

ROYAL INSTITUTION OF CHARTERED SURVEORS
Disciplinary Panel Hearing

Case of:

Mr Naveen George [6427469]

Tuesday 31 March 2026

Remotely on the papers by Microsoft Teams

Panel

Mr Glenn Mathieson (Lay Chair)

Mr Ben Davies (Surveyor Member)

Ms Hilary Lloyd (Lay Member)

Legal Adviser

Alastair McFarlane

Regulatory Tribunal Manager

Mrs Jae Berry

1. ALLEGATIONS

Allegation 1

On or around 14 March 2023, Mr Naveen George acted dishonestly when he submitted a formal Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) Submission to RICS, with the intention of representing it as his own original work, knowing that his submission had been copied in part from the submission of a previous APC candidate, Mr BA.

Contrary to Rule 1 of the Rules of Conduct with effect from 2 February 2022 Mr George is therefore liable to disciplinary action under RICS Bye-Law 5.2.2 (c)

Allegation 2

On or around 14 March 2023, Mr Naveen George acted without integrity when he submitted a formal Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) Submission to RICS, with the intention of representing it as his own original work, knowing that his submission had been copied in part from the submission of a previous APC candidate, Mr BA.

Contrary to Rule 1 of the Rules of Conduct with effect from 2 February 2022 Mr George is therefore liable to disciplinary action under RICS Bye-Law 5.2.2 (c)

SERVICE

2. Having considered the Notice of Hearing and the witness statement of Mrs Jae Berry, Regulatory Tribunal Manager, the Panel was satisfied that Notice of the Hearing was served on the Relevant Person (Mr George) on 22 January 2026 in

accordance with the RICS Regulatory Tribunal Rules Version 2 with effect from 2 February 2022 (“RTR”).

PROCEEDING IN ABSENCE/ON THE PAPERS

3. The Panel accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.
4. The Panel noted that in a decision made by the Chair on 9 March 2026 he granted RICS's application for the case to be determined on the papers. In his written decision the Chair determined under Rule 67(c) of the Regulatory Tribunal Rules (Version 3, 2024), that it was appropriate for the case to be determined on the papers. He noted that: both RICS and Mr George had requested that the matter be held on the papers; that the factual issues in question did not appear to be in dispute, and there were no witnesses whose evidence was contested so as to require attendance for cross-examination. The Chair concluded: *“the public interest can the adequately and properly addressed with the case being determined on the papers and without a public hearing. I am mindful that both parties are content with a paper hearing and that the allegations are not disputed and relate to an assessment administered by RICS as opposed to the provision of services to the public.”*
5. The Panel had no information before it to undermine the decision of the Chair made on 9 March 2026 and agreed with it. The obvious corollary of a decision to determine the case on the papers was that it was conducted in the absence of the parties. The Panel was mindful that the discretion to proceed in absence must be exercised with the utmost care and caution and was satisfied that Mr George had clearly and unequivocally waived his right to attend this hearing. The Panel was satisfied in all the circumstances that it was in the public interest and in the interests of justice overall to proceed in the absence of Mr George.

BACKGROUND

6. On 2 October 2021, the Member made an Initial Candidate Assessment Application which was unsuccessful. The Application did not raise any concerns about plagiarism.
7. On 14 March 2023, the Member made an APC submission including a case study ('the Submission') to RICS in order to achieve the status of Member of RICS ('MRICS').
8. The Submission included an APC Submission Form, Summary of Experience, and Case Study. Page 2 of the Case Study contains the declaration:

“By uploading this document, I declare that this submission is my own work; it represents my own learning and was written by me in my own words. I declare that where other sources of information have been used, I have acknowledged and referenced this. I understand that failing to acknowledge other materials will be treated as plagiarism.”

