



Academic integrity – fighting plagiarism, academic misconduct and fraud in higher education

Policy conclusions from the PLA in
Nicosia, 24-25 October 2019

ET2020 Working Group on Higher Education

SETTING THE SCENE

PLA setting and participation

This report summarises the conclusions of the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on “Academic integrity – fighting plagiarism, academic misconduct and fraud in higher education”. Hosted by the Cypriot Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth in Nicosia on 24 and 25 October, it brought together representatives of public authorities and/or higher education institutions (HEIs) from 11 countries¹. In addition, representatives were invited from the European Students’ Union (ESU), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity (ETINED) and the European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI), as well as the quality assurance agencies from the United Kingdom and Ireland and the dedicated bodies tasked with research integrity in Austria and France.

Objective and aims

The aim of this PLA was to explore how higher education authorities and institutions can enhance academic integrity, and discuss, share and assess the effectiveness of related policies and practices. By exchanging on the recent developments and reforms, the PLA examined the relevant national and institutional strategies, policies and tools as well as their implementation in practice. The PLA will contribute to the discussions at the meeting of the Directors General for Higher education of the EU Member States under the upcoming Croatian Presidency. In parallel, work is under way by ETINED to develop a policy framework on countering education fraud and promotion of ethics, transparency and integrity in education.

What is academic integrity?

Academic integrity refers to “commitment, even in the face of adversity, to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage”. It implies “compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards and practices by individuals or institutions in education, research and scholarship”ⁱⁱⁱ. In contrast, academic dishonesty or misconduct “denotes any attempt to subvert or evade the fundamental values of academic integrity”ⁱⁱⁱ.

Challenges in academic integrity and misconduct in education, research and scholarship affect all higher education systems and institutions as well as their students and staff. They cover a wide range of issues^{iv}, including:

- Academic misconduct in education and teaching and learning, such as: plagiarism; contract cheating; cheating in examinations and other assessments; using/accepting forged or altered certificates or transcripts; offering/demanding bribes for admission or for grades; fabrication or falsification of information or student identity;
- Academic misconduct in research, such as: fabrication, falsification and plagiarism; predatory publishing; authorship abuse; issues in review mechanisms; and
- Academic misconduct in governance and management of higher education, such as: issues in public procurement, conflicts of interest; in-breeding; political interference; corruption, bribery, nepotism etc.

The PLA looked into all 3 aspects of academic integrity, with a focus on teaching and learning. A summary of national and institutional practices is provided in Annex.

¹ AT, CY, EE, ES, FR, HR, IE, LT, MT, NM, PL

Why academic integrity is important?

Academic integrity is vital for the future success of European higher education policies. Trust in the higher education systems and the authenticity of the results of education and research is necessary to reach the goals of European Education Area, automatic recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad and the European Universities initiative.

Fraud in any sphere of higher education activity imposes costs in reputation, efficiency and trust. Academic misconduct and fraud are a threat to quality education and endangers academia as a whole and may have detrimental consequences. On average, 34% of Europeans believe there is corruption in their national education system, with country-by-country results ranging from 6% to 72%^v. Reputational damage to one institution may lead to the damage on the whole national higher education system^{vi}. Academic misconduct erodes public trust in the quality of higher education and institutions as well as the qualifications and research results, and may affect the willingness to support higher education from the public purse. It may risk students' academic and professional careers, and pose a risk to employers and public safety given that students might graduate without appropriate skills and qualifications. In clinical studies, engineering etc. academic misconduct may endanger lives^{vii}.

Progress in PLA countries

In most PLA countries academic integrity is part of the national higher education policies, but the approaches, focus and ambition of these policies vary significantly according to the national contexts. Only a few PLA countries have developed a comprehensive approach to promoting academic integrity across all missions and aspects of higher education. In some cases incentives created by university funding models and targets for publication, student retention and completion may discourage disciplinary measures against fraud. Existing policies are in need of revitalisation given the current gaps and new and emerging threats to academic integrity. Greater guidance and oversight by the government is needed, while respecting the autonomy of institutions.

