



# Academic Integrity Policy

Approved By:	Board of Trustees
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Policy Holder:	IBTC

## 1. Introduction

The International Bible Training College (IBTC)<sup>1</sup> upholds the Biblical principles (Ephesians 4:15-16)<sup>2</sup> of speaking truthfully and acting in integrity. IBTC is committed to supporting students to develop good academic practice and ensure there is a full understanding for students on the parameters of good ethical academic practice when writing assignments and sitting examinations, especially for students coming from other cultures. IBTC recognises that academic malpractice, including plagiarism and collusion, represent serious offences of educational process and violate the Biblical principles that the IBTC stand for. IBTC will ensure that all students are aware of its academic integrity policy through induction of new students but also through on going academic mentoring and support.

## 2. Definition

According to the Chambers Dictionary, as a noun, the word integrity is defined as: 1. strict adherence to moral values and principles; uprightness. 2. the quality or state of being whole and unimpaired.<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Location of the policy

The college will ensure that the policy is available to all students and staff and will also be on the IBTC website: [www.ibti.org.uk](http://www.ibti.org.uk).

## 4. Importance of academic integrity

IBTC is an accredited college and is required to safeguard its academic standards. The qualifications IBTC offers need to be credible representing the authentic knowledge and ability a graduate possesses. Employers, HE providers and the public need to have confidence in the awards that students gain through their studies at IBTC.

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<sup>1</sup> In all the following text International Bible Training College (IBTC) is referred to as IBTC. The college's trading name is IBTI.

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 4: <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. NIVUK, [website], <https://www.bible.com/113/eph.4.15-16.nivuk>, (accessed, 21 October.2020)

<sup>3</sup> The Chambers Dictionary, 'Search results for 'integrity'', Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2020, [website], <https://chambers.co.uk/book/the-chambers-dictionary/>, (accessed, 21 October.2020)

IBTC is committed to every student having the same opportunity to be successful and therefore any students who seek to gain an unfair advantage will be subject to the academic malpractice procedures.

Respect for the diligence and research of other scholars is important and they should be properly acknowledged for their ideas in all academic assignments.

## **5. Definition of academic malpractice**

Academic malpractice is a form of educational dishonesty and can include plagiarism, collusion, falsification and fabrication of research results in order to obtain undeserved grades and awards.

### **A. Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or even ideas (source) in writing, as if the words or ideas were one's own, without giving that person credit. Credit is given by using quotation marks and acknowledgement of the original source in a footnote following one of the well-established referencing methods. IBTC instructs its students on how to use the Oxford referencing system. When a student is paraphrasing or summarising the ideas of a scholar, they should ensure that the words they use are substantially different to their original sources.

In practice, plagiarism is any of the following (without giving acknowledgement to the original source in the main text, and in footnotes/endnotes and bibliography):

- Copying a paragraph word for word from a source.
- Copying a paragraph and making small changes - e.g. replacing a few verbs, replacing an adjective with a synonym.
- Cutting and pasting a paragraph by using sentences of the original but omitting one or two and putting one or two in a different order, no quotation marks.
- Composing a paragraph by taking short phrases from a number of sources and putting them together using words of your own to make a coherent whole.
- Using text downloaded from the Internet without acknowledging your sources or seeking permission.
- Using statistics from another source or person without acknowledging your sources or seeking permission.
- Copying from the essays or the notes of another student.
- Downloading or copying pictures, photographs, or diagrams without acknowledging your sources or seeking permission.
- Using an essay that you wrote for another module / course without getting permission from the establishment / teacher for which the original work was done. This is self-plagiarism. To avoid self-plagiarism IBTC students should produce an entirely different and new piece of work for each assessment they are set; even if the assignment brief may overlap. If a student considers that some of

their previous work is relevant to a new assignment, they should only incorporate small segments using quotation marks and reference of their own prior assignment.

### **B. Collusion**

Collusion may occur if a student works with another student or group of students on an assignment when they are supposed to be working independently. IBTC students should write assignments that are a product of their own personal efforts, unless the lecturer has particularly set an assignment brief which requires a single collaborative piece of work to be submitted on behalf of a group of students.

Although it might be legitimate to informally brainstorm some discussion ideas with other students, as that can provide other perspectives and thoughts, the written assignment should still be an individualised product. Students should not ask others to write any part of their assignment for them.

