

Academic Integrity Policy – Subject to approval

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1. Definitions

We/Us/Our/LMA means Liverpool Media Academy Ltd.

You/Your/Student(s) means a registered student, or applicant, of LMA

Academic Integrity means being honest and fair in the acknowledgement and representation of ideas, research and data within your own work. Not doing this is called **Academic Misconduct.**

2. Key Facts¹

Paragraph	Explanation
2.5	Failing to uphold academic integrity can have serious repercussions, including the possibility of being withdrawn from your course.
3.1 & 3.2	LMA provides support to help you maintain academic integrity, but the ultimate responsibility lies with you to ensure your work is conducted honestly.
3.3	Contract cheating services are illegal, and you should only seek academic support from LMA-approved sources.
4.1.1 & 4.1.2	Academic work must be referenced properly, be your own original work, and you must not take credit for others' contributions without acknowledgment.
5.1 & 5.3	Seeking an unfair academic advantage is misconduct, and if proven, it can lead to penalties such as grade capping or more severe academic consequences.
12	A Academic Misconduct Panel may make decisions even if you do not engage with the process.
13.2 & 13.3	Penalties for misconduct are case-specific and range from a reprimand to being withdrawn from your course and depending on the severity and nature of the misconduct.
14.1	You have the right to appeal against decisions of the Academic Misconduct Panel; sanctions will remain in effect pending appeal outcomes.

¹ The key facts table was produced with support from ChatGPT4. April 2024

3. Introduction

- 3.1. The academic integrity policy defines LMA's expectations for how students and staff should conduct their academic work. For students it forms a key part of our relationship with you as defined by our Terms and Conditions.
- 3.2. Academic Integrity is essential to the proper functioning of higher education and research activity as it helps to ensure the standards of qualifications and awards, ensuring that recognition is appropriately allocated for an individual's or group's insight and accomplishments.
- 3.3. To have academic integrity is to be responsible for ensuring you are honest and fair in the acknowledgement and representation of ideas, research and data within your own work. This includes where you utilise the ideas of others within your work and where you have created something in another context.
- 3.4. This requirement extends to all your studies, including any formative tasks and all of your coursework, presentations and other formal assessments, including practicals.
- 3.5. Not demonstrating academic integrity in your work is classed as academic misconduct and can have severe consequences for your studies and can even result in your withdrawal from your programme under our Terms and Conditions.
- 3.6. In addition to our terms and conditions the Academic Integrity Policy may be read alongside, and used in conjunction with, our complaints and appeals processes either to raise concerns about academic integrity or to appeal the outcome of our investigation.

4. Supporting Academic Integrity

- 4.1. We provide a range of support for you to ensure that you can demonstrate academic integrity. This includes the study skills support embedded within your curriculum content and design, on the VLE and through drop in study skills sessions.

- 4.2. However, ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure your work is honest and fair in the acknowledgement and representation of ideas, research and data either created by others, or by yourself in another context. **You must seek support if you are unsure about what you need to do to maintain academic integrity.**
- 4.3. The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill (2022) makes it illegal to provide contract cheating for financial gain and illegal to advertise such services. To ensure you are not misled by an organisation purporting to offer academic support, you should only seek help for academic integrity or academic writing from LMA staff or the tools/resources we have provided you with.
- 4.4. LMA has a moral and regulatory duty to support academic integrity and we will use our experience and all tools available to us to identify Academic Misconduct.

5. What does academic integrity look like?

5.1. Work that demonstrates academic integrity is:

5.1.1. Referenced in the format we require

- i. Any use of another person's work, including generative AI, must be attributed with the original source identified. This includes where you have paraphrased or summarised as well as when you use a direct quote;
- ii. LMA uses the [Harvard Style](#) which should be used both in the body of your text and in your bibliography.

Failure to correctly reference your work is usually known as plagiarism.

5.1.2. Your own, original, work

You only take credit for work that is yours and yours alone. When you submit your work you are declaring that unless otherwise referenced it is an original piece of work that you have directly authored.

Submitting work that has not been **wholly** written by you is usually called commissioning.

