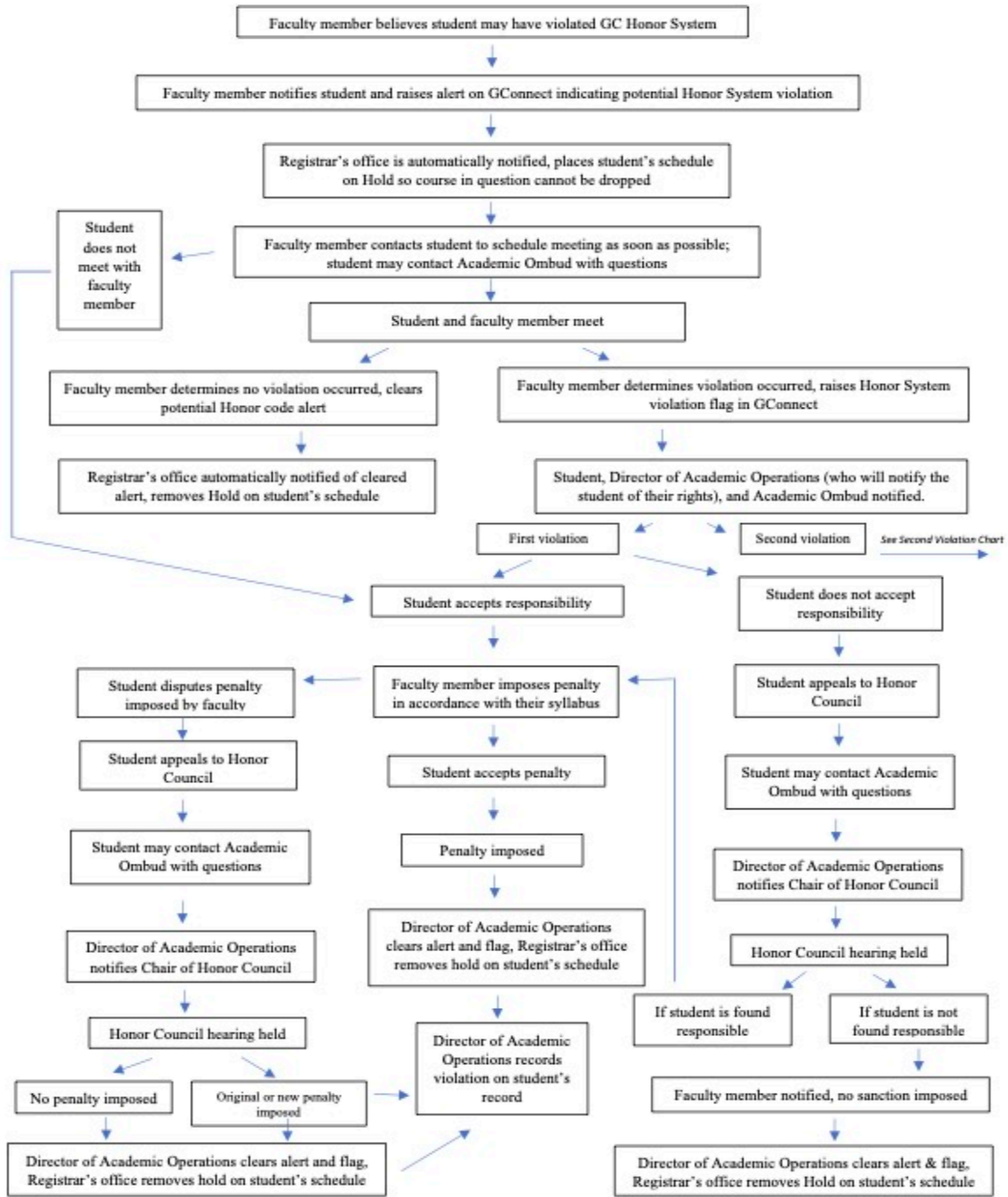
Violations of the Honor System include cheating, plagiarism, academic theft, lying in academic matters, and double assignments. Infractions may include, but are not limited to:

