

Responses to Feedback on Proposed Edits of the Code of Academic Integrity

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Abstract: This document responds to feedback we received from {UFC, EPC, AIHB chairs/recorders} on version 2 (V2) of our proposed Code revisions. We are incorporating that feedback into version 3 (V3).

A. Comments Received from the UFC

Comment 1.

In V2 §I.B.2 we had "Using, obtaining, or providing unauthorized assistance on examinations, papers, or any other academic work; including unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence; and including use of unauthorized materials or technology during an examination or other assessment."

The UFC suggested improving the flow of that list and that examples it contains.

Our new V3 revision is: "Unauthorized assistance includes any aid not explicitly permitted by the instructor, whether provided by notes or reference aids, by other individuals, by artificial intelligence, or by devices such as phones, laptops, or wearable technology."

Comment 2.

In V2 §I.B.3 we had "Citing fabricated or non-existent sources, including use of false citations created by artificial intelligence."

The UFC suggested clarifying that students are responsible for checking citations.

Our new V3 revision is: "Citing fabricated or non-existent sources, including false citations generated by artificial intelligence or other tools. Students are responsible for the accuracy and existence of all sources they cite, regardless of how those sources were generated or obtained."

B. Comments Received from AIHB Chairs/Recorders

Comment 1.

The comment:

We would like to clarify that the graduate school hearing board is responsible for all grad student cases that are not part of delegated programs. For example, the grad school AIHB will hear cases for PhD students but not professional masters students. The language in the proposal seems unclear to us, that is why we are seeking clarification. This text indicates the graduate school will continue to maintain its own hearing board for delegated (e.g., professional masters) and non-delegated (e.g., PhD) programs:

Each college and school in the University, including the Graduate School and the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions, shall establish its own Academic Integrity Hearing Board.

Perhaps this text is just for delegated (e.g., professional masters) graduate programs because it seems like the responsibility has shifted to the colleges. But [this text] mentions doctoral students so that is a bit confusing:

If the student being charged is a graduate student, at least one-third of the Hearing Board student members at the hearing must represent a commensurate degree to the student being charged (e.g., a doctoral student for PhD students, a professional master's student for MPS or similar students). If a college or school Hearing Board is unable to provide such representation, the Graduate School will assign commensurate student representatives to serve as ad hoc members of the Hearing Board for that hearing.

Our response: The commenter raises a good point in their first paragraph. The current Code calls for the Graduate School to establish an AIHB, but the Graduate School has recently revised its procedures and no longer maintains an AIHB. Instead, it now has an AIGB (Academic Integrity and Grievance Board) that hears cases that are neither course/class nor research integrity violations. Research integrity violations are handled under Policy 1.2.

As for the commenter's second paragraph, if a graduate student commits a course/class related academic integrity violation, appeal of that case would be handled by the AIHB of the instructor's college [Code of Legislation of the Graduate Faculty, December 2025,

§VII.A]. The membership requirements are for that AIHB, which is why the text quoted by the commenter mentions doctoral students.

Our new V3 revision: We will amend our proposed revision of the Code to say:

Each college and school in the University, including the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions but excluding the Graduate School, shall establish its own Academic Integrity Hearing Board. (The Graduate School shall establish an Academic Integrity and Grievance Board according to the Code of Legislation of the Graduate Faculty.)

Comment 2.

The comment:

[In the text below are] these graduate-specific procedures for delegated (professional masters) and non-delegated (PhD) programs? Are there different procedures for different types of grad programs?

Graduate School. Graduate students are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity. The Graduate School maintains graduate-specific procedures that are governed by the Code of Legislation of the Graduate Faculty.

Our response: The commenter raises a good question. We suggest that the Graduate School consider revising its Code of Legislation §VII.A to address the question as needed. As currently stated, that section simply says "graduate students" and does not distinguish delegated vs. non-delegated programs.

Comment 3.

The comment:

Who will be staffing the Accepting Responsibility course instruction? Will the staffing and cost be covered centrally or are colleges expected to provide this instruction.

Our response: It will be staffed and funded centrally. The Faculty Senate resolution that accompanies the Code revisions will clarify that detail.

Comment 4.

The comment:

There is a sense that there are different AIHB processes faculty need to go through in different colleges. As part of presenting this proposal, it would be good to reinforce

that it is one AIHB process carried out by several colleges. Other institutions have centralized the AIHB process and it could be a good idea to consider a similar approach for Cornell.

Our response: We agree that the Code establishes a single AIHB process, even though aspects of its administration must occur at the college level. Decisions about whether to further centralize administration of the process are broader structural questions that fall outside the scope of this revision to the Code.

Comment 5.

The comment:

[The proposed revisions state that "if the student being charged is a graduate student, at least one-third of the Hearing Board student members at the hearing must represent a commensurate degree to the student being charged." I would suggest] that *all* the board members for a grad student hearing should be grad students. We had a case [...] in the fall with two undergraduate students and one graduate student on our board for a hearing and it did not go well. The undergraduate students just went along with whatever the grad student was saying.

