Adherence to the principles of academic integrity in the educational and scientific environment of higher education institutions

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Abstract
This article analyses the concept of academic integrity in terms of quality culture. The aim is to contribute to the competitiveness of European education by ensuring its quality through the awareness of the need to develop a culture and disseminate best practices in this area. It is widely acknowledged that academic integrity is currently facing a crisis, which can be attributed to the increasing availability and use of online information resources and technologies that allow for the free dissemination of intellectual property results to the Ukrainian scientific and educational community. The Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions to Support the Principles of Academic Integrity cover the mechanism for maintaining academic integrity in Ukraine. These guidelines are based on six main blocks and were developed as part of the SAIUP Project for Promoting Academic Integrity in Ukraine with the support of the US Embassy. The analysis of international experience demonstrates that developing practical skills for high-quality academic writing is a complex process that requires constant and persistent effort. This text considers and analyses the principles of successful academic writing training. Academic integrity is widely recognised as a fundamental aspect of personal development, character stability, and moral consistency. This text presents ways to improve academic integrity in the preparation of written works by higher education students.

Keywords: quality of education, ensuring academic integrity, higher education, educational activities, students
Дотримання принципів академічної добросчесності в освітньо-науковому середовищі ЗВО

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Анотація
У статті проаналізовано поняття «академічна добросчесність» з огляду на культуру якості, яка сприяє підвищенню конкурентоспроможності європейської освіти завдяки забезпеченню її якості через усвідомлення необхідності розвивати культуру і поширити найкращий досвід у цій галузі. Встановлено, що особливо актуальною криза академічної добросчесності постала в умовах сьогодення у зв’язку із розвитком, впровадженням та широким використанням інформаційних інтернет-ресурсів та технологій для подання у вільному доступі результатів інтелектуальної власності серед української наукової та освітньої спільноти. З’ясовано, що механізм дотримання академічної добросчесності в Україні із врахуванням положень Проекту сприяння академічної добросчесності в Україні – SAIUP за підтримки Посольства США висвітлений у Методичних рекомендаціях для закладів вищої освіти з підтримки принципів академічної добросчесності, в основу якого закладено шість основних блоків. За результатами аналізу світового досвіду доведено, що напрацювання практичних навичок якісного академічного письма – то є складний процес, опанування якого потребує самовдосконалення, постійних і наполегливих зусиль. Розглянуто та проаналізовано засади успішного навчання академічному письму. Доведено, що академічна добросчесність у сучасному світі є тим основним варієнтом, який буде здатний формувати внутрішньої гармонії людини, стійкість її характеру та послідовність морального образу. Представлена спосіб вплинути на академічну добросчесність під час підготовки здобувачами вищої освіти письмових робіт.

Ключові слова: якість освіти, забезпечення академічної добросчесності, вища освіта, освітня діяльність, студенти

Statement of the problem. The issue of academic integrity in the educational environment is of great importance in today’s society. The crisis of academic integrity has become particularly relevant due to the widespread use of internet information resources and technologies that provide free access to intellectual property results among the Ukrainian scientific and educational community. This information resources offer the opportunity to utilise scientific ideas from other researchers (Dmitrenko, et al., 2020; Gurevych, et al., 2019; Sikora, et al., 2022). The principles of academic integrity are honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility. These principles should be observed by all participants in the academic space. The lack of a deep understanding of academic integrity and the procedures that ensure it is the main reason for its emergence in Ukraine (Hubina, 2023; Hurevych, 2020). Academic integrity is a fundamental principle of state policy in the field of education and educational activity. For instance, Article 42 of the Ukrainian Law ‘On Education’ defines academic integrity as a set of ethical principles and rules established by law. These principles and rules should guide participants in the educational process during learning, teaching, and conducting scientific (creative) activities. The aim is to ensure confidence in learning outcomes and scientific (creative) achievements (Zakon Ukrainy «Pro osvitu», zatverdzhenyi Verkhovnoi radoiu Ukrainy vid 05.09.2017 r. № 2145-VIII, 2017). Analysis of recent research and publications. To promote academic integrity, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine created comprehensive guidelines

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for higher education institutions in October 2018 (Metodychni rekomendatsii dla zakladiv vyshchoi osvity z pidtrymkym prynsypiv akademichnoi dobrochesnosti, 2018). These guidelines were the result of extensive discussions and debates on academic integrity. Additionally, a supplementary Extended Glossary of Academic Integrity Terms and Concepts was presented (Rozshyreny hlosarii terminiv ta poniat st. 42 «Akademichna dobrochesnist» Zakonu Ukrainy «Pro osvitu» (vid 5 veresnia 2017 r.). The glossary provides clear and accessible definitions, serving as a useful guide for both teachers and students in higher education institutions. These materials were developed as part of the Supporting Academic Integrity in Ukraine Project (SAIUP), with support from the US Embassy. The Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions to Support the Principles of Academic Integrity (Metodychni rekomendatsii dla zakladiv vyshchoi osvity z pidtrymkym prynsypiv akademichnoi dobrochesnosti, 2018) cover the mechanism for maintaining academic integrity in Ukraine. The guidelines are based on six main blocks and were developed with the support of the US Embassy as part of the SAIUP Project.

