

## Academic Honesty

### I. Introduction

The BME International Secondary School endorses the idea that candidates need to be able to engage in authentic creative thought and in an age where information can be gathered quickly, be able to synthesize information from multiple kinds of sources into dialectical shifts to internalize knowledge. Candidates must be given opportunities to develop these skills. This means that teachers and administrative policy, through what is done in the classroom and how candidates are assessed and monitored, create these opportunities. The framework for creating these opportunities is the BME International Secondary School's academic policy.

This policy is divided into two main sections. The first deals with the responsibilities for teachers, candidates, and administration for creating an atmosphere in which original thought can be promoted. ***Here it is worth highlighting that although the school promotes authentic production and engages in processes to prevent all forms of malpractice, it is the candidate who will ultimately bear the responsibility and suffer the worst consequences for not completing authentic work both at the school level and IB assessment level.*** The second part of this document defines the types of academic dishonesty and clearly defines the expectations for proper practice in relation to malpractice. For details on the defining malpractice as well as policies regarding the investigation of malpractice at the IB assessment level, it is imperative to read the official IB academic honesty policies referenced at the end of the document.

### II. School Policies for the Promotion of Academic Honesty

The promotion of academic honesty involves all the stakeholders in the candidate's secondary school years, but the focus for successful promotion of authentic production are the teachers, candidates, and administration. Each of these must be actively engaged in the process of helping to candidates synthesize information to authentic thought. This section deal with how each of these stakeholders will work towards this goal.

#### A. The Role of the Teacher

Individual subject teachers have the greatest role in the promotion of originality and academic honesty. The success or failure of the promotion of this idea is based on what happens on a day-to-day basis in the classroom. The teacher's responsibility falls into 4 areas: 1) creating an open classroom 2) having a process that promotes these values 3) training candidates in good practice and malpractice 4) dealing with malpractice 5) acting as role models.

##### 1. The Open Classroom

The teacher is ultimately in a position of power and as an authority in the subject matter being taught highly respected by the candidates. Ultimate authority must rest with the teacher, but there is a tendency for candidates, then, to adhere to the words of the teacher rather than trust

in their own ability to synthesize. The teacher must actively work to reduce this tendency by promoting an open classroom by acting as a guide for the candidates.

Open classroom. This means that:

- a) When possible there should be various kinds of discussions (small group, whole class, panel, partner) among the candidates in which the teacher mainly acts as a monitor.
- b) Research time should be given in class and candidates should find their own sources.
- c) When the nature of the course material allows, candidates should be given free writes to explore their own views before using other sources.
- d) Candidates should be given opportunities to assess their peers work.

The teacher should use these techniques, but the final authority in all cases is the teacher and if the teacher deems the interactions between candidates to be offensive, off base, or horribly incorrect and no other candidates correct these, the teacher must act to correct them.

Candidates must realize that the teacher has ultimate authority over assessment.

The main point is not the exact practice of these three points but that the teacher is aware of the traps that candidates call fall into by simply trying to repeat what authoritative sources promote.

## 2. A Process Based Approach (use of formative assessment)

In the IB program the tasks that candidates complete often cover several weeks or even months in the classroom. To reduce the role of the teacher to simply detecting malpractice at the end of these processes would be a disservice to the candidates. At the end of a major work, there can only be grave consequences for all stakeholders if malpractice is detected. The teacher must be engaged in the whole process to prevent this from happening and to promote authentic work.

This means that:

- a) Tasks should be broken down into parts and each part should be assessed. It is not enough to simply assess the final result.
- b) Drastic changes in a project at the last minute will not be accepted. The process of creation is what must be assessed not just the final result.
- c) Plagiarism checking will occur at key points early in the process so that candidates can redo if necessary.
- d) Policies used to prevent collusion for major assessments will be used for smaller assessments as well.
- e) Verbal and written feedback will be given throughout the process

### 3. Training Candidates in Good Practice and Malpractice

The success of an academic honesty policy is based on candidates knowing what good practice is and what malpractice is. Although each individual should take responsibility for training candidates as to what is plagiarism, collaboration, and collusion particularly paying attention to the specifics of the subject matter, the candidates will have 10 hours of training outside of regular course work in good practice, academic writing, plagiarism, referencing, collusion versus collaboration, and other forms of malpractice. This is a pass/fail class in the first semester that will contain the following in regards to academic honesty:

