

STUDENT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
(Honor Code)
Last modified-Fall 2012

Preamble

Students who have elected to study veterinary medicine must be cognizant of the seriousness of their studies and personal conduct. We should also realize that self-government is a privilege that is granted to responsible men and women.

The purpose of a Code of Professional Ethics is to define, present, and enforce the highest ideals of professional conduct. We, the students of the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine, will uphold a code of ethical behavior which assures the highest standards of our profession. Toward this end, we develop and adopt the following code:

Section I

I. Policies Governing Students of Veterinary Medicine.

All cases involving infractions of the Disciplinary Code of Auburn University by students enrolled in the College of Veterinary Medicine will be handled initially by the Student Board of Ethical Relations of the College of Veterinary Medicine (hereinafter referred to as the Board and the College).

- A. Academic Dishonesty: The Board will consider the following acts as violations:
1. Work such as thesis, reports, drawings, and grading which involves the deceitful or fraudulent use of unauthorized aid or was prepared by another.
 2. Obtaining examination questions or knowledge thereof before an examination, giving or receiving assistance, or any communication between students during an examination.
 3. Unauthorized copying, distribution, or possession of examination material via any means including but not limited to cell phones, cameras, computers or other modes of technology.
 4. Possession of unauthorized aid during an examination, whether physical, electronic, or otherwise.
 5. Failure to report known acts of academic dishonesty.

The above stated violations are only examples since it is impossible to list all acts which are violations of academic dishonesty. Therefore, nothing in the foregoing shall be construed as preventing the Board from enacting measures against violations not herein enumerated.

- B. Unprofessional Conduct: In general, any conduct by a student which reflects dishonor upon the College or adversely influences the ethical standards of its student body shall be brought to the attention of the Board. This includes material posted on social network media that associates the student with the College or the veterinary profession. Specific violations considered by the Board shall be as follows:
1. Falsifying any applications, forms, or records to be reviewed by the Admissions Committee for formal admission to the College.
 2. Engaging in any facet of the practice of veterinary medicine or surgery prior to graduation unless under the direct supervision of a legally licensed veterinarian and in accordance with state practice acts.
 3. Knowingly producing false evidence against any other person or giving false statements or charges in bad faith against any other person.
 4. Contributing to, or engaging in, any activity which obstructs or disrupts teaching, research, administration, or other university activity either on the main campus or on the veterinary

medical complex. This shall include any action that disrupts a student, technician, or veterinarian's ability to provide competent patient care.

5. Failing to show proper respect for good order, morality, integrity, and the rights and privileges of others.
6. Threatening or committing physical violence against any member of the University faculty, staff, or community.
7. Misusing student status or the right to use University property and facilities.
8. Knowingly publishing or circulating false information concerning any fellow student or faculty member.
9. Knowingly passing worthless checks or making financial obligations for which satisfactory arrangements have not been made.
10. Distributing pictures, documents, or other materials that may reflect negatively on the College or that breach the Veterinarian-Client-Patient relationship confidentiality agreement.
11. Stealing, damaging, defacing, or, without authority, diverting to personal use any property of the College or any public or private property.
12. Participating in illegal drug traffic, use or possession. Abusing controlled substances whether a prescription is held or not.
13. Falsifying clinic records.
14. Neglecting or abusing any animal.
15. Failing to report known violations of professional conduct.

The above stated violations are only examples since it is impossible to list all acts of unprofessional conduct. Therefore, nothing in the foregoing shall be construed as preventing the Board from enacting measures against violations not herein enumerated.

Section II

II. General Policies Concerning the Student Board of Ethical Relations.

A. Board Membership.

1. The full Board will consist of:
 - a. Chancellor
 - b. Clerk
 - c. Two Justices and three Auxiliary Justices from each class.
2. Hearings.
 - a. During a hearing, if appropriate justices are present on campus and are available and eligible to serve, the court will be composed of two justices from each class then on campus plus one auxiliary from the involved class.
 - b. To hear a case during Fall or early Spring Term, nine justices must be in attendance; from the onset of the fourth year preceptorships through justice elections for the incoming class in the fall, seven justices must be in attendance.
3. The chancellor and clerk will be appointed by February 15 of each year by the Dean from a list of six students in the third year class selected by a vote of the members of the class.
4. Justices and auxiliary justices shall be selected in accordance with the following procedure.
 - a. Election of first year justices and auxiliary justices will be held no later than September 30 of each year. They will take office immediately upon election, their terms ending on the following April 14.
 - b. Election of all other justices and auxiliary justices will be conducted in the Spring Term of each year, no later than April 15. Their terms will be from April 15 through April 14 of the following year.
 - c. Each student will vote for three classmates for membership on the Board.
 - d. From this balloting, the top twelve names will be determined by the respective class president.

