

Student Honor Code

A. The Honor Code

Students embarking on careers in medicine and dental medicine are expected to maintain high standards of personal and professional integrity. These standards involve such basic concepts as intellectual honesty and respect for the rights and well-being of others. Matriculation in the School of Medicine or Dental Medicine constitutes an obligation for students to act in a manner consistent with such standards. The primary source of these standards shall be this Honor Code and its application to the conduct of medical and dental students. The primary mechanism for the application and enforcement of these standards shall be the Honor Board.

The Honor Code of the University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine comprises the following items:

- Prohibition of any act of intellectual dishonesty. Examples of intellectual dishonesty include (but are not limited to): cheating; plagiarism, copying, or any misrepresentation of work other than one's own; fraud in research; dishonesty in clinical care or documentation; and willful failure to comply with examination and evaluation policies.
- Prohibition of violations of the rights or well-being of members of the UConn Health community. Examples of such violations range from (but are not limited to): failure to comply with library regulations or intentional interference that denies other students access to educational materials, the willful mistreatment of colleagues, and stealing.
- Requirement of students, staff, and faculty to take positive action when there is a reason to believe that a breach of this Honor Code has taken place.

At the beginning of their careers at UConn Health and at the beginning of every subsequent academic year, all medical and dental students shall be required to sign an attestation of the principles contained in this Honor Code. The attestation shall be in writing and shall express the student's commitment to act in a manner consistent with the standards of personal and professional integrity represented by this Honor Code.

B. Implementing the Honor Code: The Honor Board Policy Committee

The Honor Board Policy Committee's main responsibilities are to provide interpretations of the Honor Code and to develop guidelines for the application of the general principles embodied in the Honor Code and as they apply to our students.

The Honor Board Policy Committee shall consist of all current and alternate members of the Honor Board and six faculty members appointed by the Deans/designee of the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine: three basic science faculty and three clinical faculty. The Deans/designee shall appoint one faculty member to serve as chairperson of the Committee. From time to time, the Honor Board Policy Committee may appoint other non-voting members to participate in committee discussions.

The Committee also participates in the selection process for the Faculty Advisor of the Honor Board (described in detail in Section M of this policy, below).

C. The Honor Board

Membership

The membership of the Honor Board shall consist of eight voting members (one medical student and one dental student from each class) and six alternate members who shall attend each meeting and who may be designated by the chairperson to vote in the place of an absent voting member. Each voting member and alternate shall serve a two-year term for a maximum of two terms as long as she/he remains a member in good standing in her/his respective school. Students who are out of the medical or dental curriculum to pursue a dual degree or other activity, or who are on a leave of absence lasting longer than two months cannot serve on the Honor Board during that time. The Honor Board is responsible for conducting the election of Honor Board members according to the following schedule.

1. The first-year class

In October of the first year two students and one alternate will be elected. These students shall serve until June 30th of their second year. The protocol for this election is as follows:

Each student may cast one vote for members in their respective school. The medical student receiving the highest number of votes and the dental student receiving the highest number of votes will be the voting Honor Board Members.

The student (medical or dental) receiving the next highest number of votes will serve as the alternate for the class.

2. The second year class

In April of the second year, the medical and dental school classes shall elect Honor Board members to begin serving on July 1st of their third year. They shall complete their term upon graduation. Students may serve a maximum of two, two-year terms. If a student delays graduation she/he may not continue for a third year. The protocol for this election is as follows:

Each student may cast one vote for members in their respective schools. The medical student receiving the highest number of votes and the dental student receiving the highest number of votes will be voting Honor Board Members.

The medical student receiving the second highest number of votes and the dental student receiving the second highest number of votes will both serve as alternates for the third and fourth years.

Chairperson

The Honor Board shall elect a chairperson annually. To be eligible, the chairperson must have served on the Honor Board previously for at least one academic year. At the discretion of the Board, co-chairpersons, one from each school, may be selected by a simple majority.

