

Disparities in sanctions and practices across Europe for addressing violations to academic integrity

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Abstract:

Relatively little research has been conducted to compare sanctions applied to students in different institutions for various types of academic misconduct. The paper first examines previous research that explored ways of standardising sanctions. A new analysis is then presented of data collected from higher education institutions in Europe during two research projects that operated between 2010 and 2017. The analysis reveals disparities between and within European countries in sanctions applied for breaches to academic integrity, mainly focusing on bachelor and master's degree levels. The study also explores institutional decision-making procedures for deciding on the penalties.

Part of this new analysis was first presented by the author in a workshop at the International Center for Academic Integrity conference held in Athens, Greece in September 2016. This paper extends and develops the 2016 analyses, presents new findings and then suggests reasons for the observed differences in approach in different parts of Europe. Strategies are proposed that can be adopted by any educational institution to promote fairness, transparency and consistency in student experiences and outcomes when academic misconduct is suspected.

Keywords: Academic integrity, higher education, plagiarism, penalties, sanctions.