The first section is titled ‘Acquisition of competences in academic integrity and skills of quality academic writing by students. It discusses the competences necessary for research and teaching staff to maintain academic integrity, which should be mastered by higher education students. The section also explains methods for teaching students proper academic writing.

The second section provides recommendations for working with teaching staff. In particular, the ways of motivating teachers, the requirements for them and how to create an atmosphere of academic integrity in the institution.

The third section is devoted to the sanctions that can be imposed on teachers and students for violations of academic integrity.

The fourth section provides recommendations on the establishment of a code of academic ethics and an ethics commission of a higher education institution to improve internal integrity procedures. The fifth section offers guidance to institutions regarding the requirements for written work to ensure academic integrity. Additionally, this section provides methodological recommendations on how to defend written works.

The sixth block of the Methodological Recommendations is devoted to the peculiarities of check-

ing for academic plagiarism of dissertations and their public defence (Hurevych, 2020).

The aim of the article is to analyse how participants in the educational and research process can ensure compliance with the principles of academic integrity to improve the quality of education in higher education institutions.

It is important to note that academic integrity is the foundation of a virtuous academic environment in higher education institutions. All members, including research and teaching staff and students, must understand the need to comply with the principles of academic integrity (Gromov, et al. 2020; Infobrajka: taksonomiia Bluma). Academic integrity builds trust between colleagues, employers, customers of educational and scientific services, sponsors, grantors, and other stakeholders. The availability of intellectual property can attract the best students, teachers, and researchers, who will contribute to the reputation, sustainable development, and competitiveness of the higher education institution in the educational field.

The Results of the Research. Developing practical skills of high-quality academic writing is a complex process that requires self-improvement, constant and persistent efforts. Successful teaching of academic writing should be based on the following principles:

- The inclusion of academic writing should be a separate component in educational programmes. Specifically, bachelors should be taught the basics of academic writing, including the inadmissibility of plagiarism, the ability to formulate and prove their own thoughts and conclusions, and text formatting in accordance with standards. Students can acquire more advanced skills in developing their own author’s style when writing a final qualification work (project) as full-fledged research of the chosen topic. For postgraduate students, important issues include academic writing in a foreign language and the structure of scientific articles.

- Teaching academic writing within a specific discipline should include the preparation of written assignments. If the academic writing course is separate, it may be taught by a different teacher. However, students should be able to apply the tools they have mastered in this course when preparing an assignment in another discipline. A separate writing course should not be perceived in isolation from the context of another discipline and the needs of the student within it.
- The essence, features, and reasons for the harmfulness (inadmissibility) of plagiarism should be explained at the beginning of the discipline.
- It is important to pay attention to the detailed explanation of the requirements for a written assignment. Provide a detailed explanation of the requirements for written assignments. Vague and insufficient requirements are a common complaint among Ukrainian students.
- Sanctions for plagiarism should be imposed only after the instructor has made sure that students understand how to avoid plagiarism; sanctions should be appropriate to the extent of plagiarism and should be actually applied to most offences, otherwise there is injustice to those who are not sanctioned for integrity violations and to those who have done their work in good faith (they receive the same grade as the “offenders”).
- Research shows that insufficient training in the necessary techniques for completing assignments is a much more significant reason for plagiarism than any intentional deception. Therefore, it is important to provide clear explanations and learning opportunities to students while respecting their dignity. It is also important to avoid assuming that students who struggle with assignments are not interested in learning.
- The preparation of tasks for independent written work should be as specific as possible. This can be achieved by providing a narrow question for the student to answer, specifying the methods to be used, providing specific statistical information, or assigning sources such as publications, videos, or films for the student to study. Another effective approach is to assign an analysis and comparison of two qualitative works that argue opposing points of view on a particular issue.
- Submitting questions for the exam based on the content of specific sources studied during the semester.
- The Use of Bloom’s taxonomy in formulating tasks of the third and higher levels; answers to tasks formulated through verbs of the first two levels can be easily copied from the Internet; Bloom’s system is based on the nesting doll principle: completion of a higher level task is possible only through mastering the relevant information of lower levels; that is, if a teacher offers a task to assess certain information, a qualitative answer to it will inevitably show knowledge and understanding of the material (Infografika: taksonomia Bluma).

- The task requirements and assessment criteria should be clearly explained.
- Non-standard and creative tasks should be developed, and tasks should be updated regularly.
- Examples of finished works should be provided to higher education students, and discussions should be held with them regarding quality and poor academic writing.

The most effective measures for avoiding plagiarism are to process unique data, work with detailed sources, clearly identify sources and their usage, correctly cite borrowed ideas or information, and provide a moral assessment of actions in line with professional norms.

In recent years, academic integrity in Ukraine has become recognised by the educational and scientific community, although it was previously a novelty. The implementation of academic integrity principles in Ukrainian higher education institutions aims to enhance the quality of education and the reputation of these institutions. This, in turn, will increase their rating, enable recognition of university diplomas at the European and global levels, and enhance the competitiveness of their graduates (Hubina, 2023; Oliynyk, 2023).

