

Preparing for a Hearing Panel Guide for Students

This information is provided to help you prepare for an Undergraduate Honor System hearing panel. This guide is supplemental to the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual which details the Undergraduate Honor System hearing panel process. This guide does not replace information located in the Undergraduate Honor Code manual. You are encouraged to read the Undergraduate Honor Code manual thoroughly. If you have questions or concerns not addressed in this guide, you are encouraged to schedule a meeting with a member of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity's (OUAI) staff.

A student who is referred to the Undergraduate Honor System for an alleged violation of the Undergraduate Honor Code may contest the allegations of academic misconduct by requesting a hearing panel. The hearing panel is an educational meeting, not a court of law or legal proceeding. The purpose of the Undergraduate Honor Code hearing panel is to determine the facts of the case, to use the preponderance of evidence standard to determine if a violation of the Undergraduate Honor Code did or did not occur, and, if a violation did occur, to determine an appropriate sanction that will facilitate learning and hopefully prevent subsequent violations.

Hearing Panel Information

_____ I understand that The Undergraduate Honor System hearing panel consists of student and faculty panel members, with students carrying the majority vote. These hearing panels typically last about an hour and a half, but can last up to two hours.

_____ I understand that the hearing panel will be chaired by one non-voting student chairperson.

_____ I understand that the purpose of the hearing is not to review alleged grievances of the process. The purpose is to evaluate the case and determine whether it is more likely than not that an honor code violation occurred.

_____ I understand that all hearing panels will be recorded and kept on file with the OUAI.

_____ I understand that each case received in the OUAI stands on its own merit

_____ I understand that if I have a prior violation, that case will not be shared with panel members until a decision of responsibility is made on my current case.

Preparing for a Hearing

_____ I understand I may not drop or withdraw from a course if there is a pending accusation for violating the Undergraduate Honor Code.

_____ I understand that if the paperwork to drop or withdraw from a class has already been processed, I will be administratively re-enrolled.

_____ I understand that I have the opportunity to schedule a pre-hearing panel meeting with a professional staff member in the OUAI to address any questions or concerns that I may have.

_____ I understand that I will have the opportunity to review the case file. This information will be provided to me at least 2 class days prior to the hearing panel.

_____ I understand that the case file, and any submitted evidence will be provided in hard copy form to all panel members, myself, and the course instructor.

Advisor/Witness(s)/Evidence

_____ I understand that I may have an advisor present with me during the hearing. This advisor must have a valid Hokie Passport to sit in the room.

_____ I understand that my advisor may not speak to the panel during the hearing.

_____ I understand that the course instructor may bring a witness(s) to support the charges.

_____ I understand that I may bring a witness(s) to the hearing. The names of any witness(s) must be submitted at **least 2 class days** prior to the hearing.

_____ I understand that I may submit evidence to support my case. This evidence must be submitted at **least 2-class days** prior to the hearing.

_____ I understand that character references will not be considered.

Order of Hearing

1. The chairperson will ask the hearing panel members to introduce themselves.
2. The chairperson will read the charges.
3. The chairperson will ask the accused student to make a plea in response to the charges. The student may plead responsible, not responsible, or no plea.
4. The chairperson will ask the course instructor who is leveling the charge to give a brief overview of the events that led him/her to report the student for an alleged Honor Code violation. Information presented may include testimony of witnesses and supporting information on the charges.
5. The chairperson will ask the accused student(s) to give a brief overview of the events concerning the alleged Honor Code violation. Information presented may include testimony of witnesses and supporting information against the charges.
6. After opening statements, the hearing panel is open for examination and question by panel members.
7. The course instructor and student(s) have the opportunity to ask questions of each other.
8. All witnesses will be called separately and may not hear each other's testimony. Panel members, course instructors and the accused student have the opportunity to ask questions of all parties.
9. The course instructor will be asked by the chairperson if they have any additional information or comments that they would like to present to the hearing panel.
10. The student will be asked by the chairperson if they have any additional information or comments they would like to present. The student will be given the final word prior to deliberation.

_____ *I have read the above steps and understand the order of the hearing panel*

Deliberation Process

- The hearing panel will go into a closed session to determine if the student is responsible for a violation of the Undergraduate Honor Code. If the student is responsible, the hearing panel must then determine the appropriate sanction. These deliberations will be closed to all but the members of the hearing panel, non-voting chairperson and non-voting members of the OUAL.
- The decision regarding whether a student is responsible or not responsible is made using the standard of "more likely than not" that a violation of the Honor Code has occurred.
- The Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity will notify the student in writing of the hearing panel's decision and sanctions (if the student is found responsible), normally within two business days after the hearing.
- Notification of the hearing panel's decision is sent to all parties involved in the case, including the student, the faculty member/instructor, the student's department head, the faculty member's department head, the student's dean(s), and the University Registrar.

_____ *I have read the above information and understand the hearing panel deliberation process*

Sanctioning

_____ I understand that the University's recommended sanction for academic misconduct is an F* as the student's final course grade. This may be more severe than what was recommended by the instructor.

_____ I understand that the University's recommended sanction for a second offense of academic misconduct is expulsion.

Hearing Tips

- Take the process seriously and prepare carefully. Remember that this is a professional meeting, and you should present yourself in a professional manner. Do not behave in an argumentative or disrespectful manner. If this occurs, you may be asked to leave, with a decision made in your absence.
- Tell the truth. You are expected to be honest at all times. Providing false representations to the University in any form, written or verbal, is considered as a violation of University regulations and may result in a subsequent Honor Code violation.
- Remember that intention is not related to acts that are violations. Even if you did not realize that your actions constituted a violation, the actions themselves are what a determination of responsibility will be made from- not your intentions. Your intentions, or lack thereof, may be considered during the sanctioning portion of the deliberation process.
- Do not be afraid to speak up, ask questions or ask for clarification if you do not understand a question or comment.
- The chairperson and/or a member of the OUAJ staff will be present to ensure that the hearing panel proceedings follow the appropriate guidelines, to answer procedural questions, to provide background information when needed, to ensure that the hearing deliberations are free of bias, and to assist participants of the hearing. These individuals do not have a vote nor do they make a determination of whether or not the student is responsible for academic misconduct and/or the appropriate sanction.
- Take notes during the hearing panel so that you can recall specific points to which you disagree with. It is acceptable to question the information brought before the hearing panel. Discuss your side thoroughly, but avoid relating irrelevant information. Be sure your statements contain information that supports why you believe that an Honor Code violation did not occur or why a lesser sanction is warranted. The Chairperson may redirect you if you get off topic or are discussing matters that are not relevant to the discussion at hand.

By signing, I acknowledge that I have read the above document and understand the hearing panel process. If I would like to talk to someone about the panel process, I understand that I can contact the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity at 540-231-9876 to schedule an appointment.

Student Signature

Date

OUAJ Representative

Date