

## ARTICLE I: PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

### *Section 1 - Graduate Honor Code*

The Graduate Honor Code establishes a standard of academic integrity. As such, this code demands a firm adherence to a set of values. In particular, the code is founded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Compliance with the Graduate Honor Code requires that *all* graduate students exercise honesty and ethical behavior in all their academic pursuits here at Virginia Tech, whether these undertakings pertain to study, course work, research, extension, or teaching.

It is recognized that graduate students have very diverse cultural backgrounds. In light of this, the term *ethical behavior* is defined as conforming to accepted professional standards of conduct, such as codes of ethics used by professional societies in the United States to regulate the manner in which their professions are practiced. The knowledge and practice of ethical behavior shall be the full responsibility of the student. Graduate students may, however, consult with their major professors, department heads, International Graduate Student Services, or the Graduate School for further information on what is expected of them.

More specifically, all graduate students, while being affiliated with Virginia Tech, shall abide by the standards established by Virginia Tech, as these are described in this Constitution. Graduate students, in accepting admission, indicate their willingness to subscribe to and be governed by the Graduate Honor Code and acknowledge the right of the University to establish policies and procedures and to take disciplinary action (including suspension or expulsion) when such action is warranted. Ignorance shall be no excuse for actions which violate the integrity of the academic community.

The fundamental beliefs underlying and reflected in the Graduate Honor Code are that (1) to trust in a person is a positive force in making a person worthy of trust, (2) to study, perform research, and teach in an environment that is free from the inconveniences and injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty is a right of every graduate student, and (3) to live by an Honor System, which places a positive emphasis on honesty as a means of protecting this right, is consistent with, and a contribution to, the University's quest for truth.

### *Section 2 - Implementation*

The Graduate Honor System was established to implement the Graduate Honor Code, and its functions shall be:

1. To promote honesty and ethical behavior in all academic pursuits, including, but not limited to, study, research, teaching, and extension.
2. To disseminate information concerning the Graduate Honor System to all new graduate students, faculty, and other interested parties.
3. To investigate all suspected violations of the Graduate Honor Code in an impartial, thorough, and unbiased manner.
4. To try all cases involving academic infractions of the Graduate Honor Code brought before the System.
5. To assure that the rights of all involved parties are protected and assure due process in all proceedings.

### *Section 3 - Violations*

All forms of academic work including, but not limited to, course work, labwork, thesis or dissertation work, research, teaching, and extension performed by any graduate student enrolled on a part-time or full-time basis under any of the admission categories listed in the Virginia Tech Graduate Catalog shall be subject to the stipulations of the Graduate Honor Code. Violations of the Graduate Honor Code are categorized as follows: Cheating, Plagiarism, Falsification, and Academic Sabotage. Violations are defined as follows:

1. *Cheating*: Cheating is defined as the giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid, assistance, or unfair advantage in any form of academic work. Cheating applies to the products of all forms of academic work. These products include, but are not limited to, in-class tests, take-home tests, lab assignments, problem sets, term papers, research projects, theses, dissertations, preliminary and qualifying examinations given for the fulfillment of graduate degrees, or any other work assigned by an instructor or professor, graduate committee, or department that pertains to graduate work or degrees.

Any student giving or receiving unauthorized information concerning a test, quiz, or examination shall be guilty of an Honor Code violation. Submitting work that counts towards the student's grade or degree which is not the sole product of that student's individual effort shall be considered cheating, unless, for example, the professor explicitly allows group work, use of out-of-class materials, or other forms of collective or cooperative efforts. In general, all academic work shall be done in accordance with the requirements specified by the instructor or professor. In the absence of specific allowances or instructions by the professor, students shall assume that all work must be done individually.

Some uses of permanently returned, graded material ("koofers") are cheating violations of the Code. By permanently returning graded materials, a faculty member or instructor demonstrates the intent that these materials should be accessible to all students. Such materials may be used for study purposes, such as preparing for tests or other assignments, and other uses explicitly allowed by the professor or course instructor. Once test questions have been handed out, koofers may not be used. Other specific examples of the illegal use of koofers include, but are not limited to, using koofers during closed-book exams, handing in any type of copy (e.g., a photocopy or a transcribed copy) of someone else's work (partial or complete) from a previous term, and copying a current answer key or one that was handed out in a previous term. Students may not copy and hand in as their own work answers taken from any kind of koofer. When in doubt of what may or may not be used, students should consult with the course instructor. In the absence of specific instructions concerning koofers from the instructor, students shall assume that all submitted work must be the product of their own efforts.

2. *Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating, and is defined as the copying of the language, structure, idea, and/or thoughts of another and claiming or attempting to imply that it is one's own original work. It also includes the omitting of quotation marks when references are copied directly, improper paraphrasing (see Appendix: Plagiarism, p. 16), or inadequate referencing of sources. Sources used in preparing assignments for classes, theses, dissertations, manuscripts for publication, and other academic work should be documented in the text and in a reference list, or as directed by the instructor or professor. Sources requiring referencing include, but are not limited to, information received from other persons that would not normally be considered common knowledge (Plagiarism), computer programs designed or written by another person, experimental data collected by someone else, graded permanently-returned materials such as term papers or other out-of-class assignments (koofers), as well as published sources. A more detailed discussion of plagiarism may be found at the end of this document under Plagiarism.
3. *Falsification:* Students who falsify, orally, in writing, or via electronic media, any circumstance relevant to their academic work shall be guilty of a violation of this Code. Included are such actions as forgery of official signatures, tampering with official records or documents, fraudulently adding or deleting information on academic documents, fraudulently changing an examination or testing period or due date of an assignment, and the unauthorized accessing of someone else's computer

account or files. Violations also include willfully giving an improper grade or neglecting to properly grade submitted material, improperly influencing the results of course evaluations, and knowingly including false data or results in any paper or report submitted for a grade, as a degree requirement, or for publication.

4. *Academic Sabotage:* Academic sabotage is purposeful vandalism directed against any academic endeavor or equipment. It includes, but is not limited to, the destruction or theft of written material, laboratory or field experiments, equipment used in teaching or research, or computer files or programs. Unauthorized tampering with computer programs or systems shall constitute a violation. Academic sabotage includes deliberately crashing or attempting to crash a computer system or the use of files intended to cause or actually causing computer systems to behave atypically, thereby impeding another person's or group's efforts. In particular, knowingly infecting any system with a virus, worm, time bomb, trap door, Trojan horse, or any other kind of invasive program shall be considered a serious violation. Note that violations under this category may also lead to University judicial action or to criminal suits charged by the University.

*Misconduct in research and teaching* deserves special mention in the Code since it is an area of special interest to graduate students. It is not a separate violation category since it may involve cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and/or academic sabotage as discussed above. *Misconduct in research* does not include those factors intrinsic to the process of research, such as honest error, conflicting data, or differences in interpretation concerning data or experimental design. Likewise, *misconduct in teaching* does not include honest disagreement over the method of presentation of instructional material to a class or in the evaluation of the performance of a student. Research misconduct allegations may also be investigated by the Virginia Tech Office of Research Integrity.

#### **Section 4 - Composition**

The Graduate Honor System shall consist of an Advisor, a Chief Justice, one or more Investigators, GHS Facilitators, an Investigative Board, and a Judicial Panel. The Dean (or designee) of the Graduate School shall be responsible for the continued operation of the System. Appointment of Graduate Honor System personnel shall be made in accordance with Article XI, Section 7.