Proposal for Permanent Integrity Committee Pilot

Based on the results of the survey in the fall, there was very strong support for a permanent integrity committee that handles academic dishonesty cases for CSSE courses. Therefore, the current Integrity Committee proposes a Pilot for the 2024-2025 academic year. In the pilot, a committee will be formed and individual faculty will be able to opt in by including language in their course syllabus.

This document contains the policies proposed for the pilot.

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We hope to have the faculty approve this pilot in the department retreat and form the committee at that time. We welcome questions, proposed modifications etc. Please let us know!

# Syllabus Statement

The following is language that you should include in your syllabus if you want to be included in the initial pilot.

**Academic Integrity and CSSE Integrity Committee Procedures**

It is critical to maintain academic integrity. It is essential for all students to cite any and all sources of help received in completing coursework. This practice not only fosters a culture of honesty and transparency but also prevents misunderstandings that might otherwise escalate to formal proceedings. Students should also be aware of what is appropriate help on homework assignments – see policy here [link]. To ensure fairness and responsibility, any instances of suspected misconduct will be handled through the CSSE Integrity Committee.

If a case of suspected misconduct arises, it will be submitted to the CSSE Integrity Committee for review (see policies and procedures here [link] and possible penalties here[link]). The process includes an initial review of the evidence by the committee, a 24-hour window for students to confess to any violations, and potentially a hearing to examine the circumstances and evidence. Students are encouraged to continue their studies and engage with the course material and instructor normally throughout the investigation.

# Procedures of the Integrity Committee

This document outlines the procedure by which a faculty member works with the CSSE Integrity Committee to deal with cases. For the first-year pilot, we ask that in your syllabus you state if you plan to use the CSSE Integrity Committee and if you choose to do so, you submit ALL cases through the committee.

### 1. Submission of Suspicion  Once a faculty member discovers a likely misconduct case (see suggested standards [add hyperlink or section reference]) they can submit the information and evidence to the CSSE Integrity Committee. There is some flexibility in the submission process, but faculty members are encouraged to use either 1) a provided [form](https://forms.office.com/r/PZ5AiQ8Emh) or 2) to email the details and evidence to the designated contact. In all cases, the submission should include at a minimum:

* The suspected violations of academic integrity
* How the violation became suspected including dates and times
* Evidence collected relating to the suspected violation
* Specifics and context of the assessment(s) sufficient to estimate the severity of the violation in the course (i.e. in-class activity, homework, exam)
* Additional relevant details about the student or course

After the initial submission of suspicion of a student, the instructor will continue to teach and engage with the student as they would any other learner in the class. If the student wishes to discuss the case, they should do so with the CSSE Integrity Committee. In general, communication about the case should go through the CSSE Integrity Committee and should not be handled directly between the instructor and student.

### 2. Review of Submission

The CSSE Integrity Committee reviews information about the suspected violation. The Committee contacts the submitting faculty member if any clarification is needed. If the Committee finds the evidence sufficient to prosecute the case, the procedure moves forward with the next step. If the Committee does not find sufficient evidence to prosecute, they contact the faculty member who submitted the violation suspicion with an explanation of why they did not feel they could prosecute the case.

### 3. Soliciting Student Response

The CSSE Integrity Committee emails the student(s) suspected and notifies them they are suspected of an academic integrity violation and the specific course and assessment(s) for which they are suspected.

The student is asked to reply within 24 hours providing any information that think is relevant about the particular assignment. The email should note that if they wish to admit any irregularities or a violation of the student code of conduct, the fact that they were forthcoming will be taken into account as the committee considers its next steps.

If the student’s reply admits to a violation and the committee is satisfied that this covers the professor’s complaint, the Committee replies to the student with a proposed penalty (usually on the lenient side given that the student was forthcoming). If the student accepts this penalty, no hearing is held and the process moves to the Writing Letters stage.

If the student does not reply within 24 hours, the CSSE Integrity Committee schedules a hearing as below, but does not provide more information about the violation until a response is received from the student. If a student reply arrives later than 24 hours, the committee can usually proceed similarly to if it had been received in time (i.e. offering a penalty on admission, providing more information otherwise) unless the response comes too close to the hearing to be useful (at the committee’s discretion).