SUMMARY OF KEY POLICY CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Ethics, transparency and academic integrity are key a condition for excellence and high quality. Academic misconduct is a threat to quality education and endangers academia as a whole.
- ❖ A holistic policy approach to academic integrity calls for addressing all missions, all areas and aspects of higher education, and mobilising all available policies with focus on enhancing good practice.
- ❖ Broad-based dialogue and collaboration ensure that integrity and anti-corruption become a collective responsibility in higher education and the wider society. Engagement with schools, parents, employers, professional bodies and the public at large needs to be part of the design and implementation of policies.
- ❖ Prevention is key: Effective academic integrity policies start at early levels of education and are delivered coherently across all levels of education, adapted to learner needs and environments. There is a need for support mechanisms at the institutions for struggling students who may be vulnerable to the lure of cheating and academic misconduct. Student-centred teaching and learning and support services, and sound and fair human resources policies for the higher education staff encourage academic integrity.
- ❖ Each member of the academic community has responsibility to fight corruption, fraud and misconduct. There is a need to develop an institutional culture of academic integrity. Communication among institutions and the exchange of best practice can be encouraged through support for dedicated networks, agencies and associations.

- ❖ Provision of clear information and training on academic integrity for all members of the academic community help reduce fraud and misconduct. For staff this implies ongoing professional development. For students, this means integrating academic integrity in all study programmes, and embedding the topic progressively to the curricula. Institutions should establish and regularly review, with participatory approaches, codes of conduct for academic integrity, ensuring fair and transparent procedures with a possibility for appeal in case of breach.
- ❖ Quality assurance agencies should intensify their focus on academic integrity by proactively addressing emerging risks, detecting fraud and informing institutional academic integrity policies. Enhancing this focus in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) would ensure that the topic would feature more prominently in institutional quality assurance policies and practices, institutional reviews and audits and external reviews of QA agencies.
- ❖ Cyber-based and digitally driven fraud in higher education presents complex challenges which require new approaches and broad-based collaboration at the European level. The ethical and legal concerns of using new technologies to fight the technology-driven exam fraud and cheating need to be carefully considered and addressed.
- ❖ Monitoring, comparable data collection, and analysis on academic integrity are in need of strengthening. All misconduct needs to be reported and recorded. Administrative efforts to institutions and their staff should be limited through a uniform approach to data collection and monitoring, and clear definitions and indicators. The results should be widely communicated, published, analysed and discussed. Further research should be supported by authorities.
- ❖ Prevention, detection and combatting fraud and academic misconduct is costly and are part of the work of all higher education institutions. These permanent costs need to be taken into account when public authorities are allocating funding to higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies.

PLA MESSAGES ON POLICY-MAKING

Enhancing academic integrity requires a holistic approach that covers all missions, tasks and aspects of higher education and mobilises all available policies.

A holistic approach in academic integrity policies covers all missions, areas and tasks in higher education: education, teaching and learning, research and scholarship, third mission and higher education management. In several countries, the narrow focus of policies is limiting the progress.

Enhancing academic integrity requires enhancement of good practice through all available policies while respecting the fundamental values of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. A focus on the enhancing good practice through transparent, clear and well communicated policies is likely to bring sustainable results. Relevant policies include:

- Legislation and other regulatory measures (incl. performance-based funding);
- quality assurance;
- awareness raising among HE community and the wider public;
- training provision for students and staff in higher and earlier levels of education;
- detection of fraud and the use of technology;
- monitoring and publishing the results; and
- support for research and analysis into academic integrity.

Shared understanding of academic integrity is central to combatting corruption, fraud and misconduct. Different interpretations of what is acceptable practice and what is misconduct and corruption are counteractive to progress in this domain.^{viii} A clear distinction needs to be made between corruption based on intentional actions of individuals or groups and misconduct through accident, incompetence or ignorance.

A zero tolerance policy should be adopted by all stakeholders towards dishonest behaviour and abuse of power in higher education. This includes bullying, sexual harassment and all misconduct such as false ownership of intellectual property e.g. in research projects where students collect the data but receive little or no recognition for their work. Disciplinary measures and sanctions need to be developed. Austria is proceeding with a legal process to define plagiarism and to sanction purposeful offenders with a fine of up to 25.000 €; for ghost writers the fine could go up to 60.000 €.

Effective approaches to academic integrity rely on empowering the entire higher education community and wider society.

