

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

Student Honor Code

Faculty policy.

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annually revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy August 2022; technical edits were made in August 2023; edits were made in July 2024 to clarify the use of spelling- and grammar-checking tools; edits were made in April 2025 to harmonize this Code with the new Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct, which was implemented in January 2025 (the April 2025 revisions take effect on June 1, 2025).

Related policies: Graduation Requirements Policy; Policy to Prevent Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation; Sexual Misconduct Policy; Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct; Student Conduct Policy and By-Laws of the Honor Code Committee; Policy Statement on Student Academic Work-Product Originality

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A. Preamble and Purpose

As future attorneys, law students are subject to the responsibilities and ethical standards of the legal profession.

The well-being of the legal profession and the integrity of the academic community at Southwestern Law School depend upon maintaining the highest ethical standards. Nothing less is expected of Southwestern students.

Southwestern has two codes and multiple policies that govern student conduct, including this Student Honor Code (Honor Code), the Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct (Conduct Code), the Policy to Prevent Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation, the Policy Statement on Student Academic Work-Product Originality (which defines plagiarism and expectations for LAWS courses), and the Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Although both the Honor Code and the Conduct Code include rules, guidelines, and expectations for appropriate and professional conduct, this Honor Code primarily concerns academic issues, and the Conduct Code primarily concerns nonacademic and behavioral issues. Some situations may involve conduct that implicates both codes. If a matter involves conduct covered by both codes, Southwestern may choose to proceed under either or both codes.

B. Scope

This Honor Code applies to all students admitted to Southwestern. It covers conduct that occurs from the time an individual applies to Southwestern through the time a student graduates. Absent extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Dean, to graduate and be awarded a diploma, a student must not have any pending Honor Code matter. Southwestern retains jurisdiction after a student graduates or completes a program to address matters that occurred while the student was enrolled at Southwestern.

This Honor Code applies to on-campus conduct, conduct within Southwestern programs and at Southwestern events, and to off-campus, online, and virtual conduct when the law school's mission, programs, activities, or reputation, or a student's character and fitness or ability to practice law are implicated. The law school has a vital interest in the character of our students and may regard off-campus behavior as a reflection of the student's character or fitness to continue as a member of the student body or to practice law.

This Honor Code also applies to students, including students from other schools, enrolled in courses or programs sponsored or co-sponsored by Southwestern, such as the London Study-Aboard Program, the concurrent degree program with the Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University, and the Online J.D. Consortium.

C. Academic Misconduct

All forms of academic misconduct, including violations of academic integrity, are prohibited at Southwestern, including at Southwestern housing, after-hours on Southwestern property, or at off-campus Southwestern-related activities. Any action or occurrence violating this Honor Code is equally violative, whether in cyberspace or through any other electronic device or virtual environment. The following non-exhaustive list of inappropriate conduct may result in disciplinary action:

1. Academic dishonesty

Engaging in dishonest conduct concerning examinations, written work, or other academic activity.

a. *Cheating:*

- i. Giving or receiving unauthorized information when taking exams, writing papers, or completing other assignments.
- ii. Submitting work for another course unless specifically authorized by the faculty.
- iii. Violating any regulation concerning the examination environment or the general custom and conduct of students in taking exams (proctor's instructions, time restraints, interaction between students during the exam, etc.)
- iv. Revealing information to the faculty that would compromise exam anonymity during grading.
- v. Providing unauthorized assistance to others during their exams or writing papers or assignments.
- vi. Obtaining unauthorized prior knowledge of an exam or assignment without immediately notifying the Student Services Office.
- vii. Committing any other act in the course of academic work which defrauds or misrepresents, including aiding or abetting in any of the actions defined above.

b. *Plagiarism:*

- i. Plagiarism is the submission or presentation of any work, in any form, that is not a student's own without acknowledging the source. See the Policy Statement on Student Academic Work-Product Originality for more information on Southwestern's plagiarism policy.
- ii. Unless prohibited by a faculty member for a particular class or assignment and subject to the Policy Statement on Student Academic Work-Product Originality, students may use spell-checking and grammar-checking tools on the content the student created for a submission without providing a citation.

2. Misrepresentation

Engaging in acts of misrepresentation or dishonesty.

- a.** Falsifying a signature on any form, document, or paper.

- b.** Misrepresenting attendance by signing into class and leaving the class session before it has ended without permission or aiding a student in misrepresenting their attendance.
- c.** Forging, written or oral false statements, and altering or misusing documents, records, stationery, logo, or documentation.
- d.** Providing information that the student knows is false or misleading to any faculty or staff, including, but not limited to, providing false or misleading information for financial aid applications, academic petitions, exam change requests, or requests for accommodations.
- e.** Misrepresenting sources in the student's work.
- f.** Falsely accusing another student of violating the Student Honor Code.

3. Disruptive or unprofessional conduct

Engaging in acts of disruptive or unprofessional conduct in connection with academic activities and matters.

- a.** Conduct that disrupts a classroom or testing environment.
- b.** Conduct that interferes with the professor's teaching or students' learning.
- c.** Conduct that interferes with scholarly activities.