You should be cautious of companies that appear to offer any kind of academic help in return for payment; the use of essay mills and essay banks and paid drafting/proofing services (and similar) is strictly prohibited under this policy.

Commissioning can also occur where you receive help, and do not attribute it, from colleagues, friends, relatives or anyone else.

Where group work and collaboration is required this will be included on the assessment brief (e.g. “work as part of a group to...” In the case of a group work or collaboration, it is still important to be honest in the acknowledgement and representation of ideas it should be clear, and agreed by the group, who contributed what.

Collaborating on an assignment without explicit permission is usually called collusion. **Deliberately sharing all, or parts, of your work with another person may be classed as collusion if they copy it, even if you did not give them permission, or intend for them, to do so.**

In most cases work that you submit must be originally produced for the purpose for which you are submitting it. You can only use your own work where this is allowed explicitly within by the assessment brief. **If you are retaking a module or group of modules you must always submit new assessments.**

In some cases you may be allowed to submit something that you have completed in a professional capacity: unless the instructions are already explicit that it is permitted you should seek advice from your tutor before doing so and ensure the context is clear. You should also be aware of the relevant intellectual property and confidentiality expectations before submitting.

If you submit work for assessment at LMA that has been used by you elsewhere either within a LMA Programme/Module/Course or another institution without explicit permission, this is usually called duplication.

5.1.3. Honest

Your work should be reliable and produced in good faith with direct research carried out ethically and legally by you with the results or analysis accurately represented.

Falsifying research or providing deliberately misleading analysis (including omission) or outcomes is called misrepresentation.

It is good practice to keep a record of your research, drafting notes, and early drafts of your work that you can refer back to at a later stage in case of query.

6. Academic Misconduct

- 6.1. A student that seeks to gain an unfair advantage or that undermines academic integrity commits academic misconduct, regardless of whether it was deliberate or not.
- 6.2. Where we suspect, or it is alleged, that there has been academic misconduct we will investigate the circumstances using the procedures below. We will always give you the right to reply where we believe academic misconduct has taken place and you should engage fully and truthfully in the process.
- 6.3. If following investigation, and based on our academic judgement, we believe that academic misconduct has been proven we will apply one or more sanctions. This can include capping one or more a marks at the pass level, requiring you or repeat the work (for a capped mark), capping the overall mark of one or more modules, withdrawing you from your studies and, in the case of graduates, requesting your qualification to be rescinded.
- 6.4. Serious academic misconduct may also be disclosed on any references we provide for you.

- 6.5. It is not uncommon for academic misconduct to come to light, or be alleged, after a significant period of time has elapsed. **There is no time-limit on academic misconduct allegations, and they may be investigated even where students have graduated.** While we cannot compel graduates to cooperate with the investigation, we strongly encourage them to do so in order to exercise their right to reply.

7. Academic Misconduct Procedures

- 7.1. We will use the following procedure for addressing suspected or alleged academic misconduct. However we also recognise that suspected or alleged misconduct can be complicated and therefore it may be necessary to vary the process to meet the circumstances. Where this is the case, we will explain how and why we are varying it.

8. Identifying misconduct

- 8.1. We identify misconduct via several different routes, these include, but are not limited to:
- i. Reviewing your work in the context of what we know about you as student, including your engagement and contribution to discussions with the academic team and your previous work;
 - ii. The academic judgements of our staff about your work and their knowledge of the subject and other resources and sources specific to the subject;
 - iii. The use of text matching software that draws from a global database of published work and student submissions;
 - iv. Receiving reports of academic misconduct from other students and third parties.
- 8.2. Student can raise suspicions of academic misconduct by emailing registry@lma.ac.uk.

9. Reporting Academic Misconduct to us

- 9.1. Complaints can be raised about another person's academic integrity and will be considered using these procedures and as allowed for within the Complaints Policy or the Conduct Policy or both. The usual time limit for step two complaints does not apply to alleged academic misconduct.

