

West African College of the Atlantic

Academic honesty policy

Most of the ideas in this policy are taken from the IB document *Academic Honesty* (July 2011); the exact text is reproduced on several occasions throughout this document. We have also consulted the publication *Academic honesty in the IB* (2012) by Jude Carroll.

Introduction

What a student writes is his/her intellectual property. If someone else uses those ideas or exact words, then that person must cite the origin so that the true source of the ideas is not hidden. The same applies to the student who collects ideas which stem from his/her reading and discussions, etc. All forms of intellectual (including the work of a student) and creative (for example, literary, artistic or musical productions) expression must be respected.

Academic honesty should be perceived as a whole set of values and competencies which enhance the integrity of each person and promote ethical practice within teaching, learning and assessment. If the student is well informed about what academic malpractice is, he/she is much better prepared to avoid this error which is regarded as very serious within the academic world and educational institutions. It is important to be able to determine the authenticity of a student's work. The protection of one's intellectual property is a right which must not be diminished by others copying these ideas without due recognition of the source. Prevention is therefore better than punishment. Prevention is the aim of this document.

IB Definitions

What is academic malpractice? IB regulations define malpractice as "behaviour that results in, or may result in the candidate or any other candidate gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment components" (page 3).

In its document *Academic honesty* (p3) the IB provides definitions of several practices which constitute dishonest academic behaviour.

Plagiarism: the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the candidate's own.

Collusion: supporting malpractice by another candidate, as in allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another.

Duplication of work: the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and/or diploma requirements.

Other behaviour that gains an unfair advantage: for example, taking unauthorized material into an examination room, misconduct during an examination, falsifying a CAS record.

Being principled is one of the ten characteristics of the IB learner profile. Teachers and students must be honest; that is to say, they "act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. They take responsibility for their actions and their consequences."

Plagiarism

The authenticity of work and intellectual property are concepts that the school must explain to the students in all classes. In the case of plagiarism, students must understand the necessity of citing the origin of any idea which is not theirs. When they use the exact words of someone else the words must be in quotation marks and indicating the page number of the document whence the

information was drawn. If the quotation is from a web site, they must use quotation marks for the title (unless it is an electronic version of a whole book or other work when the title should be in italics), provide the precise URL address and indicate the date of the downloading of this information, including the page number if any. The student must note the source of an idea or of a precise quotation in the text of his/her essay and in the bibliography.

Paraphrasing is a practice which must be taught so that students are not led to believe that copying a passage and replacing some words with their own produces a result which can be considered their personal work. All paraphrasing of other people's ideas must be acknowledged by citing the source, even if the way those ideas are represented is that of the student.

Bibliography

WACA has adopted the following convention for presenting works in the bibliography of an essay in alphabetical order according to the surname of the authors.

Authors surname, initial of first name, year of publication, name of the work in italics (if an article, the title and then the document in which the article is found in italics with publication details), publisher, city of publication if provided, year of publication.

Examples

A book :

Kourouma, A (1998) *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris

An article :

Mattern, G (1991), « Random ruminations on the curriculum of the international school », in P. Jonietz & D. Harris (editors) *International schools and international education*, Kogan Page, London

Internet :

Valantin, C. (2010) « Léopold Sédar Senghor : le poète, l'écrivain et le politique, ou Senghor l'Africain »

http://www.cercle-richelieu-senghor.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=141

downloaded 12.10.2013

At the time of enrolling in the school, each student must sign a declaration stipulating that all work submitted for assessment is his/her own work. This declaration concerns all tests and tasks done in class, homework, and work done for any assessment including IB assessment.

When does collaboration become collusion?

Collusion is defined above as "supporting malpractice by another candidate, as in allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another."

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.

In the IB for most assessment the candidate must work alone with the support of his/her teacher or supervisor (for the Extended Essay). However there are times when collaboration is encouraged or even obligatory as in some internal assessment tasks – the Group 4 project (in sciences) or certain

oral presentations in literature or TOK. Collaboration is the action of working together to achieve a common objective while sharing information.

“Nevertheless, the final work must be produced independently, despite the fact that it may be based on the same or similar data as other candidates in the group. This means that the abstract, introduction, content and conclusion/summary of a piece of work must be written in each candidate’s own words and cannot therefore be the same as another candidate’s” (page 4). For example, if two or more candidates have exactly the same introduction or content for a collaborative assignment, the examiner will interpret this as collusion, and penalties will be imposed. A student must not, then, allow another student to copy word for word his/her work after the collaborative part of the assignment is completed.

