

The Honor Code

Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine

Approved by Honor Court, Dental and Advanced Education Students,
and Faculty Council (August 9, 2024)

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Preamble

The purpose of the Honor Code is to promote academic integrity, professionalism and respect for and among patients, faculty, staff, and colleagues by fostering an ethical, peer-supported culture among dental students and advanced education students.

The Honor Code recognizes that personal commitments to honesty, integrity, fairness, accountability, and mutual respect are essential to maintaining a harmonious professional and academic community.

The Honor Code makes explicit what dental students and advanced education students should expect from one another and acts as a social and professional contract to uphold underlying principles.

The Honor Code is intended to supplement, but not supplant, one's personal, religious, moral, and ethical beliefs. Moreover, the Honor Code does not supersede policies, regulations, codes, statutes or laws that exist Stony Brook University, New York state, or federal jurisdictions.

PART A: STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL, ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL CONDUCT

I. Professional Conduct

Establishing and maintaining the highest standards of honor and integrity within the dental and advanced education programs are critical to the development and conduct of dental health professionals and specialists. It is the responsibility of students of the profession to actively uphold these standards and expect that colleagues do the same.

A. Respect for Patients

Dental and advanced education students must demonstrate respect for patients through language and conduct that are non-threatening and non-judgmental. Students must respect patients' privacy as much as possible during history-taking, physical examinations and treatment. It is also crucial that students are candid and truthful to patients (e.g., informing patients of available treatment options, benefits and risks) to the best of their knowledge and abilities.

Students must take the utmost care to ensure patients' confidentiality and must adhere to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and all associated regulations. To avoid accidental breaches of confidentiality, students shall not discuss individually identifiable health information in common areas.

Dental/medical records are important in providing effective patient care and serve as legal documents available for patient review. As such, it is crucial that students maintain accurate and clear reporting of all pertinent patient health information about which they have direct knowledge. Written and electronic documents, including correspondences pertaining to patients, must be kept legible, truthful, complete and accurate to the best of the student's/ knowledge and abilities.

B. Respect for Fellow Students

The importance of respecting fellow dental students and advanced education students at the School of Dental Medicine cannot be overstated. Much of the education with the programs is reinforced by formal and casual interactions with peers.

Dental and advanced education students shall encourage an open, collaborative and respectful environment both within and outside the classroom and clinic.

C. Respect for Faculty, Staff, and Community Members

Dental and advanced education students must demonstrate constant respect for faculty, residents, staff, professional colleagues, guests and members of the general public. Students and residents should make every effort to express their individual views in a calm, respectful and mature manner when in disagreement with another individual. Under this Honor Code, "confrontation" is defined as

the initiation of a respectful, constructive dialogue with another community member with the goal of reaching some common understanding. While confrontation is encouraged, achieving a common understanding does not necessitate reaching agreement.

A diversity of personal beliefs serves to enrich the School of Dental Medicine community as well as the dental profession. Students should respect the values and beliefs of others both in the daily conduct and practice of this Honor Code.

D. Respect for Laws, Policies and Regulations

Laws, policies and regulations at the university, local, state and federal levels benefit the community and shall not be disregarded or violated. Any breach of those laws, policies, or regulations is also a breach of the Honor Code.

II. Academic Conduct

Dental and advanced education students are responsible for proper conduct and integrity in all didactic and clinical work. Students shall strive for the highest standard of knowledge and skill, realizing that the health and well-being of patients depend on their competence.

It shall be the responsibility of every dental and advanced education student at the School of Dental Medicine to support the principles of academic integrity and to refrain from all forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Cheating:** Dishonesty of any kind including, but not limited to examinations, course assignments, attendance sheets, alteration of records, or illegal possession of examinations shall be considered cheating. It is the responsibility of the student not only to abstain from cheating, but also to avoid the appearance of cheating and to guard against facilitating cheating by others. Students who cheat, and students who help others cheat, are equally guilty of wrongdoing. Students should also do everything possible to induce respect for the examining process and for honesty in the performance of assigned tasks, in or out of class.
- **Fabrication:** Students and professionals are expected to be honest in their representations of fact and not report as true information they do not know to be true. Reporting false information in the patient care setting or with the patient record is dishonest is forbidden.
- **Plagiarism:** Honesty requires full acknowledgement of any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas or materials taken from another source, including artificial intelligence, is guilty of plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from others may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire sections of books, periodical articles, speeches, or the writings of others. Plagiarism also includes offering someone else's work as one's own or submitting, without acknowledgment, materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections.