- 9.2. Students and third parties raising concerns about a LMA student's academic integrity should be aware that that:
- i. We will consider allegations raised by students or third parties and decide whether or not to investigate it. If we do not investigate it, we will not inform the subject of the allegation that it has been raised.
 - ii. No action will be taken against a student who in, good faith, raises a suspicion of misconduct which is subsequently found to be un-proven.
 - iii. It is highly unlikely that we will accept anonymous allegations or be able to withhold your identity from the person alleged to have committed academic misconduct: This is both due to the nature of the offence alleged and the need to allow those accused of academic misconduct to be able to respond to the allegation effectively.
 - iv. We may need to contact you and ask for more information.
 - v. We will need to have due consideration for the privacy of the individual accused of academic misconduct in communicating the outcome of our investigation.

10. Addressing misconduct

- 10.1. If you have approved reasonable adjustments, we will consider these as part of our investigation of potential academic misconduct to ensure that you have the opportunity to fully contribute. Among other things this may mean we allow you extra time to respond, provide longer notification of up-coming events or allow you to contribute, or provide information to you, in alternative formats. If you think you need support to engage with the process, please email support@lma.ac.uk.

11. Minor Academic misconduct

- 11.1. Minor academic misconduct is usually considered to be likely unintentional in nature or unlikely to provide the student(s) with a material benefit, or both – an example of minor academic misconduct would be referencing inconsistently or in an incorrect format. Often it is simply considered to be poor academic practice.
- 11.2. At level four (first year undergraduate) incidents of poor academic practice will normally be addressed through marking and feedback on your work. It may result in a lower mark

than you would have otherwise received, this could mean that a piece of work that would have otherwise been of a passing standard, fails.

11.3. Where we identify a pattern of minor misconduct (e.g. you have received feedback on an issue with your academic integrity before) we may consider it to be significant academic misconduct.

12. Significant Academic Misconduct

12.1. Significant academic misconduct occurs where the behaviour in question is likely a deliberate action/omission, or where there is an attempt to gain material academic or other benefit, or both. It can also be where there are repeated instances of minor academic misconduct.

12.2. If we believe there may have been significant academic misconduct, we will allocate an investigating officer. Normally this will be the academic member of staff that has identified potential academic misconduct, or where the matter is raised by another person, and we decide to investigate, the Head of your course at either campus.

12.3. In the first instance, the investigating officer should arrange to speak to you about your work. They will identify that the discussion is about potential academic misconduct and signpost this policy to you in advance of the meeting.

12.4. The discussion will be used to assess your knowledge of the work, or sections of it, in and how you produced it. It will be used to inform the investigating officer's report.

12.5. The discussion is not a compulsory part of the process: if for any reason it does not take place, we may still investigate the alleged misconduct and draw conclusions from other evidence available to us.

12.6. The investigating officer will compile a report summarising the case and detailing available evidence and submit it to the registry team. At this stage the report will make one of two findings that:

- There is potential academic misconduct and that as a result there is a case for you to answer;
- It is unlikely that academic misconduct has taken place and there is no case to answer.

12.7. The Director of Registry (or nominee) will review the investigating officers report. Where the investigating officer's report concludes that there is a case to answer, you will be given the opportunity to:

- Accept or refute that academic misconduct has taken place;
- outline:
 - Your response to the allegation; or
 - Any mitigating circumstances you would like us to take in to account where you have admitted academic misconduct.
 - Provide any additional documentation to support your response.

12.8. Where a response is required, you will usually have 10 working days to provide one. If you do not respond within the timeframe provided to you, the matter may be considered without your response.

12.9. Where potential significant misconduct is identified, it will be considered by an Academic Misconduct Panel.

12.10. The role of the Academic Misconduct Panel is to:

- i. determine the penalty to be applied where you have accepted that academic misconduct has taken place; or
- ii. Consider the investigating officer's report and your own response where you refute that academic misconduct has taken place. The panel will apply academic judgement to determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, that academic misconduct:
 - took place and in which in which case the allegation is proven; or
 - did not take place and the allegation is unproven.
- iii. In the case of a proven decision the panel will then also determine the penalty to be applied.

