



## Graduate Honor Council Policy and Procedures

### Honor System

The Honor System at Mary Baldwin University is *the defining quality* of the college culture. When you applied to the School of Education at Mary Baldwin, you signed the **Honor Pledge**:

Believing in the principles of student government, I pledge myself to uphold the ideals and regulations of the Mary Baldwin University community. I recognize the principles of honor and cooperation as the basis of our life together. I shall endeavor faithfully to order my life accordingly. I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, or violate my pledge of confidentiality. I will not fail to report others who lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, or violate their pledge of confidentiality. I will encourage others to fulfill the ideals of the honor system.

### Honor Policies and Procedures

#### **Honor System Policy**

The provisions of the School's Honor System apply to graduate students and are described below. Each student is responsible to understand the provisions of the Honor System and to seek information from professors as to the application of the Honor System to course activities. In the absence of directions to the contrary, students are required to complete all work without the assistance of any other person except members of the School's faculty or staff in the course of their duties.

#### ***I. The Principles of the Honor System***

In becoming a member of the Mary Baldwin University community and in taking the honor pledge, each student enters into an agreement based on freedom and recognition of responsibility to this community, promising to uphold the ideals of the honor system. Personal integrity is one of the principles upon which the honor system is founded. The ideals of the honor system include mutual trust among all members of the community. Upon entering this trust, a student assumes full responsibility for her or his own acts. Whenever a student signs their name to anything, they acknowledge the ideals of the honor system, and the signature is a promise to uphold its pledge. A student's responsibility to the honor system does not end when they leave the physical or virtual campus.

The welfare of the individual and the community depends upon all sharing equally the responsibility of enforcement, including the encouragement of others to uphold their share. It is important that each student report any violation of the honor system. It is imperative that everyone recognizes their duty to protect the honor system and the student body. Only through the cooperation of each student will the Mary Baldwin honor system continue to be effective.

#### ***II. Definition of Honor Offense***

An honor offense is an infraction of the School's stated rule of honor by a student enrolled in

Mary Baldwin University. Honor offenses include plagiarism, lying, cheating, stealing, breach of a pledge of confidentiality, and failure to report any of these infractions. An infraction may occur on or off campus.

## **A. Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's idea or work without acknowledging the source of the idea or work. All quotations, paraphrases, copying, and adaptation from published or unpublished sources must be acknowledged as explained below. Sources may include but are not limited to, papers, written or spoken statements, and works of art. If a student discovers they have made a mistake in acknowledging sources in a paper already submitted, they must make this fact known to the instructor immediately. The Graduate Honor Council will not accept a plea of ignorance. Two general principles apply to documentation of sources in written work. They are presented here, quoted from Watkins, Floyd C.; Dillingham, William B.; and Martin, Edwin T., Practical English Handbook, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971, pp. 244-245.

**All direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks and acknowledged in your text.** Even when you take only a phrase or a single unusual word from a passage, you should enclose it in quotation marks.

**All paraphrases and citations must be acknowledged.** Credit a source when you cite ideas or information from it, even when you do not quote directly. Altering the wording does not make the substance yours.

## **B. Lying**

A lie is any misrepresentation of facts as a student knows them, whether made verbally, in writing, or by a non-verbal indicator (such as, but not limited to, a head motion). Any lie that affects the Mary Baldwin University community will be dealt with by the Graduate Honor Council, whether the misrepresentation is made to a member of the School community or was made on or off campus. The Council hears cases including but not limited to those involving lying to a member of the faculty, administration, staff, a student, or to a committee or organization. Examples include but are not limited to: possession or use of a false I.D., stating a false name or age, and altering documents or official papers.

Although any lie is a serious offense, the Graduate Honor Council views particularly seriously any lie to an investigation committee or to the Council. If an investigating committee or the Graduate Honor Council suspects that an accused student may be lying, the committee or Council will ask the student to clarify their statements. If the committee or Council continues to believe that the student may be lying, it will notify the student that they are also accused of the offense of lying. The investigation or hearing will proceed, and it will include the additional charge of lying.