Secretary

The chairperson/co-chairs shall designate a secretary to write minutes documenting all proceedings regarding a case, or potential case, including Initial Meetings, Case Review Meetings, and Evidentiary Hearings.

Meetings

The Honor Board, including alternates, shall meet as often as necessary to conduct the business of the Board. Meetings are characterized as those related to 'cases' as well as those held for administrative purposes. If a voting member cannot be at a meeting, an alternate member will be selected to replace the voting member, with substitution preference exercised for an alternate member in the same class year as the absent voting member.

A quorum must be present for all proceedings regarding a case or potential case (i.e. Initial Meetings, Case Review Meetings, and Evidentiary Hearings). When the Board consists of fourteen members and alternates, eight voting members is a quorum. When the Board consists of ten members and alternates, six voting members is a quorum. The Faculty Advisor must be present at all meetings related to a case.

D. Reporting Concerns/Alleged Violations

Anyone affiliated with UConn Health, including but not limited to: students, faculty, staff, residents, and attendings, who has a concern regarding a breach of the Honor Code has a duty to take positive action. Positive actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Direct discussion with the person whose conduct is questioned and if, after such discussion, the breach is still suspected, the person with the concern must engage in informal discussions with a member of the Honor Board (as described in paragraph D.2 below) or submit a Formal Report to the Honor Board;
2. Informal consultation with a member of the Honor Board by any member of the UConn Health community who thinks that a breach of the Honor Code may have occurred but is unsure;
 - a. Upon initial consultation, an Honor Board member must notify the Chair of the Honor Board before making a recommendation or taking any action in relation to the report. The Chair who received the report must consult the Faculty Advisor and may consult members and/or alternates regarding how to proceed;

3. Direct submission of a Formal Report to the Honor Board;
 - a. Formal Reports may be anonymous or non-anonymous, but sufficient evidence must be presented to warrant Honor Board consideration.

Failure to take positive action may itself be a violation of the Honor Code.

Self-reporting of unprofessional behavior will be viewed more favorably than otherwise and can serve as an opportunity for self-reflection and improvement.

How to Submit a Formal Report

Reports of a possible breach of the Honor Code shall be made in writing and delivered in a sealed envelope or by secure email to any member or alternate of the Honor Board as soon as possible after the discovery of the alleged violation¹.

E. Initial Meeting(s)

Once a Formal Report is made to the Honor Board, an Initial Meeting is held per the following proceedings:

1. Determination of Conflicts of Interest

The name(s), only, of the accused will be disclosed to the Board members present. Any Board member with a possible conflict of interest will be given the opportunity to recuse themselves from all further proceedings regarding the case. Any Board member may identify another Board member as having a potential conflict of interest, in which case, the Board will vote on recusal of those individuals if the identified member(s) do/does not self-recuse. Recusal of a Board member by peer initiative requires a simple majority vote. If there are sufficient recusals such that the quorum is lost, the meeting will be suspended until a quorum is achieved.

2. Disclosure of the Contents of the Formal Report

The information provided in the Formal Report is disclosed and discussed.

¹ When a concern regarding a violation of the Honor Code involves a medical student, the Chair of the Honor Board must complete a Professionalism Incident Report (PIR) and submit it to the PIR Triage Committee (PIRT). When possible, reporting of concerns regarding medical students should occur directly to PIRT to facilitate proceedings. Formal Reports concerning medical students may come to the Honor Board directly from PIRT.

3. Triage

The Honor Board will determine whether there is sufficient evidence to initiate an investigation and/or if the case must be transferred to another body for action. The decision to launch a formal investigation following review of the Formal Report requires a simple majority vote of the quorum.

