

Talking to a Student Suspected of Cheating

Despite your efforts to promote integrity and prevent cheating and plagiarism, you will likely still have to respond to the occasional Honor Code Violation. According to Faculty Policy Series #11, faculty should make a good faith effort to speak with students about the suspected violation prior to filing an Honor Code Violation report. This provides both you and the student the space to gather and share pertinent information so a fair assessment can be made.

The following are some tips and procedures for talking with students about suspected Honor Code violations.

Act as Promptly as Possible

Act on these situations as soon as possible despite any reservations. This means interrupting cheating if it is occurring during an exam or notifying the student as soon as you are otherwise aware of a possible violation. According to Faculty Policy Series #11, faculty have 10 days to file an Honor Code Violation report from the day they become aware of the violation.

We know from the research that if students see cheating happening and do not see faculty responding, this can greatly increase their own likelihood of violating the Honor Code.

Prepare for the Conversation

If the situation involves more than one student, individual meetings are preferred to ensure student confidentiality and allows for a more open dialogue, while discouraging collusion between students.

When you meet with the student it may be helpful to think of three C's: Clarity, Compassion, and Candor

- Be **clear** about the behavior you find questionable.
- Be **compassionate** to the student who may experience significant distress but also great learning from this incident.
- Be **candid** about your interpretations of the behavior and your feelings about the incident.

Hold the Meeting

1. Begin the conversation with a statement that informs them of your concerns. For example, *"I have some concerns about your recent [paper or exam], specifically it appears that you may have [copied from a neighbor; plagiarized; used AI]."*
2. Then give the student an opportunity to share their point of view to open up the conversation. For example: *"Why don't we start by you telling me about your process for studying/completing the assignment".*
3. After listening to the student's answer, follow up with additional questions that make sense to you given the suspected violation and the assessment in question. A verbal

assessment of their understanding of the topic of the paper or exam may be in order. This can be done on the spot or scheduled for another time.

4. Tell the student what you're planning to do next. This could include:
 1. Considering their answers and thinking further about your next step (if you are undecided about the occurrence of a violation); OR
 2. Determining an appropriate penalty and filing an Honor Code Violation Report (located on the Portal under Faculty Services).

Remain Steadfast

Student reactions may vary. The student may cry, get angry, accuse or offend you, calmly admit to the misconduct, or deny the misconduct outright. In any event, proceed using your best judgment, knowing that it is your professional and ethical obligation to follow the spirit of and the procedures outlined Faculty Policy Series #11.

If you have questions or concerns, prior to or after your meeting with the student, you may consult with Suzanne Pike, Associate Provost for Academic Support and Global Initiatives who serves as Co-Chair of the Hofstra Honor Board: Suzanne.L.Pike@hofstra.edu

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