Upholding academic integrity is the task for the entire higher education community, including higher education authorities, all institutions, their students, teachers, researchers, administrative staff, education and also quality assurance agencies. They have the shared responsibility to fight corruption, plagiarism, contract cheating, nepotism, abuse of power and any other form of misconduct and fraud. They need to be empowered to play this role. Higher education managers can take stock of the policies in place with the help of the self-evaluation tool developed by the European Network of Academic Integrity (ENAI) to assess to what extent these policies and procedures are appropriate to enhance academic integrity and prevent plagiarism and other misconduct^{ix}. Similar tools are also available for students, teachers and researchers.

Involving students and staff as equal partners in promoting academic integrity is critical in developing ownership and bottom-up engagement. Crucially, students need to be involved in all relevant processes linked to monitoring academic integrity and the disciplinary measures in case of misconduct. For HE staff this may mean participatory approaches in establishing and reviewing the codes of conduct and dedicated strategies. Involvement of student unions in fostering a climate that promotes integrity and a quality culture may be hampered given the high turnover of representatives. Therefore support, such as training provision, should be made available to empower student unions to play a meaningful role in academic integrity efforts. Solutions to overcome the practical barriers for student involvement, notably the opportunity costs, include offering paid credit-bearing internships to students to work on tasks enhancing academic integrity (e.g. in the University of Swansea paid interns are rewriting student guidebooks.)

Communication among higher education institutions and the exchange of best practice can be encouraged by supporting dedicated agencies, centres and platforms which allow knowledge sharing and sustainable outcomes. For instance the **French Office for Scientific Integrity (OFIS)** fosters an ecosystem approach to academic integrity engaging all relevant actors in research. In Austria the action on research integrity is mainly driven by the **Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI)**, an association independent from the government, which has a commitment to promote good scientific practice. Together with its member organisations the Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice were established in 2015 which are currently part of employment agreements and funding contracts. The Working Group of the Austrian University Conference on Research Integrity and Research Evaluation is in the process of developing a uniform minimum standards for research integrity and ethics.

The dialogue and collaboration needs to be opened up to social partners and the wider public to ensure that misconduct and corruption become unacceptable for all stakeholders and the public at large. Academic integrity policies do not work in isolation,

but are connected to the wider society: a culture of corruption or complacency may drive misconduct in education and hamper mitigation efforts. The Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED) promotes the development of “a culture of democracy and participation”: this means balancing regulatory anti-corruption measures with a principles-based approach where “all relevant sections of society... commit to fundamental ethical principles for public and professional life”^x. This approach implies for example empowerment of professional bodies as proposed by the Council of Europe and transparent media relations. It also means close collaboration with the employers, who need ethically trained graduates. Open lectures and public debates are part of these efforts as exemplified by the University of Rijeka (HR) which offers open debates in topics such as reaffirming the authority of science, responsible public behaviour of scientists, nepotism and conflict of interest.

Academic integrity is based on student-centred approaches in education and sound and fair human resources policies.

Clear definitions of learning outcomes, student-centred learning and support systems, diverse teaching and assessment methods and appropriate forms of sanctions for unfair behaviour and fraud are the main tools to develop learning environments which promote integrity among students. Student-friendly support services which assist all students but also offer targeted support for those who are vulnerable and struggling help mitigate the possible trade-offs related to widening access. This approach is implemented for example in the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) where student support coordinators identify vulnerable students and provide additional support for them. Creating supportive learning environments also requires the development of student feedback systems and linking these evaluation systems to consequences for teachers that do not fulfil minimum requirements. A change of assessment method (e.g. continuous assessment throughout the semester) could also help prevent student cheating.

From the perspective of higher education staff, academic integrity is based on sound and fair human resources policies and performance indicators. Appropriate HR policies and good management ensure that academic integrity among teaching, research and administrative roles is not compromised by issues such as high or uneven workload, low remuneration, a lack of pay equality, casualization, and challenges in career progress. The impact of possible perverse incentive created by funding constraints on institutions and performance indicators for publication, student retention and completion targets etc. should be carefully examined and addressed.

Provision of information and training for each member of the academic community is key to supporting academic integrity and fighting fraud.

Provision of clear information for every member of the academic community – all HE students and staff – on the expectations on their behaviour and what academic integrity means are crucial in reducing fraud, cheating and misconduct. Each member of the higher education community should know what academic integrity means to them, what are their related responsibilities in upholding academic integrity and high quality standards and what are the sanctions and consequences of cheating and fraud for themselves, their peers, the higher education community, and the wider society.