4. Appointment of a Case Officer and/or Co-investigator

All concerns deemed to fall within the purview of the Honor Board and worthy of investigation will be investigated by a Case Officer. Case Officers will be responsible for the movement of the case through the process to final disposition. Case Officers can be either voting members or alternates and are selected in the following manner:

- a. Volunteer;
- b. If no member volunteers, a Case Officer is appointed by the Chair/Co-Chairs;
- c. The Board may choose to appoint a Co-investigator to assist the Case Officer with investigatory duties.

Case Officer Duties

- a. Conduct thorough investigation including but not limited to receiving all correspondence, statements, evidence and other materials related to the case, and maintain file and evidence folders;
- b. Review all case material;
- c. Present all case material to the Honor Board;
- d. Be present and participate in the discussion at the meeting when voting occurs (Case Officer – and Co-investigator, if present – must abstain from vote but can be counted towards a quorum);
- e. Contact witnesses and the accused in order to schedule an Evidentiary Hearing on the case, if necessary;
- f. Develop an agenda for the Case Review Meeting and Evidentiary Hearing and be responsible for the conduct of them;
- g. Help the Chair/Chairs compose a letter to the appropriate Dean/designee regarding the findings of the Honor Board.

5. Discussion on how the case might be investigated

F. Case Review Meeting(s)

Once the Case Officer has investigated the concern, then the Honor Board hears the Case Officer's findings in a Case Review Meeting. Case Review Meetings are conducted with only the members of the Honor Board and the Faculty Advisor present and proceed in the following manner:

1. The Case Officer and any Co-investigator present the evidence collected.
2. The committee discusses the evidence and then votes on one of the following three courses of action by means of a simple majority vote:
 - a. Send the case back to Case Officer for further investigation.
 - b. Determine that the presented evidence is insufficient to declare an Honor Code breach and that reasonable effort by the Honor Board would yield no further insight into the case. In such situations, appropriate reporting of this finding is performed, as per later section titled, "Notifications."
 - c. Determine that the presented evidence is sufficient to proceed to an Evidentiary Hearing.

G. Evidentiary Hearings

Evidentiary hearings are scheduled in order to provide the accused an opportunity to be heard and for the Honor Board to clarify information that was presented at the Case Review Meeting. Evidentiary Hearings will be led by the Case Officer and are conducted in the following manner:

1. The Case Officer will present the evidence concerning the case. The Case Officer may choose to interview witnesses at this time and in such cases, the members of the Board may then question these witnesses.
2. The accused may be in attendance during the Case Officer's presentation and will then have an opportunity to address the Honor Board and to present any witnesses, or evidence;
 - a. The accused may choose not to attend the Evidentiary Hearing by sending a written waiver to the Board at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled hearing. In such a case, the accused waives his or her right to present evidence or witnesses. The accused may submit a written statement to be read at the Evidentiary Hearing.
 - b. If the accused attends the Evidentiary Hearing, a personal representative (who may be an attorney) may attend. The accused must notify the Honor Board at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled hearing if a representative will be present. If the accused has an attorney present, UConn may also have an attorney

present. The representative, if present, serves in a purely advisory capacity and is permitted to speak only to the accused. The Honor Board Chair(s) may dismiss the representative if, in their sole discretion, she/he disrupts the hearing proceedings;

- c. The accused and any witnesses presented by the accused may be asked questions by the members of Board.
3. Following dismissal of the accused, any witnesses, and the personal representative of the accused, if any, the Board will discuss the case and then a motion will be made to vote, via simple majority decision, to either:
 - a. Return to the investigation phase of the case, but only if new information not known at the time of the Case Review Meeting was presented in the Evidentiary Hearing that indicated need for further investigation.
 - i. In this case, further investigation will be conducted by the Case Officer and Co-investigator, and a new Case Review Meeting and Evidentiary Hearing will be scheduled and conducted, as described in Sections F and G, above.
 - b. Proceed to a formal vote of “breach” vs “insufficient evidence of breach.”
 4. Following the decision to proceed to a formal vote regarding breach status, the formal vote will be held via secret ballot. A verdict that a breach occurred must pass with a two-thirds majority of the quorum.

