

GSBS HONOR CODE

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GSBS students are embarking on a career in a profession that requires high standards of ethical conduct and honesty of its members. The Honor Code is designed to communicate the importance and meaning of the ethical standards and to provide a structure in order to deal with any violations.

In accepting admission to the Graduate School of Biomedical Science (GSBS), students make a personal commitment to abide by an Honor Code exemplifying a standard of behavior that will form a firm basis of future professional conduct as well as respecting the academic environment of the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS). Each student, upon admission to the University, will sign a document attesting to the fact that he/she understands the Honor Code and will abide by it.

The Honor Code applies to all aspects of the graduate student's education, including coursework and research. All student behavior that shows a lack of intellectual honesty or integrity is a violation of the Honor Code. Violations of the Code are categorized, but are not limited, as follows:

- Cheating – the giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid, assistance, or unfair advantage in any form of academic work. Group work authorized by the professor is excluded from this definition. It should be assumed that all work is individual effort unless stipulated as group work by the instructor.
- Plagiarism – the copying of the language, structure, data, idea, and/or thought of another and implying, through the omission of citations, that it is one's own original work.
- Falsification – by written, oral, or electric media, any circumstance relevant to curricular work or research.
- Academic sabotage – any vandalism directed against any academic endeavor. This includes purposeful interference with the ability of a colleague to complete a curricular or research activity.
- Misuse of UMMS/UMMHC or other computer or technological resources.
- Forgery, fraud, falsification of or unauthorized access to an official document or form.
- Failure to report an Honor Code violation by another student.
- Unprofessional conduct– any other behavior considered below the standards of the profession.

All students are required to abide by the [UMMS Policy on Scientific Misconduct](#). If a violation is believed to involve scientific misconduct, the allegations will be handled by the institutional Research Integrity Officer as detailed here:

https://www.umassp.edu/sites/umassp.edu/files/content/policies/board/academic/Policy_on_Responsible_Conduct_of_Research_and_Scholarly_Activities_7-24-12.pdf

Safety issues are handled by the Department of Public Safety in cooperation with GSBS

and any other relevant Department.

Honor Code Violation Review Process

An Honor Code violation review process is established to deal with violations in a fair, honest, confidential, and just way. These are not civil or criminal proceedings and are not modeled after them. Instead, it is a self-review by members of this academic institution; discussions by all parties involved shall be honest, full, confidential, and conducted in good faith.

While there is not a statute of limitations regarding the reporting of Honor Code violations, reports of Honor Code violations must be made in writing to the GSBS Dean as soon as they are discovered. The report will include the names of the student(s) involved, nature of the alleged violation, time, place, and date of the alleged violation, statement of the facts of the case, and names of others having knowledge of the allegation.

Upon receipt of the honor code violation report, the Dean will charge the Associate Dean or the Associate Dean's designee to arrange a meeting with the reporter and a subsequent meeting with the accused to discuss the allegations. The accused will be informed in writing of the allegations made against him/her. The Associate Dean may meet with other relevant parties as warranted. The Associate Dean may also request access to relevant physical evidence. These meetings should take place within 5 academic days from the date the report was received by the Dean. The Associate Dean will issue a letter informing the accused of the findings of this primary investigation.

- The Associate Dean will convene an Honor Board hearing, unless the student specifically declines and withdraws from the GSBS.
- The Associate Dean shall inform the accused of the Honor Board process by outlining a timetable for: Honor Board Hearing, Finding Review, and Notification of Finding and Action. The Honor Board will convene within two to four weeks of the Associate Dean's meeting with the accused.
- The Honor Board will review allegations of misconduct by independently interviewing those making the allegations and the accused.
- Should additional but related allegations against the accused emerge from the interview process, the Honor Board will inform the Dean and the Associate Dean in writing. The Associate Dean will inform the accused in writing of the additional allegations and will subsequently interview the accused to review these new allegations. Any additional honor code violations will be communicated to the accused and to the Honor Board in writing by the Associate Dean.
- The Honor Board will report its findings to the Dean within 2 to 4 weeks from the date initially convened. If additional allegations arise or other circumstances necessitate further time for consideration of the charges, the Honor Board will petition the Dean, in writing, for an extension of a specified time.

- The Honor Board will issue a written recommendation to the Dean based on their findings when their deliberations have concluded.
- The Dean will review the findings, and issue a decision. The Dean's decision and the Honor Board's finding will be reviewed by the Dean's Advisory Committee for adherence to standards and procedures, and alignment with precedent, and will report their recommendation to the Dean.
- The Dean's final decision will include a justification based on the findings of the Honor Board. If the Dean's decision is not aligned with the recommendation of the Honor Board and/or the Dean's Advisory, the Dean must acknowledge the recommendations and justify the reason for deviation in writing.
- The accused shall receive a letter from the Dean with the final outcome within 5 business days of receiving the Dean's Advisory Committee's recommendation. The Honor Board Chair will receive a copy of the outcome. The Honor Code violation reporter may be told only that the matter has been concluded.

Student Status during an Honor Code Violation Review

The GSBS operates under the policy that all students are entitled to due process. If a student is accused of an Honor Code violation, that student remains in good standing and should continue to attend and participate fully in all educational activities until a resolution to the allegation has been reached.

Outcomes of an Honor Code Violation Review

If it is determined that there is insufficient evidence of a violation, the allegation against the student will be dismissed.

If a student is found in violation of the honor code, the Dean will determine the outcome, which may include dismissal from the GSBS.

Honor Board

A roster of students and faculty members who can be convened for an Honor Board for any incident will be reviewed by the GSBC and approved by GSBS assembly annually.

The Honor Board shall consist of seven members, all determined to be free of conflict of interest with the accused. Conflict of interest can be declared by the prospective Honor Board members or the accused.

Five of the members are students. The six member is a faculty member holding the rank of Associate Professor or Professor, with tenure, to advise on GSBS and professional

standards. The seventh member is an individual holding the rank of Associate Dean in the GSBS, and will serve ex officio to oversee and advise on procedure.

The members of the Honor Board shall appoint a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The chair is responsible for calling the meetings and ensuring that proper procedures are followed. The vice-chair serves in the absence of the chair and the secretary is responsible for keeping records of all hearings. All formal motions shall be passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board.

The faculty member must be present for the initial meeting and the final meeting when the Honor Board summarizes their findings and issues a recommendation. The Associate Dean will serve as a procedural advisor throughout the proceedings, and must be present for the final meeting.

It is the duty of the Honor Board to hear cases presented to it and render their findings to the Dean, based on a clear and convincing standard of proof as to the validity of the charge. The accused has the right to hear all evidence against him/her and to present evidence to refute the charges. The Dean shall examine the evidence and the Honor Board's findings and render a decision.

Privacy and Honor Board Records

All members of the GSBS Honor Board must sign an agreement stating that they will not disclose any information from hearings or investigations to persons who are not members of the Honor Board or individuals that are part of the accused appeal process. This includes information from any hearing, the identity of the accused, the reason for the investigation, and the outcome of the hearing. Any individual suspected of disclosing information may be dismissed from the GSBS Honor Board as determined by the remaining members of the Board.

The Honor Board file will be kept secured in the Graduate School Office. Records from hearings will be accessible to the Dean, the designated Associate Dean, and the Honor Board chair only for official business.

The Dean, the designated Associate Dean and the Honor Board chair may inform GSBS Assembly and the GSBC of all final decisions of the Honor Board, but not ongoing proceedings. The identities of the individuals involved must be protected during these reports.

A sealed copy of the Honor Board findings and the Dean's decision will be placed in the student's file. The documents will only be accessible to the Dean.