- **Scientific Misconduct:** Students involved in research are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest standards of scientific integrity. If participating in the research process, students must avoid intentional or gross negligence leading to fabrication of the scientific message or a false credit or emphasis given to a scientist. Anyone conducting research involving human subjects is required to undergo training in the ethical conduct of research and have their research protocol reviewed by the Committee Overseeing Research Involving Human Subjects.
- **Inappropriate Identification:** It is improper for dental students and advanced education students to present themselves to patients or others as licensed dentists or specialists. In the clinical setting, students should wear, in a highly visible location, an official Stony Brook name badge which shows the name and picture as identification as a dental student.

A. Examples of Classroom Dishonesty

Typical examples of academic dishonesty in the classroom include but are not limited to:

1. Signing an attendance sheet on behalf of someone else.
2. Cheating on course or proficiency examinations by the use of books, notes, or other aids when these are not permitted, or by copying from another student.
3. Submission of similar papers or projects in more than one course without permission of the instructor(s).
4. Collusion: Two or more students helping each other on an examination or assignment, unless specifically permitted by the instructor.
5. Use of substitutes: Sitting in for another student at an examination, or permitting someone else to sit in for oneself.
6. Plagiarism: The submission of another's work as one's own original work without proper acknowledgment of the source.
7. Falsifying documents or records related to credit, grades, change of status forms (e.g., adds and drops), and other academic matters.
8. Altering an examination or a paper after it has been graded for the purpose of fraudulently requesting a revision of the grade.
9. Use of unauthorized materials for an exam or project (e.g., use of calculators on an exam where they have been prohibited, beepers, or other electronic devices).
10. Circulation and/or use of unauthorized "old exams".

11. Unauthorized possession of an exam, even if inadvertent or un-premeditated.
12. Theft, concealment, destruction, or inappropriate modification of classroom or other instructional material (e.g., posted exams, library materials, laboratory supplies, computer programs and outputs).
13. Preventing relevant material from being subjected to academic evaluation.

B. Examples of Clinic Dishonesty

The principles of academic integrity shall also apply to those courses taken during the clinical phases of a program of instruction. In clinical programs academic dishonesty shall be defined further to include, but not be limited to:

1. Falsification of patient or institutional records.
2. Concealing information or activities that affect the safety and well-being of patients.
3. Inappropriate violation of patient confidentiality.
4. Engaging in activities that are contrary to professional codes of ethics or standards or practice as defined by the program, school, or professional associations.
5. Misrepresenting one's role as a student to an institution, patient, or to the public at large so as to mislead them in their expectations of the student's competencies and/or limitations.
6. Failure to seek supervision for clinical activities or neglecting to obtain required clearance for such clinical activities.
7. Performance of procedures without supervision, for which the student has not been prepared.
8. Rendering dental care without the direct supervision of SDM faculty within an approved SDM site.
9. Failure to follow the University guidelines regarding the use of human subjects or laboratory animals in research or experimentation.

III. Social Conduct

Our social relationships should be based on mutual respect and consideration. Dental and advanced education students must consider how their words and actions may affect an individual's or group's sense of acceptance into the greater community. If a student encounters actions or values of peers that he/she finds degrading to himself/herself or to others, that student should feel comfortable confronting the peers.

Student behavior and speech should demonstrate respect for the diversity of patients and colleagues. Students must avoid disparaging remarks or actions with regard to a person's race, age, gender, disability, national origin, station, religion, creed, sexual orientation or gender expression. Even remarks delivered in jest without malicious intent can isolate and offend members of a community. Thus, students must endeavor to be sensitive to the consequences of words and actions. Students shall strive to create an environment that fosters mutual learning, dialogue and respect, while avoiding verbal, written or physical actions that could create a hostile environment.

PART B: PROCEDURES FOR RATIFYING AND MAINTAINING THE HONOR CODE

IV. Ratification of the Honor Code

This Honor Code will be considered official at the time the students and faculty of the Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine ratify it and any amendments by majority votes. Incoming dental students and advanced education students shall be subject to this Honor Code and shall sign the Honor Code Pledge upon acceptance of admission to the School of Dental Medicine. All ongoing dental students and advanced education students must sign the pledge to advance to the next year.

V. The Honor Code Pledge

Membership as dental students and advanced education students in the Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine community is dependent on the commitment to the Honor Code and confirmed by signing the Honor Code Pledge, which states: "I hereby accept the terms of the Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine Honor Code, realizing that it is my duty to uphold the concepts of personal and collective responsibility upon which the Honor Code is based."

