

Disciplinary Panel Hearing

Case of:

RICS v Mr Sajid Rehman [1173749]

Wednesday 9 July to Thursday 10 July 2025

Remotely by Microsoft Teams

Panel

Mr Nick Hawkins (Lay Chairman)

Ms Nicola Hill (Lay Member)

Ms Jennifer Hobart MRICS (Surveyor Member)

Legal Adviser

Mr Alastair McFarlane

RICS Presenting Officer

Mr Christopher Geering

Member

Mr Sajid Rehman (represented by Mr Jonathan Goodwin)

Hearing Officer

Mr Adeel Qureshi

1. RICS was represented by Mr Geering. Mr Rehman attended and was represented by Mr Goodwin. The Panel had before it one bundle of papers, numbered pages 1 – 364.

SERVICE

2. Having considered the notice of hearing and the witness statement of Mr Qureshi, Hearing Officer, the Panel was satisfied that notice of the hearing was served on Mr Rehman in accordance with the RICS Regulatory Tribunal rules Version 2 with effect from 2 February 2022 (“RTR”).

ALLEGATIONS

1. *On or about 6 September 2021, Sajid Rehman represented to RICS that an External Wall System Assessment case study he submitted was his own work, when in fact he had copied some parts, entirely or to significant extent, from Mr LR, as set out in Schedule A. His actions:*
 - a. *Were dishonest in that he knew he was representing the work was his own, and knew that he had in fact copied part(s) of it from Mr LR,*
 - b. *Lacked integrity.*

Contrary to Rule 3 of the Rules of Conduct for Members Version 7

Mr Rehman is therefore liable to disciplinary action under RICS Bye-Law 5.2.2(c)

2. *On or about 10 May 2022, Sajid Rehman represented to RICS, personally and / or through legal representatives, that he had neither seen nor copied*

any part of Mr LR's External Wall System assessment when he had. In so doing, his actions:

- a. Were dishonest in that he knew that he had viewed and copied parts of Mr LR's submission and knew the representation to RICS was false,*
- b. Lacked integrity.*

Contrary to Rule 1 of the Rules of Conduct with effect from 2 February 2022

Mr Rehman is therefore liable to disciplinary action under RICS Bye-Law 5.2.2(c)

BACKGROUND

- 3. Mr Rehman became a member of RICS in 2014.
- 4. In March 2021 RICS on completion offered its members the chance to take place in the External Wall Systems Assessment Training Programme ("the Programme"). On completion the candidate would receive "An Ofqual regulated certification accredited by ABBE (Award body for the build environment)". The programme was partially funded by the department for levelling up, housing and communities.
- 5. The programme consisted of various learning modules followed by two assessments – a multiple-choice assessment, and a case study. To complete the case study candidates received instructions and information to complete an EWS template report and form. The course was designed to last about 12 weeks.

6. The instructions for the assessment sent to Mr Rehman included a section entitled, "Ground Rules". This stated: *"Your submission must reflect your own work. Any irregularities identified will result in your removal from the programme. For further details available on RICS' anti- plagiarism policy."*

7. A further section entitled "Submission" stated:

"It must contain two documents:

- *EWS report – you must use the template report provided within the candidate pack*
- *EWS1 form – you must use the template form provided within the candidate pack*

it must also:

- *be completed within the period given and not later than the deadline*
- *in word or pdf format including all headings provided in the template report*
- *reflect your own work."*

8. The RICS anti-plagiarism policy notes:

"RICS is committed to the detection and prevention of plagiarism in all forms to uphold the standards and integrity of our assessment processes. This approach is inshrined in our Rules of Conduct and our ethical and professional standards..."

9. The policy continues that where there has been *"assessment malpractice"* that is *"attempting to present the work of others as their own"*, then RICS members will be referred to RICS Regulation and serious offences should expect disciplinary sanctions including being expelled from RICS.