### 4. Scheduling a Hearing

If the student replies but does not admit a violation, the committee, then the CSSE Integrity Committee may give more information about the specific violation(s) under review. The CSSE Integrity Committee will also schedule a hearing that is compatible with the student’s class schedule. If a student is absent at the time of the hearing, it is at the discretion of the CSSE Integrity Committee to determine if the hearing will proceed without the student or be rescheduled.

### 5. Conducting the Hearing

CSSE Integrity Committee will run the meeting and will include at least two faculty members. A student may elect to invite another faculty or staff member to the meeting who is permitted to speak on behalf of the student. A student should provide a written statement. The student will be allowed to present their case and supporting evidence to the Committee. After reading the student’s statement and/or hearing them present their case, the faculty members will have a chance to ask questions of the accused student(s). The student(s) then leaves, there is deliberation about the case and a decision is made. The student will receive information about the case via written decision.

### 6. Writing Letters and Processing

Upon the decision being reached, the CSSE Integrity Committee will send an email to the instructor who submitted the suspicion, the student, the student’s academic advisor, and the CSSE department head. The instructor is requested to pass this letter along in accordance with the Rose Hulman academic integrity policy to the Dean of Students, and, as appropriate, the registrar (for penalty grades). The letter should be the same letter that is sent by instructors in ordinary cases of academic misconduct, but should also instruct the Institute Rules and Discipline Committee to notify the department head of the outcome of any appeal.

Students may appeal to the Rules and Discipline committee in accordance with the normal academic conduct procedures in the Student Handbook.

### 7. Meeting with the CSSE Representative

Upon a final decision (either via confession, after the integrity committee decision, or after the decision of the rules and discipline committee in the case of an unsuccessful appeal) the student will meet with a CSSE representative (i.e. Department Head, Associate Department Head, Instructor) who will provide appropriate guidance to the student regarding the implications of this violation of academic integrity and strategies for avoiding such actions in the future.

# What Constitutes Academic Misconduct

As specified in the student handbook, Rose-Hulman expects its students to be responsible adults and to behave at all times with honor and integrity. Academic Misconduct includes actions such as cheating, plagiarizing, or interfering with the academic progress of other students. In general, the policy of the CSSE department is the same as other departments at Rose-Hulman.

The one case that is special for CSSE has to with how much help is allowed from other students when working on homework – in particular in the case of programming assignments (and similar).

## Homework Help Policy

Often it can be difficult to understand what is and what is not academic dishonesty when it comes to students helping each other on homework assignments. It is desirable that students be able to get help from peers. But it also is critical that students’ individual assignments represent their own skills, and not the result of a collaboration.

Students are permitted to share their general approach to solving some homework problems with each other, including difficulties encountered or clever ideas with the following stipulations:

1. The hints should be non-specific enough that the student being helped should still be developing a unique solution. Frequently a high-level description of an algorithm or design is appropriate, but a line-by-line description or elaborated UML diagram is not. In no cases is it appropriate for a helper to share a complete or mostly complete solution with the expectation that the other student will “only refer to it as a reference” or similar.
2. The help should pertain to a small part of the overall assignment, not the majority. What would be an appropriate amount of help for 1 problem of a 10 problem set would not be appropriate if help was needed on every problem.
3. Any help must be cited in the submission.

Students are also permitted to help each other debug problems encountered in development, even to the extent of allowing another student to see their (broken) code for a short while with the following stipulations:

1. The debugging help should be for a specific problem in an otherwise functioning code base. The amount of code collaborated on should be very small in proportion to the overall assignment.
2. Any help must be cited in the submission

## Exemplar Scenarios

### Helping a friend on a programming assignment

**Situation:** You are taking a class with a friend. A programming assignment is due tonight. You just finished the homework assignment, but your friend is stuck. What amount of help should you provide them?

### Appropriate help

*Stipulate* that your friend cite you as a source of help and have them enter a citation of your help before offering any of the following:

* **Ask probing questions for understanding**: “How are you trying to solve it now? What problem from the lecture does this remind you of?”
* **Outline your approach**: “So I looped across the array elements to see if any of them are in the hash table. When I found a matching key in the table, I got the value and incremented it.”
* **Debug *one or two* problems with their code with them**: "Can I see your code? ... I think there's an issue with the range of your for loop. Take a look there, to start. If you don't see it, I can give another hint. That should be enough to get you started."
* **Send them appropriate references**: “Here is a video that I found helpful for explaining the concepts you are stuck on.”