Our response: This comment contains an interesting insight that the Graduate School may wish to consider. But at this time, the Code of Legislation of the Graduate Faculty, December 2025, §VII.A, contains the weaker requirement (i.e., one-third). If the Graduate School were to put the stronger requirement (i.e., all) in its Code, then the Code of Academic Integrity could likewise be amended at that time.

Comment 6.

The comment:

II.F.2.e - the language here is hard to follow - can that be reworded in a simpler way?

Our response: The comment references this paragraph:

The Academic Integrity Hearing Board shall hear all cases that come before it de novo. While the Hearing Board may recommend an increase in any penalty imposed at the primary hearing, it should consider raising the penalty, if it is the student seeking review, only in the exceptional case.

We believe that the intent of this language is that the Hearing Board reviews cases afresh and, although it has the authority to increase penalties, it should do so only rarely and only

when the student has initiated the review. We would welcome further feedback from the commenter on specific unclarity, but at this time we have no revisions to suggest.

Comment 7.

The comment:

II.F.3.g - it's not always possible to get 2/3 of the board to come to a hearing, but we try to have at least 2 faculty + 2-3 students + AIHB chair. I trust that that is OK.

Our response: The comment references this paragraph:

At least two-thirds of the voting Board members shall be present at every hearing, including two students and two faculty members. Both parties may agree in writing to waive this quorum.

We believe the Code anticipates the concern raised by the commenter and provides a procedural solution. The AIHB chairs could consider whether they want to review and revise this paragraph at a later date if they are experiencing issues. At this time we have no revisions to suggest.

C. Other Comments Received through Dean of Faculty

Comment 1.

The comment:

I would recommend changing the 'shall' to 'may' in the following paragraph to increase the discretion of the operator of the central registry: *'The central registry shall disclose records (including Accepting Responsibility and Primary Hearings and Appeals) to Hearing Boards considering other charges in relation to the same event or student, and to deans or associate deans of colleges in furtherance of legitimate educational interests.'*

Our response: We do not recommend this change. The central registry is intended to provide consistent information keeping for the university. Changing "shall" to "may" would introduce case-by-case decision-making at the registry level and risk inconsistent application of the Code.

Comment 2.

The comment:

I have a concern about the language at the end of the code, concerning disclosure. As I read it, if a medical or law school requires that a student waives confidentiality, then the information about their participation in accepting responsibility could/would be sent on. I understand that this is not what is supposed to happen with accepting responsibility, but I don't see where this is addressed in the new language. Unless there clear language that says that participation in the accepting responsibility program is purely internal and cannot be disclosed to those outside the university under any circumstances, even at the student's request (it's not clear that such a declaration is even legal), then I don't see what prevents a medical or law school from saying "we will not consider your application unless you waive confidentiality and allow us to know if you participated in accepting responsibility" at which point the student voluntarily (but under coercion), signs a waiver releasing this information. This is, after all, not so different than them waiving confidentiality and releasing information about past AI violations.

Specifically, suppose that medical (or law) school X has the following admissions policy: "A student must waive confidentiality and ask their undergraduate institution to release all records indicating that the student did not adhere to the institution's code of academic integrity. This includes but is not necessarily limited to (a) a finding of guilt in which all any appeals process upheld the finding or (b) a mutual agreement between the student and their instructor that they violated the academic code."

It seems perfectly plausible that attorneys for a professional school might craft such language, especially if it becomes known that policies similar to Accepting Responsibility are becoming common practice (or anything but fringe practice). It also seems that a student's signing a waiver for their records with such a request would obligate Cornell to release all Accepting Responsibility records relating to the student. I don't see any way in which the Accepting Responsibility database would not be considered "student records" in any legal sense of the word since they are certainly records and they certainly relate to a specific student, with implications for the student. Also, regardless of how carefully Council chooses the wording, there is no getting around that Accepting Responsibility involves a student not adhering to the code. If there is really "nothing to see here" (as in a finding of not guilty), then there is no explanation as to why we keep this information in a database.

Note that if this concern is legitimate, the students who participated in the

accepting responsibility program would have done so under some false impressions — namely that they were admitting to not adhering to the academic code and accepting penalties for this under the assumption that this information would never be released to, e.g., a professional school.

The issue is not with crafting language which would prevent the university from releasing information that the student didn't want released. The issue is that when applying to medical or law school, students are making a voluntary choice: either not be considered by a given school or else make a request that their records be released on terms dictated by the professional school.

Our response: We thank the commenter for this thoughtful analysis. We do not believe a revision to the Code can address this concern. Accepting Responsibility is intended to be less punitive and to support student learning, but it cannot guarantee that no external consequences will arise, particularly when a student chooses to authorize disclosure or is asked to self-report. External entities may, for example, ask applicants whether they have merely been *accused* of or *involved* in academic integrity matters, and there is no mechanism to protect students from such questions while maintaining an academic integrity system. The scenario described—external professional schools conditioning consideration on a student’s waiver—falls outside the scope of the Code, which cannot regulate what external institutions may request or require of applicants. Accordingly, the Code appropriately governs Cornell’s handling of these records, while recognizing that a student’s voluntary decisions in external processes do not alter the University’s obligations.