

Academic misconduct Report

1st October 2016 – 30th September 2017

Introduction

This report covers all alleged attempts of academic misconduct reported to the Secretary to Academic Board between 1 October 2016 and 30 September 2017 and investigated under the Infringement of assessment regulations/academic misconduct procedures (Section F) which can be found by following the link:

www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations

Penalties in accordance with the regulations were exacted by the Assessment Board in every case upheld.

Summary Data of allegations of Academic Misconduct Received During Academic Year 2016/17

26,136 students attended Middlesex University (London, Dubai, Malta, Mauritius, including Collaborative programmes) during 2016/17.

There were 414 cases handled involving a total of 478 students (*note some of the students will have been involved in multiple cases, and some cases involved multiple students*).

2015/16	2015/16 to 2016/17	2016/17
507 cases submitted	Decrease of 6%	414 cases submitted (478 students)
439 cases upheld	Decrease of 8%	366 cases upheld* (405 students)

***366 cases upheld** – this figure represents the number of cases which were upheld overall, but some of these cases which consist of more than 1 student (ie. groupwork and collusion cases), it may be that allegations were not upheld against some of the students within that case and/or that they received different outcomes.

Penalty	Dismissed	Academic Negligence	Resubmit/Retake	P NR	Expulsion	Total
ACI	32	1	38	1	2	74
PSS	35	25	233	8	23	324
ST	13	1	64	1	1	80
	80	27	335	10	26	478

Panel of investigations were convened in 5 cases in 2016/17, in which academic misconduct was upheld in all cases. In one of the cases, which was a collusion case involving 2 students, 1 of the student's was exonerated.

The number of upheld cases includes cases in which it has been recommended the work is marked with a grade penalty applied and/or the academic negligence penalty has been applied

Dismissed cases are those cases where an allegation is not proven. These cases are usually those in which collusion has been alleged, but one student is exonerated.

*These figures **do not** include cases dealt with under fast-track, at Faculty level as opposed to through the Academic Registry. There were 4 such cases handled in ACI*

Overseas Campuses reported 89 students (73 cases) to the Secretary to Academic board following initial case work (61 DBI; 28 MRU;) carried out locally. Cases were upheld against 55 students from Dubai and 27 in Mauritius.

There is a significantly higher incidence of reported academic misconduct at the Mauritius campus than at London or Dubai.

Campus	MU Students	% of MU students	Allegations	% Allegations	Upheld	% of allegations upheld
London	19757	76%	373	1.9%	307	76%
Dubai	2907	11%	61	2.1%	55	14%
Mauritius	883	3%	27	3.1%	27	7%
Other	2589	10%	16	0.6%	16	4%
Total	26136	100%	477	1.8%	405	100%

*Cases were received from the following partners: PBL(Point Blank Limited) – 1; HKL (Hong Kong Open University (LiPace)) – 2; HKS (University of Hong Kong (SPACE, Tsui)) – 1; ICB (I.C. Business & Technology (ICBT)) – 1; IFH (Informa) – 2; KMU (KMU Akademie & Management AG) – 3; LSC (London Studio Centre) – 1; NBK (Niels Brok) – 1; REAL group – 4; RFH (Royal Free Hospital) – 1; and 1 from the Malta Campus

Faculty/School Data of Academic Misconduct Allegations Received During Academic Year 2016/17

Faculty	Number of Allegations	% of allegations	Number Students in Faculty	Allegations as % of Faculty	Number of allegations upheld	% of upheld allegations of number submitted per Faculty	% of upheld allegations
ACI	44	11%	3719	1%	44	100%	12.02%
PSS	293	71%	15303	2%	257	88%	70.22%
BS	137	33%	8180	2%	118	86%	32.24%
HE	72	17%	4740	2%	66	92%	18.03%
LW	84	20%	2382	4%	72	86%	19.67%
ST	76	18%	6622	1%	65	86%	17.76%
Other			492				
	413	100%	26136	2%	366	89%	100%

* Student Number Figures from Tableau 15/1/18 (Other = preessional and exchanges)

This shows that there are more reported cases in the School of Law. This is possibly due to the number of cases from Mauritius, the majority of which were on Law Modules.

