

Honor Code

The University of Texas at Austin strives to create a dynamic and engaging community of teaching and learning where students feel intellectually challenged; build knowledge and skills; and develop critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. As a part of this community, it is important to engage in assignments, exams, and other work for your classes with openness, integrity, and a willingness to make mistakes and learn from them. The UT Austin honor code champions these principles:

I pledge, as a member of the University of Texas community, to do my work honestly, respectfully, and through the intentional pursuit of learning and scholarship.

The honor code affirmation includes three additional principles that elaborate on the core theme:

- I pledge to be honest about what I create and to acknowledge what I use that belongs to others.
- I pledge to value the process of learning in addition to the outcome, while celebrating and learning from mistakes.
- This code encompasses all the academic and scholarly endeavors of the university community.

The honor code is more than a set of rules, it reflects the values that are foundational to your academic community. By affirming and embracing the honor code, you are both upholding the integrity of your work and contributing to a campus culture of trust and respect.

Suggestions for Instructors

A great joy of teaching is nurturing students' intellectual exploration and helping them build the knowledge, skills, and values they need to thrive in school and that will put them on an ethical path in their professional pursuits. The refreshed honor code celebrates instructors' commitment to students' development and academic success while also acknowledging the curiosity, effort, and commitment to learning that students invest in their courses at UT. The suggestions below can help you and your students put the honor code into action in your class and enjoy the benefits of a rigorous, supportive classroom culture.

It may be helpful to think about the honor code and discussions about academic misconduct as two ends of a spectrum. The UT honor code is deliberately focused on the ideal learning environment that we want to build that promotes the development of a deep base of knowledge and skills. When students internalize this approach, it reduces temptation to cheat on assignments and assessments because students understand that cheating gets in the way of core learning goals. In contrast, a focus on academic misconduct is about the appropriate methods for performance of tasks in class. It is important for students to understand your expectations about how they should go about performing assignments, and they should be aware of the consequences of misconduct. But, a core tenet of the Longhorn Learning Experience is to develop an environment in which students engage with course material because of the benefits of the work rather than because of the fear of getting caught doing something wrong.

- Assessment design:
 - When creating assessments for your course, ensure that they are aligned with your course learning outcomes. Communicate how each assignment and assessment relates to those learning outcomes.
 - Design assignments where students can lean into failures and use them as learning tools for continued growth, such as having practice assignments that are not graded, opportunities to resubmit drafts, and projects that build over the course of the semester so that they improve over time.
- Add a discussion in your syllabus and have a conversation on the first day of class about acceptable and unacceptable behaviors related to the performance of assignments and exams in your class. That may include:
 - Emphasizing the importance of the honor code and students' responsibility to understand what constitutes a violation of the honor code as listed in [Subchapter 11–400 of Appendix C, Prohibited Conduct in the General Information Catalog](#).
 - Giving a clear definition of plagiarism and assessing students' understanding of plagiarism through a [plagiarism quiz](#)
 - Discussing allowable uses of AI resources like ChatGPT or Dall-E
 - Clarifying which assignments may be done in groups
 - Discussing the resources students may use to complete quizzes and exams
- Set a tone for your course by having syllabus language and in-class discussions on the importance of mastering material for long-term success rather than simply getting a good grade on a particular assignment or exam.
 - Sample syllabus statement:
 - I value your learning and want you to do well in this class. The key to success lies in strategic effort; graded activities will help you track your progress and distinguish the skills you have mastered from those that need a bit more work. I will do my best to give you prompt feedback, and I encourage you to reach out for help during office hours. Our university honor code is a reminder that we are all striving to develop new knowledge and skills and that academic dishonesty disrupts the learning process. I take it seriously.
 - Emphasize for your students that classrooms are safe spaces for experimentation and making errors.
 - Talk about the differences between feeling uncomfortable and feeling distressed so that students understand when being stretched and pushed is aiding in their learning and when they should ask for help.
- Be clear in your syllabus and in class discussions about the core learning outcomes, emphasizing what you want your students to know and be able to do by the end of the course and why that knowledge is valuable to their lives. Clarify that course assignments help you understand what they are gaining from the course so that students will understand the relationship between assignments and course goals.

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