9. On or around 4 May 2023, the Submission formed part of a random sample of APC assessments analysed by plagiarism software, Turnitin. RICS use an online system called Turnitin to ensure that candidates are submitting their own work. This includes comparing the submission against past submissions submitted by other candidates as well as resources online. Turnitin identified that the Submission was a 76% match with another student paper submitted to RICS.
10. On further examination the Submission displayed a high level of similarity with (and was in places identical to) the successful APC submission of Mr BA, made on 15 March 2022. As a result, RICS then opened an investigation into this matter.

11. On 17 July 2023, RICS wrote to the Member informing him of the potential plagiarism concerns and enclosing a similarities table ('the First Similarities Table'). The First Similarities Table compared the Summary of Experience – Mandatory Competencies sections of the Submission and BA's APC submission. The Member was asked for his comments.

12. On 22 August 2023 the Member responded substantively to RICS and also provided his comments on the First Similarities Table. In summary, the Member denied having copied from BA's APC Submission and attributed the similarities between the Submission and BA's APC Submission to the Member and BA having attended the same APC trainings and to common phrasing used within the industry. The Member also suggested that the similarities may have resulted from himself and BA having referred to the same sample materials, although he stated that he was not able to provide specific documents to which he referred. The Member confirmed that he and BA were employed by the same organisation, and that he had discussed the APC process with BA. However, he denied having ever had access to BA's APC Submission. In particular, the Member stated

"I want to assure you that I have not copied any part of my submission from any other document."

13. On 20 September 2023, RICS wrote to BA to request his comments BA responded substantively to RICS on 27 September 2023. In summary, BA confirmed that:
 - a. He and the Member were colleagues.
 - b. He and the Member had discussed the APC, and BA had given the Member some advice on APC preparation, but the Member had never discussed the Submission with him.
 - c. He had never given the Member access to the BA Submission, and it had not been stored electronically in a way the Member could access. BA had however

stored his APC submission in hard copy in a shared workspace while preparing for his APC interview, and he believed the Member could have gained access to it there without BA's permission.

14. On 16 January 2024, RICS wrote to the Member enclosing a further similarities table ('the Second Similarities Table'). The Second Similarities Table compared the Summary of Experience – Technical Competencies and the Case Study sections of the Submission and BA's APC submission. The Member was asked for his comments, however he did not respond substantively.
15. On 26 February 2024 allegations were sent to the Member in accordance with RICS Regulatory Rules. The Member was provided with the relevant evidence and given 14 days to provide a response. On 20 March 2024, the Member responded to partially accept the concerns. In summary, the Member stated that:
 - a. He had 'incorporated elements' of BA's APC submission into the Submission and apologised for this.
 - b. In response to the rejection of the Application in 2021, which included feedback that his writing was not of the correct standard, the Member had "inadvertently incorporated elements from a submission that was deemed acceptable".
 - c. His intent was not to plagiarise BA's work, and he had merely been trying to align the Submission with one he knew to have been successful.
 - d. His actions had been a 'profound professional lapse' at odds with his conformity with and respect for RICS ethical standards throughout his career.

RICS SUBMISSIONS

Allegation 1

16. RICS submits that the Submission was in large part not the Member's own work, did not represent his own learning and was not written in his own words. It also did not acknowledge or reference other sources of information (namely BA's APC Submission) which were used.
17. This is supported by the Turnitin report and the First and Second Similarities Tables prepared by RICS. These show that a substantial part of the work was similar and/or identical to the APC submission of BA dated 15 March 2022. The Submission also does not reference or acknowledge BA's APC submission.
18. RICS also rely on the fact that the Member has now also made an admission that the Submission "incorporated elements" of BA's APC submission.
19. RICS submits that the similarities between the Submission and BA's APC submission are far-ranging. Large sections of the Summary of Experience and Case Study sections of the Submission appear to have been copied word for word from BA's APC submission. The work copied was not limited to matters such as explaining technical terms or standards.
20. RICS submits that it was the Member's intention to pass off the parts of the Submission which were copied from BA's APC Submission as his own original work when he made the Submission to RICS with the above declaration.
21. It is noted that during the investigation, the Member also stated "I want to assure you that I have not copied any part of my submission from any other document."
22. RICS submits that the Member was aware of the requirement that the Submission be

his own work and that he were not allowed to copy from other sources without appropriate attribution/acknowledgement. RICS notes in particular the declaration completed by the Member in his Case Study as set out above. RICS further submits that the Member knew the Submission was not entirely his own original work and that he had copied large sections of BA's APC submission without appropriate attribution. This conduct was therefore dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

23. RICS submits that the Member's conduct as set out at Allegation 1 was in breach of Rule 1 of the Rules of Conduct Global (effective from 2 February 2022) on the basis that he acted dishonestly, as submitted above.

