

Mandatory Integrity Document for MSPM Team Projects

We would like to believe that the carefully selected students in our program possess levels of integrity equivalent to their levels of intelligence and academic achievement. Unfortunately, however, some students are willing to take credit that they do not deserve, and their colleagues are willing to allow this deception to avoid the unpleasantness that arises when confronting malfeasance. This is based on direct experience and on the uniformly affirmative response to the question we ask at the feedback session that we hold at the end of every Residency Week: “How many of you have been on teams where not every person pulled his or her own weight?” Almost everyone’s hand goes up.

Every semester we are surprised and disappointed, because students affirm electronic signatures to a statement that in its intent evolution reads: “I am satisfied that the contribution made by each team member warrants a full share of the credit for this work, and I affirm that I have completed this assignment in accordance with the Code of Academic Integrity.” The students sign, and still their hands go up, their own signatory mendacity adding to the ethical ills of our academic community.

We cannot monitor each student’s contribution to a team’s effort personally, so we attempt again to help students improve their own vision of the dual responsibilities of honesty and equally shared effort. Therefore, in addition to the above statement, each student must now write a short paragraph describing in detail his or her work on the group project. These paragraphs, each with its own individually signed statement (above), must be collected into a single document and submitted as the first pages of each group assignment.

Teams can and should disband sooner rather than later if their members do not agree on the equality of the contributions. The instructor can facilitate dissolution and the formation of new teams.

Surely some are offended by this requirement, but each semester we see the hands go up, and the cycle continues. Help each other be strong and be honest, and this renewed integrity will add to the excellence and reputation of the Master of Science in Project Management program at the George Washington University.

Team Members	Signature	Date