H. The Appeal Process

Upon notification that the Honor Board has reached a verdict of breach, the accused will be given seven calendar days to request the appeal. The accused may provide a written waiver of an appeal in order to move more quickly to notifications.

The decision of the Appellate Board is made based upon the presence or absence of either or both of the following circumstances:

1. Evidence that was not available to the Honor Board when they made the decision; or
2. Evidence that the Honor Board did not adhere to the appropriate process as defined by this policy.

If an appeal is requested, the Honor Board Chair/Co-chair will notify the members of the Appeal Board (see below) prior to the hearing.

Appeal Board

1. The Appeal Board shall consist of two students and three faculty members appointed by the appropriate Academic Officer of either the School of Medicine or School of Dental Medicine. The Appeal Board will elect a Chair for the Appeal.
2. The Honor Board Chair/Co-chair will send the request for appeal via email to the members of the Appeals Board who will decide whether the appeal will be heard or not. If the Appeal Board decides to hear the case, either the Honor Board Co-Chair or the Faculty Advisor will attend the Appeal to provide an overview of the case, but will not be a voting member of the Appeal Board.
3. The Chair of the Appeal Board and its members will review the evidence presented in support of the appeal. Persons found to be in breach of the Honor Code will have the right to present their own case in front of the Appeal Board and, like the evidentiary hearing, can elect to bring a personal representative (including an attorney). The personal representative is there for support only and will not be allowed to speak in front of the Appeal Board. If the accused has an attorney present, UConn may also have an attorney present.
4. If the Appeal Board overturns the decision of the Honor Board, in whole or in part, the reason for that decision will be conveyed to the Honor Board in person by the Appeal Board Chair. This decision is final and all documented information concerning the appeal will be destroyed (as permitted by the state records retention policy). The person(s) involved will be notified immediately by the Appeal Board Chair.
5. If the decision of “breach” made by the Honor Board is upheld by the Appeal Board, the Dean/designee of the appropriate school will be notified within seven calendar days and presented with a summary statement, inclusive of all information used to reach the decision.

I. Notifications By the Honor Board

1. At any stage in the process, when a finding of insufficient evidence to make a determination of breach is made and the case is not sent for further investigation, the chair of the Board will notify the accused orally. If the accused is a medical student, this determination will also be sent to the PIRT co-chairs.
2. If a verdict of “breach” is reached at the Evidentiary Hearing, the accused will be notified of the result by the chairperson or designee both in-person and by formal written communication;
3. If the decision of “breach” made by the Honor Board is upheld by the Appeal Board, the Dean/designee of the appropriate school will be notified within seven calendar days and

presented with a summary statement, inclusive of all information used to reach the decision.

4. When the Honor Board concludes its involvement in the case or when the Appeals Committee finishes its work, whichever comes later, the person submitting the Formal Report will be informed that the Honor Board has concluded its proceedings.

J. Confidentiality and Document Retention by the Honor Board

All specific charges, names, evidence, and testimony are treated as strictly confidential unless otherwise required by law. The integrity of an Honor System depends on confidentiality, and the disclosure of names or other confidential information concerning a report by any person shall itself be considered an Honor Code breach. If the breach involves a protected statute, all efforts to maintain confidentiality will be critical. However, reports, including the individuals who report, may be part of a more extensive investigation involving the necessary authorities. Every effort to restrict the flow of information to only necessary parties will be of utmost priority and importance.

The Faculty Advisor shall be responsible for securely storing a copy of all documents that are material to the case, including but not limited to the case officer's notes, and minutes of meetings, as well as the physical evidence. These documents will be retained as long as required by state record retention laws and/or other prevailing laws.

It is imperative for all members of UConn Health to be aware that any report of concern regarding a "protected statute" including but not limited to sexual harassment, domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, and suicidal issues cannot be treated confidentially and must be directed immediately to the Honor Board Faculty Advisor who can refer it to the appropriate authority.

