

Princeton University Honor Committee

Aggregate Statistics, Fall 2017 – Spring 2022
Compiled August 31, 2022

Overview

Allegations of misconduct by undergraduate students on in-class examinations fall under the jurisdictions of the Honor Committee. The Honor Committee is governed by the Constitution of the Honor System, which defines what constitutes a violation of the Honor Code, guides the Committee’s penalty recommendations, and enumerates rights for witnesses and students in question during investigations and rights for students in question during Honor Committee hearings.

Article V of the Constitution requires the Honor Committee “every year...to publish aggregated, anonymous statistics for the last five, indicating the number of students reported to the Committee, the types of violations that are reported, the number of cases that go to hearing, the respective outcomes of those cases, the number of appeals made, and the respective outcomes of those appeals.” This document represents the aggregated data for the fall and spring semesters in academic years 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022.

By Category

The categories in this section refer to specific alleged attempts to gain an unfair advantage reported to the Honor Committee over the time period of Fall 2017 – Spring 2022. Each case is categorized by the primary alleged violation. The data is divided into three sections for each category: number of reports submitted to the Honor Committee, number of cases moved from the investigation phase to the hearing phase, and the number of cases in which a hearing concluded in a finding of responsibility.

Category	Violations reported from Fall 2017 – Spring 2022	Violations moved to hearing	Findings of responsibility
Collaboration	15	11	2
Copying from a peer	7	0	0
Doctoring a regrade	1	1	1
Failure to submit an exam	2	0	0
Writing overtime	18	4	3
Unauthorized use of materials*	30	10	7
Plagiarism	1	1	1

Removing exam from room	2	0	0
Total cases	76	27	14

* This category of offense was previously categorized as “Use of prohibited aid”

Collaboration

Students are prohibited from collaborating with each other on in-class examinations. Between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022, the Honor Committee found two students responsible for unauthorized collaboration with a peer. Standard penalty for collaboration was suspension from the University for one year until 2019, when the Constitution was amended to remove reference to a standard penalty for violation. The Honor Committee recommended suspension from the University for one year.

Copying from a Peer

The violation of copying from a peer is view by the Honor Committee as of similar severity to collaboration, but is assessed against a student in cases where either 1) another student was not alleged to be a knowing participant in the violation or 2) where the Honor Committee was overwhelmingly convinced one student alleged to have violated the Honor Code was responsible for a violation while failing to be overwhelmingly convinced of the same with regard to the student whose work was allegedly copied.

Between Fall 2017 to Spring 2022, the Honor Committee found no students responsible of copying from a peer.

Doctoring a Regrade

In some courses, professors permit students to submit regrade requests. Policies vary across courses and examinations; some professors only accept regrade requests if there is a clear mistake in grade, but other professors allow students to “defend” why their responses or solutions should be awarded more points than originally awarded. Professors who permit students to submit regrade requests sometimes photocopy graded examinations before redistributing graded examinations to students. If students attempt to alter graded examinations before submitting regrade requests, professors can sometimes compare examinations submitted for regrade against examinations photocopied before redistribution. In some cases, professors do not photocopy examinations before redistributing them; however, examinations display physical evidence of alteration such as erasure marks or writing in various writing instruments.

Between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022, the Honor Committee found one student responsible for doctoring a regraded examination. Standard penalty for doctoring a regraded examination was suspension from the University for one year until 2019, when the Constitution was amended to remove reference to a standard penalty for violations. The Honor Committee recommended expulsion from the University due to the violation constituting a second offense.

Failure to Submit an Examination

Cases in which a student claimed to have completed and submitted an examination, but a professor claimed that the student in question did not do so fall under this category. Students typically argue their examinations have been lost by professors; accordingly, the Committee investigates and adjudicates the plausibility (a) a student completed and submitted an examination and (b) a professor lost an examination. When the Committee is overwhelmingly convinced a professor did not lose an examination, it determines by plausibility of method that a student knowingly failed to submit an examination. This constitutes an attempt to gain an unfair advantage because professors typically offer a number of advantage-granting remedies to a student if their examination goes missing. Between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022, the Honor Committee found no students responsible for failing to submit an examination.

Writing Overtime

Students are prohibited from using more than the allotted time to complete in-class examinations as time represents an advantage on examinations. Between Fall 2017 – Spring 2022, the Honor Committee found three students responsible for writing overtime on in-class examinations. Standard penalty for an overtime violation was disciplinary probation until graduation until 2019, when the Constitution was amended to institute a standard penalty of a reprimand and a recommendation for the respective professor to assign a zero for the examination for writing overtime. The Honor Committee recommended a reprimand in two cases and disciplinary probation until graduation in one case.