All higher education students at all levels require support in academic integrity in the form of training and information. Student-friendly models to inform students of the expectations on their behaviour and what academic integrity means include the MIT open access guidance: ‘**Academic Integrity at MIT – a handbook for students**’^{xi}. In addition to general information, education on academic integrity should be part of all study programmes, embedding the topic progressively to the curricula, including mandatory modules in programmes of sufficient duration and just-in-time training prior to independent

project work. The open access resources developed by ENAI can be embedded as tutorials^{xii}. For instance in the University of Rennes 1, all students, from bachelor to doctoral level, are now receiving dedicated training in academic integrity. In Tallinn University interdisciplinary self-directed project work has empowered students to develop research and action in support of academic integrity and act as ambassadors.

All higher education staff – whether teachers, researchers or administrators – need support in the form of training and information in academic integrity. Authorities and institutions should ensure that academic integrity is embedded in initial teacher education, induction to work and self-reflective continuous professional development. Supervisors of doctoral training are one of the targets for dedicated training as the example from the University of Rennes 1 shows. Value-based codes of conduct as promoted by the Council of Europe are important tools in this domain, and a participatory approach for establishing and reviewing them is likely to increase their use and impact. Other approaches include the development of communities of practice for shared learning and experience, and revisiting the performance indicators which may offer perverse incentives to HEIs and their staff.

Effective academic integrity policies start at early levels of education and are delivered coherently across all levels of education, adapted to learner needs and environments.

Academic integrity policies need to start at early levels of education highlighting the importance of honesty and crediting others for their work. In addition to improving the quality of teaching and learning outcomes at schools, higher education institutions can collaborate with schools to develop an understanding the need for academic integrity and addressing the common forms of cheating at schools. Useful mechanisms include embedding academic integrity as a topic into civic education and ethics courses, in the summer schools which familiarise learners with academic working methods (“Step up Swansea”) and collaborative projects which bring together teachers, learners and their parents given the role they may play in contract cheating at schools. A large scale multi-annual project can also be used to develop values at schools and “good schools” as the Estonian example shows (“Value Development in Estonian Society” in 2009-2013 and 2015-2020).

Knowledge, information and guidance to learners should be coherent across all levels and types of education and adapted to their specific needs and environments. Effective policies are adapted to learner needs in schools, vocational education and training, higher education institutions and work places. A practical step is to ensure open access to support tools and guidance material in academic integrity. Authorities could support the translation and ‘localisation’ of the materials developed by the European Network of Academic Integrity (ENAI) which target students and teachers in higher and secondary education including manuals, videos and real-life examples and workshops for students and teachers^{xiii}. Country examples for providing open access support include **Eetikaweeb** (Ethicsweb), a platform maintained by the **Centre for Ethics in the University of Tartu** which pools together information on different aspects of ethics. The related forum for school teachers enables discussion on ethical questions and value dilemmas.

Quality Assurance Agencies should intensify their focus on academic integrity.

While national QA agencies play an important role in academic integrity by monitoring that the standards are maintained and quality processes are operating as intended, more robust and evidence-based auditing and evaluation methods should be developed to detect fraud and uncover misconduct^{xiv}. Depending on the maturity of QA culture, national QA agencies may trigger actions within institutions to help them build a focus on academic integrity into the QA infrastructure and its implementation or retrofit it into the QA system, e.g. by replacing mechanistic methods such as use of check lists etc. In Cyprus, the national QA agency’s external evaluation criteria obliges HEs to have plagiarism detection system and sanctions.

National authorities can encourage quality assurance agencies to intensify their focus on academic integrity and take a more proactive approach to address emerging risks and inform academic integrity policies in institutions. In the United Kingdom, the QA agency has influenced global online companies to block essay mill providers from using their services, and prevent advertising through third parties that upload content onto their platforms^{xv}. The QA agency has also recently conducted an online survey to see how useful and effective universities have found the 2017 guidelines regarding contract cheating^{xvi}, developed by an advisory group. In Ireland, the national QA agency has taken the lead to ban contract cheating firms (or advertising of such firms) and is guiding the implementation of the new regulations with the help of a practitioner network and an advisory group.