Allegation 2

24. This alleged is a lack of integrity on the same facts as allegation and is an alternative to Allegation 1. RICS submitted that if the disciplinary panel find the facts of Allegation 2 proved, they will need to consider whether this conduct lacked integrity and referenced the case of *Wingate and Evans v Solicitors Regulation Authority [2018] EWCA Civ 366.*

Liability to disciplinary action

25. RICS submits if the facts and resultant rules breaches set out above are found proved (all or in part), the Member is liable to disciplinary action by reason of having having failed to adhere to Rules governing their conduct.

SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF MR GEORGE

26. There were extensive submissions from Mr George. These included:

27. Mr George's response to RICS's Listing Questionnaire dated 23 January 2026. In this he stated that he admitted allegations 1 and 2 stating in relation to each: *"I accept the findings and the report presented by RICS which was confirmed to the Investigation officer on 20 March 2024 via email"*. He also accepted that he was liable to disciplinary action.
28. In an attachment to the listing questionnaire Mr George stated as follows:

" Context and circumstances

This mistake happened after my first assessment, submitted on 2 October 2021, was not accepted. The feedback pointed out several issues with the standard and structure of my writing, and I was trying hard to improve my work to meet the required expectations. My assumption that all the QS roles and responsibilities are often similar across the profession, I wrongly assumed that using certain standard wording was acceptable and a normal practice in submissions.

At the same time, I was under a lot of pressure from my previous line managers and employer to achieve membership. I was the QS in my age group who had not yet gained RICS status, while many younger colleagues had already achieved it. This created stress and urgency that affected my judgment.

Looking back, I realise that I did not take the time to properly understand the RICS guidelines, policies, or the support available through mentorship. I made decisions without seeking the right guidance, training, or preparation, and this led me to cross a boundary I should not have crossed.

Acceptance of Responsibility

I take full responsibility for what happened. I understand that using material in a way that was not fully my own was wrong and did not meet RICS standards. I know how important honesty, integrity, and professionalism are in this process.

I regret my mistake and accept that it was my duty to make sure my submission was original and followed all the rules. I understand the seriousness of this issue, and I am committed to learning from it so that it never happens again.

Remedial Actions to Be Taken

Going forward, I am committed to taking the right steps to make sure this mistake is never repeated. I will carefully follow all RICS guidelines, ethics rules, and assessment requirements before preparing any future submission. I have already started improving my understanding of these standards, and I will continue with RICS professional Patrice once the Board's decision is completed. I also plan to undertake further training in professional writing, ethics, and preparation so that my future submission will meet the required level.

I will seek regular guidance from experienced RICS members and mentors to ensure I am following the correct process and making informed decisions. In addition, I will put in place my own checks to make sure all future work is original, properly referenced where needed, and fully compliant with RICS expectations.

Learning and Reflection

This incident has taught me an important lesson about the standards of honesty, integrity, and professionalism expected by RICS. I now understand that even unintentional misuse of wording or structure can breach these standards, and it is my responsibility to ensure that all work I submit is fully my own and prepared in the correct way. I have reflected deeply on why this happened and recognise that I must take more care, seek proper guidance, and follow RICS rules closely.

In the future, I will make sure I fully understand all assessment requirements, use only my own original work, and ask for support from mentors or experienced members whenever I am unsure. This experience has strengthened my commitment to acting with integrity and maintaining the highest professional standards at all times.