- a) Use of proper referencing
- b) Assessing reliability of sources
- c) Use of plagiarism software
- d) Understanding of the process based approach
- e) Differentiating between collaboration and collusion
- f) Defining of plagiarism
- g) Understanding consequences of academic dishonesty
- h) Understanding of the IB guidelines Academic Honesty
- i) Knowing the various forms of malpractice

### 4. Detecting of Plagiarism and Collusion

The teacher is the primary connection to the candidates in the school. This means that the responsibility for detecting plagiarism and collusion lies with the teacher. The teacher's opinion, particularly in the case of collusion will be treated as the highest authority and only in extreme cases will be overruled. As the IB is a high stakes test system, it is vital that the subject teachers work to detect plagiarism and collusion throughout teaching and not only when IB assessments are done. This means that teachers must:

- a) Throughout the process use plagiarism checkers (such as *Grammarly* licensed to teachers and administration)
- b) Ensure that the same conduct is expected for in-house assessments (quizzes, tests, etc.) and IB assessments
- c) Be familiar with the material the candidate is working with and actively check what the candidate is doing in reference to this.
- d) Observe candidate classroom interactions to insure that group work does not become collusion
- e) Recognize changes in style that may indicate copied work.

### 5. Signing of a Cover Sheet

For all IB assessments both internal and external, the teacher signs a coversheet indicating that the teacher also supports the student's work as being authentic. If the teacher does not sign this cover sheet, it may not be submitted. It is the responsibility of the teacher to inform all stakeholders of the reason for not signing the cover sheet. Working with the candidate, administration, and stakeholders these problems must be rectified so the cover sheet can be signed. The IB coordinator or administrator cannot sign in place of the teacher (for details see academic honesty 6.4-6.12).

## 6. Acting as role models

It is important that teachers and administration should also follow proper referencing practice in all materials shared with students, colleagues or stakeholders. With this practice they will promote academic honesty to the whole school community. Material published on the school's website, in brochures or newsletters should include proper referencing.

### B. Role of the candidate

As already stated, ***it is the candidate who will ultimately bear the responsibility and suffer the worst consequences for not completing authentic work both at the school level and IB assessment level.*** This means that it is imperative the candidate engages in activities that promote authentic work.

1. *Candidates must resist the temptation to copy blocks of work or be willing to give credit to the sources.*
2. *Candidates should use plagiarism checkers even if they believe their work is authentic.*
3. *Candidates should familiarize themselves with the academic honesty policy.*
4. *Candidates should work to find topics that by their nature have open ended questions that promote authentic work.*
5. *Candidates will sign coversheets of IB assessment declaring that the work submitted is authentic.*

### C. Role of the Administration

The administrator's role is to train teachers and make sure there is clear communication between all stakeholders. The administration and IB leadership team will:

1. Train teachers in the specifics of the schools academic honesty policy
2. Advertise and promote academic policy on the website, in the school, and in the classroom using posters, announcements, or other forms or activities.
3. The administration will ensure that egregious offenses will be brought to the attention of all stakeholders.
4. Train teachers in an open classroom.

5. Train teachers in a process approach.

### **III. Informing Stakeholders of malpractice and Consequences of Malpractice**

**All stakeholders are involved in the process of the informing and consequences of malpractice. This section defines how these interactions should be conducted.**

By using a process based approach, most work that the teacher identifies as malpractice can be stopped before it becomes a major issue. In these cases it is enough for the teacher to verbally inform the candidates of the conduct that could be construed as malpractice it is the candidate's responsibility to rework this material or in the case of collusion it is the responsibility of the teacher and students involved to more clearly define the roles of the candidates so each student's contributions can clearly be seen. If a candidate regularly engages in malpractice, the teacher should inform all stakeholders that this is a potential problem. The teacher will determine deadlines in regards to correction instances of malpractice

If the candidate does not rectify problems or turns in major in-house assignments that indicate malpractice, the teacher will give the lowest possible grade for the assignment and inform all stakeholders.