- **Cheating.** The act of falsifying assignments inappropriately, for instance by fabricating evidence; giving assistance to any student or receiving help without the consent of the instructor on tests, quizzes, assignments, or examinations; accessing or using devices or resources not allowed by the instructor; consulting unauthorized work with the intent of subverting the purpose of the exercise. This includes the use of testing materials from past testing periods not specifically distributed by the instructor for use in the current testing period.
- **Plagiarism.** The act of presenting information, ideas, or phrasing of another as if they were one's own. Such an act is plagiarism whether by ignorance of proper scholarly procedures, failure to observe them, or deliberate intent to deceive.
- **Academic Theft.** The act of appropriating that which belongs to another with intent to achieve an unfair advantage in academic matters, whether or not the advantage is a personal one, and/or assisting others in such acts. Examples include theft of library materials, computer software/equipment, or instructor's examinations.
- **Lying in Academic Matters.** The statement of an untruth made with deliberate intent to mislead another. Examples include forgery, lying during the process of resolving an alleged honor offense, and lying to obtain an extension, excused absence, or accommodation.
- **Double Assignments.** The use of one assignment (e.g., paper) to fulfill the requirements of more than one course is a violation of the Honor System, unless the student has received proper permission from the appropriate instructor(s).

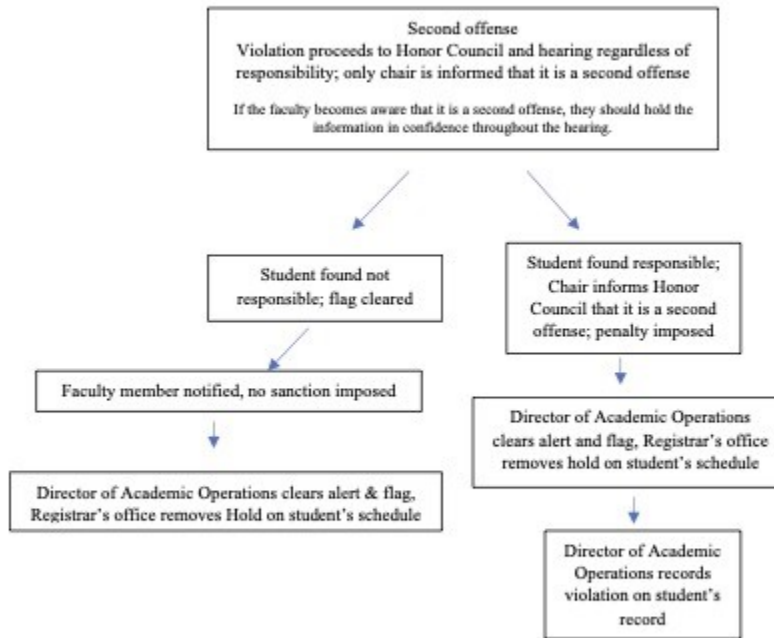
Honor System Violation Procedure

If a faculty member believes that a student may have violated the Georgetown College Honor System, they are expected to report it immediately upon discovery by using the Potential Violation Alert in GConnect. Violations may be reported up to one year after completion of the course but not after the student has graduated. The following flow charts explain the Honor System process for a first and second offense.

First Offense



Second Offense



Explanation of Procedure

1. The faculty member raises a Potential Violation Alert on GConnect.

- The alert will result in an e-mail sent directly to the student, letting them know they must meet with the faculty member as soon as possible to discuss the potential violation. The student may reach out to the Academic Ombud at any time if they have any questions regarding their rights under the Honor System. *If the student fails to meet with the faculty member, not meeting is considered the same as accepting responsibility.*
- An automatic notification will be sent to the Registrar that a potential Honor System violation has occurred. A hold will be placed on the student's schedule so they cannot drop the course in question. No further details will be given to the Registrar. At this point in the process, the only people aware a violation may have occurred will be the student, the faculty member, and the Registrar.

2. Initial Meeting and Discussion of Potential Violation. After an alert is raised, the student and faculty member will meet to discuss the potential violation. At this meeting, the student will either accept responsibility for the violation and the penalty determined by the faculty member, or the student will not accept responsibility and/or the penalty. After the meeting, there are two possibilities:

a) If the faculty member determines no violation has taken place:

- The faculty member will clear the Potential Violation Alert they raised on GConnect.
- An automatic notification will notify the Registrar the alert has been cleared. The Registrar will remove the hold on the student's account.

b) If the faculty member determines a violation has taken place:

- The faculty member will raise the Honor System Violation Flag on GConnect. This will notify the student, the Director of Academic Operations, and the Academic Ombud that a violation has been filed against the student.
- The student will be informed by the Director of Academic Operations of their rights as specified under "Student Rights."

c) If the student does not accept responsibility, they may appeal to the Honor Council. They may contact the Academic Ombud with questions.