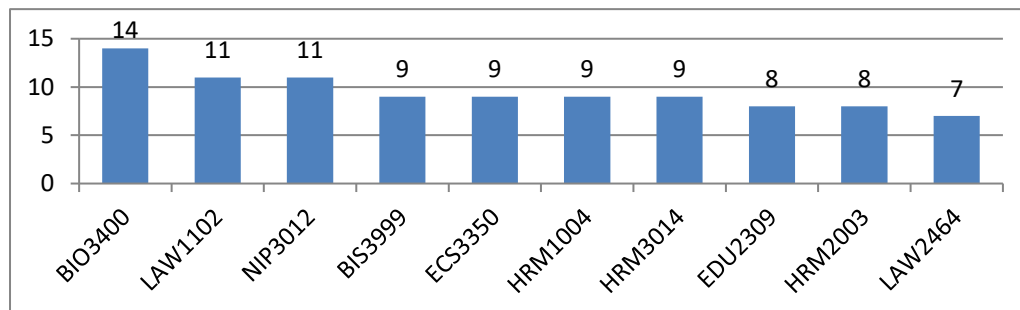
Level of Study Data of Academic Misconduct Allegations Received During Academic Year 2016/17

Number of students with upheld cases (collusion; infringement of examination room rules; plagiarism) at each module level

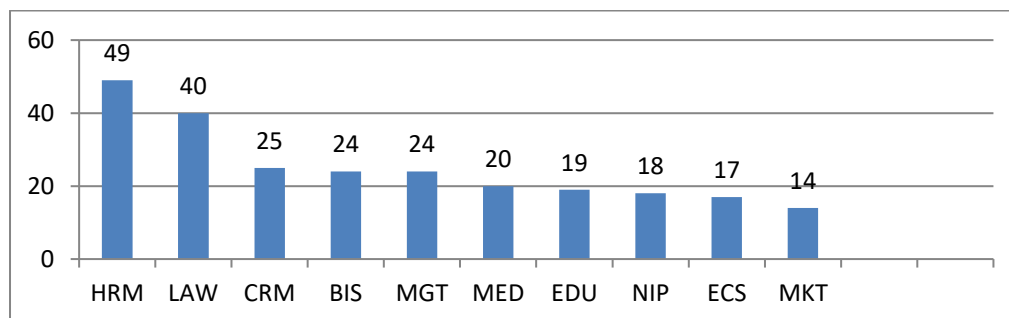
Level	Collusion	Exam Misconduct	Plagiarism	Total
3	0	0	0	0
4	12	7	50	69
5	27	14	72	113
6	14	15	113	142
7	7	3	68	78
8	0	0	3	3
Total	60	39	306	405

Module Data of Academic Misconduct Allegations Received During Academic Year 2016/17

Cases of Academic Misconduct were reported in 130 modules across the University. Modules with highest number of cases submitted for academic misconduct investigations are shown below.



Subjects with highest number of cases submitted for academic misconduct investigations



Overall, the highest number of students referred for academic misconduct investigations were from the subject HRM. The highest number of referrals from a single HRM module was 9 in modules HRM1004 and HRM3014. The highest number of referrals from a single module was 14 in module BIO3400.

The Quality Assurance Agency codes of practice advise that the following statistics are recorded: Residence (Table 5); Ethnicity (Table 6) ; Gender (Table 7); Age (Table 8); Disability (Table 9)

Residence

Comparison of the residence of students in alleged and upheld academic misconduct cases with the residence of Middlesex University students as a population indicates marginally more OS students have cases of academic misconduct alleged and upheld

Residence	% of MU students	Allegations	% Allegations	Upheld	% of allegations upheld
UK	56%	269	56%	218	54%
EU	13%	41	9%	37	9%
Overseas	31%	168	35%	150	37%
Total	100%	478	100%	405	100%

Ethnicity

Comparison of the ethnicity of students in alleged and upheld academic misconduct cases with the ethnicity of Middlesex University students as a population indicates more Asian/Black students have cases of academic misconduct alleged and upheld

Ethnicity	% of MU students	Allegations	% Allegations	Upheld	% of allegations upheld
Arab	3%	15	3%	12	3%
Asian	27%	182	38%	146	36%
Black	20%	112	23%	101	25%
Chinese	6%	38	8%	33	8%
Mixed	5%	15	3%	14	3%
Other	5%	40	8%	33	8%
White	33%	76	16%	66	16%
Total	100%	478	100%	405	100%

Gender

Comparison of the gender of students in alleged and upheld academic misconduct cases with the gender of Middlesex University students as a population indicates more male students have cases of academic misconduct alleged and upheld.