**For in-house assessment, if a candidate turns in work that indicates plagiarism in a plagiarism check (grammarly will be the primary detection software) or the teacher deems that there has been plagiarism or other forms of malpractice, it is not the responsibility of the teacher or administration to prove otherwise. This is the candidate's responsibility. The teacher involved, administration, outside stakeholders, and candidate may meet to discuss evidence that shows there was no malpractice but the final decision rests with the teacher and administration.**

**In the case of IB assessments, the IB teacher must sign off on the cover sheet that it is an authentic work. The teacher will have followed all the procedures above so that this signature can be given with confidence. If the teacher does not sign off, the assignment cannot be assessed and all problems must be rectified within the school so the teacher may sign. For detail see IB Academic policy 6.4.-6.12**

In the case of suspicion of malpractice for IB assessments, the IB academic honesty policy clearly states the process to be followed. Details for these procedures can be found in the IB Academic Honesty Handbook. In general the procedures are as follow:

- 1) The IB Coordinator informs the IB of the potential malpractice or the IB informs the Coordinator of potential malpractice.
- 2) Evidence from all parties involved is gathered.
- 3) The Award Committee (then) decides on the sanctions for the alleged malpractice.

## IV. Examples of Malpractice

The following are some examples of malpractice. It is not a comprehensive list but gives some indication of expectations. A more in-depth list can be found in the academic honesty handbook.

Scenario—There is clear evidence in the form of source material to support a decision that the Candidate has plagiarized text without any attempt to acknowledge the source(s). This includes the use of unacknowledged text in oral examinations and the use of other media, such as graphs, illustrations and data.

Principle—If there is clear evidence of plagiarism with no acknowledgment of the source(s), the candidate will be found guilty of malpractice without regard for any alleged lack of intent to plagiarize. A statement from the candidate, teacher or coordinator stating that the copying was the result of an oversight or mistake by the candidate will not be considered as a mitigating factor.

Penalty—No grade will be awarded in the subject concerned.

Scenario—An alleged case of plagiarism where the examiner, coordinator and/or teacher believe the candidate has plagiarized all or part of the work, but there is no evidence in the form of a source (or sources) that has been copied.

Principle—No candidate will be found guilty of plagiarism unless there is clear evidence in the form of source material that has been copied. A case of alleged plagiarism will only be brought to the attention of the final award committee when there is evidence of plagiarism; suspicion of plagiarism is not sufficient.

Penalty—No penalty.

Scenario—A candidate allows another candidate to copy all or part of his/her work. The candidate who copies the work then submits that work as his/her own.

Principle—A candidate who allows his/her work to be copied constitutes behaviour that results in, or may result in, another candidate gaining an unfair advantage, which constitutes malpractice.

Penalty—Both candidates will be found guilty of malpractice and no grade awarded for the subject concerned.

Scenario—A candidate hands in work that is the same or substantially similar for two different assessment components.

Principle—Depending on the specific requirements of a subject, a candidate may use the same topic for different assessment components, but that topic must be researched, written or otherwise presented using an entirely different approach. Using work that is the same or substantially similar for two different components is not acceptable.

Penalty—No grade will be awarded in the subjects concerned.

Scenario—The candidate is found to be in possession of unauthorized material during a written or oral examination (for example, a cell/mobile phone, textbook).

Principle—Possession of unauthorized material is sufficient reason to find a candidate guilty of malpractice. Whether or not a candidate did gain, could have gained, or intended to gain, an advantage by using the unauthorized material will not be taken into account.

Penalty—No grade will be awarded in the subject concerned

## V. Definitions

The IB academic policy booklet gives clear definitions of malpractice these are briefly defined below but can be found in detail in the academic honesty policy booklet.

- A. Plagiarism: using another's work without giving proper credit to the author. The examples of this are broader than many candidates imagine. It applies to all recorded material whether audio, visual, or textual – casual or formal. It included paraphrasing and/or copying. Related to Plagiarism is the use of improper form for crediting sources. Sources must be clearly credited and the beginning and end of the source used must be clearly defined.
- B. Collusion: Collusion is defined as allowing other candidates to have their work copied by another candidate to use for assessment
- C. Collaboration: At times candidates will work together. This is allowed and encouraged when candidates have clearly defined roles within a project. This is collaboration.
- D. Duplication of work: Students may only submit a work for assessment for one class. In some cases a different aspect of a work may be explored in a different class, but this must clearly not be a copy of the first submission.
- E. Fabrication of Data: Creating false data is a form of malpractice.
- F. Breach of regulations: Assessments have guidelines for what can be done and what are the roles of the coordinator and vigilantor. Breaking of these rules and guidelines is a form of malpractice.

It is important to note that these are just brief summaries of the categories of malpractice. Details can be found in the academic honesty booklet.

**Students and their legal guardians will sign an agreement that they accept the regulations described in the IB's General regulations: Diploma Programme document when they enroll into the programme.**

References:

General Regulations, Diploma Programme, IBO 2014  
Diploma Programme, academic Honesty, IBO 2009