

## **Harpur College Procedures for Graduate Student Academic Honesty Hearing Boards**

### **Introduction**

A first minor (Category I) violation of the Student Academic Honesty Code can be handled by the faculty member by requesting that the student sign the Harpur College Admission of Academic Dishonesty form describing the violation and specifying the in-course penalty. By signing it, the student admits to the dishonesty and accepts the penalty. In some cases, a student may not be eligible to sign an Admission of Dishonesty form for an academic honesty offense, either because they have violated the academic honesty code in a previous instance or because of the severity of the charge. A student may also refuse to sign the Admission of Dishonesty form. In cases where a student is not eligible or refuses to sign an Admission of Dishonesty form, a board hearing will be convened.

Academic honesty charges for Category II cases may be submitted by instructors, staff, or students to the Academic Honesty Committee Secretary ([honesty@binghamton.edu](mailto:honesty@binghamton.edu)) and must go to a hearing. The College defines a Category II case as a second violation of the Academic Honesty Code or a first violation deemed serious enough by the instructor to warrant a board hearing. Cases such as those involving academic dishonesty in qualifying exams, qualifying papers, theses, dissertations, or any other program-wide requirements will ordinarily be considered Category II violations; in these cases, the charge will be brought by the chair of the department or program director.

The Harpur College Dean's Office, working with the chair of the department or program director, or designee, convenes a departmental or program honesty hearing board (referred to as "Departmental Hearing Board") upon receipt of signed written charges and supporting evidence submitted by an instructor or staff member, by students who believe they have been unjustly accused of academic dishonesty, or by students who believe they have witnessed instances of academic dishonesty and who wish to bring this to the attention of the Harpur College Dean's Office ([honesty@binghamton.edu](mailto:honesty@binghamton.edu)).

Undergraduate students registered for a graduate-level course follow the undergraduate honesty procedures. Graduate students, including 4+1 graduate students who have earned their undergraduate degree, fall under the procedures outlined in this document.

### **Departmental Hearing Boards**

The chair of the department, program director, or their designee will choose three faculty members from the department or program affiliates who did not bring the charge, as well as a faculty member from an adjacent department, to serve on the Departmental Hearing Board.

A Departmental Hearing Board consists of these four Harpur College faculty members and a doctoral student representative, who is typically the Judicial Affairs Officer from the Graduate Student

Organization. If the Judicial Affairs Officer is not a Harpur College doctoral student or is from the same department as the student charged, the doctoral student serving on the Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee<sup>1</sup> will be appointed. The Departmental Hearing Board also includes a Parliamentarian and Secretary, appointed by the Dean of Harpur College. The Parliamentarian of the Departmental Hearing Board leads the meeting, advises on policy and procedure at the hearing, and facilitates the hearing process. The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes. The Parliamentarian and the Secretary serve as non-voting members.

Prior to the hearing, the Parliamentarian will gather information, witness statements, and supporting documents from the individual(s) alleging a Student Academic Honesty Code violation(s), referred to as “the charge.” The Parliamentarian will notify the student of the charge in writing in advance of the hearing and invite witnesses, as appropriate. Faculty members are required to maintain confidentiality regarding academic honesty cases. Discussions related to such cases should only occur when necessary and only with individuals directly involved with or responsible for handling the case until an adjudication is made by the Associate Dean, and thereafter only in relation to educational need.

Hearings conducted by the Departmental Hearing Board are closed. The student charged, the individual(s) bringing the charge, and the board are generally present. The quorum for the Board hearing to proceed is two departmental/program faculty members, one adjacent faculty member, and the graduate student representative. The student charged may opt to have a Binghamton University student, faculty, or staff member attend the hearing in an advisory capacity; advisors may only speak to the student charged and may not address the Board.

The Departmental Hearing Board makes a determination of whether a violation has occurred and, if so, the Departmental Hearing Board will issue a recommendation for the penalty/penalties, as referenced under the section entitled “Recommendations” below, and the Associate Dean appointed by the Dean to oversee academic honesty makes the final ruling on all cases.

### **Notification to the Student and Actions Prior to the Proceedings**

The Parliamentarian informs the student in writing that they are being charged with academic dishonesty. This written notification is sent within a reasonable time and with sufficient information to allow the student adequate time to prepare for the hearing. The notification includes the case information, the evidence, and the date, time, and location of the hearing, as well as a copy of these procedures. In the event a student charged fails to appear at their hearing, the hearing will proceed in the student’s absence as it may be reasonable to assume that the student received notification of the hearing.

The student charged has the right to request that all persons involved in the case be present at the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee is convened to oversee the academic honesty process for Harpur College undergraduate cases.*

hearing<sup>2</sup>. The student, the person bringing the charge, and the Board have the right to question witnesses.

The student charged may submit a statement in writing to the Parliamentarian for distribution to the Departmental Hearing Board no fewer than seven calendar days prior to the hearing. The student may identify faculty with a potential conflict of interest. The Parliamentarian will make the final determination on committee membership.

Hearings may be held remotely and individual participants may also attend remotely if the Parliamentarian determines that circumstances merit. If held remotely, hearings are closed, and are not to be recorded or shared.