### **C. Falsification**

This is where information is altered in order to fit an argument or falsely appear to support a hypothesis.

### **D. Fabrication**

Data should not be made up to cover gaps of knowledge and/or research.

## **6. Understanding why students might engage in academic malpractice**

- IBTC's student cohorts are predominantly composed by international students, although largely from Europe, it cannot be presumed that the education systems and understanding of academic malpractice are essentially similar. International students at IBTC might not be familiar with UK standards and interpretations of academic malpractice and should not be discriminated against. IBTC will ensure that all new students will receive instruction regarding academic malpractice in the UK context and existing students have a refresher session.
- Students may have come from a non-academic background and so may be ignorant of what constitutes plagiarism. All IBTC students will be familiarised with this policy as part of their student induction.
- Students succumb to academic malpractice because of deadline and time pressures, which produces panic responses and it can seem easier to cut corners academically. IBTC seeks to plan its assignment deadlines to avoid students feeling overloaded. If students are feeling pressurised by their workload, then they need to speak to the IBTC academic department.
- Lack of confidence in paraphrasing statements and critically analysing the thoughts of others. Students may uncritically accept the ideas of others so that they copy large segments of text verbatim. IBTC lecturers will encourage students to develop their own informed views and express them in assignments.

## 7. Statement

All written assignments submitted must be accompanied by a signed and dated plagiarism statement which will contain the following wording.

*“This assignment is the result of my own independent research and written in my own words, except where otherwise stated. When using/quoting other sources (books, study Bibles, websites...etc...) they are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.  
A bibliography of all sources is also included below.”*

## 8. Academic misconduct investigation process

Students reported and investigated for academic malpractice can feel high levels of anxiety and shame, so these processes will be handled by IBTC discretely and sensitively. IBTC will conduct a **three-stage** process to investigate cases where students are suspected of academic misconduct:

- **Detection** – during the marking of a piece of work if a lecturer suspects that there has been potential academic misconduct, they will confidentially send the assignment and detail the basis of their concerns to the head of the academic department, without comment to the student concerned. The lecturer will temporarily suspend marking the assignment until the matter has been investigated.
- **Investigation** – The head of the academic department will look at the assignment and investigate the concerns raised. If it is decided that there is an issue that requires investigation, the student will be interviewed to explain the concern raised. The academic department will then decide if there is a case of potential academic malpractice and the level of its severity.
- **Decision** – The academic department will conduct an integrity review panel which will make a final decision whether the IBTC Academic integrity policy has been breached and the level of consequence to be applied.

## 9. Academic misconduct penalties

IBTC will impose penalties for academic malpractice but they will not be so unforgiving that there isn't an opportunity for students to learn and correct their malpractice, especially if it is deemed as unintentional and in the early stages of their studies. This policy is meant to be rehabilitative as well as punitive.

- **Incorrect referencing and minor infringements**

Any assignment not referenced properly or infringements deemed as unintentional will be marked down in an appropriate way at the discretion of the assessor.

- **Serious misconduct including plagiarism, intentional collusion and falsification**

- a) On the first offence, the assessor will privately instruct the student as to the nature and seriousness of the problem and require the student to rewrite the assignment. Also, the student will be required to write a letter detailing the offence and accepting culpability, to be kept on file with the Academic department. On this occasion, there will be no repercussions on the student's overall studies; however, the mark they receive for the resubmitted assignment will be capped at a maximum of 49%. If the student does not incur another academic malpractice offence, the college may decide to remove the record from his/her folder.
- b) On the second offence, whether in the same or another subject, the academic department will make the student aware of the nature and seriousness of the two offences and, in coordination with the tutor, the student will be asked to rewrite the assignment and the mark they receive for the resubmitted assignment will be capped at a maximum of 49%. Another letter must be written by the student detailing the first and second offences and accepting culpability. The letter should be kept on file in the academic department.
- c) The third offence, whether in the same or another subject, will result in failing the subject. This offence will be considered by the Academic Committee whose decision will be final and may include failure of the course or expulsion.

## **10. Mechanisms for feedback**

Constructive comment for the continued improvement of this policy is welcomed and should be forwarded to our Data Protection Officer at [policies.data@ibt.org.uk](mailto:policies.data@ibt.org.uk).