

# Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy

Policy owner: Pro Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience

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## **Middlesex University**

### **Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy**

#### **Introduction**

1. Academic honesty and integrity are essential to maintaining trust in the University's academic standards. All students and staff are expected to conduct themselves ethically and to produce work that reflects their own learning, skills, and original contribution. This policy explains what academic honesty and integrity means, outlines the expected standards students should engage with; and the processes used when concerns are raised.
2. This policy should be read alongside the University's Framework and Regulations relevant to the programme award and the University's Use of Generative AI in Learning and Teaching Policy.
3. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and staff understand their responsibilities regarding academic honesty and integrity. It sets out the expectations for ethical academic behaviours, provides guidance on recognising and avoiding dishonest practice. The policy also safeguards the value and credibility of Middlesex University taught programmes.
4. Staff and students undertaking research activity should read the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and the [University Code of Practice for Research](#), as well as the Framework and Regulations for Postgraduate Research.
5. The University is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, recognising their fundamental role in maintaining the quality, credibility and value of its academic awards. This policy aligns with the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which sets out the principles for assuring academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student experience, and reflects the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework, which promotes fair, transparent and timely processes in the consideration of student cases.
6. The University has a duty to ensure that students are supported to develop good academic practice, that academic misconduct is clearly defined and appropriately addressed, and that processes for investigating concerns are applied consistently, proportionately, and based on evidence. In doing so, the University safeguards the integrity of its awards and ensures that all students are treated fairly.

#### **Scope**

7. This policy applies to all registered students, including full time, and part time, distance learning, apprentices, those in writing up phases of study, those on placement, home and international students. It applies to all forms of assessment, including written coursework, examinations, online tests, group work, presentations, practical activities, and research submissions such as dissertations and theses. There is no time limit on investigating concerns, and academic awards may be reviewed or withdrawn if misconduct is identified after graduation.

8. Students studying at Middlesex international campuses and partner institutions will be expected to operate in line with the principles of this policy. Responsibilities for partner institutions are detailed in the signed Memorandum of Cooperation agreements.

## Definitions

9. Academic honesty means that students are truthful and accurate about how their work is produced. This includes clearly acknowledging any ideas, information, or help from others and ensuring that their work reflects genuine effort and is not misleading. Honest academic practice means producing work that shows their own learning, using appropriate evidence, and following academic conventions such as referencing sources correctly and meeting assessment requirements. These practices help maintain fairness, transparency, and the integrity of academic standards.

10. Academic integrity refers to the principles that underpin honest academic work. It involves acting with honesty, fairness and responsibility, and respecting the work and contributions of others. Students demonstrate academic integrity by following assessment requirements, accurately representing their work and contributions, acknowledging the work of others, seeking ethical approval where required, and developing the academic skills needed to meet University expectations for good academic practice.

11. The following behaviours are considered breaches of academic honesty and integrity.

| Term                                               | Definition                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Plagiarism</b>                                  | When students present someone else's words, ideas, or work as their own without proper acknowledgement.                             |
| <b>Collusion</b>                                   | When students work with others on an assessment in a way that is not allowed and present the work as their own.                     |
| <b>Copying</b>                                     | When students reproduce another person's work (with or without their knowledge) and submit it as their own.                         |
| <b>Cheating in examinations or online tests</b>    | When students act unfairly to gain an advantage in an exam or test, such as using unauthorised materials, devices, or assistance.   |
| <b>Fabrication of falsification of data</b>        | When students make up, alter, or misrepresent data, results, or evidence.                                                           |
| <b>Self-plagiarism</b>                             | When students submit their own previously assessed work again without permission or proper acknowledgement.                         |
| <b>Commissioning or purchasing work</b>            | When students have work completed by another person or service (paid or unpaid) and submit it as their own.                         |
| <b>Unauthorised use of artificial intelligence</b> | When students use AI tools in a way that is not permitted, or without clear acknowledgement, and this misrepresents their own work. |

## Student Responsibilities

12. Students are expected to act with honesty, fairness and responsibility by completing required academic integrity training, seeking guidance when unsure how to meet expectations, and obtaining ethical approval before starting research where required.

Students are also responsible for understanding the consequences of dishonest academic behaviours.

13. Students are responsible for ensuring that the work they submit is a truthful and accurate representation of their own contribution, and that any ideas, information, support or tools used are clearly acknowledged in line with academic conventions such as referencing and citation.

14. Where group work is permitted, students must ensure that collaboration is carried out in accordance with assessment requirements and that their individual contribution is fairly and honestly represented.