### **Proceedings of Departmental Hearing Board Hearings**

Before the discussion begins, the Parliamentarian asks all participants in the hearing if they have received all the relevant case information and the information on honesty policies, and whether they have any questions regarding the hearing procedure.

The hearing consists of three parts. During the first two parts of the hearing, the Secretary shall keep a record with particularity to allow for review by the student and the Associate Dean. This record will be shared with the student charged upon final disposition of the case.

1. The person(s) bringing the case to the attention of the Board may discuss the circumstances and the evidence. The student charged may make a statement following the presentation of the charges.
2. The Departmental Hearing Board asks questions or seeks clarification from both parties. The person(s) bringing the case and the student charged may also question each other and exchange comments.

The student charged will have an opportunity to make a final statement. All participants, with the exception of the Departmental Hearing Board, are then excused from the hearing.

3. The Board continues to review the statements made during the first two parts of the hearing to discuss the evidence, to recommend a finding and, if necessary, a penalty. In order to allow a candid discussion, and because its conclusions are strictly advisory in nature, the summary of this part of the hearing is not released to the person bringing the charge or to the student charged. However, both receive a copy of the summary of parts one and two of the hearing and the Board's recommendation.

The Departmental Hearing Board's recommendation is based on a majority vote of those present, having considered the preponderance of evidence in the case. Other factors, such as an earlier record of dishonesty or any mitigating circumstances, may be considered when recommending a penalty. Board

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<sup>2</sup> *The Parliamentarian will choose whether or not to approve requests based on the individual's or individuals' pertinence to the case.*

members who differ with the majority vote may submit a minority opinion which becomes a part of the record. The Board's recommendation, along with the record of the open portion of the hearing, is sent to the Associate Dean.

### **Recommendations**

The Departmental Hearing Board may recommend one or more of the following findings and/or penalties to the Associate Dean:

1. There is not sufficient evidence to determine that the student has violated the Student Academic Honesty Code; **no penalty** is assigned.
2. The student has violated the Student Academic Honesty Code and is placed on **honesty probation**. The Departmental Hearing Board may recommend that a note be placed on the transcript regarding the honesty violation. **Transcript notation** starts immediately and the Hearing Board will recommend the duration thereof, not to exceed two years. After that period, the student must contact the university to request removal of the transcript notation. The student will receive instructions for this in the letter announcing the final disposition of the case.
3. The student has violated the Student Academic Honesty Code and may be **suspended** and denied course registration for a specified period of time depending on the seriousness of the violation. In the event that a graduating student is suspended, their degree conferral will be delayed for a specified period. The student will be permitted to finish any courses they are registered for at the time they receive the letter of disposition. Suspensions are noted on the student's transcript as soon as the decision is made. The student is suspended through the end of the main (Fall or Spring) semesters, and may not register for classes during any intervening period, such as Winter or Summer Session. The Hearing Board will recommend a length of time for the transcript notation, not to exceed two years. After that period, the student must contact the university to request removal of the transcript notation.
4. The student has violated the Student Academic Honesty Code and may be **expelled** and have no opportunity to return to Binghamton University. The student may or may not be allowed to finish any registered courses based on the departmental recommendation and the decision of the Associate Dean. If it is decided that the student may not complete the current semester, they will be withdrawn from their courses. Expulsions are noted on the student's transcript as soon as the decision is made. The student must contact the University for removal of the transcript notation two years after the date of the decision letter. The student is expelled from the University and will not be awarded a degree.
5. The student has violated the Student Academic Honesty Code by committing academic dishonesty in their thesis or dissertation. In addition to possible sanctions mentioned above, there may be **other sanctions** as deemed appropriate, including but not limited to requiring the student/graduate to revise and resubmit their thesis or dissertation for approval, and/or revocation of the degree<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Cases of revocation of degree are automatically referred by the Departmental Hearing Board directly to the Dean of the Graduate School for adjudication. These cases bypass the Harpur College Dean's Office.

### **Disposition of the Case**

Upon receipt and review of the case materials and the Departmental Hearing Board's recommendation, the Associate Dean reviews the findings of the Departmental Hearing Board, and any of its recommended penalties, to ensure their alignment with institutional norms and policies, before making a final adjudication on the case.

Within four weeks of the hearing, the Associate Dean sends a letter announcing the disposition of the case to the student, the person(s) who brought the charge, the Chair of the Department, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Parliamentarian. The Graduate School will be notified of the recommendation so that appropriate action can be taken.

The student is notified that a record of honesty violations is kept on file, and that further violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code may result in a more severe penalty. The student is also informed that this information will be released to other institutions should the student submit a written authorization for release of disciplinary information to law schools, medical schools, state bar committees, other professional licensing entities, etc. If the penalty includes transcript notation, the student will be provided with the earliest date by which they may request to have the notation removed. Records are kept in a confidential file for six years following the student's absence from the University whether as a graduate or not. Expulsion records are kept indefinitely.

The student may appeal the Associate Dean's decision and any penalty by submitting a written appeal and any supporting documentation to the Dean of Harpur College within 14 calendar days of the decision. Appeals are submitted to [honesty@binghamton.edu](mailto:honesty@binghamton.edu), and forwarded with the case file to the Dean of Harpur College.