I. University of South Carolina Honor Code

It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina Columbia to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this Honor Code or who knowingly assists another to violate this Honor Code shall be subject to discipline.

The Law School and Medical School have a long-standing history of high academic integrity standards grounded in the ethical obligations of their professions. As such, the Medical School and Law School may adopt procedural rules different from procedures set forth in this current code, but should still report any results to the Office of Academic Integrity.

A. General Provisions and Definitions

The USC Honor Code is the university’s policy regarding incidents involving academic integrity. The Honor Code codifies the values espoused in the tenets of the Carolinian Creed (http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed/).

This Honor Code applies to all students of the University of South Carolina Columbia.

1. A “Student” is defined as any person who is admitted, enrolled or registered for study at the University of South Carolina for any academic period. Persons who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing student relationship with, or an educational interest in, the University of South Carolina are considered “students”. A person shall also be considered a student when the person is attending or participating in any activity preparatory to the beginning of school including, but not limited to, orientation, placement testing, and residence hall check-in.

2. An “Instructor of Record” is defined as the individual designated by the academic
3. A “Dean” is defined as the Dean of a school or college offering the academic program in which the alleged violation occurred or his or her designee.

4. The “Director of Academic Integrity” is defined as the Director or any member of the Office of Academic Integrity designated by the Director.

5. A “College Committee” is defined as the group of faculty and students who hear cases of alleged violations of the Honor Code. It is composed of faculty members selected from a pool of faculty from the college where the alleged violation occurred designated by the Dean of the College and students from the College and/or the Carolina Judicial Council. Faculty members are appointed annually by the Dean, and student members are selected annually according to the guidelines set in the Constitution of the Carolina Judicial Council, or students may be appointed by the Dean of the College.

6. The “University Committee on Academic Responsibility” shall consider appeals of cases decided by the college academic responsibility committees when any party to the case formally appeals on grounds set forth in the University Academic Disciplinary Procedures. This committee shall perform any other functions provided for in the Academic Disciplinary Procedures. This committee consists of five faculty members, two undergraduate students, and two graduate students. (University of South Carolina Faculty Manual)

7. The “Office of Academic Integrity” is the office responsible for managing all administrative functions relating to complaints and allegations of Honor Code violations including investigations, making recommendations to the Dean, coordinating College Committee hearings, and convening the College Committee.

8. An “academic program” is defined as any graduate or undergraduate course, independent study or research for academic credit, laboratory, internship, externship, clinical program, practicum, field placement, or other form of study or work offered in furtherance of the academic mission of the university. Academic work includes any work performed or assigned to be performed in connection with any academic program.

9. This Honor Code is intended to encourage honesty and prohibit all forms of academic dishonesty and should be interpreted broadly to carry out that purpose. The following examples illustrate conduct that violates this Honor Code, but this list is not intended to be an exhaustive compilation of conduct prohibited by the Honor Code:

a. Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or attempting to give or
receive such assistance, in connection with the performance of any academic work.

b. Unauthorized use of materials or information of any type or the unauthorized use of any electronic or mechanical device in connection with the completion of any academic work.

c. Unauthorized Access to the contents of any test or examination or the purchase, sale, or theft of any test or examination prior to its administration.

d. Use of another person’s work or ideas without proper acknowledgment of source.

e. Intentional misrepresentation by word or action of any situation of fact, or intentional omission of material fact, so as to mislead any person in connection with any academic work (including, without limitation, the scheduling, completion, performance, or submission of any such work).

f. Offering or giving any favor or thing of value for the purpose of influencing improperly a grade or other evaluation of a student in an academic program.

g. Conduct intended to interfere with an instructor’s ability to evaluate accurately a student’s competency or performance in an academic program.

Whenever a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate this Honor Code, it is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member or instructor of record prior to engaging in such conduct.

B. Investigation of Complaints – Office of Academic Integrity

Upon receiving a report of an alleged violation of the Honor Code, the Director of Academic Integrity will review the report and relevant evidence, and has the duty to investigate and consult with relevant parties regarding the incident in question. The Director will consult with the Dean to determine if the evidence warrants a charge. The Dean will ultimately determine whether a charge is warranted. If a charge is warranted, the Office of Academic Integrity will send written notification to the charged student indicating what sections of the Honor Code were allegedly violated.