- e. The cognizant class president will contact each nominee to determine his/her willingness to serve on the Board.
 - f. The list of twelve (or less, if any have declined nomination) will be presented to the class, and each class member will vote for three of the nominees.
 - g. The respective class presidents will determine the top seven names from the second balloting.
 - h. Each of the seven nominees will appear before the Board's Screening Committee which will be composed of the following:
 - 1) The chancellor of the court.
 - 2) The clerk of the court.
 - 3) The president of the respective class.
 - 4) Faculty advisor(s) of the Board.
 - i. The Screening Committee will present the names of the seven nominees, along with any remarks it deems necessary, to the Dean of the College.
 - j. The Dean, in consultation with the respective class presidents, will appoint two justices and three auxiliary justices from the seven nominees submitted for each class.
5. Auxiliary justices will serve in case of inability of any justice to serve at any case hearing and may be asked by the chancellor to serve on an ad hoc committee to review alleged violations. Ad hoc committee members are not eligible to serve as justices on that case.
 6. A faculty advisor to the Board should be present at all Board meetings and case hearings for the purpose of solicited consultation.
 7. The faculty advisors to the Board will assist the chancellor and clerk in ensuring continuity of the events conducted by the Board. Their duties will include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Familiarizing the new chancellor and clerk with the conduct of their duties.
 - b. Ensuring proper and timely elections each year including required interviews.
 - c. Ensuring that regular meetings of the Board are held as required by the Code.
 - d. Assisting the chancellor in matters of scheduling and coordinating events of the Board as deemed appropriate.
 - e. Serving as members of the Screening Committee in the election of justices and auxiliary justices.
 8. Three faculty advisors, one from each of the academic departments, will be appointed by the Dean in consultation with the Board.
 9. Ex officio positions. The immediate past chancellor and clerk will remain associated with the Board as consultants to their successors. Their responsibilities will be primarily to familiarize the new officers with the conduct of their duties. They will neither participate in hearings nor preside or vote in organizational or policy meetings of the Board.
- B. Duties of the Board Members.
1. Chancellor
 - a. Serves as Chairman of the Board.
 - b. Calls all regular and special meetings.
 - c. Presides at all meetings.
 - d. Initiates an investigation of an alleged violation of the Code by appointing an ad hoc student review committee composed of auxiliary justices (IIB4).
 - e. Notifies the accused in writing of specific violations recommended by the Ad Hoc Student Review Committee for Board consideration and the exact time and place of the hearing.
 - f. Notifies the accused in writing of findings and recommendations of the Board.
 - g. Gives a written report to the Dean as to guilty findings and penalties recommended by the Board.
 - h. Conveys all records in cases with a guilty finding to the Dean for review and filing.
 - i. Destroys all records in cases of a not guilty finding.
 - j. If the Clerk is away, the Chancellor appoints an acting Clerk from the auxiliary justices of the senior class.

