

London's  
International  
Drama School

**Rose  
Bruford  
College**

of Theatre  
& Performance

# Academic Misconduct

Including Plagiarism

POLICIES and  
PROCEDURES

# ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## Contents

### **Section A: Policy on academic misconduct**

1.0 Introduction and purpose.....	2
2.0 Scope and applicability.....	3
3.0 Definitions of academic misconduct.....	3
3.1 How the College determines whether plagiarism has taken place. ....	4
3.2 Steps to avoid academic misconduct.....	5

### **Section B: Disciplinary Procedure for Academic Misconduct**

4.0 Applying the Procedure.....	6
4.1 Preliminary (Informal) Procedure.....	6
4.2 Formal procedure .....	7
4.3 How will the panel be conducted? .....	8
4.4 Penalties for academic misconduct.....	9
4.5 Communication of the decision of the hearing .....	9
5.0 Appeals .....	10
5.1 The Examinations Appeals Board .....	10
5.2 The appeal hearing .....	10
5.3 The decision of the Examinations Appeals Board .....	11
6.0 Further action.....	11
7.0 Reporting .....	11
8.0 Sources of help and advice: .....	11

## Section A: Policy on academic misconduct

### 1.0 Introduction and purpose

The following Policy and Procedure has been developed as part of the College's commitment to ensuring the quality and standards of our programmes of study, academic services and facilities. Its aim is to ensure that you and staff members have a clear understanding of the College's definition of Academic Misconduct, and that effective support, advice and guidance is available to staff and students.

When dealing with students suspected of academic misconduct the College recognises that it has a *Duty to Act Fairly*, which informs and underpins all its processes when working with students. The College will therefore endeavour to ensure that our systems, panels and communications adhere to the following set of tenets as a guiding set of operational principles that will contribute to making our operations both transparent and clear.

We will:

- Inform you of the basis of the issue and give you an opportunity to respond before any decisions are made;
- Avoid bias when dealing with issues;
- Be transparent in all our dealings whilst maintaining confidentiality;
- Not delay in communicating with you;
- Where appropriate, we will seek to resolve academic misconduct issues informally through our student support system;
- Follow our procedures exactly as they are written in policy documents;
- Ensure appropriate guidance and support on academic misconduct is available to you at all levels of study;
- Not delay in carrying out any necessary investigations to establish the facts of the case;
- Provide all the information and documents to the panel and to you and in alternative format as appropriate;
- Ensure that all the appropriate college regulations and policy documents are easily accessible and available to you;
- Allow you to be accompanied by a member of the Rose Bruford College community at any stage including formal hearings;
- Allow representations either in written or verbal form
- Take account of all circumstances;
- Confirm the decision of the panel in writing;
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of our academic misconduct procedures and ensure appropriate action is taken

## 2.0 Scope and applicability

The Procedure is for student use. An appeal submitted by a third party (including parents, guardians and friends) will not be accepted unless accompanied by your written authorisation.

You may not be granted an award, obtain certification of an award or attend a graduation ceremony whilst a matter of alleged academic misconduct is still in the process of being dealt with under this Procedure.

This procedure **does not** cover actions relating to:

- general student misconduct, (see ***Student Disciplinary Action***)
- lack of diligence in your or failure to meet other academic requirements, see (***Student Attendance and Academic Engagement***)

This Policy shall be applied to any suspected instance of academic misconduct. Any procedure being undertaken through this policy may be adjourned at any time if it is known or suspected that you are not fit to participate. In such circumstances, the proceedings may be suspended or terminated subject to specified conditions.

## 3.0 Definitions of academic misconduct

Academic misconduct can take many forms. The College considers that the following activities constitute academic misconduct:

- i. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism may occur in all forms of assessment and falls broadly into three areas:
  - a. Generally, plagiarism is defined as taking the work of another person or source and using it as if it were one's own. It can encompass ideas, written works, musical compositions, computer programs, survey results, diagrams, graphs, drawings, images and designs. The original sources are (deliberately) hidden from the marker by not referencing the source. Words, phrases and passages taken verbatim from a published work must be in quotation marks and the source acknowledged using the College's style guidelines (Available in the Student Handbook and on the VLE) and should normally be less than 100 words in length.
  - b. If you want to make more use of a published work you may summarise or paraphrase the author's words, but you must properly acknowledge

the source. Paraphrasing, when the original statement is still identifiable and has no acknowledgement is still plagiarism.