VI. Role of the Honor Court

A. Membership of the Honor Court

Three members from each dental class of the student body plus three advanced education students will serve on the Honor Court. At the beginning of the new academic year, each dental class will elect three of their peers to the Committee for a one-year term. Similarly, students from the advanced education programs (i.e., from any year of training) will elect three representatives. There are no limits to the number of terms one can serve on the Committee. One member of the Court shall be elected from the representative members to serve as President of the Honor Court. The President of the Honor Court for the subsequent academic year shall be elected by April 30 of the prevailing academic year. All potential candidates write a statement of interest and send it to the Faculty Advisor.

The results of all elections will be kept on file for the duration of the current term. In the event that a member of the committee steps down, the first runner-up in the most recent election will serve the remainder of the term. If there is no runner-up, a special election will be held within a reasonable time to elect a new committee member to serve the remainder of the term.

The Honor Court will also feature a Faculty Advisor who will be appointed by the Dean of the School of Dental Medicine. The Faculty Advisor will serve in an *ex officio* (non-voting) capacity. This Faculty Advisor must not be a concurrent member of the Academic Standing Committee of the School of Dental Medicine.

B. Responsibilities of the Committee

1. To the Community

The Honor Court's responsibilities to the community include: educating students, faculty and administration about the Honor Code using literature and other media; maintaining awareness of the Honor Code; and ensuring that every continuing and incoming dental and advanced education student signs the Honor Code Pledge every year. Records must be kept regarding all student signatures on the Honor Code Pledge.

2. Within the Committee

The Honor Court is responsible for interpreting and implementing the Honor Code. The Committee will consider each case individually and should be sensitive to both the community and the individual(s) involved when making decisions. The committee will assist in the resolution of reported Honor Code violations as outlined in Sections VIII and IX.

VII. Amending the Honor Code

This Honor Code may be amended through an annual proposal and voting process. Proposals are to be in writing, signed by at least 20 dental students plus five faculty members and submitted to the Honor Court no later than one week before the scheduled meeting date. Amendments to the Honor Code must be accepted by a majority vote of all then-current students and Faculty Council. Voting may be conducted electronically.

PART C: PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESOLVING VIOLATIONS

VIII. Reporting Honor Code Violations

Student honor as community members and professionals is maintained through accountability. Dental and advanced education students shall act in accordance with this Honor Code and shall expect their peers to do the same. Any action not in accordance with the standards specified above in Sections I-III constitutes a violation of this Honor Code.

A. Self-Reflection

If there is concern that a student's professional, academic or social conduct, whether actual or perceived, may represent a violation of this Honor Code, students are obligated to contact an Honor Court member.

B. Confronting a Violation

If there is a concern that a peer's actual or perceived professional, academic or social conduct is in violation of the Honor Code, that individual must be privately confronted. It is sometimes difficult to challenge the behavior of a fellow community member; however, it is the student's responsibility to confront the

alleged offending party or parties. Failure to do so is itself a violation of this Honor Code.

The confronting party is encouraged to approach the alleged offending party on his or her own; however, he or she may ask a member of the Honor Court to accompany him/her as an impartial mediator (Section VIII.C). Alternatively, a member of the Honor Court may approach the alleged offending party on behalf of the confronting party with the understanding that no accusation will be anonymous. This should be done with discretion, in a confidential manner and involve respectful communication and dialogue. During the initial confrontation, each party shall attempt to exchange facts and viewpoints in order to achieve a mutual understanding. If the parties agree that there has been no violation, the matter will be closed. If no agreement can be made, then an impartial mediator must be involved as outlined in Section VIII.C. If the parties agree that there has been a violation of the Honor Code, the report will be considered to have been made to the Honor Court member. The Honor Court will then proceed as outlined in Section IX.

C. Involving an Impartial Mediator

Impartial mediators are members of the Honor Court (students or the Faculty Advisor) who can be called upon to mediate a confrontation. In the event that an initial confrontation proceeds **without** the use of a mediator and a mutual understanding is not reached, or the alleged offending party has neglected to report his or her actions, the confronting party must then contact a member of the Honor Court. At this time the committee will assign an impartial mediator. The mediator must maintain the confidentiality of the confronting and offending parties.

The mediator must set up a confidential meeting between the confronting and the alleged offending parties. If it is agreed that a violation did not occur, then both parties must feel comfortable with that resolution. If it is agreed that a violation likely occurred, or if an impasse persists after mediation, the case will be brought before the Honor Court by the mediator.