- k. Can appoint ad hoc committees for specific issues as needed to address concerns of the board or student body.
 2. Clerk
 - a. Acts as secretary to the Board.
 - b. Notifies Board members of regular and called meetings.
 - c. Acts as chancellor in the event the chancellor cannot serve.
 - d. Makes records of transcripts of case proceedings.
 - e. Assures that permanent and confidential records of case hearing are filed in the Dean's office.
 - f. Notifies appropriate persons to appear before the Board.
 - g. Assists chancellor with preparation of findings and recommendations.
 - h. If required to serve as chancellor, appoints an acting clerk from among the justices.
 3. Justices.
 - a. Consider evidence presented regarding Code violations.
 - b. Act to determine guilt or innocence of the accused.
 - c. Recommend punitive measures if guilt is established.
 - d. Serve on ad hoc student review committee if appointed.
 4. Ad Hoc Student Review Committee
 - a. Composed of three (3) auxiliary justices appointed by the Chancellor.
 - b. Reviews the allegations and advises the chancellor whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a hearing.
 - c. If a hearing is recommended the committee will turn over all evidence and statements it has collected to the chancellor. If a hearing is not recommended, the accuser will be notified by the Chancellor and all notes relative to the accusation will be destroyed.
 - d. Committee members cannot be seated as justices for the case they have reviewed.
 - e. Committee can be appointed by the Chancellor.
- C. Functions of the Board.
 1. It shall be the responsibility of the Board to acquaint the students of the College with the provisions of the Code, to investigate and consider all alleged violations of the Code, and to recommend punitive measures in case of violation. In addition, it shall be general responsibility of the Board to promote in every way possible the ethical standards of personal conduct in the relationships among students and between students and faculty.
 2. The Board shall be charged with the responsibility of explaining the provisions of the Code to incoming students at the orientation program each year. The Board shall also meet with other classes or groups upon request for the purpose of discussing the provisions of the Code.
 3. The board shall meet at least once during each term at a time designated by the chancellor. During the last week of April, the members of the Board will meet with the newly appointed board for a general discussion and orientation.
- D. Board Action.
 1. Any violation of the Code will constitute grounds for Board action. The introduction, explanation, and signing of the pledge to abide by the Code during admissions procedures by each incoming class member is considered to be adequate notice.
 2. Board action will be initiated by the witness of apparent violation(s). The alleged violation(s) must be described in writing to the chancellor, clerk, or Dean of the College.
 3. Following receipt of a written accusation, the chancellor shall appoint an ad hoc student review committee, composed of three (3) auxiliary justices, to gather all evidence pertinent to the alleged violation. If the ad hoc committee determines that the case is within the province of the Board, the chancellor will notify the accused in writing of the charges on the Student Board of Ethical Relations Notification Form #1 which provides the accused with at least 72 hours for the preparation of his/her case. After notification of the accused, the justices and accuser(s) will be notified of the time and place of the hearing. Any written communication to the accused using the U.S. Postal Service should be by certified mail, return receipt requested.
 4. The hearing will conform to the guidelines as set forth in Section III.

5. After full consideration of the evidence, the Board determines by secret ballot of the justices if there has been a violation of the Code. In a guilty finding, as a standard of proof, there should be clear and convincing evidence based on the record as a whole. A vote of two-thirds of the justices present will be required for a guilty verdict. If it is determined that there has been no violation, the accused, accuser, and witnesses will be notified of the outcome of the hearing within three (3) College working days. If it is determined that there has been a violation, the Board will then vote by secret ballot of the justices on a recommended penalty. An affirmative vote by two-thirds of the justices present is required for a recommendation of reprimand, probation, or restitution, or counseling. In order to sustain a recommendation for suspension or expulsion, there must be no more than one dissenting vote.
 6. The chancellor will immediately notify the accused in writing of the Board's decision and his rights of appeal on Student Board of Ethical Relations Notification Form #2.
 7. In all findings of guilt, the Board shall submit its recommendations, along with complete records of the hearing, to the Dean of the College. If no appeal is made, the Dean will act on the Board's recommendation and notify the accused in writing. If an appeal is made to the Dean, he will transmit all records to the Admissions and Standards Committee for their review and recommendations. Following receipt and consideration of the Committee's report, the Dean will make a final decision and notify the accused in writing.
 8. All hearings and actions of the Board are confidential and only released to cognizant parties as identified in the code.
- E. Recommendations of the Board.
1. The Board employs the following penalties:
 - a. Reprimand
 - b. Probation
 - c. Suspension
 - d. Expulsion
 - e. Restitution
 - f. Counseling
 2. These penalties are defined as follows:
 - a. Reprimand: written expression of disapproval given by the Board to the offending student.
 - b. Probation: a stated period of time during which a subsequent violation of the Code will carry with it a minimum punishment of suspension. During the period of probation, the individual will lose the privilege of holding any elected or appointed student office within the College.
 - c. Suspension: excludes the student from the College for a stated period of time.
 - d. Expulsion: dismissal from the College for two (2) years, after which the student may reapply.
 - e. Restitution: a requirement to make compensation to the injured party for damaged, lost, or destroyed property. This action may be taken separately or in conjunction with other penalties. The Board will set amount and form of restitution.
 - f. Counseling: a requirement to obtain professional guidance as recommended by the Board.
- F. Rights of Appeal
1. Appeal of the Board's recommendations must be made in writing to the Dean of the College within two (2) College workdays following the official notification to the accused of the Board's action. If an appeal is made, the Dean will refer the entire file to the Admissions and Standards Committee for their review and recommendation. The Admissions and Standards Committee may uphold the verdict of guilty. If the verdict is upheld, the Admissions and Standards Committee may concur with the recommended punishment by the Board or may recommend a lesser degree of punishment. Under no circumstances will the Admissions and Standards Committee recommend a more severe punishment than that recommended by the Board.
 2. If the Admissions and Standards Committee concurs with the recommendation of the Board, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Dean for final action. In the event the Admissions and Standards Committee does not concur with the opinion of the Board, the Dean will call a meeting of the Board and Committee to ensure that all pertinent information is understood. Within three