I fully accept the findings of RICS, which I confirmed to the Investigation Officer on 22 March 2024. I understand that my actions did not meet RICS standards, and I am truly sorry for my mistake. I am not trying to challenge the investigation. I am only asking the Disciplinary Panel to kindly consider giving me one more chance to correct my error. I have been carrying the stress of this situation since 2023, and it has affected me deeply.

My goal of becoming MRICS has always been based on respect for the values and principles that RICS stands for. This incident is not a reflection of who I am or how I have worked throughout my career. From the start of the investigation, I have been honest, cooperative, and transparent. I have never denied the allegations or tried to hide any information.

At 45 years old, the outcome of this process will have a major impact on my future. A severe sanction would not only affect my career but also my ability to support my family, who rely on me completely.

Before this incident, I had never faced any academic or professional misconduct. I have always followed ethical standards. The stress of these proceedings since May 2023 has affected my mental and physical health. At one point, I even thought about stepping down from RICS, but I now understand that this was an emotional reaction, and I apologise for expressing it.

With all this in mind, I respectfully request permission to withdraw my current submission and be given a chance to correct my mistakes through a fresh submission or any other action the Panel finds suitable. I am committed to following all RICS guidelines and ensuring that all future work is fully my own.

I also request that my personal details and the nature of these allegations remain confidential, as public disclosure could seriously harm my career. I do not have the financial means for legal support, which makes this process even more difficult. While I understand that sanctions may be necessary, I kindly ask the Panel to consider waiving any financial penalties, as my family is already under financial strain.

I trust the Panel will review my case with fairness and understanding. I am sincerely asking for leniency and a second chance to prove my commitment to integrity and to continue my professional journey with RICS.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my situation and for your understanding during this difficult period.

Naveen George.”

FINDINGS OF FACT

29. The Panel reminded itself that the burden of proving this allegation was on RICS alone. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. The standard of proof to be applied throughout was the ordinary civil standard of proof, namely the balance of probabilities. It reminded itself of Collins J's observations in *Lawrance v. GMC [2015] EWHC 581(Admin)* to the effect that in cases of dishonesty, cogent evidence was required to reach the civil standard of proof.
30. The Panel noted that there had been no previous findings against Mr George and accepted that it was relevant to put his good character into the balance in his favour.

Allegation 1

On or around 14 March 2023, Mr Naveen George acted dishonestly when he submitted a formal Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) Submission to RICS, with the intention of representing it as his own original work, knowing that his submission had been copied in part from the submission of a previous APC candidate, Mr BA.

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31. The Panel was satisfied that it was appropriate and fair to Mr George to treat Allegation 2 (lack of integrity) as an alternative to Allegation 1 (dishonesty).
32. The Panel carefully considered the documentary evidence before it as well as Mr George's admissions. The Panel was satisfied that the documentary evidence establishes on the balance of probabilities that the APC submission had been copied by Mr George from the submission of Mr BA. The face of the documents showed similarities that could not in the Panel's judgment have occurred by chance. Further, and in any event, the Panel was satisfied that it was appropriate to take account of the admissions from Mr George. These included his "full acceptance" of the findings of RICS.
33. The Panel exercised caution when considering whether to rely upon Mr George's "admissions" in relation to the dishonesty element of Allegation 1, the Panel was mindful that at some parts of his submissions Mr George's statements may be inconsistent with an admission of dishonesty, for example, "*I wrongly assumed that using certain standard wording was acceptable and a normal practice in submissions.*" and "*I now understand*

that even unintentional misuse of wording or structure can breach these standards”.

34. The Panel also noted that Mr George stated:

“I take full responsibility for what happened. I understand that using material in a way that was not fully my own was wrong and did not meet RICS standards. I know how important honesty, integrity, and professionalism are in this process. I regret my mistake and accept that it was my duty to make sure my submission was original and followed all the rules. I understand the seriousness of this issue, and I am committed to learning from it so that it never happens again.”

