

Desert Academy Academic Honesty Policy

Introduction

Academic honesty is essential to quality scholarship and personal integrity. Desert Academy endeavors to foster an understanding of and a commitment to academic honesty among all its students.

This commitment flows out of our Mission:

Desert Academy is dedicated to academic and personal excellence. We provide a quality college preparatory education in a diverse school community, which values individuality, builds character, promotes self-confidence, and foster global understanding.

Academic honesty is also embodied in the IB Learner Profile Traits, especially those that encourage IB learners to strive to be *knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, caring, balanced, reflective* and, above all, *principled*. Principled learners act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

What Is Academic Honesty?

Academic honesty assumes that work represented by a student as his or her own, is actually that student's work. As a corollary, academic honesty prohibits allowing/enabling your own work to be submitted or presented by another. At its most basic level, then, academic misconduct occurs if a student copies another student's work for submission, allows one's own work to be copied, copies another student's answers on a test, or brings into a test answers or other means of support that are outside the guidelines for that assessment. These examples of academic misconduct can be referred to in the simplest of terms: they constitute *cheating*.

Academic honesty at this level can be defined as a *value*: it is the rejection of misrepresentation of the truth and/or the gaining of an unfair advantage in relation to other students. It embodies a commitment to honesty, fairness and self-respect, more than the acquisition of a specific skill set. Thus, the steps needed to ensure academic honesty at this level are consistent with and integral to Desert Academy's overall goal of developing character, promoting self-confidence and encouraging personal excellence. (For further discussion of Academic Honesty, see *MYP: From principles into practice*.)

Why Is Plagiarism More Complex?

Academic honesty also involves aspects of scholarship significantly more complex than those addressed above. Plagiarism—the misrepresentation of someone else’s work as one’s own—takes place when material gained through research is not properly cited, when paraphrasing has not been sufficient to distinguish material from that previously written by someone else, or when the words of another are not quoted. While there is still a value proposition inherent in these aspects of academic honesty, sound scholarship also requires extensive knowledge and understanding of how proper *boundaries* are defined, and of the *tools* needed to avoid academic malpractice.

Why Is Teaching Academic Honesty a Significant Challenge Today?

Proper attribution and documentation are skills that require frequent illustration and demonstration and can only be fully learned through repeated use and guidance over time. In today’s environment of vast information technologies, the challenge of properly educating students on sound methods of scholarship has only become greater. Information abounds; it is housed in multiple media, is available from widely divergent sources, and can be acquired at the click of a button. And this is good—as long as our students have a clear understanding of what constitutes intellectual property and what methods are needed to properly attribute and communicate that knowledge to others.

It is for this reason that Desert Academy utilizes a carefully thought out, step-by-step approach to academic honesty, which begins in MYP Year 1, and progressively gains depth in the years through MYP 5. These values are reinforced in the DP years, where the skills of quality scholarship are further developed and refined.

Middle School/MYP 1-3

- MYP 1

The *value proposition* behind academic honesty is introduced, and examples of academic misconduct are presented. These examples focus on areas such as copying someone else’s work and/or cheating on a test. Discussions are held to bring to life the connection between academic honesty and a broader and deeper commitment to honesty, fairness, and self-respect. The IB Learner Profile Traits are used extensively to bring this topic to life.

- MYP 2 & 3

The *value proposition* of academic honesty is introduced and reinforced as above. In addition, the *skill set* a student needs to develop to carry out quality scholarship begins to be built. The primary focus is on *differentiating* ‘opinion’ from ‘evidence,’ and learning the rudimentary techniques used to *synthesize* opinion and fact, while properly citing evidence.

High School/MYP 4 & 5

The *value proposition* of academic honesty is introduced and reinforced as above. In addition, students are explicitly taught the skills connected to determining the quality of sources, when and how to cite sources, and the finer points of using direct quotations and paraphrasing. This instruction includes the conventions of subject-specific documentation styles (e.g., Chicago style in Diploma Program History courses, MLA style in Language & Literature courses, etc.).

Diploma Program 11th and 12th grades

In the Diploma Program/Grades 11-12, the goal is a refinement of the knowledge introduced in the MYP years and works toward sophistication in the research and documentation process. By their senior year, students have taken major steps towards full acquaintance with standards of academic honesty and the consequences of academic misconduct required of a college-level student.

Desert Academy Consequences for Plagiarism and Cheating

Consequences for academic misconduct may vary depending on the severity of the situation, and on whether it is a first or repeat offense. Consequences for clear cut situations of plagiarism and cheating may include: receiving failing grades on work; conferences with the student, parents, teacher, and administration; or suspension; expulsion. It is Desert Academy's expectation that parents will work to support the school's efforts to foster among its students a strong commitment to academic honesty.

IB Diploma Program Approach to Academic Honesty

The *Diploma Programme Guide: Academic Honesty* defines malpractices as ‘behavior that results in, or may result in, the candidate or any other candidate gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment component.’