(3) College workdays, the Dean will take formal action on the recommendations and will notify the accused in writing. Following notification, in the event the accused requests presidential review, he/she will so notify the Dean in writing within three (3) College workdays. If appealed, the Dean will refer the proceedings of the case to the President of Auburn University with a notation, "Academic Honor Review" or "Disciplinary Review," as may be appropriate to the case under consideration.

G. Notification.

1. In addition to earlier references to notification, the following will be observed.
 - a. Following the expiration of appeal times of a guilty verdict, three (3) College workdays will be allowed for the Dean of the College to notify the following of the decision:
 - 1) The accused
 - 2) The accuser
 - 3) Cognizant Board members
 - 4) The witnesses as deemed necessary
 - 5) The Provost
 - 6) In cases of academic dishonesty or unprofessional conduct that results in expulsion or suspension.
 - a) The Course Instructors
 - b) The Registrar

H. General Provisions

1. Confidential proceedings.
 - a. Information regarding hearings, names of all involved parties, and the proceedings of the Board are strictly confidential.
 - b. Revelation of any of these items constitutes a breach of the Code.
 - c. All records of hearings will be placed in a permanent, confidential file in the Dean's office.
 - d. The records of Board hearings will be maintained by the clerk. The chancellor and clerk will have access to records they deem necessary while conducting the business of the Board.
 - e. Any information made available to the Board members about previous cases must be presented by the chancellor and clerk with reference to case numbers and without mention of the names of any persons involved.
 - f. The Board is entitled to prior knowledge in the case of one who has been found guilty of an offense after having been placed on probation for an earlier charge.
2. Conduct.
 - a. Students are expected to speak and act at all times in full accord with the spirit of the Code.
 - b. It is the personal responsibility of each student to report to the Board any individual whose actions depreciate the standards of moral integrity on which this Code is based.
 - c. The student body will be responsible for the adherence of its members to proper standards of ethical conduct at all times.
3. As a condition of acceptance to the College of Veterinary Medicine, each applicant is required to sign a pledge which states that he/she will uphold and abide by the Code of Professional Ethics. A copy of the Code shall be included with the letter of acceptance from the Dean's office which shall stipulate that final acceptance to the College is dependent upon applicant's endorsement of the pledge, "I pledge, on my honor, that I will uphold the spirit and the principles of the Code of Professional Ethics while I am a student in the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine".
4. Amendments and Revisions.
 - a. Proposed amendments and revisions concerning this Code shall be submitted to the student body of the College through the Board.
 - b. A two-thirds majority vote by the student body is necessary for the adoption of the amendment which is then subject to the approval of the Dean of the College.
- I. The faculty and staff of the College have two options in reporting students accused of violations of academic honesty, professional conduct, or performance.

1. Alleged violations may be reported in writing to the Dean of the College for a preliminary investigation by an ad hoc faculty committee appointed by the Dean. If the ad hoc faculty committee finds sufficient evidence, a formal hearing will be conducted by the Admissions and Standards Committee of the College. The ad hoc faculty committee will not include the accuser or Admissions and Standards Committee members.
2. Alleged violations may be reported in writing to the chancellor of the Board who will appoint an ad hoc student review committee, composed of auxiliary justices, to determine if the case is within the province of the Board. In such cases, the faculty should indicate in the written accusation which option is preferred.
3. Faculty members are encouraged by the students to select the option of adjudication by the Board, where appropriate, and to allow students to retain the autonomy they have enjoyed in the past in applying the principles of the Code. In so doing, the faculty members inherently express their confidence in the Code and in the students' responsible exercise of self-governance.