Gender	% of MU students	Number of allegations	% of allegations	Number of appeals upheld	% of upheld allegations
Female	57%	234	49%	200	49%
Male	43%	244	51%	205	51%
Total	100%	478	100%	405	100%

Observations and Recommendations arising from the processing of allegations of academic misconduct in 2016/17:

1. The adoption of the standard template documentation has proved successful in ensuring the correct information regarding an allegation is received from the outset of an academic misconduct investigation. This has resulted in a more streamlined process overall. However, when making a referral for an academic misconduct investigation, the Faculty must ensure that all relevant evidence in support of the allegation is provided in all cases. Any feedback that has been given to a student or other circumstances should be recorded and clearly communicated on the form. Module leaders should abide by the University Regulations which state that work under suspicion should be submitted within one month of the submission of the component of assessment - where this is not possible, the reason the allegation is late should be made clear on the referral form. Students should not be allowed informal reworks and resubmissions unofficially after the formal deadline.

2. The implementation of the student response form has also proved successful, resulting in clearer interpretation of the student's response and has reduced the amount of lengthy written statements and ambiguity as to whether the student is accepting or denying allegations. When students deny the academic misconduct allegation, it is standard practice to report back to the Schools to verify whether the School still uphold the allegation on the basis of the student's response. In at least one case, the Module Lead maintained that academic misconduct had occurred, but it was viewed the evidence presented was not strong enough to present at a Panel and a decision was made in conjunction with senior staff in the school not to go to Panel and instead to dismiss the allegations against the student.
3. Faculties are advised to hold Viva Voce's prior to referring students to Academic Misconduct when the allegation is one of suspected contract cheating. These particular cases can prove to be very difficult and often result in Panels.
4. There were 25 Appeals received against penalties awarded for academic misconduct in 2016/17:
 - a. 4 of the Appeals were successful, in which 2 were referred back to Academic Misconduct for further investigation and the other 2 were offered informal settlements.
 - b. 21 Appeals were not upheld, as they did not meet the regulatory grounds. They were rejected either because i) there was no new evidence submitted in the Appeal which had not previously been considered by Academic Misconduct, or ii) the new evidence submitted was found not to be justified (ie. the new evidence submitted did not deem significant to the academic misconduct outcome).
5. As part of the expulsion process implemented by Academic Misconduct, an expulsion hold is entered on MISIS. This year it has come to light that entering the expulsion hold on MISIS causes immediate inactivation of the student's access to MyUnihub and shuts down their emails accounts. However, in the event that students wish to make an appeal against the academic misconduct decision, it is necessary that this access remains in place, as it is likely they will need to access information in these accounts in order to make their appeal (for example; their grades, emails and learning materials etc). As a result of this issue, it has been necessary to devise a process with CCSS to enable expelled students to be moved temporarily to a safe container within the MISIS system. This enables full access to MyUnihub and email accounts for a set period of time.
6. The records show that only 106 students out of 530 who have been registered on the online academic awareness course have completed it since its implementation in 2015/16. This number is deemed too low. It is our intention to now include information on this course in the initial allegation that is sent to students, and also on the outcome letter in the hope that this will increase engagement.
7. Work with the LSS staff and MDXSU staff to highlight the issues of contract cheating to staff and students is ongoing.
8. We also suggest that the use of Turnitin as a means of identifying plagiarism is reviewed amongst teaching teams alongside other methods of academic misconduct identification, as relying on the overall similarity score alone may not give a true indication of the extent of matches in the body of work submitted.

There will be a detailed review of the academic misconduct regulations in 2017/18, which will include a revision of the penalty system, and the process of investigation, consequently no specific recommendations have been made this year.