



Academic Integrity Informational Guide for Students

Updated Summer 2026

Introduction

“The mission of the University of Richmond is to educate in an academically challenging, intellectually vibrant, and collaborative community dedicated to the holistic development of students and the production of scholarly and creative work. A Richmond education prepares students for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world.”

— University of Richmond Mission

Academic integrity, honor, and trust are fundamental to the University of Richmond’s mission—ideals that have been central to the university since the founding of Richmond College in 1840. Our commitment to the “holistic development of students and the production of scholarly and creative work” binds students, faculty, and staff into an academic community held together by a set of expectations, bonded in trust.

Until recently, the University’s honor system was carried by approximately seventy students, led by an Executive Committee of students from Westhampton and Richmond Colleges and advised by the College Deans. That system served the university well for more than a century, but pedagogical, academic, and infrastructural challenges have required that it be revised. Because the landscape changed, our process also needed to change to meet the challenges of the present moment.

Any effective system designed to facilitate a community of trust must be built into the very fabric our academic community—within and beyond the classroom. To that end, we have reimagined the academic integrity and honesty process to better promote a community of trust. Building a community of trust requires a **preventative, educational, restorative, and growth-based approach** to academic honor and integrity.

Our Community of Trust

At the core of academic integrity is **trust**: that each student's work is their own, fairly done, and truthfully presented; that students are honest with instructors; that they protect each other's chance to learn; and that when something goes wrong, it is faced openly.

Any effective system should be built into the very fabric of our academic community—within and beyond classrooms. We have outlined **four areas of trust** that maintain our community's academic integrity:

Honest
Authorship

Fair
Process
for
Everyone

Truthful
Content

Honest
Dealings
with
Instructors

This process is grounded in the concept of restorative justice—it is as progressive and developmental as it is disciplinary.

Our aim is an efficient and fair process for students, faculty, and staff that promotes growth, skills, accountability, and fairness, all while being sustained by strong channels of communication. Our culture of accountability gives serious consideration to the underlying conditions that lead to acts of academic misconduct and provides remedies that are educational and restorative.

Our process has been redesigned to address fundamental questions, such as, *How has trust been strained?* and *What can or should be done to restore it?*

How Has Trust Been Strained?

1 Honest Authorship

Is the work presented the student's own?

The work reflects the student's own thinking and effort. Trust is strained when work from elsewhere—e.g., another person, a bought or found source, a duplicative submission of your own work, or a generative tool—is presented as one's own.



2 Fair Process for Everyone

Is learning demonstrated under fair conditions?

Everyone shows their learning under the same conditions. Trust is strained when these conditions are bypassed—e.g., unauthorized notes, devices, help during an assessment—or shared resources are withheld from classmates.



3 Truthful Content

Is the work real, supported by factual data?

The work is grounded in real evidence, honestly reported. Trust is strained when content is invented or altered—e.g., fabricated data, results, citations—so that something presented as real may be false or fabricated.



4 Honest Dealings with Instructors

Is the student open and honest with faculty and staff?

The student is truthful with faculty and staff and faces concerns openly. Trust is strained when facts are misrepresented—e.g., a false account or forged document—or a known concern is avoided rather than faced.



Some Examples

Samples of situations that may arise, with a question one could ask

1

Honest Authorship

Submitting a bought or AI-written paper as one's own; citation problems; copying online material; having someone else do the work; a duplicative submission of your own work

A question you could ask: "Does this reflect my own learning and voice?"

2

Fair Process for Everyone

Using a phone or smart device during a test; working together when meant to work alone; using a test bank or a prior test without permission; hiding a reserve book the class needs

A question you could ask: "Was this completed under the conditions everyone was held to?"

3

Truthful Content

Inventing data or citations that don't exist; altering a returned exam answer to claim a mis-grade; submitting work reviewing an event (e.g., an exhibition or show) that was not attended

A question you could ask: "Is what I presented actually real and accurate?"

