

Princeton University Honor Committee
Aggregate Statistics, 2014-2018
Last Edited February 15, 2019

Overview

Allegations of misconduct by undergraduate students on in-class examinations fall under the jurisdiction 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 “to publish aggregated, anonymous statistics for the last five years, 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.” The Honor Committee began maintaining these statistics during academic year 2014-2015; accordingly, this document represents aggregated data for the fall and spring semesters in academic years 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018.

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 2014-2018. 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 2014-2018	Violations moved to hearing	Findings of responsibility
Writing overtime	32	9	6
Use of prohibited aid	39	15	8
Copying from a peer	17	2	2
Failure to submit an exam	4	4	2
Doctoring a regrade	7	7	5
Total	99	37	23

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 2014 and Spring 2018, the Honor Committee found six students responsible for writing overtime on in-class examinations. Standard penalty for an overtime violation is disciplinary probation until graduation. The Honor Committee recommended disciplinary probation until graduation in four cases, disciplinary probation until graduation with the

addition of censure in one case, and a dean’s warning in one case. See **By Penalty and Appeal** for further explanation of why the Honor Committee may recommend to increase or decrease standard penalty.

Use of Prohibited Aids

Prohibited aids include, but are not limited to, calculators, cheat sheets, cell phones, lecture 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 2014 and Fall 2017, the Honor Committee found eight students responsible for use of prohibited aids on in-class examinations. Standard penalty for a prohibited aid violation is suspension from the University for one year. The Honor Committee recommended suspension from the University for one year in six cases and disciplinary probation until graduation in two cases.

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

Category	Allegations Reported	Hearings	Findings of Responsibility
Cell phone	17	8	4
Calculator	4	3	2
Cheat Sheet	4	2	2
Notes	5	2	0
Other (No Record)	9	0	0
Total	39	15	8

Copying from a Peer

From Fall 2014 to Spring 2018, the Honor Committee found two students responsible for copying from a peer. Standard penalty for a copying violation is suspension from the University for one year. The Honor Committee recommended suspension from the University for one year in both copying cases.

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 2014 and Spring 2018, the Honor Committee found two students responsible for failing to submit an examination. Standard penalty for failing to submit an examination is suspension from the

University for one year. The Honor Committee recommended suspension from the University for one year in one case and suspension from the University for two years with censure in one case. See **By Penalty and Appeal** for further explanation of why the Honor Committee may recommend to increase or decrease standard penalty.

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 2014 and Fall 2018, the Honor Committee found five students responsible for doctoring a regraded examination. Standard penalty for doctoring a regraded examination is suspension from the University for one year. The Honor Committee recommended suspension from the University for two years in two cases and suspension from the University for two years with censure in one case. Two of the Committee’s two-year recommendations were reduced to suspension from the University for one year with censure on appeal. The Committee recommended expulsion from the University in two cases. See **By Penalty and Appeal** for further explanation of why the Honor Committee may recommend to increase or decrease standard penalty.

By Penalty and Appeal

The Honor Committee has a standard penalty system. Standard penalty for overtime violations is disciplinary probation. Standard penalty for all other violations of the Honor Code is suspension from the University for one year. There are two circumstances in which the Committee may increase standard penalty: (1) when the Committee is overwhelmingly convinced a student perjured himself or herself, or (2) when the Committee is overwhelmingly convinced a student’s actions implicated his or her peer. The Honor Committee may decrease standard penalty when it is 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. 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 2014 and Spring 2018. This table does not include appeal outcomes.

Category	Disciplinary probation to graduation	One year	One year censure	Two year	Two year with censure	Expulsion
Writing overtime	6*	0	0	0	0	0
Use of prohibited aid	2	5	1	0	0	0
Copying from a peer	0	2	0	0	0	0
Failure to submit an exam	0	0	0	1	1	0
Doctoring a regrade	0	0	1	1	1	2
Total	8	7	2	2	2	2

*In one case, the Honor Committee recommended disciplinary probation until graduation with censure. In a separate case, the Honor Committee recommended a Dean's Warning.

Appeals

The Honor Constitution outlines two grounds for appeal: procedural unfairness and harmful bias. All appeals are heard by 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 2014 and Spring 2018, no cases were remanded to the Committee. Appeals may also result in a reduction of penalty.

Between Fall 2014 and Spring 2018, the Dean of the College heard sixteen appeals. Thirteen penalty recommendations were upheld, two penalty recommendations were reduced from a suspension from the University for two years to suspension from the University for one year with censure. One decision of the Honor Committee was overturned.