### Too much help

* **Narrating the code to write**: “So you write a for loop, 1 to array length. Your key variable is gonna be array[i]. You check if hashMap.get(key) is null, if not, you get the value with get, then hashMap.put(key, oldValue + 1)…”
* **Debugging their entire assignment with them:** “Now that we fixed that issue, let’s make sure you got everything else working before you turn it in.”
* **Pre-empting their learning**: “We got Part 1 working, but now the problem is that your Part 2 won’t work because you need to convert the hashMap into a binary search tree to guarantee the entries are retrieved in-order.”
* **Showing them your code**: "Let me step you through how my code worked, and we can see where you went wrong."
* **Pointing them at an online solution to the homework**: “Here use this link. I found the solution online and just copied and pasted right into Eclipse.”
* **Asking AI**. “I have the “Generative AI: Expensive Edition” license. Let me plug in your code into it and see if it can tell us what is wrong with it.”

### Asking for help on a programming assignment

**Situation**: Your programming assignment is due tonight. You realize it is much harder than you thought it would be. You unexpectedly need to find help.

### Appropriate help

You must **cite** all sources of help.

* **Ask a Teaching Assistant or Tutor for help getting started**: "I just don’t know where to begin this assignment. What should I be thinking about to get started?"
* **Ask a Teaching Assistant or Tutor for help debugging a problem or two**: "I am almost done but just have this one error that I cannot understand. Can you help me debug it?"
* **Ask a reliable friend for help thinking about the problem**: "I'm just getting started on this assignment. Can you help me brainstorm ways I might generally approach it?"
* **Search existing questions and answers on reputable websites**. “stackoverflow what does Segmentation Fault mean”
* **Unless your instructor has given you explicit permission do not ask questions of generative AI tools.**

### Too much help

* **Getting a TA or Tutor to help you through the entire assignment**: "I haven't started this assignment yet. Can you tell me how to do each of the Ten Problems?"
* **Asking a friend about specifics of their solution.** “I just cannot figure out how to make this last test case pass. How did you get it to pass?”
* **Peeking at someone else’s code**: “My friend left their computer unlocked and I just happened to see their code on their screen.”
* **Referencing existing solutions**: “I found a solution to a very similar assignment in the Learning Center’s files on Moodle and peeked at the code to get an idea of how to get started.”
* **Submitting another person’s work as your own.** “I am too busy with my other assignments to submit this one assignment on time. I already know how to do this stuff! I could just submit this old one I found to make time for my other assignments.”
* **Using AI.** “No one was awake and I couldn’t find anything online, so out of desperation, I copied the problem into Generative AI: Expensive Edition, and I accidentally generated the entire solution.”

# Penalties

The Integrity committee is empowered to adjust the student grade on a particular deliverable (including to a negative value), adjust the student grade in the course (including an F penalty grade), and to devise course-specific penalties in consultation with the instructor.  In all cases where misconduct has occurred, the committee will submit a letter to the dean of students.

Cheating that is done willfully is given worse penalties than excessive collaboration considered accidental. Leniency is often given for students who come forward without prompting. Repeated offenses incur much worse penalties.

The table below summarizes general guidance on appropriate penalties.  The committee may apply penalties more or less severe than listed here.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Misconduct on...* | *Penalty* |
| *In class activity* | *Negative 100% grade penalty, or small reduction in course grade* |
| *Small assignment (e.g. 3-5 day assignment)* | *Negative 100% grade penalty – dropped letter grade in the course* |
| *Quiz or other minor “test like” assessment* | *Negative 100% grade penalty – dropped letter grade in the course* |
| *Multi-week course project* | *Negative 100% grade penalty – F in the course* (penalty grade) |
| *Access of inappropriate resources on small part of Exam* | *Negative 100% grade penalty – dropped letter grade in the course* |
| *Collaboration during exam, broad cheating on exam questions* | *F in the course* (penalty grade) |

# Burden of proof – on students and faculty

It is the policy of the Rose-Hulman CSSE Department that:

1. Students must cite all sources of help on all coding assignments (and non-coding assignments) to establish their academic integrity.
2. Faculty report academic misconduct when misconduct is *more likely than not* to have occurred.