D. Role of the Faculty

To report suspected Honor Code violations, members of the faculty may follow the same procedures as outlined above (see Sections VIII.B. and VIII.C.).

IX. Resolution of Violations

A case of suspected Honor Code violation(s) may be brought to the Honor Court through self-reporting or by the impartial mediator (Honor Court member), at which point the case proceeds to a full hearing for resolution overseen by the Honor Court.

A. Assigning a Chairperson

The impartial mediator of the case may be designated as Chairperson of the hearing. Alternatively, the President of the Honor Court or faculty advisor may be selected by consensus of the Court. In the case of self-reporting, an Honor Court member will be assigned the position of chairperson for the hearing and

will no longer be a voting member of the case. When a case reaches the Honor Court, the chairperson will convene a Preliminary Meeting with the Faculty Advisor, the President of the Honor Court, and Honor Court members of the offending party's class.

B. Hearing Procedures

All Honor Court members are expected to attend the hearing. At the meeting, the chairperson will present all pertinent background information in the case. Honor Court members may remove (recuse) themselves from participation due to conflict of interest. The following minimum conditions must be met for the hearing to take place:

- At least half of the Honor Court must be present.
- At least one voting Honor Court member from each of the dental classes.

Membership on the Honor Court for the case will consist of those in attendance at the Hearing. No additional Committee members may join later case proceedings. The Faculty Advisor of the Honor Court must be present to provide guidance to the student members regarding policies and procedures at the Hearing. In the event of extenuating circumstances, a committee member without conflict of interest may be excused from the Hearing by the chairperson. Attendance at any subsequent meetings is expected. Absences may result in dismissal from the case at the discretion of the chairperson.

The chairperson will serve as the facilitator of the hearing and all related meetings subsequent to these proceedings. At the beginning of a hearing, the chairperson will give a brief overview of the purpose of the hearing, answer any procedural questions, and ask members of the committee whether they feel they can be objective.

All persons involved in the hearing, including the confronting and offending parties, called witnesses and the committee members, are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings. No part of the case may be shared with anyone, including fellow students, faculty or members of the administration.

C. Executive Session

The Honor Court will convene an executive session immediately before the start of the hearing. The members of the Honor Court of the offending party's year will present the information obtained since the Preliminary Meeting pertinent to the case.

1. The Presentation of the Facts

The first phase of the hearing will focus on establishing the facts of the case. All parties involved will have the opportunity to express what they believe to be the facts of the incident. Each party also will be asked to suggest and justify a fair resolution of the problem. During this portion of the hearing, all committee members are urged to ask questions to gain a clear understanding of the situation. Witnesses may be called on behalf of the confronting and offending parties to provide testimony or evidence.

Neither the confronting nor offending party shall be represented by counsel at this meeting.

2. *Determination if a Violation Has Been Made*

The chairperson will then dismiss the confronting and offending parties and their advocates. The remaining voting members (plus the *ex officio* Faculty Advisor) of the committee will determine by consensus whether the Honor Code has been violated in the case presented. The hearing proceeds to the evaluation phase.

3. *Evaluation and Deliberation*

When the parties and committee members believe that enough information has been shared, the voting members of the committee will determine the following by consensus:

- What are the relevant circumstances in this case?
- What is an appropriate resolution in this case?

After an initial consensus is reached, the committee will adjourn for at least one day and refrain from discussing the details of the case. Each committee member will privately reconsider the case issues and reevaluate his/her endorsement of the initial consensus. The committee will then either confirm its position or reach consensus on another response.

4. *Presentation of the Resolution*

The parties will be notified of the committee's finding and recommendation.

5. *Recommendation and Execution of the Resolution*

Findings of academic dishonesty and recommendations from the Honor Court will be presented in writing to the Associate Dean for Education and/or their designee for execution of the resolution. Given findings of academic dishonesty, the Academic Standing Committee reserves the right to accept or modify the Honor Court's recommendation given the severity of the violation. The offending party has the right to appeal the recommendation to the Dean of the School of Dental Medicine, in which case the Dean may uphold the recommendation, return it to the Academic Standing Committee for further consideration, or overturn it. The community at large of students, faculty and administrators entrusts vital responsibility to the Honor Court in these matters.

D. *Repairing Breaches of Trust*

When found guilty of an Honor Code violation, the offending party is obligated to repair breaches of trust to the community at large by compliance with the final resolution of the case, acceptable reaffirmation of commitment to the standards of the community, and re-signing the Honor Code Pledge.