To ensure a more systematic action within and across higher education institutions and systems the focus on academic integrity in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) should be strengthened. This would ensure that academic integrity would feature more prominently not only in institutional quality assurance policies and practices (e.g. risk registers), but also in institutional reviews and audits, and ENQA's external reviews of QA agencies. An academic integrity officer within each QA agency could be useful, as well as establishing a network of academic integrity officers in the higher education institutions.

Authenticity of certifications is increasingly ensured with the help of digital verification, but will not remove the need for vigilance in accreditation as 'unearned' qualifications awarded by authentic higher education institutions cannot be detected with digital systems. The Groningen Declaration Network facilitates a digital verification service for academic qualifications^{xvii}. Blockchain-based solutions are under development, e.g. Erasmus funds are supporting collaborative work to use blockchain technology in recognition of qualifications and for portability of academic diplomas. At the national level, Malta aims to ensure the authenticity of certification in all education institutions by using Bitcoin blockchain which works on a distributed ledger system that practically makes it impossible to create a false transaction or certification. Currently all certificates of Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) are published in paper and digital version and can be instantly verified through any BlockCerts verification portal. The take-up among students is still modest which points to the need for enhanced awareness raising.

Cyber-based and digitally driven fraud in higher education presents complex challenges which require new approaches and broad-based collaboration, also at European level.

The use of essay mills is an "insidious type of cyber fraud that is more difficult to detect by HEIs, but is concomitantly more accessible to learners". Fighting this type of cyber fraud affects all higher education systems and requires collaboration between agencies, institutions and learner representatives on national level and within and beyond the European Union. Ireland outlawed essay mills including the promotion and advertising of their services in 2019, but more countries should follow suit in order to provide an effective response to contract cheating. The Irish quality assurance act^{xviii} assigns the power to prosecute contract cheating companies and other forms of academic cheating to the QA agency, targeting particularly for-profit organisations. The implementation will be supported by collaborative initiatives and communication.

Higher education institutions are using new technologies to fight the technology-driven exam fraud and cheating, but such methods may raise ethical and legal concerns that need to be carefully considered and addressed. Institutions are resorting to methods such as camera surveillance, acoustic jamming, and face recognition to detect the use of hidden earpieces, mobile phone communications and more traditional methods such as impersonation and student cheat lists^{xix}. A working group of the European Commission is currently developing recommendations to define the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which regulate e.g. the use of biometrical tools.

Authorities in all PLA countries are encouraging or mandating the use of digital antiplagiarism tools in HEIs, however, the capacity and the limitations of these systems should be addressed. Along with the off-the-shelf solutions, some countries are investing in national antiplagiarism tools, with the help of European funds. Poland recently launched the Unified Anti-plagiarism system, JSA, as a mandatory tool for all universities and PhD-awarding institutions. JSA is the biggest IT system of Polish education authorities in terms of number of end users and the size of data processed^{xx}. The JSA concept and software is available for use and adaptation by other countries. In Estonia, the KRAT system has been in use since 2013, but will be closed down by 2020; in recent years it has been used for educational purposes. The example of KRAT highlights the challenges faced by smaller language areas, notably the high costs of keeping the systems up-to-date. In general, the current antiplagiarism systems detect only text similarity, but not audio-visual similarities which poses challenges e.g. in art and media fields as the example of Tallinn University shows.

Institutional strategies in academic integrity mobilise the whole institution and are adapted to the context.

There are no ready-made recipes for institutions to develop and enhance academic integrity policies other than developing context-specific whole-of-the-institution approaches building on what already exists. Typical components include:

- Institutional commitment to a culture of academic integrity underpinned with fair and coherent integrity policies, procedures, communication and resources;
- Promotion of academic integrity among the entire higher education community, information and training to its all members about academic integrity expectations and standards, underpinned with student-centred learning and support services, and sound and fair human resources policies;
- Fair, consistent and transparent implementation of academic integrity policies across the institution, including prevention, detection, and disciplinary measures and sanctions;
- Regular monitoring of academic integrity, covering also emerging risks, and evaluation of effectiveness of related policies and practices, followed by revision where needed;
- Active outreach to schools, labour market and communities to develop focus on academic integrity and ethical decision-making capabilities.
- Exchange of experiences and good practices at national or European level (e.g. through the QA agencies or ENAI membership).

An enabling national framework helps guide the monitoring, recording and publishing results.

The higher education systems and institutions that use data, surveys, research and analysis to detect, monitor and investigate into academic integrity, are more likely to have effective policies to support this goal. The PLA country experience suggests that monitoring, data collection, research and analysis on academic integrity remain an area in need of strengthening.