## Students must cite all sources of help

Students can complete their assignments with the help of a host of approved people and resources. The best way students can prove the integrity of their work is by clearly citing all sources of help on every assignment and by relying only on approved sources of help. The CSSE faculty agree that **students must cite all sources in their coding assignments** by **adding one-line comments** above the relevant code that cites their sources.

Example citations for code

Here are some examples of one-line comments that students might add to their code to indicate that they received accepted sources of help on their assignments:

// Credit for this function: https://stackoverflow.com/1234/

// Credit for the idea for this loop: SRT Charlie Andersen

// Credit for helping me debug this: roommate Alice Cooper

## Proving academic misconduct – “more likely than not”

When students don't provide detailed citations in their work, students and faculty sometimes question how much "proof" a professor must present to charge a student with academic misconduct. While Rose-Hulman's Rules and Procedures do not describe this bar, our peer institutions (see appendix) seem to agree: **faculty need only determine that it was more likely than not that their students cheated**; think only “51% likely.” This bar is often called the *preponderance of evidence* standard at our peer institutions and is henceforth the standard adopted by the CSSE department.  It’s common for individual faculty members to decide they personally use a higher bar (e.g. 90% likely etc) but it is recommended that faculty prosecute misconduct in cases where they are not 100% certain.

## Accepted proof of misconduct

Here are some examples of evidence that each *sufficiently* establish that academic misconduct more likely than not occurred:

* Lack of citations for ideas that were not discussed in class.
* Similarity of code to other students’ idiosyncratic work; past and present.
* Similarity of code to generative AI output.
* Discrepancies in coding style.
* Statements from project partners who witness misconduct on their team.
* A professor’s own eye-witness account of misconduct.

None of these forms of evidence establish that academic misconduct occurred “beyond reasonable doubt” or with “moral certainty.” That level of certainty is neither necessary nor warranted to make academic misconduct allegations at *any* of our peer institutions. (see appendix)

Sometimes evidence can be made stronger with circumstantial evidence that might *not be* sufficient by itself. For example:

* Students sitting next to each other in class
* Students living or traveling together
* Students submitting work at around the same time or from similar IP addresses

As always, faculty use their best judgment to fairly consider whether such circumstantial evidence is relevant to the situation.

Faculty should strive to ground their misconduct case in concrete evidence. They should not allow personal feelings, positive or negative, about students to cloud the issue. If faculty are concerned about their personal feelings impacting their judgment, they should feel comfortable seeking another professor to evaluate the evidence.

## Appealing academic misconduct findings on CSSE assignments

When confronted with a false accusation of academic misconduct, students should provide direct evidence as to their innocence, such as citations that the professor may have missed, email threads, and chat transcripts. Evidence is what is most likely to persuade faculty who charge you with misconduct.

We encourage students who are wrongfully accused to appeal to the Institute Rules and Discipline Committee. When doing so, please present direct evidence of your integrity. When appealing, it can be beneficial to get the advice of a trusted faculty member. Without evidence, there are minimal chances of correcting a false accusation.

## Appendix: *Preponderance of evidence* is appropriate

The aim of adopting this standard is to reduce uncertainty about reporting academic misconduct. Despite the prevalence of the preponderance of evidence standard among our peer institutions (see below), some observers might worry that the preponderance of evidence standard is too low given the gravity of academic misconduct charges. Faculty may worry about whether it is ethical or fair for students to go through the academic misconduct process when faculty are anything less than *absolutely* certain that misconduct occurred. We can reconcile with these concerns by examining how we handle more serious forms of misconduct on campus, keeping in mind our educational mission, and relying on the faculty of the Institute Rules and Discipline Committee to help us out when our judgment fails.