C. Options and Resolution Procedures for Allegations of Violations of the Honor Code

Students who have violated the University of South Carolina Honor Code are subject to both academic and non-academic penalties.
1. Outcomes of the initial meeting with the student.

When an instructor of record or the Director of Academic Integrity meets initially with a student regarding an allegation of a Honor Code violation, there are four possible outcomes of that meeting:

a. Student does not contest the allegation(s) or sanctions. If a student does not contest the allegation(s) of a Honor Code violation, please see section C 3 for procedures for resolution.

b. Student does not contest the allegation(s), but contests the sanctions. If a student only contests the sanctions of a Honor Code violation, please see section C 4 for procedures for resolution.

c. Student contests allegations. If a student contests the allegation(s), please see section C 4 for procedures for resolution.

d. Allegation is dismissed by the Dean.


a. Academic Resolution

The instructor of record will determine the academic evaluation of the student’s work and any academic penalty if necessary. The student should have the opportunity to discuss with the instructor of record any academic penalty that may be applied. All allegations must be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity for investigation. Faculty should notify students that they are being referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.

b. Non-Academic Resolution

A non-academic resolution is the disciplinary punishment imposed by the university, which may be in addition to any grade penalty. All allegations must be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity for investigation. The instructor of record may also make a recommendation to the Office of Academic Integrity regarding non-academic sanctions (see Section E). The student will have the opportunity to meet with the Director of Academic Integrity to determine the nature of the recommended non-academic penalty, if any.

At the conclusion of the meeting between the charged student and the Director, the Director will recommend to the Dean either:

1) to dismiss the charges if they are unsupported by evidence, or
2) to resolve the charges through an Informal Administrative Hearing or a College Committee Hearing as listed in #3 and #4 below.

The final determination will be made by the Dean. This matter may also be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct for additional disciplinary action, if appropriate.

If the charged student fails to meet with Director, a hold may be placed on the student’s registration preventing him/her from registering for future classes until the matter is resolved. Any student who has an outstanding Honor Code allegation cannot graduate until the matter has been resolved.

3. Informal Administrative Hearing

An Informal Administrative Hearing is an informal conference with the Director of Academic Integrity, pending final approval by the Dean. An informal administrative hearing allows the charged student to present evidence for consideration and suggest witnesses that the Director may consider interviewing before a recommendation is rendered. The Director may contact other parties who have knowledge/information regarding the incident in question. The charged student waives the right to question such parties or otherwise participate in these meetings. Informal administrative hearings are not to be recorded without permission of the Office of Academic Integrity. After investigation the Director will make a recommendation to the Dean regarding findings and sanctions.

Upon receiving approval from the Dean, the Director will send the charged student a letter indicating the finding and any sanctions imposed, with copies to the appropriate Dean and instructor of record. If the Dean does not approve of the resolution, the Dean will refer the matter to a College Committee.

4. College Committee Hearing

A College Committee Hearing is a formal hearing before the College Committee. A case can be referred to the College Committee for one of four reasons:

a. there is a material question of fact that cannot be resolved by the Director or the Dean of the College.

b. the charged student does not wish to resolve the matter informally.

c. the charged student contests the sanctions of their Honor Code violation that were offered in an Informal Administrative Hearing.

 d. the Dean does not approve the Informal Administrative Hearing resolution.
Within ten (10) business days of the hearing, barring special circumstances requiring an extension of this time limit, the College Committee or designee will send the charged student a letter which indicates the finding of “Responsible” or “Not Responsible” for the charges and any sanctions imposed.

NOTE: Should a charged student fail to appear for a College Committee Hearing, that student will be considered to have waived his/her right to represent him/herself in the hearing and a decision will be made in his/her absence.

5. Composition of College Committee

The College Committee is composed of faculty members selected from a pool of faculty from the college where the alleged violation occurred designated by the Dean of the College and students from the College and/or the Carolina Judicial Council. Faculty members are appointed annually by the Dean, and student members are selected annually according to the guidelines set in the Constitution of the Carolina Judicial Council, or may be appointed by the Dean of the College.