35. Nonetheless, given the seriousness of an allegation of dishonesty for a professional, the Panel determined that it was appropriate and fair for it to determine the question of dishonesty solely on the basis of whether RICS proved this and not to rely on any reported admission of dishonesty which may be equivocal in all the circumstances.

36. Therefore, the Panel asked itself whether RICS had proved that the conduct in Allegation 1 was dishonest.

37. In accordance with the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd T/A Crockfords [2017] UKSC67* the Committee first considered what Mr George’s belief was, as to the facts.

38. The Panel has found proved as a fact that Mr George's Submission had been copied in part from the submission of Mr BA. The Panel found it highly significant that Mr George had signed a declaration confirming that the Submission was his own work, was written by him in his own words, and properly acknowledged or referenced other sources. The document did not acknowledge or reference other sources of information. The Panel noted that at one stage during the investigation Mr George

asserted to RICS: “*I want to assure you that I have not copied any part of my submission from any other document.*” This was not true and Mr George subsequently accepted that he had “*incorporated elements*” of Mr BA's submission. The Panel was satisfied that Mr George knew at the time that he signed the declaration on the submission that his declaration was false and that he knew it to be false as he knew the submission was not fully his own work. It was also significant that RICS APC Candidate Guide warned candidates of the use of the Turnitin “anti-plagiarism” system to check the candidate submission of their own work. Further, irrespective of the declaration, the Panel rejected as implausible that he would not have realised that submitting a plagiarised document to his regulator was wrong conduct.

39. The Panel was satisfied that it is not plausible in the circumstances, that Mr George signed this declaration innocently or by mistake or carelessly.
40. The Panel in the circumstances inferred that the more likely scenario was that Mr George's deliberate intention was to pass off parts of the submission as his own original work, when he knew they were not and that he had copied them from Mr BA. Applying the second limb of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd T/A Crockfords*, the Panel was satisfied that this conduct was dishonest according to the standards of ordinary decent people. Accordingly, it was satisfied that Allegation 1 was proved.
41. Given the Panel’s findings in relation to Allegation 1 it did not consider the alternative of Allegation 2.

LIABILITY FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

42. The Panel next considered whether the proved Charge rendered Mr George liable to disciplinary action under bylaw 5.2.2 (c).

43. 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 dishonestly submitting a submission that was not entirely his own work amounted to breaches of his professional obligations that were very serious. The Panel was satisfied that that Mr George's actions brought discredit on himself, RICS and the profession. It was satisfied that his conduct undermined one of the fundamental tenets of the profession – to be honest and not associate oneself with a false submission. In its judgment the conduct was sufficiently serious to render Mr George liable to disciplinary action, as his conduct fell well-below that to be expected of a Regulated Member.

SANCTION

44. The Panel next considered the matter of sanction. It noted the written submissions of RICS and those of Mr George in a document entitled "*Request for Reconsideration and Compassionate Waiver of Costs, Sanction, and Publication*". This was dated 28 March 2026 and signed by Mr George. In it he stated:

"Dear Panel Members,

I respectfully submit this letter to request your kind reconsideration of my case, taking into account the exceptional personal, financial, and regional circumstances that I am currently facing. As outlined in my Statement of Means and considering the current situation in my region has deteriorated significantly due to the ongoing war in the Middle East. We are experiencing frequent missile and drone attack very frequent, creating continuous instability, fear, and psychological strain. The conflict has prolonged, casualties in my zone are rising, and the economic impact has been severe, particularly with the sharp increase in oil prices.

These conditions have directly affecting my employment. Companies in my sector have begun taking extreme measures, including suspending projects and laying off staff.

Unfortunately, I am already impacted by these developments. Working in the real estate industry, which is highly sensitive to market volatility, I face constant risks of job loss, salary reductions, removal of allowances, and the absence of annual increments. This instability has placed immense pressure on my financial situation.

I am the sole breadwinner for my family, fully responsible for supporting my spouse, children, and elderly parents. They depend entirely on my monthly salary for their living expenses, medical needs, and overall well-being. I do not have any other source of income, and my financial commitments are ongoing and unavoidable.

