

# George Mason University THE HONOR COMMITTEE

## *Instructions for Completing an Accusation Packet*

**1. The Fact Sheet** - Please complete this form as thoroughly as possible. It is critically important that the proper person be identified when an accusation is made. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, INCLUDE THE ACCUSED PERSON'S ID NUMBER (SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER). This will not always be possible when a student is accused by another student, but faculty members are asked to take the ID number from the class list.

**2. The Testimony Form** - Please complete all sections of this form. Be sure to include the date of realization of a violation of the Honor Code as well as the specific charge you are bringing against the student (see the enclosed copy of the Honor Code).

Complete the description of the violation in the space provided. You may attach an additional sheet if necessary.

If the violation occurred in a classroom setting (i.e. a quiz or test), complete the diagram on page two of the form. Please be sure to complete all relevant questions on page two. Also, please sign and date both page one and page two of the form.

**3. Professor Penalty Recommendation Form** - This form is to be completed by the course instructor only. Students filing charges should disregard this form. The Honor Committee will contact the instructor directly to secure this information.

The faculty member should note that it is also possible for the Honor Committee to impose a non-academic sanction such as community service. If you feel that such a penalty would be appropriate, please mention that fact on the recommendation form.

**4. Evidence** - Please include a **copy** of any evidence you may have (e.g. the test, paper, etc.). Keep the original for your own records.

**THIS PACKET SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO  
THE DEAN OF STUDENT'S OFFICE  
302 Student Union I  
as soon as possible.**

**The Honor Code specifies time limits for the filing of charges.**

# George Mason University

*To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this*

## Honor Code

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

### The Honor Committee

The Honor Committee is a group of students selected from the George Mason University student body for the purpose of promoting academic integrity as a core value for our University Community. Members of the Committee will also serve on hearing panels established to investigate and resolve alleged violations of the Code.

- I. **Composition of the Committee - Membership** will be limited to one hundred (100) members who apply for membership and are confirmed at an election held each spring. Members appointed by the Chair of the Honor Committee may serve provisionally pending the next election. Members must themselves have no honor code violations, maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.3, be in good academic standing, and successfully complete the training/orientation program. If more than one hundred students apply for membership, a candidate list will be maintained according to the date of the application and appointments made as vacancies occur. The term of office extends from initial appointment until final graduation provided the member is not found responsible for an honor code violation, serves on at least two hearing panels each semester, remains in good academic standing, and maintains the required grade point average.
- II. **Honor Committee Officers** - A chairperson and vice chairperson will be elected in April of each year by the members of the Committee. The term of office will be one year. A faculty advisor, chosen jointly by the Chair of the Committee and the Vice President for University Life, will provide administrative assistance for Committee business.
- III. **Responsibilities of the Students** - Students should request an explanation of any aspect of the Professor's policies regarding the Honor Code they do not fully understand. They also have an obligation to not only follow the Code themselves, but to encourage respect among their fellow students for the provisions of the Code. This includes an obligation to report violations by other students to the Honor Committee.
- IV. **Responsibilities of the Faculty** - Faculty members have a responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the learning and testing process. They should explain at the beginning of each semester what would be considered an integrity violation in their course. Special attention should be given to the subject of plagiarism.

(Over)

**George Mason University  
The Honor Committee**

**FACT SHEET**

#1 ACCUSED: (Ms. or Mr.) \_\_\_\_\_

University ID \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

#2 ACCUSED: (Mr. or Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_

University ID \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

#3 ACCUSED: (Ms. or Mr.) \_\_\_\_\_

University ID \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

If more than three students are accused in this incident, please use the reverse of this sheet to include the information.