10. Mr Rehman submitted a case study on 6 September 2021. This was put through the Turnitin programme, which is used by RICS to identify potential plagiarism by assessing, among other things, the degree of similarity between the various student studies submitted. Ms Paxton, the Qualification Standards and Compliance Manager for RICS, reported that the Turnitin Report for Mr Rehman's case study showed that 76% of it matched other sources of which 76% matched other student submissions to RICS.
11. The Turnitin programme also identified similar concerns in relation to a study submitted by Mr R. Miss Paxton examined the papers for Mr R and Mr Rehman and considered the large parts of these papers were identical and discovered that both Mr Rehman and Mr R worked for the same firm.
12. RICS wrote to Mr Rehman on 13 April 2022 setting out its concerns. On 10 May 2022 RICS received a response from Mr Goodwin, the solicitor instructed for Mr Rehman, which contained Mr Rehman's denial of plagiarism or any wrongdoing and contended that any similarity between the documents of Mr Rehman and Mr R was "*entirely inadvertent unintentional and explainable*".
13. In a further response to RICS on 9 October 2023 Mr Goodwin explained that with the benefit of hindsight and reflection Mr Rehman "*now recalls that he briefly, which he believes to be no more than 15 minutes or so, viewed part of LR's submission...*

SR recognises, informed with the benefit of hindsight and reflection, that he made an error of judgement and is extremely remorseful, and offers his genuine, and sincere apology to RICS and, importantly, to LR, who had no knowledge of that which occurred."

14. As a result of this letter, the case against Mr R was discontinued. The case against Mr Rehman was put on the basis not of collusion, but that he had plagiarised Mr R's work.
15. Mr Goodwin provided a response to this revised case on 11 March 2024. Mr Rehman accepted he had signed a declaration stating the case study was his own work. He repeated he had *"briefly reviewed Mr R's assignment prior to submitting his own to RICS"*. However, he denied dishonesty. He stated:

"SR's actual state of mind as to the facts and his genuinely held belief, that he did not consider that his actions, at the time, were other than legitimate, shows that there was nothing dishonest about his actions".

"SR... misunderstood the brief, and wrongly assumed that the assignment was to be researched and written like an every day report for work, and which he did on a daily basis."

He accepted – objectively – he acted without integrity "by representing to RICS that the EWS1 assessment he submitted was not his own work, when in fact, he knew that the work was in part not his own, but that of LR."

16. Mr Rahmen submitted the RICS Listing Questionnaire in April 2025. At that stage all the charges were admitted including both dishonesty allegations.

ADMISSIONS

17. Mr Rehman admitted all the charges when they were put to him (Allegations 1 a) and 1 b) and 2 a) and 2 b). He further admitted the specified Rule breaches and accepted that his conduct rendered him liable to disciplinary action.

FINDINGS OF FACT

18. The Panel was satisfied that the admissions were clear and unequivocal and accordingly found the facts and breaches proved by virtue of those admissions.

LIABILITY FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

19. The Panel next considered separately whether Mr Rehman was liable to disciplinary action under bylaw 5.2.2. (c) .
20. The Panel accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. It reminded itself that liability to disciplinary action was a matter for the judgment of the Panel. It was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Rehman amounted to breaches of his professional obligations that were serious and committed over a prolonged period. The findings of dishonesty were breaches of fundamental tenets of the profession, namely the need to be honest and act with integrity and were therefore very serious. The Panel had no doubt that the conduct proved in each of the allegations was individually and collectively sufficiently serious to render Mr Rehman liable to disciplinary action.

SUBMISSIONS BY MR GEERING

21. Mr Geering addressed the Panel on sanctions, costs and publication.

SUBMISSIONS BY MR REHMAN

22. Mr Goodwin, on Mr Rehman's behalf, also addressed sanctions cost and publication. His primary submission was that in the circumstances of this case an order of expulsion was not necessary and made what he described as “a bold” submission for the Panel to impose a reprimand coupled with a fine and/or undertaking.

