Academic honesty is a serious matter for both you and the IB.
You may be wondering:

"Why do I need to know about academic honesty? I am a
decent and honest person. I would never steal or cheat."

While I know that you probably are a respectful, good human
being, there are some rules and concepts of academic honesty
that do not always follow common sense. Some of the concepts
of academic honesty you may of never even considered before.

It important to know what constitutes academic honesty mainly
for your own protection. The IB takes this issue very seriously.

Students who violate the IB's terms of academic honesty face
harsh and swift penalties that range from have certain pieces of
work invalidated to being dismissed from the IB program and
possibly their school.

Additionally, the damage of being suspended from IB over
academic honesty does not always stop in high school. Students
dismissed or accused of cheating and plagiarism can lose
scholarships and even be denied entrance to university.

While this is really a worst-case scenario and most students
never have any run in with the harsh hand of IB, most problems
relating to academic honesty are easily preventable with a little
bit of knowledge and common sense.

**What does academic honesty mean?**
Essentially, academic honesty means that all of your academic
work is produced with integrity, independently, and according to
established guidelines of conduct.

Any type of academic dishonesty is referred to in the IB as
malpractice.

There are two major and common types of malpractice: plagiarism
and collusion.

**Plagiarism**
To give a complete definition of what plagiarism is and is not, I
will let plagiarism.org explain:

"Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work,
or borrowing someone else's original ideas. However, terms like
"copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the
offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to
"plagiarize" means
• To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as
one's own
• To use (another's production) without crediting the
source
• To commit literary theft
• To present as new and original an idea or product derived
from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both
stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of
original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected
by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms
of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are
recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).
All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- Turning in someone else’s work as your own
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. See our section on citation for more information on how to cite sources properly.

Additionally, the IB acknowledges that most cases of plagiarism which are prosecuted do not arise as a result of deliberate malpractice, but rather stem from the student not properly acknowledging or citing sources.

It is essential that you acknowledge every source and quote that you use in writing papers and essays for IB. For more information on citations, see chapter 8.

Collusion

Collusion is an easy trap to fall into for many students. Collusion is defined as helping another student in his or her malpractice. Allowing your work to be copied or another student to turn in your work as their own is considered collusion.

A common example of collusion often starts simply and friendly:

Let’s say that Jimmy has spent the last two weeks writing his final essay and it is due tomorrow. Sally has been procrastinating and has barely written anything. Not knowing what to do, she asks Jimmy if she can borrow a copy of his paper to inspire her writing.

Late into the night fueled by stress and caffeine, Sally decides that she cannot possibly finish everything on time and so she copies the outline and a large portion of Jimmy’s paper.

When they are both caught, Sally gets in trouble for plagiarism and Jimmy is busted for collusion. What started out as a friendly gesture has now turned ugly.

Being a good friend and helping people is never a bad thing, however you must use caution when sharing what you have done with other Diploma candidates.

Duplication & Other Types of Malpractice

Beyond plagiarism or collusion, duplication is something that many IB candidates do not consider. It is malpractice to resubmit work for more than one assessment component or diploma requirement.

This means that the amazing essay you wrote for your philosophy internal assessment CANNOT be turned in as a TOK essay.

There are additional specific circumstances that the IB considers malpractice. I have listed them here for your benefit.

In addition to collusion and plagiarism, a student is in malpractice if they:

- Duplicate work to meet the requirements of more than one assessment component
- Fabricate data for an assignment
- Take unauthorized material into an examination room
- Disrupt an examination by an act of misconduct, such as distracting another candidate
- Exchange, support, or attempt to support, the passing on of information that is or could be related to the examination
- Fail to comply with the instructions of the invigilator or other member of the school’s staff responsible for the conduct of the
Academic Infringement

There may be a circumstance where a candidate submits a work and makes a small mistake; not citing a source or forgetting to out a quote in quotation marks.

If the candidate has made it clear that they acknowledge the ideas and resources they used, but were negligent in citation, the final award committee may rule the case academic infringement.

Academic infringement is not considered malpractice and is only applicable in a case where a candidate made accidental mistake and did not attempt to gain an unfair advantage.

In this case, a candidate is still eligible for a grade in the subject as well as the IB diploma. It is likely however that the component or part of the component in question will be discarded and not graded.

What to do if you f*#! Up

OK, so things got messy and the hammer is starting to come down. What do you do now?

There are several actions that you can take to improve your current situation and your eventual outcome.

The first thing is that every case of academic dishonesty or malpractice is treated on a case-by-case basis by the IB and by the school.

There are rules and consequences for malpractice; however, there

is no cookie cutter situation. The IB treats every situation of malpractice as unique.

Thus, approach an accusation of malpractice with honesty and an open mind. In general do not lie or attempt to deceive anyone in your school or associated with the IB in any way, what so ever.

Regardless of circumstances, you are already suspected of dishonesty, so further deception will not be beneficial to your situation.

How big is the problem?

You know that an accusation of malpractice is without a doubt your problem. The next step towards resolution is the determination if the issue is going to be handled by the IB or by your school.

To help guard against malpractice, the IB requires that a signed cover sheet accompany every material that is turned in with every assessment, whether internal or external. This cover sheet states that all of the work being submitted is the sole work of the candidate and has been created by them alone.

Standard procedure dictates that if an instance of malpractice is discovered BEFORE this cover sheet is signed; a resolution of the malpractice issue is up to the school. In this case you should consult with your school as every school’s policy for dealing with malpractice will be different.

Mitigation

In the case that the malpractice is discovered after you have signed the cover sheet and submitted the work, the IB deals with the issue.

The IB has a set of rules and proceedings for how they handle malpractice.

In general, the process proceeds in three stages:

First, the IB coordinator at the school, as well as the IBCA (International Baccalaureate Curriculum and Assessment Centre), is notified of the issue. This includes written documentation from the school and coordinator.
Along with this statement, the candidate(s) in question may submit their own statement in response to the allegation to the IBCA in order to better document the incident.

It should be noted that, you as a student have a right to view all of the accusations and evidence against you, as well as to be informed if you are under investigation for malpractice.

Next, if there is basis for an investigation; the IBCA will instruct the coordinator to conduct an investigation, which consists of a statement from the teacher for the subject concerned, the coordinators own statement, a statement from the candidate, and a summary of an interview with the candidate about the allegation of malpractice.

Finally, upon completion of this report, the case is presented to the final award committee. This committee will review all of the presented evidence and has full discretion to decide whether to dismiss the accusation, uphold it and assign an appropriate penalty, or to request further investigation.

Reconsideration and Appeal

In the case that the committee does uphold an accusation, a candidate has the right to request a reconsideration of the committee's decision.

This is only possible if the candidate is able to produce and establish facts that were unknown when the original decision was made.

An additional appeal is possible as well, but only on the grounds that the procedures defined in the IB Regulations, which led to the final decision of the case in question, were not properly followed.

In general, both of these circumstances are difficult, though not impossible to achieve once a final decision has been reached.

Ultimately, the best solution for malpractice is prevention. This starts in vigilance and an awareness of the possibilities and existence of academic dishonesty.

Remember that academic dishonesty is real and present. It is not something to be taken lightly in the IB program.

If you do the right thing and are aware, you should have no problem.