When developing data collection and monitoring systems, care should be taken to ensure that all cases of misconduct are reported and recorded, while limiting the administrative efforts for institutions and their staff. Authorities, quality assurance agencies and other dedicated agencies and networks can support this through a uniform approach to data collection for comparability, using clear definitions and indicators developed in collaboration with the higher education community. In France, the Network of Research Integrity Officers (RESINT) has developed a guide for recording and processing reports of academic misconduct^{xxi}. Where monitoring and data collection systems have not yet been developed, authorities could consider sponsoring dedicated research in order to build trust and dialogue with institutions.

The results of monitoring academic integrity in institutions and related evaluations should be widely communicated, published, analysed and discussed. These discussions need to involve the higher education community at the institutional and national level including the wider public to enhance the understanding of the importance of honesty and academic integrity for the quality of higher education. Employers need to emphasise their desire for ethical graduates and distaste for evidence to the contrary. The challenges in the academic integrity also call for further research and enhanced capacity building among the state and institutional administrations.

IDEAS FOR FURTHER ACTION AT THE EU LEVEL

The European Commission could commission comparative research on academic integrity with the objective of increasing combined understanding of the challenges in a European context in order to enable the development of effective and targeted responses. Such research could seek answers to questions such as: What forms of academic misconduct are taking place, where and why? What types of programmes, institutions and learners are most susceptible or vulnerable to misconduct? What measures are most effective in preventing misconduct and addressing it? It should also explore the possibility to develop, together with stakeholders and national authorities, standards and guidelines to deal with breaches of academic integrity.

Furthermore, European efforts could support the **creation of an EU-level hub of information on academic integrity** by bringing together the research, knowledge and information which currently exists in pockets in institutions, countries or language areas. This hub could also be tasked for prevention of misconduct, coordination of action and dissemination of results in order to reduce the stigma and fear of exposing misconduct at a local level and to protect whistle blowers. Networking of academic integrity officers of the QA agencies could be a good starting point for such hub.

European collaborative efforts are necessary to develop measures to combat the cybercrime in education and cross-sectoral and cross-national responses to crime which reaches across jurisdictions and may involve money laundering, black mail etc. International collaboration in the context of the Bologna Process and beyond with third countries and regional and international organisations could seek to find solutions to the conditions that produce essay mills in developing countries, such as a lack of high skill jobs.

European guidance and regulations on research funded by industry and commercial interest groups would be welcome given the concerns that such research may be more susceptible to corruption and unethical conduct. This could cover declaration of vested interests, verification of results by external parties etc. as well as guidance and training for researchers on the risks and responsibilities associated with commercially funded research.

Peer learning activities and exchanges between policy makers and HEIs, could bring together specialists in digitalisation and its regulation with focus on combatting contract cheating and cyber fraud in higher education. Peer learning among practitioners could involve professional bodies to ensure that the provisions for specific professions would enhance academic integrity in higher education, and legitimate entities such as **FIVERR.com** to prevent freelance writers and web content developers to slide into areas of concern.

Finally, **European level tools and systems could enhance the importance of academic integrity.** This applies to projects financed by the Erasmus+ programme, the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education which is regularly reviewed, but also the European Standards and Guidelines as explained above. A new European award for excellence in teaching and learning would drive enhancement and reflect good practice. Academic integrity could usefully be promoted in the context of further coordination and integration of the European Education Area and the European Research Area.

Annex: Overview of participating countries policy frameworks and policies on Academic Integrity