4. Violation of distance education or online protocols

- a.** Falsifying their presence or participation in Distance Education or online activities.
- b.** Unless permitted by the course professor, using applications, programs, or services to perform or assist in completing their work in violation of the Honor Code or the provisions of the professor's syllabus.
- c.** Receiving assistance from other persons in performing their work in violation of the Honor Code or the provisions of the professor's syllabus.
- d.** Copying or using without permission or attribution any online or other source.
- e.** Using Distance Education or online facilities or activities to harm another member of Southwestern's community knowingly.
- f.** Manipulating or interfering with Distance Education or online program facilities or activities without authorization.

5. Other misconduct

- a.** Tampering with or misusing library or other academic materials.
- b.** Violating any regulation concerning the academic or on-campus residential environment.
- c.** Conduct that could be deemed a violation of ethical standards governing the profession.
- d.** Assisting in another student's misconduct, such as sharing test answers or completing work on their behalf.

- e. Submitting the same or substantially similar work for multiple courses without approval.
- f. Any act or omission which results in the conviction of an offense involving moral turpitude.

D. Nonacademic Misconduct

Serious violations of the Conduct Code that could lead to enhanced sanctions under the Conduct Code may be referred to Honor Code Committee (HCC) handling (see Sections VIII(B) and IX(A)(4) of the Conduct Code).

E. Interim Measures

The Associate Dean for Student Services, in consultation with the Vice Dean(s), may, at any time, determine that interim measures are necessary or appropriate. Interim measures must be based on a reasonable belief that serious misconduct occurred and that the student's continued presence or participation poses a threat to an individual, property, or law school operations. The interim measures should be tailored to the specific situation and based on an objective assessment of the circumstances and the alleged misconduct.

A decision to impose interim measures will be communicated in writing to the student and will become effective at the time stated in the communication.

A student who receives interim measures will be provided with an opportunity to meet with the Associate Dean for Student Services to respond to the allegations of misconduct no later than three days following the effective date of the interim measures.

The interim measures will remain in effect until a final decision has been made on the pending referral or until the Associate Dean for Student Services determines that the reasons for imposing the interim measures no longer exist.

Interim measures may include but are not limited to the following:

- Restricting the student's access to the law school campus or certain areas of the law school campus (e.g., library, fitness center, etc.);
- Requiring the student to attend classes, educational activities, or office hours remotely;
- Restricting the student's access to certain events, platforms, or systems;
- Adjusting or restricting the student's participation in nonacademic activities and programs;
- Relocating the student's Residence unit or removing the student from Southwestern housing; or
- Restricting the student's contact with certain individuals.

F. Administration of the Honor Code

Alleged violations of the Honor Code will typically be referred to the HCC. The functions and procedures of the HCC are described in its By-Laws, which appear in the *Student Conduct Policy and By-Laws of the Honor Code Committee*. Details of the procedures for handling charges of student misconduct are set out in the *Student Conduct Policy and By-Laws of the Honor Code Committee*.

Any conduct deemed a violation of ethical requirements governing the profession would indicate that an individual is not presently qualified for admission to the profession and, therefore, may be subject to termination of enrollment or other appropriate disciplinary measures as determined by the HCC.

G. Sanctions

When the HCC has found a student to have violated the Honor Code, one or more of the following sanctions may be recommended by the HCC to the Dean:

- oral or written reprimand;
- probation;
- suspension of rights and privileges in the law school;
- suspension from the law school;
- suspension or revocation of admissions, a degree, concentration, award, or other recognition conferred by Southwestern;
- expulsion; or
- any other reasonable sanction deemed proper by the HCC.

Students should be aware that the imposition of a penalty will be communicated to any bar to which the student seeks admission with or without the student's consent for disclosure. Moreover, certification by Southwestern may be withheld when a student is facing an HCC determination regarding an alleged Honor Code violation or has yet to complete sanctions resulting from such a violation.

H. Mitigating and Aggravating Factors

In determining sanctions, HCC may consider mitigating and aggravating factors. A non-exhaustive list of factors that HCC may consider include the following:

1. Pre-referral admission

When a student voluntarily admits conduct before learning that someone has referred the matter or is about to refer the matter, HCC may consider the admission as a mitigating factor. A student who has the courage and integrity to come forward with a good-faith admission has reaffirmed a personal commitment to integrity and professionalism. Admissions should be made to the Associate Dean for Student Services or a faculty member.

2. Other admissions

Even an admission made after a referral may have some mitigating value. This type of admission acknowledges the inappropriate conduct and acceptance of responsibility.

3. Cooperation

HCC may consider how cooperative or uncooperative the student was during the process, including whether the student responded timely and professionally to inquiries and requests for meetings and information and whether the student dealt honestly and civilly with the HCC and others involved in the process.

4. Intent

Conduct falls on an intent continuum that ranges from malicious, willful, intentional, reckless, and grossly negligent on the more serious end to negligent, careless, and accidental on the less serious end. HCC may consider where conduct falls on this continuum when determining sanctions.

5. Degree of harm or seriousness of the offense

The degree of harm to others and the seriousness of the conduct are relevant factors in determining sanctions.

6. Prior violations

HCC may consider prior violations of the Conduct Code, this Honor Code, or other Southwestern policies in setting sanctions.

7. Nexus to professional standards

The nexus between the student's conduct and the question of the student's character and fitness to practice law is a relevant factor in determining sanctions.

I. Revisions

Southwestern reserves the right to revise this Honor Code at any time and for any reason. Revisions may be enforced on 15 days' notice to the student body. Notice may be made via the student listserv or in another manner deemed by the Dean to reach most students.