K. Disciplinary Action

The Honor Board is concerned only with judging a person(s) as having committed a breach or not of the Honor Code and is not responsible for taking disciplinary action against the person(s) who has breached the Honor Code. Such actions shall be taken by the appropriate Deans/designee. Whether a disciplinary action results from a breach in the Honor Code is up to the respective policies and procedures of the schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine. Reports of a breach of the Honor Code are forwarded to the Senior Associate Dean for Education for the School of Medicine or Senior Associate Dean for Education and Patient Care for the School of Dental Medicine, who will refer the report to the Academic Advancement Committee (SOM) or the Academic Performance Committee (SoDM) for possible disciplinary action. Not all breaches in the Honor Code result in disciplinary action. Sometimes the process of being investigated by the Honor Board is the only punitive action and, in itself, can be viewed as an opportunity for professional growth.

L. Reports to the Academic Community

The Honor Board and the Faculty Advisor shall be responsible for maintaining a record of the number and types of complaints brought to the Honor Board each year (and year to year), regardless of whether a breach of the Honor Code was found. These reports shall not contain any identifiable information about the accuser, the accused, or the specifics of the event that would facilitate identification.

At least once each academic year, the Honor Board shall report on its activities to Education Council (for the School of Medicine) and Dental Senate (for the School of Dental Medicine) and to the medical and dental classes. These reports shall discuss, in general terms, the activities of the Board during the year.

M. Process for Selecting the Honor Board Faculty Advisor

The process is divided into 3 steps, namely:

- Nomination
- Preliminary Review and Vetting
- Final selection

Descriptions of the individual steps are as follows:

Nomination

The nomination process should be open with nominations being accepted from students and faculty. Students will be invited to nominate faculty. Faculty will be free to either self-nominate or put forward the names of colleagues. The process will begin with a nominations process similar to all nomination processes utilized by both schools. Applicants will be asked to submit a one page personal statement explaining their interest and describing any relevant experience. Nominations go directly to an administrator.

Preliminary Review, Vetting, and Interview

The Senior Associate Deans of Education in both SOM and SDM will review and vet the nominations with their teams and the Deans. Either administration may veto individual candidates who are unacceptable. The vetting process should remove the fewest candidates possible from consideration. The Honor Board Policy Advisory Committee will be told the total number of nominees, but will only be sent a list of acceptable nominees. Ideally, the list will include at least 2-3 candidates. The Honor Board Policy Advisory Committee reviews the applicants, conducts interviews, and narrows the list of candidates to at least 2.

In the event that there is only 1 candidate deemed suitable then the Honor Board Policy Advisory Committee will meet to discuss and determine if that candidate is acceptable. A

unanimous consent is required. If unanimous consent is not possible, the nomination process begins again.

Final Selection

After reviewing the materials submitted by the candidates chosen by the Honor Board Policy Advisory Committee, the students of the Honor Board will make the final selection by a simple majority of the quorum.

Term of Appointment

The term of service for the faculty advisor to the Honor Board will be five years with an opportunity to renew for one additional term. The opportunity to renew will be contingent on the approval of the Honor Board Policy Advisory Committee and the Senior Associate Deans of Education of the Schools.

Salary Support

To promote the effectiveness of the faculty advisor to the Honor Board, salary support for educational effort will be decided by the respective Senior Associate Dean. Additionally, the faculty advisor to the Honor Board may not serve on any other committees where a conflict of interest might occur (e.g. promotions or disciplinary committees in the SOM or the SDM).

Approvals for this policy

- **6/26/17** **Honor Board Advisory Committee**
- **6/29/17** **SoDM Education Council**
- **7/11/17** **SoM Committee on Undergraduate Education**
- **7/12/17** **SoDM Faculty Senate**
- **7/20/17** **SoM Education Council**