3. Honor Council Hearing. If it is the student's first Honor System offense and they do not accept responsibility and/or the penalty, they may appeal to the Honor Council to resolve the issue by hearing. If the potential violation is the student's second Honor System offense, it will proceed automatically to the Honor Council. In this case, the Director of Academic Operations will notify the Chair of the Honor Council of the need for a hearing.

- The office of the Provost/Dean of the College will forward a complete listing of the charges and the appropriate rights and procedure information to the respondent.
- The hearing will be held, and the penalty assessed.

Record of Honor System Violations

If a student is declared not responsible by the faculty member or by the Honor Council, there will be no record of the potential Honor System violation. Any finding of responsibility for an Honor System violation will remain on a student's academic record.

Honor Violation Alert, Flag, and What They Mean

Potential Honor Violation Alert

To be sent by instructor when they think a student has potentially committed an Honor violation. This alert will place a hold on the student's schedule and will take care of all documentation needs, including sending a message to the student that they must meet with the instructor. After the alert notifies the student, the next step is for the instructor to contact the student separately to arrange a meeting.

Information included in the alert:

Date and time of potential violation

What happened

Specified length of time student has to respond (no sooner than 5 business days)

Honor Violation Flag

To be raised by instructor when they have determined a student has committed an Honor violation. This flag will take care of all documentation needs, including sending a message to the student. A second honor offense will result in automatic adjudication by the Honor Council and at least an F in the course if they are found responsible.

Information included in the flag:

Honor violation

Date and time of the incident

What happened

Whether the student accepts responsibility for the incident

Penalty assigned to the student

Whether the student accepts the assigned penalty

The Honor Council and Hearing Process

The Honor Council

The purpose of the Honor Council is to allow a student to appeal the decision of a faculty member and ensure that multiple violations by a student are addressed appropriately. The Honor Council consists of a pool of three faculty and five students, with exactly 2 and 3, respectively, present at each hearing, plus the Chair (or their designee in a conflict of interest). Additionally, the Chair of the Honor Council is a nonvoting member of the Council and is responsible for ensuring the hearing is conducted in a fair and impartial manner. The Chair will know whether the case is a second offense but will not communicate that information unless and until the determination of responsibility has been reached.

Honor Council members typically serve at least a two-year term. Student members (5) of the Honor Council will be nominated by faculty members, current Honor Council members, and SGA, and will be selected by the Ombud in consultation with the Honor Council. Faculty (4) will be appointed by the Committee on Committees, with one of them appointed as Chair by the Provost/Dean of the College.

All members of the Honor Council will be trained in hearing procedures before the first hearing. They must agree to maintain confidentiality in all Honor Council matters.

Honor Council Hearing Process

1. The names of the faculty member bringing the accusation and the respondent are sent to the Chair by the Director of Academic Operations. The Chair then reaches out to members of the Honor Council to schedule them for the next hearing. Honor Council members are given the opportunity to recuse themselves from the hearing if they perceive a conflict of interest. Then, two faculty and three students from the council, plus the respondent, will attend the hearing.
2. The Honor Council meets to hear the case. Hearings typically occur on the first Tuesday of the month at 11:00, but may be scheduled at other times. If it is a second Honor System violation, please see the [Multiple Violations](#) section.*
3. The Chair of the Honor Council calls witnesses to give statements and provide any relevant evidence or documentation. Required witnesses include the faculty member(s) and the respondent. Other material witnesses may also be requested by the respondent and the faculty member(s). In the event that the faculty member(s) cannot attend, the department chair or other designee may represent them. The Honor Council members may ask questions of both parties and witnesses during the hearing.
4. The respondent is offered the opportunity to make a private statement to the Honor Council (without the presence of the faculty member(s) or any witnesses).
5. The Honor Council deliberates in private on:
 1. responsibility or non-responsibility and
 2. the appropriate sanction to be imposed in the case of a finding of "responsible." The respondent has a right to call up to two character witnesses before the Honor Council renders a decision on penalty.
6. A 4/5 majority of the Honor Council is required for decisions on responsibility and/or penalty.
7. In the event the Honor Council proposes a sanction that is less than what the faculty member recommended, they will call back the faculty member(s) once more to discuss the proposed decision and any sanctions.
8. If more time is required, the Council may have an additional 48 hours to render a decision. If there is no decision (i.e., if a 4/5 majority cannot be reached), if there is a procedural error, or if the instructor who raised the flag request(s) it, the Provost/Dean of the College may review the evidence and recorded hearing and render a decision. If unable to render a decision with the available information, the Provost/Dean of the College may request a new hearing.