=====

ACCUSER: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty or Student? \_\_\_\_\_

Address or Department Department of English, MS 3E4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Office 703-993-1160 Home \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Office Use Only:

Case \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

3/2000

George Mason University

THE HONOR COMMITTEE

Case No \_\_\_\_\_

**TESTIMONY FORM**

Accuser \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Violation \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Realization \_\_\_\_\_

Professor \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_

Building & Room Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Accused \_\_\_\_\_ Charge (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Accused \_\_\_\_\_ Charge (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Accused \_\_\_\_\_ Charge (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Weight of Work: \_\_\_\_\_ % of Final Grade

Have you had any prior association with the accused? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe what you saw that made you aware that the student (s) may have violated the Honor Code.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

*continue on next page*



George Mason University

HONOR COMMITTEE

**PROFESSOR PENALTY RECOMMENDATION FORM**

Accuser: \_\_\_\_\_

Accused #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Accused #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Accused #3 \_\_\_\_\_

Course \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

*This recommendation is made on the assumption that this is the first offense.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*If this is a second offense:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

George Mason University  
Honor Committee

*A Brief Explanation of the Adjudication Procedures*

Accusation packets are available during normal office hours in the Office of the Dean of Students, 302 Student Union I. When a completed packet is returned to this office, an accusation letter is sent by certified mail to the accused student or students. This is normally mailed on the first business day following receipt of the completed charge packet. In this letter, the student is notified of the nature of the charge (plagiarism, cheating, lying), the associated academic course, and the name of the accuser. The accused student is told to contact the Dean of Students within one week to discuss the basis of the accusation and the procedures used to resolve the charge. During the meeting with the Dean, the student is also required to enter a plea to the charge.

If the student accepts responsibility for the violation, a meeting with three members of the Honor Committee is scheduled. The accuser does not normally attend these hearings. The accused student is given an opportunity to present any mitigating circumstances. An appropriate sanction is then determined by the panel members.. The Professor's recommendation is always given significant weight in determining the sanction.

If the student denies responsibility for the alleged violation, a more complex procedure is followed. Five members of the Honor Committee, a faculty advisor to the hearing panel, and the accuser meet with the accused student. The accuser outlines the case against the student and the accused then presents a defense. Witnesses may be called by either side. While the procedures are relatively informal and flexible, procedural due process is observed.

To find the student guilty of the offense, four of the five panel members must determine that the case has been proven to a *clear and convincing* level. This standard of proof is defined as between the *preponderance of evidence* level of 51% and the 99+% proof required for *beyond a reasonable doubt*. If the student is found responsible for the violation, the faculty penalty recommendation is reviewed and a sanction imposed.

Honor Code hearings are normally scheduled in the evenings. A guilty plea case can usually be processed within thirty days of filing. A not-guilty case can take several months depending on the number of cases filed in any given semester. Any involved faculty member may request a status report on a case at any time by contacting the Dean of Students (993-2885).

The hearing panel can impose community service, oral and written reprimands, and other non-academic requirements. Changes to a student's grade are **recommendations** from the Honor Committee to the instructor. Suspension and expulsion recommendations are sent to the Provost's office for approval and implementation.

Questions? Contact the Dean of Students in 302 Student Union I; telephone (703) 993-2885.

**George Mason University**  
**The Honor Committee**

**STUDENT RIGHTS IN HONOR CODE CASES**

All students are responsible for upholding the standards outlined in the George Mason University Honor Code. If a student is accused of a violation of the Honor Code, the student-directed Honor Committee will conduct an inquiry and hearing to determine whether a violation has occurred. The Honor Committee will also recommend sanctions in those cases where a violation has occurred.

Students accused of violating the University Honor Code are guaranteed certain procedural rights. A student accused of an Honor Code violation has the following rights.

1. The right to receive written notification of charges.
2. The right to a hearing to determine guilt or innocence and, if guilty, to impose or recommend a sanction.
3. The right to know the name(s) of the accuser(s). The right to know in advance of the hearing the name of any witness to be called by the accuser. The hearing panel reserves the right to request or require the presence of witnesses that the judges determine may provide substantial evidence needed for a fair judgment of guilt or innocence. The judges may also determine if a hearing delay is necessary for either side to prepare to respond to a panel-called witness.
4. The right not to be compelled to be a witness against oneself or to have his/her silence taken as an indication of guilt.
5. The right to provide written or verbal 'quality of character' statements from anyone within the George Mason University academic community. A student may also provide relevant evidence from outside the George Mason University academic community. This may include a report of any medical problems; physical or psychological. Evidence of this nature must be available to all parties at least one working day prior to the hearing.
6. The right to obtain counsel from within the student body (excluding the School of Law).
7. The right to have access to the records of the case under specific conditions.
8. The right to appeal decisions based on the introduction of new evidence or procedural irregularities.