Duplication of work

A student must not present the same work for other assessments or components in the same or in other subjects. That constitutes an act of academic malpractice. For example, if a student presents the same work, or very similar work, for the in-depth study in history and for his/her Extended Essay in history, this will be considered as academic malpractice. It is, on the contrary, acceptable to work on clearly different aspects of the same topic for internal assessment and for the Extended Essay.

Other behaviour that gains an unfair advantage

Here are some other practices to avoid which constitute academic dishonesty or cheating.

- Fabrication of data: a student must not manufacture data for a table, graph, survey or other such requirement. Using authentic data is a matter of academic honesty.
- Origin of a translation done by a student: WACA is a bilingual (French/English) school . If a student translates a text into another language and inserts it in a document, he/she must cite the source of the original text.
- Taking unauthorized material into an examination room (such as cell/mobile phone, written notes).
- Leaving and/or accessing unauthorized material in a bathroom/restroom that may be visited during an examination.
- Misconduct during an examination, including any attempt to disrupt the examination or distract another candidate.
- Exchanging information or in any way supporting the passing on of information to another candidate about the content of an examination
- Failing to comply with the instructions of the invigilator or other member of the school’s staff responsible for the conduct of the examination.
- Impersonating another candidate.
- Using an unauthorized calculator during an examination, or using a calculator when one is not permitted for the examination paper.

How can we ensure the promotion of honesty?

The school has put the following measures in place:

- A reference system for citing sources, including those from the internet. Students in Grades 12 & 13 learn this system (see below) and apply it in their work.
- Precise advice on how to prepare and present written work and how to use and acknowledge resources to strengthen the content or the argument.
- The *viva voce* “defence” of the Extended Essay is mandatory (while “recommended”) by the IB; it serves to detect plagiarism and malpractice in general, but also provides the student with the opportunity to reflect on the research process, including the collection of primary and secondary resources and how they are recognised in the Extended Essay.

- During the conduct of tests in class and the setting of homework, teachers remind students from Grade 7 to 13 that integrity and academic honesty are values which command respect from our societies and in our school.
- Academic honesty is an agenda item of the meeting of all staff which takes place at the beginning of the school year.
- The students are made aware of the penalties which will be imposed by the school and the IB when a student cheats, plagiarises, or attempts in some other way to gain an unfair advantage; they are made to understand that it is their reputation which suffers *vis-à-vis* their classmates and the school community at large.

Checks and penalties

From Grades 7 to 13 students may be penalised if they commit an action which damages their own integrity and gives them an unfair advantage. The school imposes penalties ranging from a zero mark (grade) for the test, task or essay in which the malpractice occurred to a mark (grade) of zero for the final term result in that subject.

Teachers are experts in their subject areas of competence and they know their students and their ways of expressing themselves. They can usually detect work which is not authentic.

On internet there are web sites which can detect passages which have been plagiarised. The IB undertakes checks on candidates' work chosen at random. These checks are done with the aid of a professional internet service for detecting plagiarism.

IB examiners are very vigilant with regard to plagiarism; they recognise material and text which does not constitute the candidate's authentic work because they are experts in their field and have read an enormous amount of material on the internet and in published books and documents.

Here are some examples of academic dishonesty with the corresponding penalties imposed by the IB.

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.

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

Scenario: A candidate takes text from the Internet and translates it into another language for use in his/her work without acknowledging the source.

Penalty: No grade will be awarded in the subject concerned. This is plagiarism.

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.

Penalty: Both candidates will be found guilty of malpractice and no grade awarded for the subject concerned. This is collusion.

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

Penalty: No grade will be awarded in the subjects concerned. This is duplication of work.

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).

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

Communicating this policy

At the beginning of their Grade 12 year all students receive a copy of this policy which is also intended for them to show their parents. The student must sign a declaration, as indicated above, stipulating that all work submitted or assessment will be the student's own work.

The prefects committee – two representatives per class (14 students) – considers this policy once a year and is asked to remind their classmates of its content, to tell them that the policy is on the school's web site, and that any suggested amendments are welcome.

This policy is posted on the school's website <http://www.waca-school.com/index.php>

An agenda item in the first staff meeting for the school year is dedicated to raising awareness about this policy. The teachers responsible for each class discuss it with the students.

Links with other school policies

This policy has links with the following documents:

- The assessment policy where the student must demonstrate ethical behaviour: not to plagiarise, cheat, or commit other forms of academic malpractice which would enable him/her to gain an unfair advantage with regard to his/her classmates and diminish his own reputation.
- The admissions policy where a student must not present falsified school reports or other documents to facilitate his/her acceptance into the school.

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