

Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Program in Higher Education

BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2013, the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (CGS&P) passed a resolution that encouraged each academic program to “make use of existing strategies and efforts to instill in their students the need for integrity and ethical behavior in all scholarly matters and to instruct their students in this regard” (CGS&P, Resolution 2012-13B). As part of this resolution, Appendix A outlined the required topics that must be included in this instruction. These topics included: (a) plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor Code, (b) proper use of professional conventions in citation, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work, (c) ethical standards in teaching, mentoring, and professional activities, and (d) available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct (See CGS&P, Resolution 2012-13B, Appendix A).

THE PROGRAM

To address these issues for students enrolled in the master’s and the doctoral programs in Higher Education, the faculty has agreed to the following:

Content

1. All students enrolled in the Higher Education program will be required to attend a School-wide program created by the faculty members in the department of Learning, Science, & Technology that will address items a, b, and d as outlined in the Background section of this paper and CGS&P, Resolution 2012-13B, Appendix A as attached. This School-wide program is scheduled to be available for all students in the fall semester of 2014.
2. In addition, our master’s students will attend a mandatory class session on the appropriate use of the APA Manual 6th edition, which will include proper use of professional conventions in citation, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work in EDHE 5314 – Theory and Appraisal of College Student Development. This class is required for all master’s students and is offered in the first academic term of a master’s student’s enrollment.

Doctoral students will receive information on the appropriate use of the APA Manual 6th edition, which will include proper use of professional conventions in citation, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work in EDHE 6914 – Theoretical Foundations in Higher Education. This class required for all doctoral students and is offered in the first academic term of a doctoral student’s enrollment.

In addition, doctoral students in the Higher Education program are required to take at least six EDRE classes in which research ethics are discussed as well. All students complete IRB training as they become involved in research in their classes and with their advisors, well before the required timing for their own dissertation.

3. All newly admitted students in the Higher Education program are required to attend a program specific fall orientation program. A special session on ethical standards in teaching, mentoring, and professional activities will be incorporated into this program.

Verification

In each instance students who attend these sessions will receive a certificate of completion. Students will submit copies of these certificates of attendance to the Administrative Assistant for the Higher Education program who will file them in the student's educational record. As the student's Plan of Study is completed, the student's committee will verify that the Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Program has been completed.

Notice

To ensure that applicants and student are aware of these expectations and this training requirement, the section titled, "Ethics and Professional Behavior" found in the program guides for both master's and doctoral students will be expanded to include an explanation of the training program and its requirements.

Submitted on Behalf of the Higher Education Faculty:

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Date

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Appendix A

Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies Resolution 2012-13B

Resolution to Include a Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education

Approved, Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies: February 22, 2013
First Reading, University Council: April 15, 2013
Approved, University Council: April 29, 2013
Approved, President: April 29, 2013
Effective Date: Fall 2013

WHEREAS, the Virginia Tech community strongly endorses a well-rounded educational experience for graduate students, and

WHEREAS, all graduate students are expected to uphold the Virginia Tech Principles of Community and the Graduate School's Expectations for Graduate Study as well as the scholarly integrity and research ethics standards of their disciplines, and

WHEREAS, individual departments, colleges, and programs offer opportunities for graduate students to engage in activities that promote and strengthen their academic and professional integrity while studying at Virginia Tech and thereafter,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that all graduate students participate in ethics and integrity activities as part of their graduate studies, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the particular ethics and integrity activities for a graduate student be planned and approved by the student's program, department, or college, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the plan for the ethics and integrity activities within each program, department, or college be submitted for approval to the Graduate School by the Graduate Coordinator of a program or department, or equivalent in a college, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Program of Study for all graduate students show a record of the student's participation in the particular ethics and integrity activities delineated by the student's program, department, or college, as part of the student's graduation requirements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, given the number of ethics and integrity activities already present on campus and elsewhere, that the Graduate School be directed to make the best of such activities known to any program, department, or college wishing to use this information to develop their own plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Implementation to start with the incoming class Fall 2014. Details for the ethics and integrity activities are found in the Appendix to Resolution 2013.

APPENDIX TO CGSP RESOLUTION 2012-13B

The guidelines offered in this Appendix seek to clarify the intent of the Resolution and to make specific recommendations regarding its implementation. It is the aim of the Resolution to serve the needs of all students, while acknowledging the distinctiveness of those needs across the range of departments, programs, and colleges (hereafter referred to as “academic units”). To comply with the terms of the Resolution, academic units are encouraged to make use of existing strategies and efforts to instill in their students the need for integrity and ethical behavior in all scholarly matters and to instruct their students in this regard. Should existing measures be insufficient, new measures will be put in place to satisfy the requirements set forth in the Resolution. The Graduate School will be available to offer assistance with the formulation of these plans as needed and/or requested. In all cases, the appropriate academic unit will submit for approval to the Graduate School the manner and method by which the requirement will be satisfied. Once the plan is approved, the completion of the requirement for any given student will be verified through that student’s Plan of Study.

With regard to the extent of topics to be covered, again recognizing the range of appropriate emphases across different academic units, four topics have been identified as appropriate for all students. Other, optional, topics should be addressed, as identified by the individual academic units and appropriate to specific disciplinary needs. Both the required topics and a list of optional topics appear below:

Required Topics:

1. Plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor Code
2. Proper use of professional conventions in citation of existing research and scholarship, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work
3. Ethical standards in teaching, mentoring, and professional activities
4. Available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct

Optional Topics (including, but not limited to the following, as deemed appropriate by the academic unit):

1. Appropriate lab procedures and maintenance of lab notebooks and other research documentation
2. Fair use of publications, software, and equipment
3. Appropriate research protocols involving human and animal subjects; Institutional Review Board and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee certification

4. Guidelines for maintenance of confidentiality (and, where relevant, anonymity) in research
5. Guidelines for determination of authorship
6. Appropriate grant and contract management, including appropriately asserting personal or program capacities and competencies when applying for grants and contracts
7. Discipline- or field-specific professional ethics