For a hearing, the College Committee shall consist of at least five (5) members: three (3) faculty members selected from the pool designated by the Dean of the College; and two (2) students selected from the College and/or the Carolina Judicial Council.

D. Findings

The outcome of an informal administrative hearing or a College Committee Hearing will be one of the following:

1. Responsible: The College Committee or Dean determined by a preponderance of the evidence ("...more likely than not") that a violation of the Honor Code occurred.

2. Not Responsible: Insufficient evidence exists to warrant a responsible finding.

3. For Information Only (FIO): This finding is ONLY available in an informal administrative hearing. An FIO finding indicates that the record of the alleged offense is for internal USC Office of Academic Integrity records only, and will not be shared without consent to anyone outside the USC system.

E. Sanctions

1. The academic evaluation of all work remains the purview of the instructor of record. However, an instructor of record who issues an academic penalty when an informal administrative hearing or College Committee hearing issues a finding of “Not Responsible” should be aware that such penalty may be subject to University Policy STAF 6.30 Grievance Policy -
2. The College Committee or the Dean is the final authority for the imposition of sanctions for violations of this Code. The following sanctions may be imposed upon a student found to have violated the Honor Code:

a. Expulsion from the University. This is dismissal from the University without the ability to apply for re-admittance.

b. Suspension from the University for a period of no less than one semester. Suspension is denial of enrollment, attendance, and other privileges at the University for a specified period of time. Permission to apply for re-admission upon termination of the period may be granted with or without conditions/restrictions. Students may be required to complete a period of disciplinary probation upon their return to the University.

NOTE: Any student suspended or expelled for disciplinary reasons must vacate the campus within the period of time noted in the notice of suspension. The student may not return to campus or University property during the term of the suspension without prior written permission by the Director of Academic Integrity or designee.

c. Probation. A period of review and observation during which a student is under official notice that subsequent violations of the Honor Code are likely to result in a more severe sanction including suspension or expulsion from the University.

d. Written Warning (first offense only). An official reprimand that makes the misconduct a matter of record in University files. Any further misconduct could result in further disciplinary action.

e. “X” on the transcript before a grade denoting an Honor Code Violation.

f. Academic Integrity Workshop. This sanction may be offered by the Office of Academic Integrity. It is a four-week workshop (meeting once per week) and may be offered twice per semester. The Office of Academic Integrity will notify the Deans and College Committees when such workshops will be available.

g. Online Academic Integrity Seminar. This sanction may be offered for students who are not on campus. The student sanctioned is responsible for the cost of this seminar which is $100.
h. Research Project. This sanction typically should be assigned for the educational benefit of the student and should be related to academic integrity or ethics on the whole or in the discipline in which the offense occurred. They will be monitored by the Office of Academic Integrity.

i. A combination of the above sanctions.

3. The sanctioning of an “X” before a grade (e.g. “XF”) is intended to denote an Honor Code violation in the course. The University reserves the right to place this denotation on classes whether there is a grade assigned for the class or not (e.g. where a student withdraws from the class and receives a “W” or “WF”). The grade assigned by the instructor shall be recorded on the student’s transcript with the notation “violation of the USC Honor Code”. The grade shall be treated in the same way as any grade would be for the purposes of Grade Point Average, course repeatability, and determination of academic standing.

a. The sanctioning of an “X” will be given in the most serious breaches of academic dishonesty, as well as all second academic dishonesty offenses. These more serious breaches involve premeditation, conspiracy and/or intent to deceive, and deliberate failure to comply with assignment(s) directions. Sanctioning of an “X” will be determined by the Dean or the designated College Committee.

b. The student may submit a written petition to the Office of Academic Integrity to have the “X” removed and permanently replaced with the assigned grade. The Office of Academic Integrity will notify the original hearing officer or body and other relevant parties of the petition submission within 10 days of receipt of the petition. The decision to remove the “X” and replace it with the assigned grade only shall rest in the discretion and judgment of the original hearing officer or body; provided that:

1) at the time the petition is received, at least twelve months shall have elapsed since the “X” was imposed, and,

2) at the time the petition is received, the student shall have successfully completed a non-credit Academic Integrity Workshop, as administered by the Office of Academic Integrity; or, for the person no longer enrolled at the University, an equivalent activity as determined by the Office of Academic Integrity; and,

3) the Office of Academic Integrity certifies that to the best of its knowledge the student has not been found responsible for any other act of academic dishonesty or similar disciplinary offense
at the University of South Carolina or another institution.