- c. Self-plagiarism (or double submission) is resubmitting previously submitted work on one or more occasions (without proper acknowledgement). This may take the form of copying either the whole piece of work or part of it. Normally credit will already have been given for this work. **You should note that this applies even if you are re-taking a module or level.**
- ii. Collusion: A student colludes when he or she submits work for assessment done in collaboration with another person as entirely his or her own work, or collaborates with another student to complete work which is submitted as that other student's work. Collusion does not apply in the case of the submission of group projects, or assessments that are intended to be produced collaboratively.
- iii. Misleading material: Inclusion of data which has been invented or obtained by unfair means or an academic offence; for example, falsifying the results of questionnaires or interviews.
- iv. Cheating: Any irregular behaviour during examinations such as the unauthorised possession of notes; attempting to give or receive help in a formal academic exercise or examination; unauthorised possession of notes; the copying of another candidate's work; giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work; submitting work that is not your own; the unauthorised obtaining of examination papers.
- v. Bribery or paid services: Submitting work for assessment that you have purchased from an essay procurement website or offering a bribe to another student or member of staff.
- vi. Sabotage: Attempting to prevent others from completing their work.

The above list is not exhaustive and you should always seek advice if you are concerned that you may be breaching required standards of academic conduct. The College is keen to help you maintain the highest academic standards and will always endeavour to support you provided you seek help at the earliest opportunity.

### **3.1 How the College determines whether plagiarism has taken place.**

Plagiarism may be detected based on either the academic experience of the marking tutor(s) or by use of electronic plagiarism software which the College uses called URKUND. As experienced academics, markers may already know source material that is being presented as your own; they may also recognise changes in writing style, language or even spelling which can flag-up concerns. This may be sufficient for the marking tutor(s) to initiate the procedure outlined in Section B.

Tutors should ensure that all written work is submitted through plagiarism software (URKUND). This generates a report indicating the percentage of the work that *MAY* have be plagiarised and a detailed report.

### **3.2 Steps to avoid academic misconduct**

The College seeks to ensure that all students understand the nature and implications of academic misconduct. Therefore, the first written assessment at Level 4 is essentially diagnostic. This will allow you to explore good academic practice in your written work and for tutors to offer feedback where you work falls short of expected standards, particularly in regard to plagiarism, without imposing the penalties outlined in Section B.

## Section B: Disciplinary Procedure for Academic Misconduct

### 4.0 Applying the Procedure

If you are suspected of academic misconduct, the following informal and formal procedures will be followed.

Cases of suspected academic misconduct by an undergraduate student will be dealt with by your Programme Director or Subject Leader informally – the Preliminary (Informal) Procedure. More serious and/or repeated cases of academic misconduct may be referred upwards to a formal Academic Panel depending on the severity of the case. (Formal Procedure)

Cases of suspected academic misconduct by a taught postgraduate student are always referred to the formal Academic Panel.

Level:	Dealt with by:
Level 4 or 5 First Offence	Programme Director/Subject Leader
Level 4 or 5 Subsequent Offence(s)	Academic Panel
Level 4 or 5 Serious (first) Offence	Academic Panel
Level 6 or 7	Academic Panel

#### 4.1 Preliminary (Informal) Procedure

If the module tutor/assessor suspects academic misconduct according to the above definition(s), you will be invited to meet with the Programme Director or Subject Leader at the earliest convenient occasion. If the tutor is also the Programme Director or Subject Leader they will ask another member of academic staff from the programme to attend. The purpose of this meeting is to ascertain whether:

- i. plagiarism or other academic misconduct has taken place;
- ii. you fully understood the College's definition of academic misconduct;
- iii. the misconduct was essentially inadvertent or intentionally deceptive.

##### At Level 4

Where the preliminary consideration finds that the misconduct was *inadvertent* or an example of *poor academic practice*<sup>1</sup>, you will be informed of this in writing and be invited to discuss the issues with an appropriate member of academic staff at the earliest possible opportunity. As part of this discussion, you may be shown the score from your URKUND report. You will be given clear advice on the steps you must take to prevent a recurrence of this poor practice. A note of this discussion should be given

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<sup>1</sup> Poor academic practice is a term used when students either hurriedly or badly prepare a piece of work for assessment. It often involves bad referencing where the work may be referenced and cited, but not using the correct format or system. It may include a paraphrase which only slightly alters the original source or incorporate so many reference texts that there is very little evidence that the student has engaged with the topic in question. Whilst such scenarios might not reflect plagiarism they do show a lack of individual thinking based on the teaching a student has received and should therefore be penalised by using the normal assessment criteria.

to you within **5 working days** of the meeting and a copy kept on your student record for future reference if you are suspected of a further case of academic misconduct. The code used against your mark will not record a first offence of plagiarism.