4

Honest Dealings with Instructors

Faking an illness to postpone an exam; forging or altering emails or forms; misrepresenting an accommodation; not accepting responsibility for an act of academic misconduct

A question you could ask: "Did I deal with my instructors honestly and openly?"

One Question, Many Situations

Some situations can seem complicated—artificial intelligence (AI) seems to be everywhere at once—but asking these questions can help make sense of what’s really at stake.

Situation 1

AI used to write a paper, passed off as one’s own

→ **Honest Authorship**

Situation 2

AI used to get answers during a proctored exam

→ **Fair Process for Everyone**

Situation 3

AI used to invent fake data or results

→ **Truthful Content**

Situation 4

AI use denied when an instructor asks directly

→ **Honest Dealings with Instructors**

Same tool, but the path to a constructive conversation differs in each situation. AI is the “how”—the questions help reveal the “what” and the “why.” Instead of a blanket “don’t use AI,” each question opens a more direct, specific discussion about how AI use, in that specific case, weakens learning and erodes the trust on which an academic community depends.

If a Concern Is Raised

1 How it starts

If an instructor suspects academic misconduct and has evidence, they complete a reporting form [here](#). Often, though, an instructor will first raise the concern with you directly. If they are unsure whether the evidence is sufficient, they will contact the Director of Student Conduct.

Instead of the formal process, an instructor may choose to resolve a concern through an educational conversation with you. In that case, the instructor *still* informs the Director of Student Conduct, and the conversation is noted—but not included as part of your conduct record. This option is allowed one time per student.

2 How it begins

The Director of Student Conduct checks whether you have a prior finding. Most first-time situations can be resolved directly between you and the instructor—framed by a conversation about trust—if the instructor wishes and you accept responsibility.