## **C. Cheating**

Each student is expected to do their own work in all academic endeavors. Giving or receiving help on academic work unless allowed by the instructor is cheating and must be reported. It is the student's responsibility not to discuss a test or exam with a student who has not taken it. To avoid the possible appearance of committing honor violations, students are advised not to

possess or take any materials other than writing instruments and blank paper into any room where a closed book test or examination is being given, or to possess or take any materials not specifically permitted by the instructor into any room where an open book test or examination is being given. Books and study materials should be left outside the room where the test or examination is to take place.

#### **D. Stealing**

Respect for the personal property of every individual is an essential principle upon which the Mary Baldwin University community is based. Taking or use of the belongings of others without permission and unauthorized use of school property (including library books and magazines, laboratory equipment, dining room utensils, and refrigerators) are breaches of the honor system and will be dealt with by the Graduate Honor Council. A student's responsibility to the honor system does not end when they leave the campus. Whenever a student signs their name to anything, they acknowledge the ideals of the honor system and their promise is to uphold its pledge.

#### **E. Explanation of Failure to Report an Offense**

Conscious awareness of having witnessed a possible infraction of the honor system and then failing to report it is in itself an honor offense. The purpose of reporting a violation is not to harm the individual involved, but ultimately to maintain the integrity of the student and that of the community.

#### **F. Confidentiality**

All members of the Graduate Honor Council, students reporting offenses, members of an investigating committee, witnesses at a hearing and/or investigating committee, and advisors shall strictly maintain the confidence of proceedings. An accused student may discuss their case while an investigation is proceeding with the following individuals: their family, advisor, the Graduate Honor Advisor, and faculty, administration, and staff of the School. An accused student may not discuss their case with any other individual, especially those involved with an investigation. If an accused student is found responsible and given a sanction, the student may tell others the sanction. They may not discuss any other aspect of the case with anyone except those persons listed above. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in an action by the Graduate Honor Council. The Graduate Honor Council shall post the results of cases in which a student has been found in violation, without names, once each semester; however, if there is a breach of confidentiality the Graduate Honor Council reserves the right to post a statement without names of the facts of the case for one-and-a-half to two days, at four places on campus.

#### ***IV. The Graduate Honor Advisor and Graduate Honor Council***

A member of the School of Education faculty, who has at least half of their responsibility in the graduate program, serves as the Graduate Honor Advisor. The Honor Advisor is nominated by the Associate Dean of the School of Education and elected by the School of Education faculty for a five-year term. The advisor receives referrals of cases in which a violation of the Honor System may have occurred and forms an Honor Council if there is probable cause to believe an offense has been committed. See the procedures below.

## **V. Honor Council Procedures**

### **A. Referral**

**Self-Referral:** A graduate student who realizes that they may have committed an honor offense must report the matter to the Graduate Honor Advisor immediately. Such a consultation does not constitute an admission of guilt but represents an honest attempt to clarify the matter. Any such consultation is completely confidential. The fact of such a consultation will weigh favorably in subsequent actions of the Graduate Honor Council, if any.

**Referral by Another:** Any member of the college community who suspects that a graduate student may have committed an honor offense may report the matter immediately to the Graduate Honor Advisor. Alternatively, the community member may consult the suspected student and request a clarification of the matter. If the community member continues to believe an honor offense may have been committed, they may allow the suspected student 24 hours to consult the Graduate Honor Advisor as noted above. If the suspected student does not consult the Graduate Honor Advisor, the person who suspects an honor offense must report suspicions directly to the Graduate Honor Advisor in writing.

### **B. Investigation of Offenses**

When the Graduate Honor Advisor receives a self-referral or a written report of a suspected honor offense, the Honor Advisor may in their discretion or shall at the request of the accused appoint two students who have been enrolled in the program for not less than one semester to gather evidence as to the suspected offense and report it to the Graduate Honor Advisor.

