

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND MISCONDUCT POLICY

Real Group is committed to operating in an inclusive and ethical way in every area to ensure the highest possible standards of decision-making and accountability. Real group values assert that we will act with integrity; in a fair, honest, compassionate and consistent way. We take a positive approach and outlook to the challenges that face those learning with us so that together we can embrace the change and opportunity.

We recognise that academic integrity is a set of learned skills with honesty, fairness and respect for others and their work at the core. Therefore we will support and guide delegates to learn the necessary skills to ensure their work is demonstrating academic integrity and respecting others work that they have access to.

In order to demonstrate academic integrity, delegates must produce their own work, acknowledging explicitly any material that has been included from other sources or legitimate collaboration. Delegates must present their own findings, conclusions or data based on appropriate and ethical practice.

Academic misconduct is a breach of the values of academic integrity, and can occur when a delegate cheats in an assessment, or attempts to deliberately mislead an examiner that the work presented is their own when it is not. It includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, commissioning or buying work from a third party or copying the work of others.

Academic misconduct

Plagiarism is the most common form of academic misconduct and is the presentation by a delegate, as their own work, of a body of material (written, visual or oral) which is wholly or partly the work of another. Delegates are considered to have plagiarised if they have taken someone else's work or ideas and passed them off as their own. Plagiarism includes:

- Copying – i.e. submitting another's entire work as the delegate's own. The original work could be, for example, from the internet, from a publication, from a fellow delegate, or from a delegate from another cohort
- Failing to indicate a direct quote in the text. Quotation marks, italics or a similar device should be used
- Paraphrasing or synthesising material from a book, journal article or internet site without acknowledging the source in the text
- Composing a paragraph by joining together sentences from a number of sources and not acknowledging that in the text
- Using previous work in another assignment without acknowledging it.

Other forms of academic misconduct include:

- Fabrication or fraudulent reporting of source material, results, research, or other investigative work
- Collusion in the preparation or production of submitted work, unless such joint or group work is permitted explicitly
- Use, or attempted use, of a ghost-writing service for any part of assessment

- Impersonation of another delegate in an assessment, or the employment of an impersonator in an assessment.

Real Group considers plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct to be serious offences.

Real Group will apply penalties to any delegate who is found to have engaged in academic misconduct, whether through negligence, academic naivety or deliberate intent.

Delegates must, therefore, reference their work correctly to avoid plagiarism. Guidance is included in the course materials to help delegates understand the nature of plagiarism and academic misconduct and how to avoid it.

Tutors use online tools such as Ouriginal to verify that citation practice has been followed in assessed work.

Process and penalties

Tutors will be using plagiarism checking software on assignments submitted to them in draft or final form. Delegates are encouraged to submit their draft assignments to tutors/project reviewers for formative assessment and when in draft form; formative feedback can be given on inaccurate referencing so that delegates can make the necessary amendments.

Final assignments:

- Will be checked using plagiarism checking software prior to being sent to any outsourced marking or moderation agencies.
- If work is passed to outsourced marker agencies, (such as NPQOnline specific to the NPQ programmes) they then also apply their own plagiarism checks. Assignments identified as containing a high level of plagiarism are returned, unmarked, to Real Group for review.
- Where plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct are identified, either by Real Group or external agencies, delegates will be contacted and given the opportunity to explain how this has arisen
- If the delegate's explanation is unsatisfactory and/or there is strong indication of academic misconduct, an investigation will be carried out by the Programme Leader, or their nominee, to determine whether there is a case of academic misconduct to be answered
- Where the Programme Leader, or their nominee, determines that there is a case of academic misconduct to be answered, then there are 2 routes dependant on through who the course is accredited:

Courses not validated by an external body such as Middlesex University:

- Academic misconduct concerns raised with the Academic Lead to investigate further and/or determine next steps
- Where the Academic Lead's investigation determines that a technical offence has been committed. e.g. the delegate attempted to acknowledge their sources fully and/or comply with the regulations for assessment but a minor oversight or error has given cause for concern, then the Academic Lead may decide either that no further action will be taken, or may require the delegate to submit a compliant version of the assignment
- If the Academic Lead is satisfied that more serious academic misconduct has taken place, the case will be put to the relevant Academic Quality Assessment Board (AQAB) to impose one of the following penalties, considering all evidence and any mitigating factors:
 - a. A formal reprimand

- b. Failure in the element of assessment in which misconduct occurred, with a resubmission of the element. Where relevant, the mark for the resubmitted element will be capped to the minimum pass mark and where additional fees are due in relation to resubmission, these will be paid by the delegate or their sponsor, or
- c. Failure for the relevant element of assessment, with no right to resubmit.

Courses validated by Middlesex University or other awarding body:

- Where the Programme Leader, or their nominee, determines that there is a case of academic misconduct to be answered, then they will be bound to follow the current Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedures of the relevant awarding body, see links below to access their documentation:

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/academic-integrity>

Appeals

Participants are able to appeal against the outcome of academic misconduct cases either through the awarding body policy and procedure guidelines or Real Groups own policy and procedure as outlined below.

An appeal may be based on:

- a) Extenuating or mitigating circumstances where, for good reason, the AQAB was not made aware of a significant factor relating to the delegate's assessed work when it made its original decision, and/or
- b) That there was a material error, either in the conduct of the assessment itself, the investigation process or in the proceedings of the AQAB, which significantly affected the AQAB's, or
- c) These grounds:
 - That there is new and relevant evidence, which the delegate was demonstrably and for the most exceptional reasons, unable to present to the investigating team/ AQAB
 - That the procedures were not complied with in such a way that it might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result would have been different had they been complied with.
 - That there is documented evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the AQAB or by one or more members of the team investigating the case.

A successful appeal will result in the AQAB reviewing its decision in the light of the new information initially provided by the delegate, although it does not necessarily mean that the original decision of the AQAB will be changed.

In line with terms of agreement with partner organisations, such as programmes affiliated with the DfE like the NPQs, we are required to report any investigations into, and confirmed instances of malpractice to the DfE/its QA agent.

Further information

Real Group reserves the right to review, revise, amend or replace the content of this policy, and introduce new policies and procedures, from time to time, to reflect the changing needs of the organisation and new legislation and regulations.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the Academic and Professional Lead.