



Academic Integrity Policy

Montana International School Uganda (MISU) Academic Integrity Policy

Policy Statement:

At Montana International School Uganda (MISU), we believe that a strong self-concept and the ability to be resilient in the face of difficulty are built upon a foundation of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Academic integrity is paramount to achieving our vision of enabling every individual to achieve their full potential. This policy outlines our commitment to fostering a culture of academic honesty within the Cambridge International Education framework for all students from Year 7 to Year 13.

Guiding Principles:

- **Honesty:** All academic work submitted by students must be their original effort.
- **Trust:** MISU fosters an environment where students, teachers, and parents can trust in the authenticity of academic achievements.
- **Fairness:** All students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning and abilities without unfair advantage.
- **Respect:** We respect the intellectual property and creative works of others, acknowledging sources appropriately.
- **Responsibility:** Students are responsible for their actions and for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Teachers and staff are responsible for educating, guiding, and enforcing this policy.

What is Academic Integrity?

Academic integrity is the commitment to honest and responsible scholarship. It means that all academic work, including assignments, projects, homework, tests, and examinations, truly reflects a student's own understanding, effort, and original thought, or properly acknowledges the contributions of others.

Forms of Academic Malpractice (Academic Dishonesty):

Academic malpractice undermines the principles of academic integrity and is strictly prohibited at MISU. This includes, but is not limited to:

a) Plagiarism: Presenting someone else's ideas, words, images, data, or creative work as one's own without proper acknowledgement. This includes:

- Copying text directly from books, articles, websites, or other sources without quotation marks and proper citation.
- Paraphrasing or summarizing others' ideas without proper citation.
- Using images, diagrams, charts, or other media without acknowledging the source.
- Submitting work downloaded or purchased from the internet.

b) Collusion: Working with another person or persons on an assignment where individual work is expected, without the explicit permission or instruction of the teacher. This includes:

- Sharing answers during an individual assessment.
- Allowing another student to copy one's work.
- Submitting identical or highly similar work from a group where individual submissions are required.

c) Cheating: Any dishonest act to gain an unfair advantage in an academic assessment. This includes:

- Using unauthorized notes, electronic devices (e.g., mobile phones, smart watches) or other materials during tests or examinations.
- Copying from another student during a test or examination.
- Communicating with other students during an examination.
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during an assessment.
- Impersonation (pretending to be another student or having another person take an assessment on one's behalf).
- Fabrication/Falsification of Data: Inventing or altering information, data, or sources (e.g., making up research results, altering laboratory data).

d) Duplication/Self-Plagiarism: Submitting the same piece of work (or a substantial part of it) for assessment in more than one subject or for more than one assignment without explicit prior permission from all relevant teachers.

e) Aiding and Abetting Malpractice: Assisting another student in any form of academic malpractice (e.g., providing one's work to another student to copy, sharing unauthorized information).

f) Unauthorized Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools: Using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, generative AI) to generate content for academic work without specific teacher permission and proper attribution/acknowledgement. Students must understand that work generated by AI is not their original work.

Roles and Responsibilities:

a) Students:

- Understand and adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy.
- Complete all academic work honestly and to the best of their own ability.
- Properly cite and reference all sources used in their work.
- Seek clarification from teachers if unsure about what constitutes academic malpractice or how to cite sources.

- Report observed instances of academic malpractice to a teacher or school administration.
- Take responsibility for their actions and accept the consequences of academic malpractice.
- Maintain the security of their own work and not share it in a way that facilitates malpractice by others.

b) Teachers:

- Educate students about the principles of academic integrity, including proper research, citation, and referencing techniques (age-appropriately for Years 7-13).
- Model academic integrity in their own work and presentations.
- Design assessments that minimize opportunities for malpractice.
- Supervise assessments effectively to prevent malpractice.
- Monitor student work for originality and authenticity.
- Investigate suspected cases of academic malpractice thoroughly and fairly, following school procedures.
- Communicate with students, parents, and relevant school staff about academic integrity concerns and outcomes.

c) Parents/Guardians:

- Support the school's Academic Integrity Policy at home.
- Encourage their children to take responsibility for their own learning and academic work.
- Refrain from providing unauthorized assistance to their children on assignments or assessments.
- Communicate with the school if they have concerns or questions regarding academic integrity.

d) School Leadership and Administration:

- Ensure this policy is clearly communicated to all stakeholders (students, staff, and parents).
- Provide resources and training to staff on academic integrity.
- Establish clear and consistent procedures for investigating and addressing academic malpractice.
- Uphold the principles of fairness, trust, and responsibility in all academic integrity matters.
- Liaise with Cambridge International regarding any cases of malpractice in external examinations or coursework submissions.

Procedures for Suspected Academic Malpractice:

When academic malpractice is suspected, MISU will follow a clear and fair procedure:

- **Initial Investigation:** The teacher suspecting malpractice will gather evidence and discuss the matter with the student concerned. The student will be given an opportunity to explain.
- **Reporting:** If the teacher determines that malpractice has likely occurred, they will inform the Head of Department/Subject and the Curriculum Coordinator.
- **Further Investigation/Review:** The Head of Department/Subject and/or Curriculum Coordinator may conduct further investigation, including reviewing the evidence, interviewing the student again, and consulting with other relevant staff. Parents will be informed at this stage.
- **Decision and Consequence:** Based on the investigation, a decision will be made regarding whether academic malpractice occurred and, if so, the appropriate consequences will be applied.
- **Record Keeping:** All incidents of academic malpractice and their outcomes will be recorded by the school.

Consequences of Academic Malpractice:

Consequences for academic malpractice will be applied based on the severity of the offense, the student's age, the frequency of previous offenses, and the specific circumstances. Consequences are designed to be educational and deterrent, helping students understand the seriousness of their actions and encouraging a commitment to integrity.

Possible consequences include, but are not limited to:

a) First Offense (Minor):

- A verbal warning and clear explanation of the breach.
- Required re-submission of the work (possibly for a reduced grade or no credit).
- Meeting with student, teacher, and Head of Department/Curriculum Coordinator.
- Parental notification.

b) Subsequent or More Serious Offenses:

- A mark of zero for the assignment/assessment.
- Formal written warning.
- Meeting with student, parents, Head of School/Designated Leader.
- Internal school suspension.
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities.
- In cases of malpractice in Cambridge examinations or coursework submitted to Cambridge International, the incident will be reported to Cambridge, which may lead to:
 - i) Cancellation of marks for the paper/component.
 - ii) Disqualification from the entire examination series.
 - iii) No grade awarded for the subject.

iv) Disqualification from future Cambridge examinations.

c) **Repeated or Severe Offenses:** May lead to formal disciplinary action, up to and including permanent exclusion from Montana International School Uganda.

Preventative Measures and Education:

MISU is committed to preventing academic malpractice through ongoing education and support:

- **Curriculum Integration:** Academic integrity, research skills, and proper citation methods are explicitly taught across subjects and year groups.
- **Teacher Training:** Staff receive regular professional development on identifying and preventing academic malpractice.
- **Resources:** Students are provided with resources (e.g., style guides, online tools) to help them understand and implement academic integrity.
- **Turnitin/Plagiarism Detection Software:** The school may utilize plagiarism detection software to support student learning about originality and to identify potential malpractice.
- **Open Communication:** Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek help if they are struggling with an assignment or are unsure how to properly acknowledge sources.

This Academic Integrity Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the evolving educational landscape.