

BRIDGING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, RESEARCH AND INTEGRITY IN BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

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Bridging Integrity in Higher Education, Business and Society (BRIDGE) is a new Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project (2020-1-SE01-KA203-077973) scheduled for 2020-2023. The project is coordinated from Uppsala University (Sweden) and includes five more partners from four other countries: Kherson National Technical University (Ukraine), Lithuanian Social Research Centre (Lithuania), Mendel University in Brno (Czech Republic), Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures (Lithuania), South East European University (North Macedonia).

Academic integrity, research integrity, integrity in business, and integrity in society are usually conceptualized as separate fields. In this holistic project, we seek to explore the place inbetween these fields and create bridges between them in order to reach a broader understanding of interrelated aspects of integrity within these areas as well as to drawing attention to interrelated skills and qualifications needed to act in accordance with academic integrity values. The target group of the project are early career researchers – master and doctoral students – and their supervisors.

The aim of the project is to prevent academic misconduct in research, business and society by establishing standard guidelines to better ensure academic and research integrity in practice and by development of the innovative flexible open educational resources including gamified cases that would make the guidelines more accessible for the target group.

In this presentation, we will give an overall presentation of the project and our intended outcomes. The presentation aims also to discuss the results of the first suboutput, a national report on the relationship between academic and research integrity on the institutional and the national level in the

partner countries as well as in the EU as a whole. The report also explores to what extent the concepts of academic and research integrity and ethics are used and addressed in national procedures, policies or guidelines. Within this study, different aspects of the concepts are elaborated as a building block for related intellectual outputs in the project.

The initial stage of design for national reports was based on desk research of existing documents, strategies, policies, and guidelines in relation to the national context of connection between academic integrity and research integrity. The focus of the desk research was the identification of national aspects of academic and research integrity, in order to develop the guidelines for standardization of the national report structure. The research study questions were three-dimensional as they were discussed in the context of the academic integrity, research integrity, and the connection between these two fields. Main research questions attempted to investigate how academic and research integrity are defined within national practices, whether these definitions include positive or negative dimensions, and if the practices proposed are using preventive, reactive, or punitive strategies. Additionally, national resources such as guidelines and policies were investigated to draw a line on how academic integrity is connected to research integrity.

The reports from the partner countries indicate that academic and research integrity are either vaguely defined or definitions are very limited in scope. The summary of the main conclusions drawn from the results of desk research in partner countries is provided below:

- In the last few years, the awareness of academic and research integrity rises and the concepts have gained importance in all countries. Desk research shows that despite the lack of strategy and

documentation of academic integrity and research integrity at national levels, there are widespread initiatives in institutional level to document academic and research integrity concepts and procedures, as well as to develop educational programs to raise the awareness of academic integrity (e.g. Sweden).

- Neither academic integrity, nor research integrity are clearly defined in national documents and the content of these concepts is vague. The concepts of academic or research integrity in national or institutional documents are mentioned together with principles of integrity, trust, honesty, truth, respect, transparency etc. as well as plagiarism prevention and the breaches of academic or research integrity.
- The desk research results show that there is still strong orientation towards negative detection and reaction strategies in most project countries, e.g. punitive disciplinary measures are frequently used in national and institutional documents. Breaches of academic or research integrity are related to sanctions and penalties in most cases and rarely related to education.
- Positive prevention measures used in project countries are guidelines, recommendations, codes of ethics, plagiarism prevention measures, accreditation of educational programs, education and information measures, etc. with plagiarism prevention being one of the most commonly used positive preventive strategies in the field of academic integrity.