Given this reality, any additional financial penalty or severe sanction would create a significant and overwhelming hardship for my household.

I have already acknowledged and accepted the findings in my earlier communication to the RICS member in 2024. However, the proposed cost of £6,508.20 represents an extremely heavy and unaffordable burden for me, especially in the current volatile and war-affected environment. I am already mentally and financially struggling to cope with the uncertainty ahead, and this additional cost is beyond my capacity to manage.

In view of these extraordinary circumstances, I humbly request the Panel to kindly waive the costs, sanction, and publication associated with this matter. Any such measures would severely affect my already fragile financial position and could irreversibly damage my professional standing in the industry. I have worked hard to build my career with integrity, and I deeply value the respect and trust I have earned over the years.

I sincerely ask for a second chance to correct my course, rebuild my professional path, and continue pursuing my long-held dream of becoming a member of this prestigious institution.

Being part of RICS has always been a significant aspiration for me, and I remain committed to upholding the highest standards of professionalism and ethics. Allowing me the opportunity to continue this journey would mean a great deal to me and my family, especially during this difficult period.

Thank you very much for your time, understanding, and compassionate consideration. I remain hopeful that the Panel will take into account the exceptional challenges I am facing and grant me the opportunity to move forward positively.”

45. The Panel accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. It had regard to RICS’ Sanctions Policy, and in particular 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 and bore in mind the overriding principles of proportionality. The Panel took account of Mr George’s interests, his detailed responses and his desire to remain an RICS member. The Panel had specific regard to the public interest and the necessity to declare and uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour. The dishonest behaviour was serious. Trust and honesty are fundamental requirements of any professional. Dishonesty by a member of the profession undermines its reputation and public confidence in it.

46. The Panel reminded itself that the purpose of sanctions is not to be punitive, though that may be their effect. It weighed the mitigation advanced by Mr George against the public interest – which includes the necessity to uphold the reputation of the profession, declare proper standards of conduct and to deter other members of the profession from such behaviour.

47. The Panel considered mitigating and aggravating factors as well as the issue of proportionality in weighing up the appropriate sanction.
48. The aggravating factors the Panel identified were:
- The dishonesty was pre-planned and designed to deceive his regulator for personal benefit
 - The serious impact on the reputation of the profession
 - The initial denial of plagiarism to the regulator.
49. The mitigating factors the Panel identified were:
- A previous good character with no disciplinary record
 - Some evidence of insight shown into the impact on the profession and public of such conduct
 - Evidence of remorse and apology.
50. Given the Panel's view of the seriousness of the misconduct, it was satisfied that the sanctions of No sanction, Caution, Reprimand, Undertakings as to future conduct, Fine and Conditions were insufficient to highlight to the profession and the public the gravity of the proven misconduct. In considering RICS Sanctions Policy, the Panel noted that the factors (at paragraph 7) of wrongdoing, dishonesty, a deliberate breach, were present, as were admissions and regret. Further, it noted that in relation to paragraph 21 of the Sanctions Policy that the factor "dishonesty" was present in this case.
51. The Panel was mindful of the case law to the effect that dishonesty lies at the top of the spectrum of misconduct. The Committee was satisfied that his dishonest

behaviour was fundamentally incompatible with Mr George remaining on the register of RICS and considered that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction was that he be expelled from membership.

PUBLICATION

52. The Panel was satisfied that no justifiable basis was advanced by Mr George 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

53. The Panel noted Mr George's submissions as to costs and his completed statement means. RICS has submitted a statement of costs in the sum of £6,508.20.
54. The Panel 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 appropriate and proportionate. Mr George did not detail what his income is but simply indicated 85% of his income was committed to expenses. This did not give the Panel any figure as to his surplus of income over expenditure. The Panel saw no basis on any of Mr George's contentions to reduce the costs claimed. Accordingly, it awarded RICS costs in the sum of £6,508.20.

APPEAL PERIOD

55. The Regulated Member has 28 days, from the service of the notification of the decision, to appeal this decision.