If it is determined that the misconduct was deliberate you will be required, at the discretion of the Examination Board, to re-sit the assessment. Your mark will be capped at a maximum of 40%.

If the academic misconduct is repeated then the formal procedure will be followed and the case considered by an Academic Panel (see below).

#### At Level 5

Where the preliminary consideration finds that the misconduct was *inadvertent* or an example of *poor academic practice*, you will be informed of this in writing and be invited to discuss the issues with an appropriate member of academic staff at the earliest possible opportunity. A note of this discussion should be given to you within **5 working days** of the meeting and a copy kept on your student record for future reference if you are suspected of a further case of academic misconduct. You will be required, at the discretion of the Examination Board, to re-sit the assessment. Your mark will be capped at a maximum of 40%.

If it is determined that the misconduct was more serious or deliberate, the formal procedure will be followed and the case considered by an Academic Panel (See below)

#### At Level 6 and Level 7

In all other instances and in all cases involving Level 6 and Level 7 students, the formal procedure must be followed and the case referred to an Academic Panel.

### **4.2 Formal procedure**

In more serious cases of academic misconduct, the informal procedure may conclude that:

- i. there is evidence of proven repeated offences of academic misconduct (three cases of bad academic practice or the second occasion of deliberate misconduct);
- ii. you are at an advanced stage in your programme of study (e.g. the offence has been committed in the dissertation, final project or major project of a Level 6 programme) or at any time on a level 7 programme;
- iii. the academic misconduct is compounded by deliberate deception or lying (e.g. purchasing an essay from an essay procurement website; stealing work from another student);
- iv. other students have been disrupted or affected in some way by your academic misconduct;
- v. there are other aggravating factors.

In such cases, you will be asked in writing to attend a formal Academic Panel consisting of the following or their nominees:

- Two senior members of Academic Staff
- A member of academic staff unconnected to the case

The relevant Programme Administrator will be present to maintain a record of the meeting.

You will be given full information about the allegation being made you. You will be advised of your right to be accompanied by a person of your choice (who may speak on your behalf), normally a fellow student, member of staff or Students' Union representative.

The case must not be discussed by the Panel before you are present, other than to agree or clarify procedure. You must be given the opportunity to hear all the evidence and to present an explanation, but will not be present whilst the Panel comes to a decision.

The Programme Director/Academic Programme Manager/tutor concerned will be required to present the case to the Panel.

The Academic Panel cannot impose penalties. This is the responsibility of the Examination Board. Rather it makes **recommendations** to the Examination Board. The panel may at its discretion, choose to recommend a more serious penalty for ratification by the Chair of the Examination Board, including possible termination of the student's programme of study.

In all cases of alleged academic misconduct, full records of the plagiarised assignment, relevant evidence of plagiarism and meeting minutes are to be kept by the Programme Director/Academic Programme Manager or by the Chair of the Panel if the matter is escalated as above, and the Chair of the Examination Board must be informed in writing.

Following the conclusion of the plagiarism procedure, the student has the normal right of appeal as laid down in the College Appeals Procedure.

#### **4.3 How will the panel be conducted?**

You will be given notice of the hearing outlining the nature of the academic misconduct and your right to be accompanied by another person **at least three working days** before the hearing. If a plagiarism report is to be used at the panel, then the student will be advised of its contents in advance by a member of staff not involved with the panel.

The Panel will be chaired by one of the College's senior academic members of staff and will proceed as follows:

- i. Introductions
- ii. Allegation of academic misconduct set out by the Programme Director or Academic Programme Manager;
- iii. The student, or his/her representative, responds to the allegations;
- iv. The Panel has the opportunity to question both the Programme Director or Academic Programme Manager (and tutor) and the student;
- v. The Programme Director or Academic Programme Manager sums up the allegations. New evidence is not admissible at this time;
- vi. The student sums up. New evidence is not admissible at this time;
- vii. The Programme Director or Academic Programme Manager/tutor and the student withdraw whilst the Panel reaches its decision

#### **4.4 Penalties for academic misconduct**

In considering which academic penalty to recommend, the Panel will take into consideration admission of guilt on your part, the seriousness and the extent of the misconduct. Relevant precedents will also be considered. For example, an admitted misconduct would normally be treated more leniently than a denied offence.