9. Once a decision is reached, the Chair of the Honor Council communicates information to the Director of Academic Operations about the finding of responsibility (with sanction) or the finding of non-responsibility. This communication is then sent by email from the Director of Academic Operations to the respondent and the faculty member(s). The Honor Council will share the findings directly with the student at the conclusion of the hearing and prior to formal notification, unless more time is required per step 8 above. The hearing documentation and resolution will be placed in the student's file in the office of the Provost/Dean of the College.
10. The student may accept or appeal the decision of the Honor Council. If the student accepts the decision, the Director of Academic Operations clears the flag, and the Registrar removes the hold on the student's account. If the student wishes to appeal the decision, they may follow the appeal process below.
 - **Multiple Violations.** If the student has not accepted responsibility, the Honor Council will not be informed of the previous offense until after responsibility has been determined (only the Chair of the Honor Council will know the hearing is for a second (or more) offense(s)). In this case, the hearing process will be followed. If a student is then found "responsible" for a second (or more) offense(s), the Chair will inform the Honor Council of the details of the previous offense during the sanction phase of its deliberation. If the student already has one (or more) Honor Violation(s), the Honor Council hearing will focus entirely upon whether the penalty should exceed the automatic F in the course mandated for second (or more) violations of the Honor System. In the event of a second honor violation where the student is found responsible and a penalty of an F in the course is assigned, the grade will be recorded on the student's transcript.

A few notes about the Honor Council Hearing:

- All hearing proceedings will be audio recorded by the Chair of the Honor Council.
- Neither the respondent nor the faculty member(s) has a right to Counsel.

Honor Council Guidelines and Considerations

As the Honor Council reviews a case, it may consider the following:

- Syllabus statements regarding Honor System violations and penalties.
- Sanctions assigned in known previous, similar cases based on official records.
- A variety of kinds of evidence, but should use discretion in determining its relevance and credibility.
- Previous official violations by the student (in determining sanctions only).

Student Rights

In the event of an Honor Council Hearing, a student has the following rights:

- The right to have specific charges outlined when an Honor Violation Flag is raised.
- The right to request the Academic Ombud's presence at an Honor Council Hearing.
- The right to call up to two character witnesses during the penalty phase of the hearing.
- The right to have the outcome of the hearing discussed in a face-to-face meeting with the Academic Ombud.
- The right to an appeal with the Provost/Dean of the College.

Student Appeals of the Honor Council Decision

The student can appeal the Honor Council finding to the Provost/Dean of the College. The appeal process is as follows:

1. The student will write a letter of appeal to the Provost/Dean of the College within five days of the receipt of written notice of the Honor Council's decision. The appeal letter must state specifically the basis for the appeal; for example, misinterpretation of a policy or new information not made available during the Honor Council hearing.
2. After review of the student appeal and the Honor Council findings, the Provost/Dean of the College will make a decision to uphold or reject the Honor Council's findings. The decision will be communicated by email from the Director of Academic Operations to the student. The decision of the Provost/Dean of the College will be the final decision regarding honor violations.

Note: If the charged student is a graduate student, the Dean of Education will participate in the communication.

Sanctions

The determination of responsibility and the use of appropriate sanctions are part of the learning experience as students are educated on the importance of academic honesty. A sanction used in the resolution of an honor offense is based on precedent, prior record, and severity of the offense.

First Offense

Upon a finding of responsibility for a first violation of the Honor System, a student will have the honor violation on their record. In addition, the following sanctions may be levied. Sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Written warning
- Grade reduction on an assignment
- F on an assignment
- F in the course

Second (or More) Offenses

Second (or more) offenses are automatically referred to the Honor Council for adjudication. Second (or more) offenses result in a minimum sanction of an automatic F in the course. The Honor Council may, if appropriate, apply a greater penalty such as suspension or expulsion. Sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- F in the course
- Suspension for a period of time with a right to reapply for admission following suspension period
- Expulsion (no right to reapply)

Faculty, Provost/Dean of the College, and Honor Council members have a responsibility to work together to make sanctions as fair and consistent as possible. Though due respect will be given to a faculty member's recommendation on the nature of the penalty, faculty members should also respect it is desirable to have consistent and fair sanctions.

Accommodations

A student may request accommodations during an Honor Council Hearing by reaching out to Disabilities Services. For a disability or medical condition to be considered during the hearing process, a student must provide documentation of that evidence through Disabilities Services in advance of the Hearing. While confirmed disabilities may be taken under consideration during sanctioning, they do not excuse violations of the Honor System.