12.11. The Panel will consist of a minimum of three of the following members of staff, to include the Chair or Deputy Chair:

- i. The principal of the campus the student is studying at who will be Chair;
- ii. The Curriculum and Quality Director who will be Deputy Chair;
- iii. The Director of Registry (or nominee);
- iv. One member of academic staff that has not taught the student, usually from a different subject area.

The panel will also be attended by a Secretary and other individuals, including but not limited to, the student and the investigating officer, as necessary for the panel to make an informed decision.

13. Procedures of the Panel

13.1. Following your response to the allegation (or the case of no response, after ten days has elapsed), we will inform you in writing (e.g. email to your LMA email address) that an Academic Misconduct Panel will consider your case, at least five days in advance of the meeting. Panel meetings may be held online, by circulation, or in person at the discretion of the Chair.

13.2. A copy of these procedures shall be forwarded to you, along with any information or evidence to be presented to the Panel. The process is not designed to be adversarial and therefore the Panel will usually make their determination based on written evidence. However they may, at their discretion, invite you, the investigating Officer, or both to the meeting where the Chair considers that it would be useful to do so.

13.3. You may provide additional information in writing. If doing so you should outline any relevant factors and provide any evidence that you would like the Panel to consider. This must be submitted to the Secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting.

13.4. If you are invited and choose to attend, you may be accompanied by one other person, this can include but is not limited to a family member or friend, a support worker, another student. The person accompanying you cannot speak for you other than in

exceptional circumstances (for example, where you have a condition which affects your ability to communicate). You must tell the Secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting if you intend to invite someone else to the Panel meeting

- 13.5. The Panel may make such enquiries as are deemed necessary to confirm the facts reported to it.
- 13.6. The Panel may consider your case (and any outcomes be valid) in the absence of, or any response from, you (whether due to non-attendance in person or non-engagement with the process) if we have sent the notification of the meeting five days or more in advance of the Panel meeting.
- 13.7. The panel's decision will be communicated to you within 10 working days of the meeting.

14. Determining the penalty for significant misconduct

- 14.1. Academic misconduct can take a wide variety of forms and therefore we do not have a set tariff of penalties that are applied when academic misconduct is accepted or found to be proven.
- 14.2. The panel will seek to apply a penalty that is proportionate to the context of the academic misconduct and one that is aligned to the policy of any validating partner. The factors they may consider include, but are not limited to:
 - i. The circumstances leading to the misconduct and your own academic track record (e.g. have you had issues identified with your academic integrity before)
 - ii. The extent of the academic misconduct within the work in question;
 - iii. Your level of study and the nature of the assessment you are undertaking, and its role within an award. For example academic misconduct within a dissertation or final project is likely to be considered more serious than that which takes place within one element of assessment in a module at a lower level.
- 14.3. The Panel can draw from one or more of the following penalties:

- i. Require the work to be re-marked with the affected sections disregarded, with any passing mark subsequently received to be capped at the pass mark;
- ii. Requiring you to undertake additional study skills support sessions;
- iii. Requiring you, where appropriate, to provide a written apology;
- iv. Disregard the submission(s) and require you to complete the second-opportunity for a capped mark in the assessment element(s)
- v. Disregard the submission(s) and require you to complete the second-opportunity for a capped mark in the assessment element(s) with the overall module mark also capped;
- vi. Disregard the submission(s) and require you to complete the second opportunity for a capped mark in the assessment element(s) with multiple module overall marks also capped
- vii. Issuing a formal written reprimand that would be disclosed as part of any reference provided;
- viii. Disregard the submissions with no further opportunities to be provided: the module is failed and cannot be re-taken. This may result in your studies being terminated (where there is no alternative module to replace the required credit), you incurring additional expense in order to pay tuition fees for a replacement module, your studies being delayed.
- ix. Recommending to that your registration as a LMA student is withdrawn with immediate effect in accordance with the Student Conduct Policy.

15. Appeal

- 15.1. You have the right to appeal the Panel's decision through the appeals procedure. Any penalty, exclusion or expulsion recommended by the Panel shall remain in force pending the outcome of such an appeal.