Students citing personal mitigating circumstances should be advised that such matters are dealt with at School level by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee, with documentation provided to the same at the appropriate point in time

If you admit misconduct or misconduct is found to be proved, the Panel may issue a **reprimand and warning about future conduct** or recommend to the Examination Board one or more of the penalties:

- i. a mark of 40% (or the pass mark whichever is the lower) awarded for the component or module in question
- ii. a mark of 0 is awarded for the component of assessment in question;
- iii. a mark of 0 is awarded for the module in question
- iv. a mark of 0 is awarded for the module in question and marks for all other modules at that level will be kept at the minimum pass mark
- v. a limitation is imposed on progression and award
- vi. termination of the student's studies

Where the recommendation is for a mark of 0 to be awarded, the penalty *may* be imposed without "loss of credit" where it is judged that such a penalty would have a disproportionate effect on the outcome for the student.

Proven cases of Academic Misconduct will be referred to the relevant Examination Board for confirmation of the penalty. The Examination Board will inform the student of its decision in the normal way and of any academic requirements following the implementation of the penalty.

#### **4.5 Communication of the decision of the hearing**

The decision of the Academic Panel (subject to confirmation by the relevant Examination Board) will be communicated to you in writing within **five working days** of a decision being made.

## 5.0 Appeals

You have the right of appeal against any disciplinary action. Appeals will be heard by the Examinations Appeal Board.

Notice of appeal should be sent to the Registrar in writing within **seven working days** of the dispatch of the decision of the original hearing.

### 5.1 The Examinations Appeals Board

An appeal shall be heard by the Appeals Committee, a sub-committee of the Board of Governors. Its composition shall be:

- Vice Principal (Chair)
- The Head of School from the School not associated with the appellant
- The Registrar
- A member of academic staff, nominated by the Principal, from a programme not associated with the appellant
- One member of the Board of Governors

### 5.2 The Appeal Hearing

The Appeal Hearing shall be called as soon as is possible after receipt of the student's notice of appeal.

The student will be given notice of the date of the hearing and the procedure to be adopted at **least three working days** before the hearing.

The Appeal Committee shall not rehear the case afresh but shall:

- review the procedures followed by the Panel
- establish whether any new evidence that is material and substantial has been presented
- review the penalty imposed.

The student may submit a written statement for consideration by the Appeals Board

The manner in which the appeal shall be conducted and the evidence heard will be entirely at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee and in accordance with the terms of reference for the Examinations Appeals Board.

### 5.3 The decision of the Examinations Appeals Board

The Committee may:

- Confirm the original decision
- Uphold the appeal and quash the original decision
- Substitute its own decision for the original one. This may involve an alternative, lesser or greater penalty.

You will be notified in writing of the Board's decision **within 5 working days** of a decision being made and will be issued with a completion of procedures letter.

### 6.0 Further action

Normally the decision of the Examinations Appeals Board is final and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

*If you are studying on an award of The University of Manchester and you still believe that your complaint has not been dealt with properly by the College or that the outcome is unreasonable you may make a further appeal to the validating university (University of Manchester). If you are dissatisfied with the decision of The University of Manchester, you may be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided the complaint is eligible under its rules and once all internal procedures have been concluded.*

*If you are studying on a Rose Bruford College award, and you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with properly by the College you may be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided the complaint is eligible under its rules and once all internal procedures have been concluded.*

Information about the role of the OIA and the procedure for submitting complaints can be obtained from the OIA website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

### 7.0 Reporting

Each year, the Registrar will prepare a report to the Board of Governors on the number and nature of cases of Academic Misconduct, identifying any general issues that may have arisen.

### 8.0 Sources of help and advice:

Advice to students

- Student Style Guide (available in Student Handbooks, VLE, LRC)
- Guidance to students on academic misconduct

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

[www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

DOCUMENT CONTROL BOX		Version 1.2
<b>Policy / Procedure title:</b>	Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures	
<b>Policy owner:</b>	Quality Office	
<b>Lead contact:</b>	Secretary and Registrar	
<b>Audience:</b>	Students and Academic Staff	
<b>Equality Impact Screening date Referred to Equality Impact Assessment Group? Yes/No</b>	Yes	
<b>Approving body:</b>	Academic Board	
<b>Date approved:</b>	November 2017	
<b>Implementation date:</b>	November 2017	
<b>Previous revision dates:</b>	30 January 2013	
<b>Supersedes:</b>	Principles of Assessment Document	
<b>Previous review dates:</b>		
<b>Next review date:</b>	August 2019	
<b>Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations</b>	Academic Regulations	
<b>Related Policies, Procedures and Guidance:</b>	Assessment Policy Student Disciplinary Action Student Complaints	
<b>Further information:</b> Updated August 2017 to include reference to RBC or UoM awards. Updated November 2017 to include reference to URKUND Updated September 2018 to take account of new academic structure within the School of DMTA		