Malpractice is further defined by the *Guide* to include:

- Plagiarism: this is defined as the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the candidate's own;
- Collusion: this is defined as supporting malpractice by another candidate, as in allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another
- Duplication of work: this is defined as the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and/or diploma requirements;
- Any other behavior that gains an unfair advantage for a candidate or that affects the results of another candidate.

In abbreviated form, the *Guide* specifies the following **roles** in maintaining academic honesty:

*The role of the **International Baccalaureate (IB)** is to:*

- Provide the regulations and instructions that govern the conduct of each examination session
- Offer guidance to schools on what constitutes malpractice and how it can be prevented
- Investigate cases of alleged malpractice, in liaison with the school concerned
- Review all available statements and evidence collected during an investigation and decide whether to dismiss or uphold the allegation
- Notify the head of school of the decision of the final award committee
- If requested, reconsider a decision made by the final award committee on submission of new factual evidence
- If requested, implement the appeals procedure on decisions made by the final award committee.

*The **Head of School** must ensure that all candidates:*

- Understand what constitutes academic honesty, an authentic piece of work and intellectual property
- Receive guidance on study skills, academic writing, how to conduct research and how to acknowledge sources
- Understand what constitutes malpractice (particularly plagiarism, collusion and misconduct during an examination)
- Know the consequences of being found guilty of malpractice. It is also the responsibility of the head of school to establish a school policy that promotes good academic practice and a school culture that actively encourages academic honesty. It is assumed that part of this responsibility will be delegated to the coordinator and teachers. The school is the IB's first line of defense against malpractice and schools are therefore expected to support the IB fully in the prevention, detection and investigation of malpractice.

It is the responsibility of each **teacher** to confirm that, to the best of his or her knowledge, all candidates' work accepted or submitted for assessment is the authentic work of each candidate. When a school has implemented all prevention measures, teachers are expected to detect any plagiarism, collusion or duplication of work. Teachers are also expected to support and act on the school's policy on good academic practice and provide candidates with advice whenever necessary. In this respect teachers must act as good role models for the candidates.

The **candidate** is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all work submitted for assessment is authentic, with the work or ideas of others fully and correctly acknowledged. Candidates are expected to comply with all internal school deadlines; this

is for their own benefit and may allow time for revising work that is of doubtful authorship before the submission of the final version.

In abbreviated form, the *Guide* states the following with regard to **penalties**:

Penalties are imposed on a candidate found guilty of malpractice in order to

- Ensure that the candidate does not gain an unfair advantage
- Maintain the integrity of the examination session by excluding those candidates who have abused the system
- Deter other candidates from taking the same action
- If a candidate is found guilty, the aim is to penalize the candidate only for the subject in which he or she has been found guilty of malpractice. For example, if a retake candidate is guilty of malpractice in one subject the grade for that subject obtained in a previous session will be carried over to the current session and any higher grades in other retake subjects will be counted in the current session.
- Investigating malpractice in the bibliography or in a footnote, the final award committee may designate a case of this type an academic infringement and not malpractice. The judgment as to whether "academic infringement" is the appropriate decision will be partly based on the quantity of text (or other media) that has been copied by the candidate.
- If the final award committee decides that an academic infringement has been established, no mark will be awarded for the component or part(s) of the component. The candidate will still be eligible for a grade in the subject or diploma requirement concerned. No further penalty will be imposed and the case will not be recorded as malpractice. In such a case, the decision regarding academic infringement will be notified in accordance with section.
- If the final award committee decides that a case of malpractice has been established, no grade will be awarded in the subject concerned. (No lesser penalty for malpractice is available to the final award committee.) In the case of a Diploma Program candidate the consequence is that no diploma will be awarded to the candidate. However, a Diploma Program courses results will be awarded for other subjects in which no malpractice has occurred.
- If a candidate is found guilty of malpractice in his or her third attempt at achieving the diploma or improving the number of points for the diploma, the candidate will not be permitted a fourth examination session in which to achieve the diploma or improve the number of diploma points.
- If a candidate is found guilty of malpractice the candidate will be permitted to register for future examinations sessions in which malpractice was established, including the session that follows six months later
- If a candidate is found guilty of malpractice in the production of one (or more) of several assignments required for a component, the candidate is not eligible for a mark based on his or her performance in the remaining assignments for the component; no grade will be awarded for the subject. For example, the internal assessment requirement for a subject may require a portfolio of four separate assignments. If a candidate is found to have plagiarized all or part of one assignment, a mark for his or

her internal assessment will not be based on the remaining three assignments: no grade will be awarded for the subject.

- If a case of malpractice is very serious, either because of its nature or because the candidate has already been found guilty of malpractice in a previous session, the final award committee may decide that the candidate will not be permitted to register for examinations in any future session. An IB diploma, or a certificate, may be withdrawn from a candidate at any time if malpractice is subsequently established. This includes the enquiry upon results service when, for example, a senior examiner may identify plagiarism in a piece of work that previously went unnoticed by the teacher or other examiner.

(From: *Diploma Programme Guide: Academic Honesty*; Updated July 2011.)