BSIS PEDAGOGY — INSTRUCTOR PRINCIPLES POLICY

# Key Values

## Integrity

We aim to be transparent, honest and act in accordance with all principles set down in this document.

## Humility

Instructors stand on the same level as students. There is no hierarchy at Brisbane School of Iberian Swordsmanship: all are equal.

## De*m*ocracy

Every member of Brisbane School of Iberian Swordsmanship has an equal right to be involved in decision-making if they wish.

## Respect

All students and instructors are to be treated politely at all times. While in classes, our students are paying members, and at events, our students are volunteers; as such, while requests can be made, students are not obliged to follow orders and should not be addressed as such.

## Enjoyment

The purpose of classes and community at Brisbane School of Iberian Swordsmanship is fun.

## Responsibility

All instructors are responsible for the learning of all students. All students are willing participants, and as such any student’s learning being less than desired is to be treated as a teaching challenge, not a failure of the student.

# In-Lesson Behaviours

## Constructivist, student-centred learning

Constructivism is underpinned by respecting the prior knowledge and experiences of learners and allowing them to create their own understanding by exploring historical fencing techniques with teacher guidance.

Students are actively involved in learning. We encourage students to work through techniques to reach their own conclusions. We emphasise that instructors are not the class experts filling learners with knowledge, that instructors have knowledge gaps, and students have prior experience and skills which positively influence their learning.

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| Implications for practice* Students are to be taught as capable participants in the attitude and language used when speaking to or about them. Instructors will talk to and about students as equals.
* Students with specific, relevant knowledge are invited to teach the class for a brief period.
* The instructor should allow students time to work through a new technique rather than providing them with spoon-fed information.
* When students have achieved something successful, the instructor should have them communicate this to the group rather than the instructor themselves.
* Teach by iteration.
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## Collaborative and cooperative training

We encourage students to work together for shared understanding and celebrate one another’s achievements. We do not condone a negative or competitive atmosphere. We aim to foster an attitude of reassurance and support between students.

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| Implications for practice* Students should work together towards a shared understanding wherever possible.
* Questioning by the instructor to lead groups to a conclusion is preferred to instructor explanations and monologue. The instructor should use leading questions to guide students towards the desired answer.
* We do not play, ‘Guess what’s in the teacher’s head.’ Instructors evaluate all answers on their individual merit, not on whether they were the anticipated answer.
* When working together, students are encouraged to discuss their opponent’s successful techniques.
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## Inclusivity of all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, religion, age, disability, illness or other difference.

Inclusivity refers to treating students with respect in conversation and teaching, and to providing students with lesson activities from which they can learn.

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| Implications for practice* No student is to be socially excluded.
* Students are never required to disclose their medical conditions or history.
* Instructors, students and the Happiness Officers are encouraged to positively address any noticed problem, such as anger management issues.
* Examples of inclusion:
* A student with ADHD is to be allowed to move during all stages of the class, as long as it is done safely.
* A student with a hearing or vision impairment should be always placed near to the instructor.
* A student who for any reason cannot attend consistently must be treated as an equal member of the community.
* A student who experiences panic attacks may choose a safe place to go, to which they must always have access.
* Students with mental health issues will, in accordance with research, be treated as safe.
* Students with invisible illnesses will be treated the same as any other student with a visible health issue.
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## Safety

The physical and emotional safety of all students in the school is the responsibility of all members of administration. Instructors will maintain high safety standards at all times.

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| Implications for practice* Negative or aggressive comments between students are to be discouraged and terminated.
* The use of the term “hold” is to be treated with respect and always adhered to.
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## Catering for a variety of learning styles

Students learn in a variety of ways. Instructors will teach with an understanding that different students learn differently, and that more than one mode of teaching is needed.

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| Implications for practice* Some students cannot rotate in three-dimensional space. Instructors will demonstrate movements (which suits visual learners) while verbally explaining (which suits linguistic, auditory learners).
* If an instructor moves a student’s body, with permission, to ensure understanding, this is reflective of a kinaesthetic (physical) learning style, not a slow learning style.
* Instructing to multiple styles is the best way to give all students the best learning experience.
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## Use and acknowledgement of historical sources

The first part of HEMA is historical. All instructors should have a basic understanding of the source material which underpins their lessons.

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| Implications for practice* Instructors should state which sources are used to develop a technique in their lesson.
* When techniques have been inferred rather than being explicit in the sources, and are thus school-specific, this should be communicated to students.
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## Feedback is love

Feedback from students forms the crux of reflection and evaluation.

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| Implications for practice* Regular feedback forms will be distributed to receive anonymous evaluation.
* Students should be encouraged to provide feedback in person, and never feel anxious about doing so.
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# Assessment Principles

## Constructive and timely feedback

Students should receive constructive and timely feedback on their fencing. While this is particularly relevant to assessment, this should not be the only time at which students receive significant feedback.

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| Implications for practice* Feedback to students should include their positive skills as well as current shortcomings.
* The emphasis is on progress, not mastery.
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## Fair and transparent assessment

Assessment is based purely on student ability. There is no place for favouritism or discrimination in the assessment process.

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| Implications for practice* Where possible, conflict of interest between assessor and assessed are to be avoided.
* Students have the right to query and challenge the result of their assessment by speaking to any member of administration, including the instructors and the Happiness Officers. These queries will be treated with dignity and respect.
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## Consistent and comparable assessment

Within reason, the same standard is to be expected of any student attempting grading, unless they have an identified learning need. Each assessment iteration should be comparable to past iterations, and each grade awarded should be comparable to past and present gradings.

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| Implications for practice* A criteria sheet is used to determine the result of a student, both to provide feedback and to ensure comparability between students.
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# Beyond-Lesson Behaviours

## Reflective and collegial practice

All instructors are encouraged to reflect on their lessons, determining both strengths and areas for further improvement. This is facilitated through a system of feedback and evaluation between instructors.

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| Implications for practice* Instructors should welcome the presence of another instructor in their class.
* Instructors should accept all collegial feedback with professionalism, humility and respect.
* When providing feedback to others, it is expected that instructors will be constructive and emphasise strengths as well as areas for improvement.
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## Personal upskilling

Instructors are students also. They should keep upskilling and learning as part of their personal journey, and to become better teachers.

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| Implications for practice* Instructors have the right to participate as a student in a lesson.
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## Positive engagement with the broader HEMA community

We acknowledge that we belong to an active, healthy HEMA community with many schools, styles, students and instructors. The engagement of our instructors with these schools is to be positive and collegial.

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| Implications for practice* Instructors will treat teachers from other schools as equals.
* Instructors will act with humility and understand that they can learn from other HEMA coaches.
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