



# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND MISCONDUCT POLICY FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

DECEMBER 2021

## **Context**

In this policy “you”, “your” and “yours” means a researcher registered for a postgraduate research degree awarded by City, University of London. “We”, “us” and “our” means City, University of London and, depending on context, staff and officers of City acting on its behalf.

This policy applies to all postgraduate research programmes leading to an award of City, University of London. Where programmes are PSRB-accredited and a postgraduate researcher is found to have committed academic misconduct, the disciplinary and/or conduct procedures of the PSRB may apply in addition to those of City, University of London.

Academic integrity is at the heart of our commitment to academic excellence and reflects a shared set of principles and standards which include honesty, trust, diligence, fairness and respect. We strive to communicate and support clear standards of integrity so you can value and embed those standards in your academic work and carry them forward in your professional life.

## **Equality and Diversity statement**

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

# Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy for Postgraduate Research Programmes

## 1. Introduction

1. You are expected to uphold academic integrity and good academic practice by demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in all of your academic work. This policy outlines the process and practice which is triggered when we suspect that a postgraduate researcher has not upheld the principles of academic integrity and committed academic misconduct.
2. City, University of London upholds the commitments of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#). Postgraduate researchers must ensure their work is underpinned by rigorous high standards. Allegations of misconduct in research are covered by our Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research available [here](#).
3. City, University of London actively pursues all cases of suspected academic misconduct. This policy is designed to ensure that postgraduate researchers suspected of committing academic misconduct are provided with an objective, independent and transparent system that is both efficient and fair. This system safeguards the integrity of our awards.
4. An allegation of misconduct must be supported by evidence and the standard of proof is on the balance of probabilities. This is satisfied if it is proved the allegation is more likely than not to have happened, and is the same as the standard of proof used in civil cases in the courts.
5. City, University of London reserves the right to use technology to detect and/or follow up cases of suspected academic misconduct and this may also be used as part of your School, Department or Centre's routine procedures for managing research degrees.
6. Non-academic conduct is covered under [Regulation 13: Student Discipline](#).

## 2. Definition and categories of Academic Misconduct

7. Academic misconduct is any action that produces an improper advantage for you in relation to your assessment.
8. The [Framework for Good Practice in Research](#) further defines misconduct as a behaviour that represents a serious breach of the principles of good practice in research conduct and/or is based on deliberate deception and dishonesty as opposed to unintentional error.

9. For the purpose of this policy, categories of academic misconduct are defined as:
  - a. Poor academic practice,
  - b. Academic Misconduct,
  - c. Severe Academic Misconduct
  
10. Poor academic practice, is considered a minor offence. Some examples include, unattributed quotations; inappropriate paraphrasing; reproducing an existing concept or idea unintentionally; some missing, incorrect or incomplete citations; several sentences of direct copying without acknowledging the source.
  
11. Repeated poor academic practice, particularly if the postgraduate researcher has been previously reprimanded should escalate to Academic Misconduct.
  
12. Examples of academic misconduct are given in the [Framework for Good Practice in Research](#). These include (but are not limited to):
  - a. Plagiarism – the copying of ideas, data, whole paragraphs and /or significant sections of unreferenced text or any other form of material or intellectual property without permission from or acknowledgement of the author.
  
  - b. Fabrication or falsification – the creation of false data or other aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent or the inappropriate selection and/or manipulation of data, imagery, consents and/or findings with an intention to deceive.
  
  - c. Piracy – the deliberate exploitation of the ideas of others without permission or acknowledgement, including the use of material that has been provided in a privileged way for review, examination, assessment or appraisal.
  
  - d. Negligence or breach of duty of care – the failure to follow and apply appropriate duty of care to contemporary legal, administrative and ethical practices and codes of conduct for research, particularly that which involves other human or animal subjects. This includes improper disclosure of the identity of research participants and placing others in danger without consent or without proper safeguards, including both reputational danger, where this can be anticipated, and physical safety.
  
  - e. Non-recognition – the failure to give fair and appropriate credit for work done by others, including failure by you to recognise formally contributions from others, including your supervisory team.

- f. Misrepresentation – in addition to misrepresentation of data, this includes undisclosed duplication of publication, including undisclosed duplicate submission of manuscripts for publication; misrepresentation of interests, including failure to declare material interests either of the researcher or of the funders of the research; misrepresentation of involvement such as inappropriate claims to authorship and/or attribution of work where there has been no significant contribution; and misrepresentation of qualifications and/or experience.
  - g. Non-compliance - the failure to adhere to whatever terms and conditions have been freely entered into in order to receive public or private funds from outside the University. This may include mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data and/or primary materials in breach of funders' or City, University of London's policy or relevant legislation.
  - h. Collusion – the conscious participation with another in any of the above
13. Serious cases of academic misconduct may be categorised as Severe Academic Misconduct. The categorisation of an offence as Severe Academic Misconduct is an academic decision of the assessors.

### **3. Preliminary Investigation**

- 14. A member of staff of our university and/or of an external institution (e.g. an external examiner) who suspects academic misconduct has been committed should first follow any local procedure(s) established at School, Department or Centre level.
- 15. These local procedures are considered the preliminary investigation. An independent, objective, fair and robust preliminary investigation is key to ensuring that the evidence establishes as much as possible if a case can be confirmed, and/or potential resolution.
- 16. Preliminary Investigations can be conducted in-person, online (by Zoom or Teams) and by correspondence.
- 17. Local procedures should be well documented and communicated to all postgraduate researchers and staff supervising or supporting postgraduate researchers. The local procedures are overseen by the Senior Tutor for Research and/or the Associate Dean with responsibility for postgraduate research.