Section III

III. Guidelines for Conducting a Board Hearing.

The following guidelines are intended to assist the chancellor in conducting a hearing and are not intended to prohibit amended procedures where made desirable by clarity of justice.

A. General Comments

1. The chancellor should meet with the justices prior to convening the hearing to answer questions concerning the protocol to be used.
2. All hearings shall be recorded by the clerk on magnetic tape or similar device. A written log of times, attendance, and major events will be recorded and filed by the clerk. Exact transcriptions are not required except for use in a legal appeal. Individuals speaking should identify themselves by name and class.
3. Access to the hearing room should be restricted to the justices, the accusers, the accused, and the witness who is giving testimony. The accuser and the accused must be present during all testimony except in the case of multiple defendants, in which case each defendant should be questioned separately by the justices. The faculty advisor(s) of the Board may be present in the room as observers only.
4. Advisors or counselors for the accused may be available on the premises but are not allowed in the hearing room. At the discretion of the chancellor, the hearing may be recessed to permit the accused to seek consultation. Under no circumstance will legal counsel for the accused be permitted to participate in the hearing unless the legal counsel for Auburn University is also present.
5. It should be understood that the hearing is not intended to duplicate the procedures used in a court of law, but the accused will be allowed to ask questions directly of witnesses.
6. There should be no discussion of the case among the justices in the presence of the accused, accuser, or witnesses except for questions directed to these persons.

B. The Hearing.

1. The meeting will be called to order by the chancellor. Only the justices, the accused, the accuser(s), and faculty advisor(s) of the Board may be present.
2. The clerk will call the roll and record the names of the justices present.
3. The chancellor will present the accused and the accuser(s).
4. The chancellor will read the charges.
5. Justices will be asked if they have any prior knowledge of the charge. If so, those justices will be excused and auxiliary justices called.
6. The accused will then be asked for a plea of guilty or not guilty.
 - a. If the response is "guilty", the Board will conduct a hearing in order to have a basis for sanctions.

- b. "Not Guilty" pleas require that a hearing be conducted to determine if guilt can be established and, if so, to provide a basis for sanctions.
7. The chancellor calls upon the accuser(s) to present his/her case. Witnesses will be brought into the hearing room individually to present their testimony. All communications will be directed to the chancellor. The chancellor may ask appropriate questions to ensure clarity.
8. The chancellor will call upon the accused to present his/her response. Witnesses will be brought into the hearing room individually to present their testimony. All communications will be directed to the chancellor who may ask appropriate questions to ensure clarity.
9. Following the presentations by the accuser(s) and the accused and the dismissal of all witnesses from the hearing room, the accused may direct questions to the accuser(s). If requested, the chancellor may recall a witness for questioning by the accused.
10. After the accused has asked questions to his/her satisfaction, the justices are permitted to ask questions of either the accused or accuser(s). Any witness may be asked to return to the hearing room to be questioned by the justices. (The accused must be in the room during any questioning of witnesses or the accuser(s).)
11. The chancellor may excuse all persons except the justices to permit discussion by the Board.
12. At any time the chancellor deems it appropriate, any person who has previously participated in the hearing may be recalled for further questioning. The accused must be in the hearing room during all testimony.
13. Following a "guilty" plea, justices vote to determine the type of punishment. Following a "not guilty" plea, the justices must first vote to determine the guilt or innocence. If guilty, another vote must be taken to determine the type of punishment. This vote may be postponed until precedential cases can be reviewed by the Board.

College of Veterinary Medicine-Required Withdrawal Review Procedure

"The faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine reserves the right to require the withdrawal at any time of any student who, in the judgment of the Admissions and Standards Committee is not profiting from the instruction offered, who is neglectful, irregular, dishonest, or indifferent in the performance of required duties and studies, or whose character or conduct is inconsistent with good order of the veterinary school or with the standard of the veterinary profession."

Auburn University Bulletin

These guidelines provide a specified route of disciplinary action as recommended by Mr. Thomas D. Samford III, attorney for Auburn University, acting as counsel to the Admissions and Standards Committee of the College of Veterinary Medicine. This procedure is taken to ensure due process of the law in such cases as may warrant the exercise of required withdrawal.

Diagram of optional process reporting honor code violations
(Admissions and Standards Committee process)