SANCTION

23. The Panel noted the submissions of Mr Geering and Mr Goodwin. It accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. It had regard to RICS' Sanctions Policy, and particularly the overriding principles of acting in the public interest, to protect the public, the reputation of the profession and to declare and uphold proper standards while bearing in mind the overriding principle of proportionality.
24. The Panel reminded itself that the purpose of sanctions is not to be punitive, though that may be their effect. The purpose of sanctions is to declare and uphold the standards of the profession, to safeguard the reputation of the profession and of RICS as its regulator and to protect the public. Sanctions must be proportionate to the matters found proved.
25. The Panel considered carefully any mitigating and aggravating factors of this case as well as the issue of proportionality in weighing up the most appropriate sanction.
26. The Panel considered that the following aggravating factors were present:

- Proved conduct was deliberate and dishonest
- There was a potential gain of the qualification and future potential financial gain
- Potential risk to the public of a surveyor holding himself out as competent in this area, which would certify him to advise on fire safety
- Breach was covered up
- He lied to his regulator maintaining that he was not dishonest leaving his colleague under suspicion for 17 months
- The extent and nature of the dishonesty, when he was repeatedly warned in the documentation about the need for it to be his own work and that he could be expelled from RICS if it was not
- The conduct breached the trust the public places in the profession and undermined the reputation of the profession

27. The Panel considered that the following mitigating factors were present:

- He has now made admissions (although this was not his position from the outset)
- He was of previous good character
- He has provided supportive character references
- He has expressed remorse, apology and regret
- There was some evidence of insight

28. The Panel noted the stresses Mr Rehman was under at the time and the context of him acting in this way after an unblemished career. However, his dishonesty had the potential to place the public at risk and was compounded by lying to his regulator. The Panel was mindful of the factors set out in paragraph 7 of the sanctions policy for "considering the seriousness of a breach and possible sanction" and noted that Mr Rehman's conduct involved many of the factors listed including, in particular, that it was dishonest, benefited him and was repeated over a prolonged period of time. The Panel had specific regard to the public interest and the necessity to declare and uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour. Trust and honesty are

fundamental requirements of any professional. Dishonesty by a member of the surveying profession undermines its reputation and public confidence in it. The Panel was, however, mindful that its duty was to determine the appropriate and proportionate sanction on the merits of this case and that there was nothing automatic about the appropriate sanction in a dishonesty case. It was also mindful that dishonesty covers a wide range of different facts and circumstances.

29. Given the Panel's view of the seriousness of Mr Rehman's conduct, it was satisfied that the sanctions of Caution, Reprimand, Undertakings, a Fine and Conditions were insufficient to protect the public and highlight to the profession and the public the gravity of the proven conduct. Such sanctions were in the Committee's judgment, insufficient to protect the public and uphold standards. There was a risk of harm to the public from the original dishonesty and then Mr Rehman compounded his errors by lying to his regulator. The Panel was mindful that dishonesty in a professional lay at the top end of the spectrum of misconduct. It was unable to identify any extenuating circumstances in Mr Rehman's case to depart from the most severe sanction and was satisfied in the circumstances that the proven conduct by Mr Rehman was fundamentally incompatible with continued membership of RICS. The Panel was satisfied that only expulsion of Mr Rehman from RICS was sufficient to mark the seriousness to the profession and the public and was the appropriate and proportionate sanction.

Publication

30. The Panel was satisfied that no justifiable basis was advanced for departing from the presumption of publication. The Panel considered the policy on publication of decisions, The Sanctions Policy Supplement 3 - Publication of Regulatory Disciplinary Matters. This decision will be published on the RICS website and in the RICS magazine Modus.

Costs

31. RICS has submitted a statement of costs and claimed the sum of £11,646. (This had been reduced to reflect the shorter time RICS Counsel was engaged rather than the two days estimated). Mr Rehman's solicitor accepted the costs were proportionate.
32. The Panel had regard to Supplement 2 to the Sanctions Policy in relation to costs. It was satisfied that it was appropriate to make an award of costs in this case in favour of RICS. It was further satisfied that the costs claimed by RICS were reasonably incurred. The Panel was satisfied that it was fair and reasonable to make a costs award in the full sum of £11,646. Accordingly, it directed that Mr Rehman pay RICS costs in the sum of £11,646.

Appeal Period

33. The Relevant Person has 28 days, from the service of the notification of the decision, to appeal this decision in accordance with Rule 152 of the Rules.

ANONYMISATION SCHEDULE

MR R = MR RHODES