**Pre-Hearing Dismissal:** If in the sole judgment of the Graduate Honor Advisor, the evidence does not constitute probable cause to believe that an honor offense may have been committed, the Graduate Honor Advisor dismisses the case without a hearing.

### **C. Formation of a Graduate Honor Council**

If the evidence constitutes probable cause to believe that an offense may have been committed, the Graduate Honor Advisor forms a Graduate Honor Council of five graduate students who have been enrolled in the program for not less than one semester. The accused student chooses one member, the Associate Dean of the School of Education appoints two, and the Graduate Honor Advisor appoints two, in consultation with education faculty members at the discretion of the Graduate Honor Advisor and the advisor of the accused (see D.4. below). The Honor Advisor also invites a member of the education faculty to serve as hearing advisor to the Council.

### **D. Rights of the Accused Student**

A Mary Baldwin University graduate student accused of an honor offense has the following rights:

1. The right to be notified by the Graduate Honor Advisor that a report of an offense has been made and to request that an investigating committee be appointed.
2. The right to be notified in writing by the Graduate Honor Advisor of the charge against at least seventy-two (72) hours before appearance before the Graduate Honor Council. The notice will

include the names of the Council members named by the Graduate Honor Advisor and the Associate Dean of the School of Education and a request that the accused student name one member of the Council. The accused student may present to the Graduate Honor Advisor, in writing within 24 hours, questions as to the ability of any member to participate in the case. At their sole discretion, the Graduate Honor Advisor shall decide whether the member can participate in the case, or shall appoint another person to serve.

3. The right to a delay in the hearing of at least forty-eight (48) hours for cause if requested. Delays will not be granted in the absence of cause. The presence or absence of cause shall be determined by the Graduate Honor Council Advisor.

4. The right to choose and have present at the hearing a member of the faculty, administration, or student body of Mary Baldwin University to serve as advisor. The Graduate Honor Advisor will assist the accused in choosing or appoint an appropriate advisor. The advisor may counsel the accused, question witnesses and the investigating committee, and be present during the presentation of all evidence in the case. The advisor may not present argument to the Graduate Honor Council. Unavailability of the chosen advisor shall be grounds for a reasonable continuance of the hearing. However, should such advisor be unavailable for a period longer than one week from the originally scheduled hearing date, the accused may be required to choose a replacement advisor who is available, such advisor to be found with the assistance of the Graduate Honor Advisor.

5. The right to call any witnesses who are members of the faculty, administration, or student body of Mary Baldwin University who are necessary to present her or his case.

6. The right to cross-examine all witnesses who are called to testify at the hearing.

7. The right to be present during the presentation of all evidence in the case.

8. The right to refuse to testify. However, should an accused choose to testify on their own behalf, they shall be required to answer all questions material to the case which are asked of them.

9. The right to leave the Mary Baldwin University community to avoid a hearing, provided, however, that in the event of such withdrawal, the student's permanent record shall contain a notation that they withdrew without official permission while facing charges of a possible honor violation, and that the student shall not be readmitted as a student at Mary Baldwin University without appearing before the Graduate Honor Council to face the original charges.

10. The right to appeal a decision of the Graduate Honor Council resulting in suspension or dismissal to the president of the university. The student may base their appeal on the following:

- a. the student's contention of innocence;
- b. the student's contention that incorrect procedures were followed, or
- c. the student's contention that the sanction is unjust, if and only if the sanction is a major penalty as outlined in paragraph 2 of section F, "Penalties."

## **E. Hearing Procedures**

1. On determining that a quorum of the Graduate Honor Council, all requested witnesses, the accused, and the advisor to the accused are present, the Council shall elect a secretary. The

Graduate Honor Advisor shall require the accused and the witness(es) to state their names and administer the oath to the accused and each witness in turn. The accused and the witness shall be reminded that statements given in their testimony are subject to the provisions of the Honor System.