Academic integrity is a crucial aspect of personal and moral character. Higher education plays a significant role in promoting intellectual dignity and respect for diverse opinions and ideas through teaching and research. This fulfils its social mission (Satsyk).

Academic integrity requires higher education students, academic staff, and researchers to adhere to the principles of honesty and integrity in their work and studies. It prohibits plagiarism, cheating, and the unauthorized use of others’ work. According to an international study that surveyed respondents from various parts of the world, including Ukraine, academic fraud is most prevalent in our country, while US representatives are least likely to engage in such misconduct (Satsyk).

To increase integrity, it is important to promote good educational practices in higher education institutions where they have been insufficiently implemented in the past. This requires meeting the following prerequisites:
1) Sustainable results in implementing academic integrity norms are only achievable if the institution’s management makes persistent efforts to promote these values. As resolving this issue is not a quick fix, it is insufficient for a university to simply adopt a code
of ethics or subscribe to a plagiarism detection system and report that the problem has been solved.

2) Academic staff should possess suitable qualifications in modern academic writing, knowledge of fair and unfair teaching practices, their causes, and tools for responding. Additionally, they should have experience in editing texts with elements of plagiarism. Therefore, it is necessary to organise training for academic staff on this issue.

3) Furthermore, it is important to motivate academic staff to work on the basis of academic integrity. The reluctance of educators to address these concerns is not unique to Ukraine, but is also prevalent in many other countries.

4) One solution is to openly discuss academic integrity with colleagues. Keeping the issue silent will not lead to a resolution. It is recommended that department colleagues regularly share their experiences with implementing best practices and discuss this matter as a team every one to two months.

5) Higher education students should be informed about the policies of the educational institution to foster a sense of honesty within the academic community. It is important to explain the benefits of integrity and motivate students to uphold the high values of the academic community, which enable the preservation and creation of new knowledge about the surrounding reality.

6) The ability to plan and conduct educational activities that effectively assist higher education students in avoiding plagiarism.

7) The ability to identify instances of plagiarism in texts.

To improve academic integrity when higher education students prepare written works, it is recommended to conduct at least one intermediate review of a draft version of the written work with feedback and recommendations. Additionally, structuring the work in a timely manner with intermediate checks of each stage of its preparation can be helpful.

- Provide students with clear criteria for evaluating their work, enabling them to review each other's work objectively.
- Avoid publicly announcing to higher education students that plagiarism has been found in their work, as this statement can cause a defensive reaction. Instead, demonstrate how to revise and check the revised work.
- If possible, demonstrate to higher education students the results of checking their texts in text borrowing detection systems, which can be a useful tool (Nikolaiev, 2018).

Academic integrity encompasses more than just plagiarism. It is important to maintain objectivity and avoid biased language. It involves trust, responsibility, and mutual respect within the scientific community, where justice and honesty are crucial.

Conclusions and Prospects for Future Research. In the context of global higher education standards, academic integrity is a crucial tool for ensuring the quality of higher education. It is essential that all participants in the educational process accept and support the principles of academic integrity, as this is a guarantee of a good employment record and the foundation of a successful life strategy.

In the research field, citation errors may occur due to violations of academic ethics. Such errors can lead to distortion of scientometric indicators of scientists and scientific publications, thus violating the rights of the real authors.

The correct citation of translations is a controversial issue. This is because the process of translation inevitably introduces changes in the understanding of the text, which can distort the author's original position.

In some fields of knowledge, including management and administration, it is common for Ukrainian educators and researchers to present their publications or reviews as a collection of fragments borrowed from various sources. Unfortunately, these fragments are not always correctly formatted, even when they are direct quotations, resulting in confused references.

The concept of self-plagiarism remains controversial in academic circles. According to Ukrainian legislation, self-plagiarism is defined as the publication, in part or in full, of one's own previously published scientific results as new scientific results (Zakon Ukrainy «Pro osvitu», zatverdzhenyi Verkhovnoi radoiu Ukrainy vid 05.09.2017 r. N° 2145-VIII, 2017). Improving academic integrity requires possessing tools and methods for monitoring its observance, such as using regulatory documents developed by the educational institution.

Academic responsibility measures are effective when all participants in the educational process understand the rules, grounds, and procedures for bringing academic responsibility. Clear and understandable procedures for reviewing cases and mak-
ing decisions regarding alleged violations are crucial for ensuring academic integrity. Based on the above, it can be concluded that academic integrity is a comprehensive concept. It refers not only to the general corporate culture of the higher education institution but also to the internal culture of the individual.

Academic integrity means the ability to honestly admit mistakes, take responsibility for learning and research, use only verified data, avoid plagiarism, and correctly cite the work of others. There are six fundamental values that are important to every researcher: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. Honesty is the basis for the provision of educational services. All the following key values can be realized through honesty. Trust means that all participants in the scientific process can share their thoughts and ideas without fear. Fairness implies clear requirements and transparent assessment. It involves treating others and their work with dignity and consideration. Respect is essential in the academic environment and should be reciprocal. Courage is also important, as it requires standing up for the core values of academic integrity and taking action when necessary.

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