POLICY FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES IN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY	
AT	<p>The University Act contains a definition of plagiarism (since 2015) and work is under way to introduce a definition of ghost writing with the intention to outlaw it. The University performance contracts have a chapter on academic integrity and concrete sanctions have been put in in place. All universities must have a dedicated committee to investigate research misconduct.</p> <p>Relevant working groups include the WG on Controlling and Preventing Plagiarism (est. 2011) and the Austrian University Conference WG on Research Integrity and Research Evaluation (est. in 2018) which is developing a uniform minimum standards for research integrity and ethics.</p> <p>The action on research integrity is driven by the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI), (est. 2008) an association with voluntary membership and a commitment to promote good scientific practice. Entirely independent from the ministry, it is financed by membership fees from the 44 (+3) member organisations including all public universities. OeAWI offers members support in the prevention, awareness raising and investigations of research misconduct through advice and training (incl. train-the-trainers). There is also an international independent Commission for Research Integrity. Outcomes include the Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice (2014/2015), developed in a collaborative process, and now part of employment agreements and funding contracts.</p>
CY	<p>The quality assurance and accreditation agency (CYQAA) has established external evaluation criteria for the prevention of academic fraud. They oblige the institutions to have plagiarism detection systems and relevant sanctions. CYQAA also requires transparency of qualifications and credentials of all academic personnel employed in higher education institutions. Evaluation Committees for the external evaluations of programmes, departments and institutions have specific terms of reference for evaluating academic integrity. External evaluation reports are publicly available on the CYQAA website. Each university has a disciplinary committee to investigate the allegations of misconduct by academics and students and to address misconduct in line with procedures in the Internal Regulations. Disciplinary sanctions depend on the nature and gravity of the misconduct. Some universities have established the Student Ombudsman Service to allow students to voice complaints. Some have nominated an academic advisor for each student. The Cypriot Rectors' conference has also declared the intention of all universities to join the European Network for Academic Integrity.</p>
EE	<p>The new Higher Education Law (2019) obliges students to follow the principles of academic ethics and the best practices of learning. Most HEIs cover the topic of fraud and improper student behaviour in study regulations. The ENIC/NARIC Centre shares information on fraudulent final diploma and typical diploma mill qualifications. The Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) is responsible for evaluations and promotes quality in education. Its regulation on Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation requires that HE and VET staff act in line with the principles of academic ethics and that institutions have clear rules on plagiarism. The QA assessment criteria cover the aspects of education fraud. HEIs use the antiplagiarism tool URKUND to detect text similarity. A decision has been made to close down the national digital solution for text matching (KRAT). Recently it has been used only for educational purposes.</p> <p>The Tallinn University monitors the academic integrity through surveys and networks. It has reviewed the quality assurance policy with the aim to enable a more proactive role for students and staff. It aims to integrate academic integrity into everyday teaching. Challenges include: keeping up with the digital threats, the notion of intellectual property in arts and media, and the need for systems to detect audio-visual similarity. The 2018 reiteration of the interdisciplinary LIFE-project (6 ECTS) empowered a group of 20 students to act as ambassadors in academic integrity.</p>
ES	<p>Several universities have recently created a Commission for Academic Integrity in response to the high profile cases of misconduct featured in the media. They are also looking for software solutions to academic plagiarism and developing Codes of Conduct.</p> <p>The University of Zaragoza launched the office of the General Inspection Services ('Inspección General de Servicios') in 2019 by pooling and upgrading the existing structures and services. The office is in the process of developing strategies around anti-plagiarism software and also codes of conduct.</p>