18. Outcomes from preliminary investigations may include:

- a. Offering the postgraduate researcher the opportunity to resolve the issue by correspondence if both sides agree about the facts
- b. Inviting the postgraduate researcher to a meeting to explain the allegation and discuss potential ways forward
- c. Giving the postgraduate researcher a warning (written or verbal) that any future occurrences would be dealt with by an Academic Misconduct Panel
- d. Holding a viva for the postgraduate researcher

19. If the case is not resolved at this stage, including if the postgraduate researcher disputes the charge, it should be referred to an Academic Misconduct Panel.

#### **4. Academic Misconduct Panel**

20. When local procedures have been exhausted, a Panel for considering cases of academic misconduct will be established. The Panel will include three members of academic staff appointed by the Associate Dean with responsibility for postgraduate research or nominee by virtue of:

- a. their independence from the preliminary investigation
- b. their expertise and experience in research methods and conduct

The Panel may include members of academic staff external to the School.

21. Academic Misconduct Panels can be conducted in-person, online (by Zoom or Teams) and by correspondence. Academic Misconduct Panels can also take place in the absence of a student where it is reasonable and justifiable to do so.

22. Where you are invited to attend the hearing, either in-person or online, you may choose to be accompanied. If accompanied, you are expected to speak on your own behalf. You may present your case to the Panel verbally or in writing. You may also respond to any evidence used by the Panel.

23. If you decide to attend in person but do not subsequently attend the meeting, and have not given adequate reasons for this in advance, the Panel may continue in your absence.

24. The Panel will investigate each case and decide whether or not academic misconduct has taken place. The Panel is not required to prove intent but instances of deliberate fraud may carry more severe sanctions.

25. If academic misconduct has not taken place no further action will be taken and no note is entered on your record. The notes of the Panel will be retained. The assessment process will be resumed in the normal way. If you have committed poor academic practice this should be taken into account during the assessment process as normal.

26. If academic misconduct has taken place the Panel must decide an appropriate sanction to recommend to the Doctoral College Board of Studies. Different sanctions exist to accommodate different levels of academic misconduct. Recommendations as to sanctions should be based on the following facts:
- a. The instance of the misconduct (first or subsequent)
  - b. The extent of the misconduct (see paragraph 9). This is a decision based on academic judgement
  - c. Whether the misconduct was deliberately fraudulent; i.e. when it is likely that the postgraduate researcher knowingly participates in committing an offence
27. The Panel may also take into account any extenuating or mitigating circumstances in determining the recommended sanctions.
28. The reasons for the recommendation must be clearly recorded. The Panel must also make clear the rationale for any deviations from sanctions that are the norm for a given type of misconduct. The sanctions a Panel may recommend are:
- a. Poor academic practice (see paragraph 10): requirement that amendments are carried out to the satisfaction of the assessors
  - b. Academic Misconduct (see paragraphs 11-12): requirement that amendments are carried out to the satisfaction of the assessors and of the Doctoral College Board of Studies
  - c. Severe Academic Misconduct (see paragraph 13): requirement that the case be dealt by a City Disciplinary Panel. Sanctions the Panel may recommend include any of those listed in the Student Discipline Regulations (see [Senate Regulation 13](#)).
29. In addition, the Panel may recommend that you undergo training in good academic practice.

## **5. Outcomes**

30. The Academic Misconduct Panel will report its decisions and recommendations, with reasons, to the Doctoral College Board of Studies.
31. The Doctoral College Board of Studies will normally only consider requests for consideration of academic misconduct received via the Panel. The decision of the Panel as to the finding of academic misconduct is not open to further consideration by the Doctoral College Board of Studies. However, the Board

may consider the recommendations of the Panel as to the action to be taken when making recommendations concerning progress and award.

32. Where the case is being considered under the Disciplinary Regulations, the Doctoral College Board of Studies will note any recommendations made by the Panel but will suspend implementation of them pending the outcome of the disciplinary process.
33. Reports on serious misconduct will be made to regulatory, statutory or professional bodies, host organisations and funding bodies where this is required or is in the public interest. All reporting will be done in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in force at the time of the allegation and only once the internal procedures have been completed. You will be informed before notifications are made.
34. The outcomes of academic misconduct cases will be reported to the Doctoral College Board of Studies and a record retained.

## **6. Your right to Appeal**

35. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Academic Misconduct Panel you have the right to appeal.
36. The Appeals process is in the [Appeals Policy](#). We recommend you contact the Student's Union should you wish to pursue an appeal.

<b>Policy Title</b>	
Academic Integrity and Misconduct policy for Postgraduate Research Programmes	
<b>Policy Enabling Owner and Department</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation and Department</b>
Quality and Academic Development, Student and Academic Services	City Doctoral College, Schools
<b>Approving Body</b>	<b>Date of Approval</b>
Senate, upon recommendation from Doctoral College Board of Studies	15 Dec 2021
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>Review Due Date</b>
	Dec 2024
<b>Publication of Policy</b> ( <i>tick as appropriate</i> )	
For public access online (internet)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For staff access only (intranet)? <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Queries about this policy should be referred to</b>	
<a href="mailto:QUAD@city.ac.uk">QUAD@city.ac.uk</a> Quality and Academic Development, Student and Academic Services	