Unauthorized use of outside materials

Unauthorized use of outside materials may include, but are not limited to, calculators, cheat sheets, cell phones, lectures notes or textbooks, or other impermissible written materials. In its adjudication of these types of cases, the Committee always considers whether the rules were fairly and reasonably communicated to students prior to the start of an examination. Between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022, the Honor Committee found seven students responsible for unauthorized use of outside materials on in-class examinations. Standard penalty for a prohibited aid violation was suspension from the University for one year until 2019, when the Constitution was amended to remove reference to a standard penalty for violations. The Honor Committee recommended one year of disciplinary probation in three cases, disciplinary probation until graduation in three cases, and one year suspension with censure in one case.

Below is a breakdown of prohibited aids across all reports, hearings, and findings of responsibility:

Category	Allegations Reported	Hearings	Findings of Responsibility
Calculator	4	2	1
Notes	2	0	0
Phone	8	2	1
Other/not listed	16	6	5
Total	30	10	7

Plagiarism

Rights, Rules, Responsibilities defines plagiarism as “the use of any outside source without proper acknowledgement. ‘Outside source’ means any work, published or unpublished, by any person other than the student” (RRR 2.4.7). While plagiarism cases typically occur in the context of written papers and essays that are beyond the jurisdiction of the Honor Committee due to the Student-Faculty Committee on Discipline’s jurisdiction over out-of-class academic policy violations, the Honor Committee found one student responsible for plagiarism during between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022. The Honor Committee recommended disciplinary probation until graduation.

Removing exam from exam room

Removing an in-class examination from the examination room is prohibited, both because the Honor Code is based upon the principle that students are capable of holding each other accountable, which requires that they be able to observe each other, and because it provides opportunities for students to gain a number of unfair advantages.

Between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022, the Honor Committee did not find any students responsible for removing an examination from the examination room.

By Penalty and Appeal

The Honor Committee had a standard penalty system until Fall of 2019. Standard penalty for overtime violations was disciplinary probation. Standard penalty for all other violations of the Honor Code was suspension from the University for one year. There are two circumstances in which the Committee would increase standard penalty: (1) when the Committee was overwhelmingly convinced a student perjured himself or herself, or (2) when the Committee was overwhelmingly convinced a student’s actions implicated his or her peer. The Honor Committee could decrease standard penalty when it was overwhelmingly convinced of the existence of an extenuating circumstance. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, material error on part of the University or failure to adequately communicate rules for an examination.

From Spring of 2019 onward, penalties have been at the discretion of the Honor Committee, subject to the constraints outlined in Article IV § 1.2 of the Honor Committee Constitution, which stipulates that overtime violations are usually subject to a reprimand unless it is an “especially egregious case.” The Committee is permitted to add censure to any penalty in order to underscore the seriousness of a violation. A student found responsible of a second Honor Code violation is usually expelled.

Penalties

The table below summarizes Honor Committee penalty recommendations between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022. This table does not include appeal outcomes.

Category	Reprimand	One year disciplinary probation	Disciplinary probation until graduation	Disciplinary probation until graduation with censure	One semester suspension
Collaboration	0	0	0	0	2
Doctoring a regrade	0	0	0	0	0
Writing overtime	2	0	1	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	1	0	0
Unauthorized use of materials*	0	3	3	0	0
Totals	2	3	5	0	2

Category	One year suspension	One year suspension with censure	Two year suspension	Two year suspension with censure	Expulsion
Collaboration	0	0	0	0	0
Doctoring a regrade	0	0	0	0	1
Writing overtime	0	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0	0
Unauthorized use of materials*	0	1	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	0	1

Appeals

The Honor Constitution outlines two grounds for appeal: procedural unfairness and harmful bias. All appeals are heard from the Dean of the College, with assistance from the Secretary of the University. Appeals may result in cases being remanded to the Committee, which will be instructed by the Dean of the College to rehear the case after remedying for procedural unfairness or harmful bias. Between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022, no cases were remanded to the Committee.

Appeals may also result in a reduction of penalty. Between Fall 2017 and Spring 2022, the Dean of the College heard nineteen appeals. Seventeen penalty recommendations were upheld, one penalty recommendation was reduced from two years suspension from the University to one year suspension with censure, and one decision of the Honor Committee was overturned.