

Towards understanding Academic Integrity Policy amongst Hungarian Higher Education Institutions

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Introduction

Hungary did not escape the plagiarism crisis that involved the politicians of many countries at the start of the 2010s, however, this at least moved the issue into the public eye. The response to the phenomena [plagiarism] by universities was fulfilled by the creation of ethical rules and multiple plagiarism-detecting software, and Hungarian higher education believed the issue to be solved.

The author has studied plagiarism since 2010, more broadly as academic integrity at the University of Óbuda, where he was the first in the country to coordinate the implementation a complex plagiarism-finding system, that was then integrated with the university's digital repository of academic papers.

The university in question, mainly due to cost issues, would have liked to extend this solution to plagiarism to the national level. This came to be in 2017, when the Hungarian Rectors' Conference (HRC) created a working group to coordinate tasks regarding plagiarism. The author is a member of this committee; thus, an opportunity arose to create a national-level survey of the competencies and attitudes of Hungarian higher education institutions, with the support of the HRC.

The Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education Across Europe (IPPHEAE) conducted from 2010-2013 was a European-level study, however, it did not produce significant results for Hungary. Through a series of e-mails with the author of the IPPHEAE report - Plagiarism Policies in Hungary, its Hungarian and English questions were obtained, and it provided a starting point for the current survey (Irene Glendinning personal communication, March 20, 2018, Re: Questionnaires). Furthermore, valuable information from the "Surveying academic integrity: Methodological issues and lessons learned" workshop at the 2019 ENAI conference in Vilnius further aided the development of the survey, largely in the areas of survey design and risk assessment/mitigation.

Research aims and objectives

The survey has multiple simultaneous goals. It was conceived to fill a gap in the information on academic integrity at the national level of Hungarian higher education, paying attention to the currently implemented anti-plagiarism practices and software, as well as to the operation of their repositories. The survey also had the goal of serving as an assessment of the

implementation of a possible national level system in the future, as demonstrated by good examples from Slovakia and Slovenia. (Kravjar, J.- Noge, J., 2013, Ojsteršek et. al, 2014)

Methodology

The first step of the survey was to find and contact the institutions with an online survey form. The survey comprised elements from the following international surveys: AIRS (The Academic Integrity Rating System), IPPHAEA, SEPPHAI. The document titled *Electronic Detection of Plagiarism in Finnish Higher Education Institutions 2013* provided a starting point for questions regarding the creation of a centralized national system.

Throughout the summer, HRC sent a letter to the rectors of higher education institutions, which contained the objectives of the survey, its structure, highlighted the importance of informed consent, and asked them to designate someone to fill the survey out at their institution. The designated person received the survey at the beginning of September as a link.

Informed consent was extremely important throughout the survey process, since the respondents fear of damage to their reputation had to be minimized. The survey was not done anonymously. This was reasoned to be appropriate, as the committee is interested in personally visiting the institutions in the future to conduct more precise research, thus we asked for a personal contact, who tended to be the one filling out the survey. After the closure of the survey, data was pseudo-anonymized, and stored in this form. The results are published in aggregated form.

The Online survey was sent in a form that could be saved and continued, through the Evasys system used by universities. (This provides sufficient security for the data). This was necessary due to the complexity and length of the survey. In the interest of more precise data, we asked respondents to contact those colleagues (leader, librarian, etc.) if they believe that someone is more informed or better able to answer a question regarding the institution, in the same way as AIRS.

Structure of the Survey

The survey encompassed three broad categories. The first was scientific ethics, more specifically the institutional rules, procedures, and sanctions regarding plagiarism. The second was institutional repositories, where we asked questions about the storage of students' thesis. The third section contained questions regarding anti-plagiarism systems, with emphasis on the need for such systems. In the case that certain institutions already use such software, we asked about experience with the system, as well as evaluating further needs.

Due to the length and complexity of the survey, the survey email included a unique identifier (token), that ensured that the respondent could stop and save their progress and provided the

opportunity to finish the survey at a later date.

The answering of the survey took much longer than expected, and involved multiple reminders sent to the respondents. The initial plan had the deadline as October 1st; however, this was extended as multiple responses arrived citing a high workload at the start of the semester, making it difficult to finish on time. There were also technical problems throughout the process, thus, after multiple extensions, the data collection was closed at the beginning of December 2019.

Survey Completion Results

“Higher education programmes in Hungary are offered by universities and colleges. In accordance with the common European higher education principles, Hungary introduced the three-cycle degree structure in 2006 (BA/BSc, MA/MSc, and PhD/DLA).” (HRC, 2015)

The number of higher-education institutions in Hungary is 65, the different categories are shown by tables 1 and 2. After multiple contacts, eventually 52 institutions delegated a survey respondent, out of which 50 completed the survey. Thus, the overall completion rate out of Hungarian higher education is 77%.

Table 1: Recognised higher education institutions in Hungary (as of August 6, 2019)

Categories	Completed Survey/ Total Number of Institutions	Number of Students
State (public) universities	21/21	199.664
Private universities	5/8	29.769
State universities of applied sciences	5/5	31.741
Private universities of applied sciences	4/4	10.302
State colleges of education	1/1	361
Private colleges of education	14/26	9.624

Source: (Educational Authority, Higher Education Institutions in Hungary, HRC)

Table 2: Recognised higher education institutions in Hungary by Managing Authority

Managing Authority	Completed Survey/ Total Number of Institutions	Number of Students
State	27/27	231 766
Private (non-religious)	10/14	26 228
Private (religious)	13/24	23 467
Total	50/65	281 461

Source: (Educational Authority, Higher Education Institutions in Hungary, HRC)

Since there are large variations in the number of students at different institutions, the number of students at the institutions that completed the survey is used as a base-value. The data on student enrollment is from the official statistics on Hungarian higher education. The

newest data on student numbers for the 2019/20 fall semester will be made available at the beginning of January. The temporary numbers shown here are from the 2018/19 academic year. The temporary numbers shown here are from the 2018/19 academic year.

The students attending institutions that responded to the survey comprise 96% of Hungarian students in higher education.

The detailed analysis in line with the research plan is starting now, thus there will already be an opportunity to present preliminary results at the April conference.

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