15. Students may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools in their learning where this is permitted. Any use of AI must be appropriate, transparent, and clearly acknowledged. Work submitted must be a truthful and accurate representation of the student's own learning and contribution. Students are responsible for understanding when and how AI can be used in their assessments and must not use AI in ways that misrepresent their knowledge, skills, or authorship. The University is responsible for providing clear guidance for each assessment on whether and how AI tools may be used. Further guidance is set out in the University's policy on the use of generative AI in learning and teaching.

### **University Support for Maintaining Academic Honesty and Integrity**

16. Academic honesty and integrity is developed over time, and the University provides support, training, and guidance to help students learn the skills required for good academic practice.

17. The university is committed to supporting students to develop the knowledge and skills required for academic honesty and integrity.

18. Students have access to a range of academic support services throughout their studies, including workshops, one-to-one guidance, and online resources covering academic writing, research, referencing, numeracy and digital skills.

19. Specialist support is available for students through:

- a. **Academic Advising:** Academic advising supports students in understanding expectations and developing practices that help them maintain academic honesty.
- b. **Subject Librarians:** Specialist support to help students find and correctly reference the information they need for their studies.
- c. **Academic Skills Advisors:** Students are supported in understanding assignment briefs and different types of academic tasks, as well as planning, structuring, and improving their work. This includes developing a critical voice, using and referencing sources correctly, and preparing for written and non-written assessments such as presentations and group projects.
- d. **Campus Student Administration teams** provide access to academic advising, subject librarians, and academic skills advisors to support students in understanding expectations, developing their work

20. Students may also seek independent advice and guidance from the Students' Union, which provides confidential and impartial support to help students understand the academic integrity process and make informed decisions.

21. These services are designed to help students build confidence, develop good academic practice, and succeed in their studies. All academic honesty concerns are considered and resolved through processes designed to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency, in accordance with this policy.

### **Investigation of Academic Integrity Concerns**

22. The University takes a consistent and proportionate approach to concerns about academic honesty and integrity. Where a potential issue is identified, it will be reviewed to determine whether it reflects poor academic practice or a potential breach of this policy.

23. Students will be informed of any concerns and given a fair opportunity to respond. All cases are considered in line with the principles of fairness, consistency, and evidence-based decision-making.

24. If someone reports suspected cheating or misconduct but does so anonymously or through a third party, the university will only investigate the case if there is enough clear and reliable evidence to support the claim.

### **Investigation Timeframes**

25. Students are required to respond to an academic misconduct allegation within 10 working days of the date of notification.

26. The University will normally review and conclude cases in a timely and proportionate manner. Formal investigation outcomes are normally issued within 28 calendar days.

27. The University is committed to ensuring that students are kept updated throughout the process and that any delays and/or decisions are communicated as promptly as possible.

28. Decisions relating to academic honesty and integrity should be made as early as reasonably practicable in the assessment process to support accurate recording of outcomes. Where concerns cannot be resolved in advance of an assessment board, a provisional or holding grade may be recorded until the matter has been concluded.

29. Where further investigation, evidence gathering, or panel consideration is required, the student will be informed of any necessary extension to the expected timeframe.

### **Outcomes and Penalties**

30. The outcome categories (A–D) represent the formal tariff applied following an investigation. For clarity and student understanding, these can be grouped conceptually into poor academic practice, minor misconduct, and serious misconduct, reflecting increasing levels of severity and intent.

| <b>Outcome category</b> | <b>Outcome category</b>     | <b>Seriousness of the issue</b>                                                                                    |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A                       | Poor academic practice      | This outcome results in feedback and guidance, and the work may receive reduced marks.                             |
| B                       | Minor academic misconduct   | This outcome results in failing the component or module, with reassessment permitted and normally capped.          |
| C                       | Serious academic misconduct | This outcome results in failing without reassessment and may require a full retake.                                |
| D                       | Serious academic misconduct | This outcome applies to the most serious cases, where the penalty may include expulsion or withdrawal of an award. |

31. Where an outcome requires a student to retake a module or to register for a substitute module, full tuition fees for that module will be payable in accordance with Middlesex University Student Financial Regulations (London campus), or equivalent regulations at overseas campuses and partner institutions.

32. Outcomes under this policy may affect a student's eligibility for professional registration, accreditation, or licensure where programmes are linked to professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements.

33. A finding of academic misconduct may have implications beyond academic outcomes and may be considered under associated professional or fitness to practise processes where relevant. In such cases, information may be shared with the appropriate university process or external body in accordance with institutional regulations and professional requirements.

### **Right to Appeal**

34. Students may appeal decisions relating to academic integrity within the stated deadlines. Appeals may be submitted on grounds such as new and relevant evidence, procedural error, or evidence of bias. Academic appeals are considered through the University's formal processes to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency.