

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (Honor Code)

Georgia Tech is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is safe and that fosters the dignity respect and worth of students, faculty, and staff. Each member of this community has the responsibility to practice the highest ethical principles and standards of conduct.

Student Code of Conduct

The purpose of the [Student Code of Conduct](#) is to educate the Tech community about the Institute's expectations for academic and nonacademic conduct. The code also outlines students' rights and seeks to foster an environment conducive to academic excellence. The Office of Student Integrity (OSI) is responsible for managing potential violations of academic and nonacademic misconduct. Examples in this section are highlights of the document. For full details, please see the Code of Conduct and all other student policies found at the [OSI website](#), or contact one of the staff members directly for consultation.

Inappropriate Classroom Behavior

As stated in the Student Code of Conduct, the primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the instructor. Students who engage in any acts that result in disruption of a class may be directed by the instructor to leave the class for the remainder of the class period. Longer suspensions from a class can be administered only by the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students in accordance with this policy. If a faculty member, instructor, or TA is experiencing any classroom disruption and needs assistance, contact OSI immediately.



Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is described fully in two documents: the Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code. The Student Code of Conduct outlines nine charges that apply to academic misconduct. Specific information about these charges and the conduct process can be found at the OSI website.

The [Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code](#) is a document that acts as a guide in outlining student and faculty expectations. Originally designed by students, the Academic Honor Code became official Institute policy in 1996. Students are required to sign an honor agreement acknowledging their awareness of the code. The objective of the Academic Honor Code is to strengthen the level of academic integrity and trust within the Tech community. The Honor Advisory Council is a student peer advisory group and is available for consultation with any member of the Tech community regarding issues of academic integrity.

As described in the Academic Honor Code, faculty members are expected to create an environment where honesty flourishes. In creating this environment, faculty members are expected to do the following:

- ▶ Make known to their class as specifically as possible what constitutes appropriate academic conduct, as well as what comprises academic misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of previously submitted work, collaborative work on assignments, etc.
- ▶ Provide copies of old exams or lists of sample questions to the Georgia Tech library for students to review.
- ▶ Avoid the reuse of exams.
- ▶ Include a paragraph containing information about the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code on the syllabus for each class they teach.
- ▶ Report instances of academic dishonesty to Office of the Dean of Students.



Tips for Preventing Plagiarism and Other Forms of Cheating

Educating to Reduce Plagiarism

- Assign narrow and specific research topics.
- Do not allow last-minute changes of topic.
- Require that outlines be submitted three to four weeks prior to the deadline and that drafts be submitted with the final paper.
- Do not assume students know what constitutes plagiarism or proper citation format. Review this information or refer students to campus resources.
- Require detailed citations, including page numbers.
- Clearly explain your expectations.
- Encourage students to come to you if they are confused about citation practices.
- Model proper citation format in lectures, emphasizing that it shows respect for other scholars.
- Talk about academic honesty with your students, and make sure they understand both the reasons and tools for avoiding plagiarism.

Educating to Reduce Cheating

- At the beginning or end of each test, quiz, or exam, ask students to sign the Challenge Statement advocated by the Honor Advisory Council: *“I commit to uphold the ideals of honor and integrity by refusing to betray the trust bestowed upon me as a member of the Georgia Tech Community.”*
- Consider asking students to place backpacks, books, notebooks, cellphones, and laptops in another part of the room during exams.
- Remake exams each semester. Reorder questions, reword questions, and change formats. Students frequently give old exams to friends, which is permitted under the Academic Honor Code. Creating new exams each semester gives all students an equal opportunity for success.
- When possible, use free-response and essay questions rather than multiple-choice questions.
- When giving take-home exams, take time to define clearly what will and will not be acceptable. Make sure students understand your policy on collaboration.
- Clearly state (on your syllabus preferably) what is and what is not appropriate collaboration in your class, particularly regarding homework assignments, lab work and reports, or other group-oriented projects.

In addition to the expectations listed above, faculty can set classroom-specific expectations on some aspects of academic conduct including, but not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Old exams for use during open-book exams
- ▶ Contents of formula sheets allowed on exams
- ▶ Use of calculators on exams
- ▶ Collaboration on out-of-class assignments
- ▶ Use of previously submitted out-of-class assignments

It is strongly encouraged that any expectations placed upon students in a classroom, such as those outlined above, be put in writing for the students either in a syllabus or on a class website.