2. The Graduate Honor Advisor shall read to the accused the charge or charges against the accused and shall determine that the accused: understands the charges, has had an opportunity to prepare for the hearing; and has received a statement of their rights.

3. The Graduate Honor Advisor shall ask the members of the Graduate Honor Council if there are members who have knowledge of the offense charged which will prohibit them from deliberating in an unbiased manner. Any members who have such knowledge shall be disqualified.

4. The Graduate Honor Advisor or the investigating committee shall present its written report. Members of the Graduate Honor Council may question the committee members orally. At the conclusion of such questions, the Advisor to the Honor Council, the accused, and the advisor to the accused shall have the right to question orally. The Graduate Honor Advisor shall determine whether the questions are appropriate. Any rejected question shall be recorded in the written minutes of the hearing.

5. Witnesses requested by the Graduate Honor Advisor or the investigating committee shall then be called to testify. They shall be questioned in the same manner as members of the investigating committee.

6. After the investigating committee and all witnesses requested by it have presented their evidence, the accused and/or witnesses for the accused shall testify in an order to be determined by the accused and their advisor. The testimony shall be conducted in the manner set forth for previous witnesses.

7. At any time during the hearing, the Graduate Honor Advisor may direct that the Graduate Honor Council withdraw for deliberation and/or discussion, out of the presence of the accused and the advisor to the accused. The accused and their advisor may request of the Graduate Honor Advisor a brief recess for deliberation and/or discussion.

8. Witnesses shall be allowed to testify to any matter considered by the Graduate Honor Advisor to be relevant to the issue of the guilt or innocence of the accused. Questions of relevance shall be within the discretion of the Graduate Honor Advisor. No questions shall be allowed concerning previous misconduct, or honor offenses.

9. At the conclusion of the evidence the Graduate Honor Council shall retire to deliberate. A student shall be found in violation of the codes only if the committee finds that the offense has been proven by clear and convincing evidence. If more than one member of the Graduate Honor Council present casts a vote of "not in violation" at the conclusion of the deliberations, the charges shall be dismissed, and the accused is notified.

10. If a student is found in violation of the codes, the Graduate Honor Council shall recall the accused and the advisor and so inform them.

11. Proceedings shall then begin concerning the appropriate penalty. During this portion of the hearing, the accused may testify on their own behalf concerning the penalty and may call

witnesses on their behalf (including character witnesses) who may provide any information relevant to the determination of the penalty. They may not present evidence weighing on guilt or innocence. The Graduate Honor Council may consider past honor convictions but may not consider any past honor accusations.

12. After hearing the evidence concerning the penalty, the Graduate Honor Council shall return to its deliberations and determine the penalty by a majority vote. The appropriate penalties are as set forth below.

13. The Graduate Honor Council shall notify the accused in person of the penalty imposed. The accused shall be presented a written statement of the offense, verdict, and penalty, signed by the secretary of the Graduate Honor Council.

14. The Secretary (or designee) of the Graduate Honor Council shall maintain: a tape recording and, if necessary, a typed summary of the procedures except the deliberations of the Council; written minutes of the hearing; and as part of the record of the hearing, the summons, the signed statement of rights, a signed copy of these procedures, and a copy of the written statement described in Paragraph 4, above.

15. These materials shall be used in the event of appeal.

## **F. Penalties**

### *1. Minor*

a. **Alternative Penalties:** Council may require such penalties as it deems advisable. These may include, but are not limited to, community service, educational tasks, and restitution.

b. **Probation:** Probation is a testing period and acts as a warning that further offenses will warrant severe action. The Graduate Honor Council also may assign alternative penalties and/or place conditions on the probation as it deems appropriate.

