

On Appropriate Collaboration between Students

We believe personal connections that develop among classmates are a central benefit of acquiring a graduate degree. Additionally, as recent learners of the material, students are uniquely able to identify conceptual difficulties. To maximize these social and pedagogical benefits, we encourage BST students¹ to work together in their coursework, especially homework problem sets.²

We also believe in the importance of self-learning. Statistics must be learned through the process of solving statistical problems. This process is much more critical to learning than being led most or all of the way down the path to a solution. Exchange of drafts between students of written or electronic homework and exam solutions, including computer source code, imperils the pedagogical benefits of collaboration and increases the temptation to engage in plagiarism, which is a serious offense. Therefore, it is prohibited for a BST student to intentionally give another student **physical or electronic possession of a solution**, including instructor-provided solutions, and prohibited for BST students to accept physical or electronic possession of another student's solution. Violations of this policy will be treated as violations of the SMD academic honesty policy. If a student is unsure if particular conduct is permitted, the student should consult with the course instructor.

Examples of appropriate collaboration:

- Student A and Student B meet and discuss this week's assignment, devise the steps necessary for a solution, and independently write up versions of the solution. (Instructors may additionally request that students indicate when they have worked together.)
- Student A devises a solution to this week's assignment. Student B gets stuck. Student A texts them a starting point, a key theorem, or the name of a software function.
- Student A devises a solution to this week's assignment. Student B gets stuck. Students A and B meet (in person, zoom, etc.) and work together toward a solution. Student A maintains possession of student A's initial draft. Their joint efforts likely will be similar but not identical to student A's draft, given student B's contributions.

Examples of prohibited collaboration (unless otherwise permitted by the instructor):

- Student A emails to student B a cell phone picture of a page of student A's homework.
- Student A (who took the class in a previous year) shares with student B (who is currently registered in the class) a folder containing source code for a solution to an exercise.

¹ And others registered in BST courses

² Examinations or projects may have different policies regarding collaboration, which instructors must clearly communicate in their syllabi or instructions for the assignment.