While Rose-Hulman does not name a standard of evidence in the Rules and Procedures for handling academic misconduct, we can look to our guidance for handling non-academic misconduct. Specifically, Rose-Hulman *does* use the preponderance of evidence standard by name to handle [Title IX violations](https://www.rose-hulman.edu/about-us/human-resources/title-ix-2.html). The staff who decide Title IX violations face the same problem as faculty who decide academic misconduct cases: neither have the investigative tools of law enforcement to conclude serious matters beyond reasonable doubt. That is precisely why Title IX Coordinators are empowered by Rose-Hulman's policies to make their determinations with the lower preponderance of evidence standard. It follows that our standard of evidence for academic misconduct would also be similar. Faculty do not have the investigative tools of law enforcement and cannot realistically decide whether academic misconduct occurred beyond reasonable doubt.

If there are ever any doubts about a situation's integrity, it is better to have educational albeit awkward conversations with students, than to not have conversations at all. It may feel uncomfortable to discuss the prospect of academic misconduct when the evidence seems to only point 51% toward misconduct. All parties can take comfort that a first offense does not result in further penalties, students can appeal wrongly made accusations of misconduct, and that all appeals and repeat offenses will be reviewed carefully and fairly by the Institute Rule and Discipline Committee. While our rules and procedures afford a great deal of deference to faculty who report misconduct, in practice, our appeals process ensures that no individual faculty member is left as the student's sole judge and jury.

For these reasons, the preponderance of evidence is enough, although individual faculty may choose a higher standard for themselves.

### Use of the preponderance of evidence standard among peer institutions

The following peer institutions use the preponderance of evidence standard by name to determine whether academic misconduct occurred:

* Carnegie Mellon: [Course Level Review, Decision, and Action - The Word - Student Handbook - Carnegie Mellon University (cmu.edu)](https://www.cmu.edu/student-affairs/theword/academic-discipline/course-level-review-decision-action.html)
* Duke University: [The Duke Community Standard (duke.edu)](https://students.duke.edu/get-assistance/community-standard/)
* Indiana University: [Part Two: A. Academic Misconduct: Disciplinary Procedures: IU Bloomington: III: Procedures: Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, & Conduct: Indiana University](https://studentcode.iu.edu/procedures/bloomington/discipline/academic-misconduct/part-two.html#:~:text=The%20board%20holds%20a%20hearing%20on%20the%20issue,a%20finding%20of%20misconduct%2C%20the%20matter%20ends%20there.)
* Milwaukee School of Engineering: [Student Conduct Code](https://msoe.s3.amazonaws.com/files/resources/student-code-of-conduct-master-2.pdf) (named the “preponderance of information”)
* MIT: [IX. Hearing Procedures | Committee on Discipline](https://cod.mit.edu/rules/section9)
* Olin College of Engineering: [Student Rights and the Hearing Process (olin.edu)](https://www.olin.edu/sites/default/files/2021-12/student-rights.pdf)
* Purdue University: [Responding to Academic Dishonesty - Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - Purdue University](https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/resources/documents/responding_to_academic_dishonesty.html)
* University of Chicago: [University Disciplinary Systems | Student Manual | The University of Chicago (uchicago.edu)](https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/student-life-conduct/university-disciplinary-systems/)
* University of Illinois: [Part 4, Article 1 » Student Code » Illinois](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-403/) (named "probably more true than untrue")
* Virginia Tech: [Frequently Asked Questions | Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity | Virginia Tech (vt.edu)](https://honorsystem.vt.edu/resources/faq.html)

Like Rose-Hulman, not all peer institutions elect to name their standard. Georgia Tech, Harvey Mudd, Rochester Institute of Technology, Stanford University, and Stevens Institute of Technology do not formally name their standard. Rochester Institute of Technology's policy [actively refuses](https://www.rit.edu/policies/d080) to define their standard and instead purports the "sole discretion" of the chair of their Academic Integrity Committee to decide whether misconduct occurred.

Other schools apply the standards inconsistently. Notre Dame and Pomona College use the higher *clear and convincing* standard for students’ academic misconduct but use the lower preponderance of evidence standard to handle faculty academic misconduct. Faculty at the University of Illinois only need a preponderance of evidence to charge a student, but their language suggests that students might need to bring clear and convincing evidence of their *innocence* to successfully appeal the faculty’s determination. Even so, all these schools appear to use the preponderance of evidence standard to handle Title IX cases.