### *2. Major*

a. **Suspension** is an immediate temporary termination for a stated period of the student's enrollment in the University. Suspension always includes the remainder of the term in which the student was enrolled at the time they were suspended. Suspension usually is for a period of no less than two terms. The student who is suspended must leave the University within 48 hours. No credit is given for courses in which the student was enrolled at the time they were suspended. The Graduate Honor Council also may place the suspended student on probation after return to the School and may place other conditions on the suspension, as it deems appropriate.

b. **Dismissal** is immediate termination of the student's admission and enrollment in the School. The dismissed student may apply for re-admission after one year. Their application must include evidence of good conduct in the interim. The application will be considered on its merit.

3. **Additional Penalties:** Council may impose additional sanctions and conditions, as it deems appropriate. When a student is found in violation of plagiarism, the Council will determine whether the work is valid, and may be revised, or whether the work is invalid, and will be graded

zero. When a student is found in violation of cheating, the work affected is automatically invalid and will be graded zero. The Graduate Honor Council may suggest to a faculty member that a grade of F (or NC in the case of a course taken P/NC) be given to a student who has been found in violation of cheating or plagiarism. The Graduate Honor Advisor will notify the professor of determinations regarding a student's work in cases of plagiarism or cheating and of recommendations regarding the course grade.

4. *Notation on Transcript:* All penalties of dismissal or suspension will be noted on the student's transcript. Probation will be so noted only when the Graduate Honor Council specifically makes such notation a condition of the probation.

5. *Notification:* Council may at its discretion notify members of the School community that it has disposed of a matter brought to its attention. The notification will not include information as to the disposition of the case nor the verdict nor penalties imposed, unless Council determines that it requires the assistance of a member of the College community in carrying out the penalty or sanctions.

The Graduate Honor Advisor will notify the Associate Dean of the School of Education when a student has been placed on probation, suspended, or dismissed. The Associate Dean will send the student a letter stating the Graduate Honor Council's penalty and outlining any additional sanctions and conditions. The Associate Dean will send a copy of the letter to the Registrar if the penalty is suspension or dismissal, or if the Council has determined that the probation will be noted on the student's transcript. The Associate Dean will destroy the file copy of the letter at the end of the student's probationary period if there are no other offenses.

When the Registrar receives from the Associate Dean of the School of Education notice that a student has been suspended or dismissed, or that probation will be noted on the student's transcript, they will note: "Disciplinary [Suspension/Dismissal/Probation] imposed by Graduate Honor Council on [date] for offense of [lying/cheating/stealing/plagiarism] for a period of. . ." The Registrar will destroy the letter they receive from the Associate Dean.

### **G. Procedures for Appeal**

The student has the right to appeal a decision resulting in suspension or dismissal to the president of Mary Baldwin University. The appeal should be based on the following:

- a. the student's contention of innocence;
- b. the student's contention that the procedures above were not followed
- c. the student's contention that the penalty of suspension or dismissal is unjust.

### **H. Confidentiality**

All members of the Graduate Honor Council, students reporting offenses, members of an investigating committee, witnesses at a hearing and/or investigating committee, and advisors shall strictly maintain the confidence of proceedings. An accused student may discuss their case while an investigation is proceeding with the following individuals: their family, their advisor to the Honor process, the Graduate Honor Advisor, and faculty administration, and staff of the School. An accused student may not discuss their case with any other individual, especially those involved with an investigation. If an accused student is found responsible and given a sanction, the student may tell others the sanction. They may not discuss any other aspect of the case with anyone except those persons listed above. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in an action by the Graduate Honor Council.

The Graduate Honor Council shall post the results of cases in which a student has been found



in violation, without names, once each semester; however, if there is a breach of confidentiality, the Graduate Honor Council reserves the right to post a statement, without names, of the facts of the case for one-and-a-half to two days, at four places on campus.

***I. Graduate Honor Council Policy on Additional Offenses***

All persons testifying in a Graduate Honor Council proceeding shall be subject to the Honor System. In the event that a student is suspected of lying during a hearing, the hearing will proceed to a conclusion. The separate suspected offense of lying shall be investigated following the procedures applicable to other honor offenses.