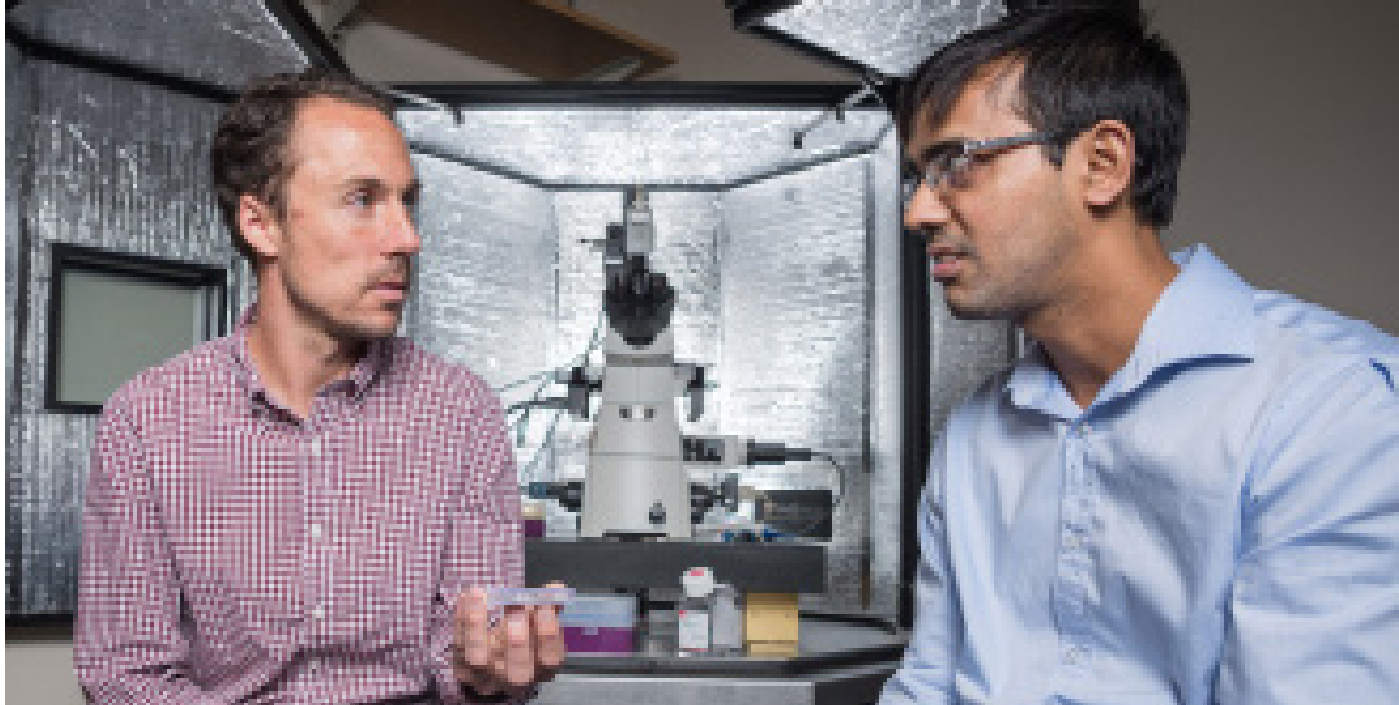
It is important to note that if a faculty member, instructor, or TA punishes a student academically without due process (e.g., reduces a grade for cheating without working with OSI), he or she assumes legal liability for denying a student's rights.

Some additional best practices to reduce academic misconduct are as follows:

- ▶ **Address Academic Honor Code issues** in your class. Tell your class what you expect from them in terms of academic performance, and what is and is not allowed in your academic environment.
- ▶ **Change testing measures** in class frequently to prevent students from using previous assignments to gain an unfair advantage.
- ▶ **Invite the OSI and the Honor Advisory Council** to present to classes on academic misconduct and the Honor Code.
- ▶ **Involve your TAs** when talking about academic integrity with your class. Remind TAs that they are role models to students. New students take what TAs say more seriously than any other group.
- ▶ **Provide sample/practice or past exams** to help students focus their efforts appropriately.

SOURCES

- ▶ **Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students**
studentlife.gatech.edu
- ▶ **Office of Student Integrity**
osi.gatech.edu
- ▶ **Georgia Tech Honor Advisory Council**
honor.gatech.edu
- ▶ **Georgia Tech Catalog**
catalog.gatech.edu
- ▶ **Faculty Handbook**
policylibrary.gatech.edu/faculty_handbook
- ▶ **The Board of Regents Policy Manual - Sections 4.1.1, 4.1.4, 4.6, 3.2.3**
usg.edu/policymanual/



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Honor Code

What do I do if I think I have an Academic Honor Code violation?

All that is necessary to report an allegation is to fill out the Public Incident Report form available at the [Incident Referral](#) tab on the OSI website. The form allows you to upload any supporting information (e.g., copies of exams, syllabi, etc.). After OSI receives the report, the staff member assigned to the case will be in contact if additional information is needed.

Can I just fail the student and not go through the conduct process?

No. The Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code prohibit penalty grading. Penalty grading may also infringe upon the student's due process, leaving the faculty member legally liable.

Can I consider this a teachable moment and not go to OSI?

It depends. Effectiveness of the Academic Honor Code relies on participation of both faculty and students. If you believe an act of academic misconduct has occurred, you should contact OSI and discuss your concern. Before you complete a Faculty Conference as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, you are encouraged to consult OSI first to make sure the student is eligible for a Faculty Conference. In addition, you are required to send the resolution of the case to OSI once a Faculty Conference is complete because OSI is the centralized location where student discipline files are kept at the Institute.

Do I have to confront the student?

No. If you are not comfortable speaking to the student about your concern, you can directly refer the incident to OSI. If you would prefer to speak to the student first, please do so. No two students or cases are the same; you need to approach the situation in a manner that is most comfortable for you.

Can the student continue to attend class? What do I do about the grade?

Yes, the student should be allowed to continue in the course. The student should be assigned a grade of "I" (Incomplete) for the assignment (and an "I" for the course, if end-of-term grades are due) until a resolution is reached, at which time you will need to submit a grade-change form.

Does the process require a lot of my time?

The amount of time involved varies depending on the position of the student and his or her approach to the case. The process requires that you document your concern and may involve a few conversations with OSI. Staff may need to consult with you about differences in the student's account of events and those submitted on the report. While uncommon, faculty members are occasionally required to attend a hearing regarding the case.

How long does this process take?

The length of time for completing the conduct process varies based on the facts and complexities of the case. Some cases may be handled in one meeting; other cases may take longer.

What are the possible sanctions assigned when a student is found responsible?

Typically, a student is assigned a grade penalty as well as a disciplinary sanction and an educational component. These sanctions are outlined in the [academic misconduct sanction guidelines](#), located on the OSI website.