FR	<p>The French Office for Scientific Integrity (OFIS)^{xxii}, a department of the High Council for the evaluation of research and higher education (Hcéres) (est. 2017) has been operational since 2018 as a national transversal structure. A 12-member advisory board (the French Council of Scientific Integrity-CoFIS) oversees its roadmap. OFIS has adopted an ecosystem approach to research integrity, providing a forum for reflection, observation and coordination of issues and activities.</p> <p>Since 2015, all presidents of universities and research bodies are encouraged to confirm their commitment by signing the French charter for research integrity. All higher education and research institutions are required to designate a research integrity officer for the implementation of research integrity policy, the introduction of the systems and procedures for preventing and addressing research misconduct and the reporting to the head of the institution. A Network of Research Integrity Officers (RESINT) with more than 100 members shares experience and has adopted guidelines for addressing the reports of research misconduct (2018). Disciplinary procedures in academic fraud are at the discretion of institutions. Students and staff may appeal to the disciplinary section of the Ministry. An ongoing reform aims to lighten the disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>At the University of Rennes 1 the first research integrity officer was nominated in 2016 and has since then introduced the strategy of the human resources policies for research (2018) and an antiplagiarism training for all students (2019). Dedicated training is available for PhD students and supervisors.</p>
HR	<p>The National Ethical Committee, appointed by the Parliament, has a consultative role, but no sanctioning powers. The higher education law covers plagiarism, forging of results, and obligation to sanction misconduct (e.g. downgrading titles such as PhD).</p> <p>The PhD programme evaluations by the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education (2016-2019) showed limited progress in academic integrity: Only a few universities have a antiplagiarism detection system; Very few offer formalized training for students or require supervisors to check student work; Many doctoral students lack adequate training in academic integrity. HEIs use generic ethical codes which cover plagiarism and forging of results, but leave out other misconduct (conflict of interest, quid pro quo, favouritism or bribing, or authority pressure). Their documents often include no definitions, procedures and sanctions for misconduct. Some HEIs have no ethical code. Misconduct by students (cheating, colluding) could be tackled by disciplinary ordinances, but rarely done.</p> <p>In Rijeka University all units of the University have ethical codes and ethical boards. Regular public debates raise awareness and uphold the principles and rules. The university recommends that all units offer training and guidance to students, and guidelines and instructions for thesis work as a part of the curricula. Digital tool (Turnitin) is used to detect plagiarism. The Board of Honour at the university level and the ethical boards of the units are responsible for implementation.</p>
IE	<p>Ireland is the first country in the EU to outlaw the essay mills and the facilitation of learner cheating in any form, including the promotion and advertising such services (summer 2019). The QQI, the national regulatory body, has launched a series of projects with HEIs to identify the nature and scale of academic misconduct, to understand how HEIs are detecting and addressing such conduct and collaboratively work together to minimise the opportunity for, and risk of such practice by learners. The National Academic Integrity Network, a practitioners' network and advisory group, was launched in November 2019 after Ireland commenced the legislation. It will identify common terminology and good practice guidelines. Communication efforts will target providers, learners and advertisers and publishers, informing about the new law and implications for them, their responsibilities and procedures for reporting suspected offences to QQI. Other state bodies will deal with advertising and publication of advertisements for cheating services. Cooperation will be pursued with agencies and relevant actors within and beyond the EU.</p> <p>The National Forum for Research Integrity is coordinated by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA). Part of its agenda is to help reconcile the increasing cross-border research collaboration with the nationally confined standards and remedies for addressing allegations and proven cases of research misconduct. The guidelines for research integrity are captured in the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, first published in 2014 and revised in 2019.</p>
LT	<p>The Law on Science and Studies (2009) mandates the academic community to comply with the Code of Academic Ethics which is prepared and approved by higher education institutions in line with the recommendations of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures. All HEIs have Academic Ethics Commissions and Academic Ethics Codes. BA and MA theses can be defended only after they have gone through the plagiarism detection system. Doctoral students must sign a declaration of good faith stating that the research is free from plagiarism and co-authorship.</p>

MT	<p>The guidelines by the National Council for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) for the Internal and External Quality Assurance require that each institution has procedures and policies for integrity issues. Regular quality assurance audit cycles measure the effectiveness of each HEI.</p> <p>Malta aims to ensure the authenticity of certification in all education institutions by using Bitcoin blockchain which works on a distributed ledger system that practically makes it impossible to create a false transaction or certification. Currently all certificates of Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) are published in paper and digital version and can be instantly verified through any BlockCerts verification portal. MCAST uses rigorous methods to fight plagiarism.</p>
NM	<p>Northern Macedonia is in early stage of development in academic integrity. Except for the national plagiarism system no other measures or policies in academic integrity are in place on the national level and very few on institutional level.</p>
PL	<p>The Law on higher education and science, in force in 2018, introduced measures for academic integrity, identifying the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the disciplinary procedures, and the details of these procedures e.g. the possibility of a financial penalty. The actors are: the university disciplinary ombudsmen and the disciplinary ombudsmen appointed by the Minister. The adjudication is made by university disciplinary committees, the disciplinary committee at the General Council for Science and Higher Education and the minister's disciplinary committee. Rectors have the right of mediation before launching the investigation.</p> <p>The Unified Antiplagiarism System (JSA) is the mandatory antiplagiarism system for all universities and PhD awarding organisations (2019). The theses and doctoral dissertations are checked against the National Repository of Written Theses (ORPPD), Polish-language Internet resources through the search engine (NEKST), and Wikipedias, and the online journal of legal acts (ISAP). The system is accessible via the Internet for thesis supervisors and academic administration employees (https://jsa.opi.org.pl). The system works in a cluster of a hundred servers managing over 30 terabytes of data which makes it the biggest system of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in terms of number of end users, the number of servers used by a single system, and the size of data being processed.</p>

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