When these conditions are met and the original hearing officer or body so directs, the Dean will instruct the Registrar to remove the “X” from the transcript leaving no past evidence of the “X”.

A prior violation will be treated as a significant aggravating factor in determining the appropriate sanction for a subsequent offense.

The sanctions provided for in this Section are intended to be disciplinary, and nothing in these procedures, including the imposition of any sanction, shall be interpreted to limit the academic authority of an instructor to determine an appropriate grade for a student who has violated the Honor Code.

It shall be the responsibility of the Office of Academic Integrity to notify proper University offices of the suspension or expulsion of a student.

F. Appeals

All sanctions determined by the College Committee shall remain in place during the appeals process. An “appeal” of an Informal Administrative Hearing will be considered a request for a College Committee hearing. All exceptions to this policy shall be at the discretion of the Dean.

1. Grounds for Appeal. The charged student may appeal the decision to the University Committee on Academic Responsibility on any or all of the following grounds:

   a. that deviations from procedural rules had significantly prejudiced the findings of the College Committee;

   b. that there is new evidence, which was not available at the time of the hearing and which would significantly impact the finding of the original hearing.

2. Notice of Appeal. A student appealing the finding of the College Committee must notify the Office of Academic Integrity in writing no later than ten (10) business days after the receipt of the letter indicating the findings of the College Committee. The student should set forth the specific ground (s) of the appeal. The Office of Academic Integrity will notify all relevant parties, including the Chair of the University Committee, regarding the appeal within ten (10) business days and will compose a response memorandum.

3. Consideration of Appeal. The University Committee on Academic Responsibility shall meet to consider the matter of appeal within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the appeal. The University Committee on Academic Responsibility shall issue a written decision that either:
a. the decision of the College Committee has been affirmed in its entirety; or

b. the case is remanded to the College Committee with a clear statement of specific reasons for further proceedings and with directives to attend to procedural errors or new evidence.

The Chair of the University Committee on Academic Responsibility shall send copies of the written decision to the appealing student and the Office of Academic Integrity within ten (10) business days (barring exigent circumstances) of the Committee meeting. The Office of Academic Integrity will forward copies to the appropriate parties within ten (10) business days (barring exigent circumstances).

G. Procedures for College Committee Hearings

When a case is referred to the College Committee for a hearing, the Office of Academic Integrity shall set a date and location for the hearing and notify the charged student, the Committee, and relevant witnesses and participants.

H. Rules Governing Committee Hearings

1. Hearings shall be considered closed and confidential and are subject to FERPA. All statements, information, or comments given during hearings shall be held in strictest confidence by Committee members, University staff, witnesses, advisors, and observers before, during, and after deliberation in keeping with relevant law and policy. Video, audio, stenographic, or photographic recording of hearing proceedings are prohibited, except as authorized by the Office of Academic Integrity.

2. If any material facts are in dispute, relevant testimony of witnesses and other evidence shall be heard. The Dean, Director, or designee and the College Committee may call and question witnesses. Character witnesses and/or testimony of character not directly relevant to the incident are not permitted.

3. A student charged with a violation of the Honor Code is responsible for presenting his/her own case. Advisors (including attorneys) are not permitted to speak for the student or to participate directly in the hearing.

4. The Chair of the Committee, with the assistance of the Dean, Director or designee, will exercise control over the hearing to avoid needless consumption of time through repetition of information and/or to prevent the harassment or intimidation of participants. Any member of the Committee may require the Committee to go into private session to discuss and decide a matter by majority vote. The Chair can recess the hearing at any time. The Chair of the Committee shall ensure that all procedures are appropriately followed.
5. The charged student, the Dean, Director or designee, and the Committee members shall have the right, within reasonable time limits set by the Chair, to present questions for witnesses who testify orally.

6. All hearings shall be conducted in an informal manner, and technical rules of evidence will not be applied. Witnesses (except for the charged student) shall be present during a hearing only during the time they are testifying.