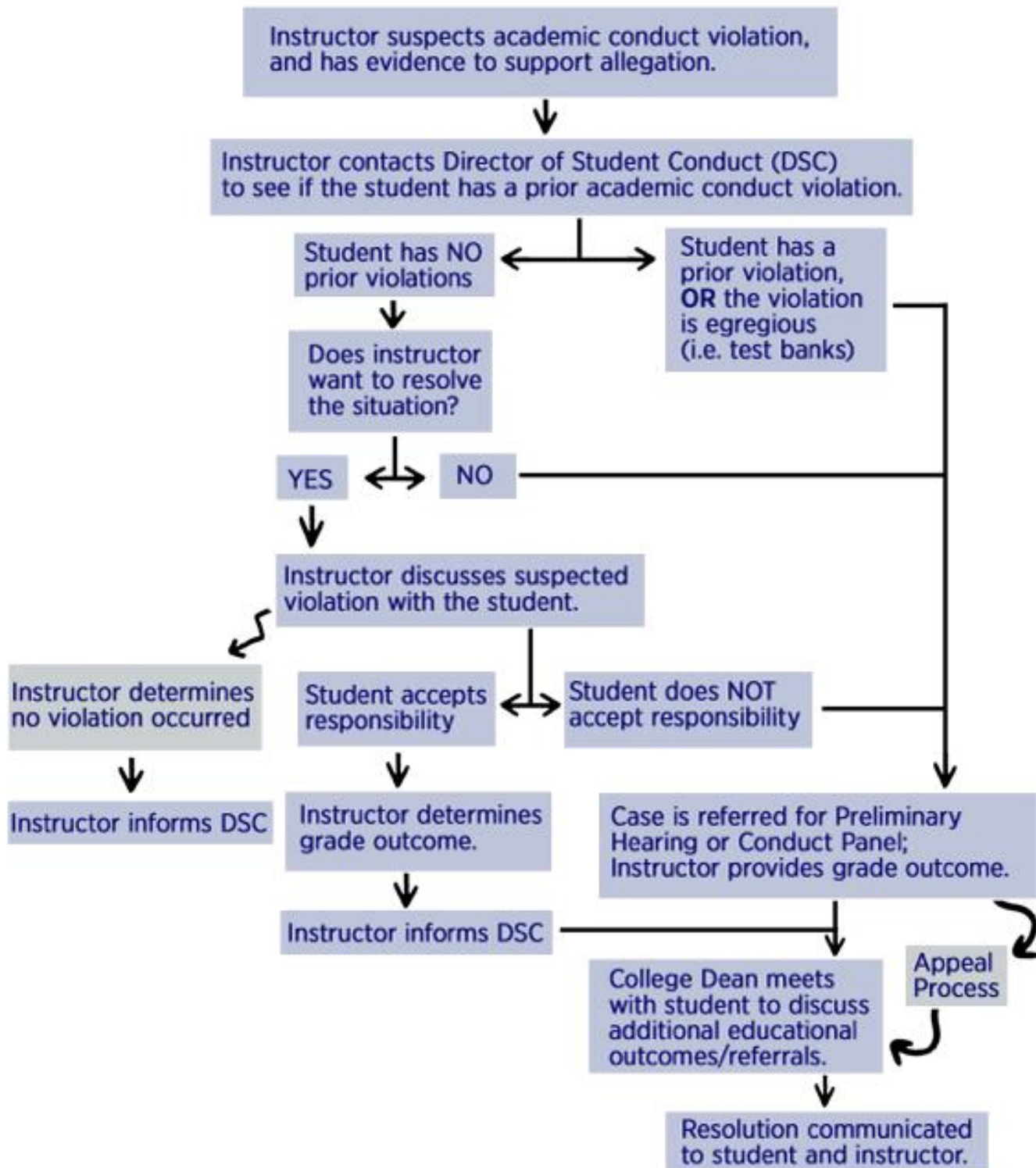
3 What follows

A College Dean meets with you for a developmental conversation—a discussion of trust and possible referrals to the Weinstein Learning Center, the Library, or other resources—and follows up with the instructor. More serious or repeat situations follow the full academic misconduct process.

4 Acceptance & finding of responsibility

The instructor provides the grade outcome. Any further developmental and disciplinary outcomes continue through the conduct process. For more information, see Community Standards, Section 9.

How the Process Works



Possible Outcomes

If a student is found responsible, one or more of the following may apply:

1 Grade Outcome

When a student is found responsible for academic misconduct, the instructor sets the grade for the assignment in question/class in which misconduct occurred.

For example: failing the assignment or the course, or a cap on the assignment or course grade

2 Development

When relevant, students found responsible for academic misconduct will engage in a conversation with a College Dean about trust, plus possible referrals to campus resources.

For example: the Weinstein Learning Center, the Library, or other academic support

3 Honor Probation

In instances of repeated or more serious academic misconduct, the student would assume a status of honor probation for a set period of time.

Note: the student remains enrolled in the University, although another violation during this time would lead to a more serious outcome

4 Suspension or Dismissal

This outcome is reserved for the most serious/repeated cases, where the student would acquire a temporary or permanent separation from the University.

Note: the magnitude of the violation(s) is reflected in the sanction; suspension provides a final chance for regaining trust

Your Role & Where to Get Help

You uphold this community every day by doing your own work, showing your learning under the same conditions as everyone else, presenting real and accurate content, and dealing openly with your instructors—even (and especially when) when you might be struggling.

When you are unsure what is allowed on an assignment, ask your instructor before you submit. When you need help, reach out early: the Weinstein Learning Center offers tutoring and writing and quantitative support, the Library can help with research and citation, and your instructor and College Dean are there when questions or pressures come up.

For the full rules, see the University's Community Standards.

Conclusion

In the end, this process is meant to promote a culture of trust, honesty, openness, and, ultimately, you as productive citizen of our community. We all sustain this by giving serious consideration to the underlying conditions that may give rise to a harm, and by keeping open, honest communication among students, faculty, and staff. Building and maintaining our community of trust asks all of us to remain proactive about our Community Standards. Thank you for the part you play in it.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Joe Boehman, Dean of Richmond College & Director of Student Conduct at jboehman@richmond.edu.