7. The charged student shall have access to examine any evidence and has a right to review documentary evidence and summaries of likely witness testimony at least three (3) days before the hearing, barring exigent circumstances. The charged student shall provide the Office of Academic Integrity with copies of relevant evidence, statements, and a list of witnesses no less than three (3) days prior to the date of the hearing. A statement summarizing the relevant testimony of all witnesses must accompany the witness list. The Office of Academic Integrity reserves the right to limit the witness list. The Office of Academic Integrity reserves the right to prohibit the presentation of any witness testimony not submitted within these guidelines.

8. If the charged student chooses not to attend the Committee hearing, the Committee will proceed with the hearing without the student’s participation.

9. An audio or video recording of the hearing shall be kept by the Office of Academic Integrity until any appeal has been concluded, or ninety (90) days from the date of the hearing, whichever is longer. No typed record shall be required. The charged student and advisor shall have the right, upon request, to listen to the recording in the presence of a staff member from the Office of Academic Integrity.

10. The charged student may request a duplicate copy of the recording at his/her own expense within a period of ninety (90) days from the date of the hearing.

11. After all information has been presented, the Committee shall meet in private to deliberate the case and reach its decision regarding responsibility. Decisions of the Committee must be by majority vote. If the student is found “Responsible” of violating the Honor Code, the Committee will hear any information concerning any past infractions by the student, which will be provided by the Director. The Committee will then deliberate in private to determine appropriate sanctions.

a. The Director shall be responsible for forwarding the written decision of the College Committee to the charged student. The letter from the College Committee shall consist of: findings of the College Committee;
I. Provisions for Charged students

The following provisions apply to participants in all hearing processes conducted by the University or conducted by the University’s delegated authority. Each individual charged with Honor Code violations has the following rights that are protected throughout the hearing process.

1. The right to be notified in writing of the charges against him/her with sufficient time to prepare for a hearing. In the event that additional charges are brought, a further written notice must be forwarded to the student. The charged student may waive the right to separate written notice of additional charges in order to expedite the hearing process.

2. The right to be notified of the date, time, and place of formal hearings at least three (3) University business days prior to the hearing.

3. The right to know the nature and source of the evidence used in a hearing process. This includes the right upon the student’s request to review all documents and exhibits to be introduced at a hearing as well as a list of witnesses asked to testify at the hearing.

4. The right to present evidence on his or her own behalf. A person’s knowledge or intent may be inferred from the circumstances of an alleged violation.

5. The right to elect not to appear at the hearing, in which case the hearing shall be conducted in the absence of the charged student.

6. The right to refuse to answer any questions or to make a statement. However, the hearing authority may draw inferences from this refusal.

7. The right to question witnesses. The Committee may rule on the relevance of these questions.

8. The right to be accompanied by an advisor throughout the hearing process. An advisor may be any person chosen by the charged student so long as that person is not involved in the incident in any way (witness, etc.). The advisor, with the written permission of the charged student, may:
   a. advise the charged regarding preparation for the hearing;
   b. accompany the charged to all proceedings;
   c. have access to evidence to be introduced at the hearing.
NOTE: Advisors are not permitted to participate directly in the hearing process or to speak for the charged student.

J. Retention of Honor Code Records

1. Records pertaining to Honor Code violations will be retained by the Office of Academic Integrity.

2. Records pertaining to Honor Code violations that have been resolved with a sanction less than suspension or expulsion for graduate students will be retained by the Office of Academic Integrity for six years after graduation or six years after the last date of enrollment.

3. Records pertaining to Honor Code violations that have been resolved with a sanction less than suspension or expulsion for undergraduate students will be retained by the Office of Academic Integrity for six years from the last day of the spring semester of the academic year of the offense.

K. Effective Date

This Honor Code shall take effect on August 24, 2010, and shall govern all proceedings commenced on or after that date. Proceedings commenced prior to the effective date shall continue to be conducted in compliance with procedural rules in effect at the time the proceedings commenced.

II. Related Policies

University Policy STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct
http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staff626.pdf

University Policy STAF 6.30 Grievance Policy--Academic
http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staff630.pdf

III. Reason for Revision

Policy reviewed for accuracy October 2016; no substantive changes needed.