

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STRATEGIES: POSITIVE, PREVENTATIVE AND PUNITIVE

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## KEY WORDS

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academic integrity, contract cheating, student success, strategies, student survey

Our presentation will focus on the key findings from our Academic Integrity Fellowship which took place in 2020. We presented our initial findings at the 2020 ENAI conference and we are now returning a year later to present our final findings. Our presentation will report key findings concerning the three strands of our project – positive, preventative and punitive strategies.

Our first strand centred on developing a positive environment which encourages students in Higher Education to study with integrity. This is necessary to ensure that students understand what is meant by ‘academic integrity’ and ‘good practice’ and to foster a sense of pride in being able to demonstrate this at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Looking at recent research (Bretag et al, 2019; Harper et al 2018; Alin, 2020; Amigud and Lancaster 2020), we examined positive teaching strategies to enhance good practice and promote student success. Part of the research for this strand involved the use of small focus groups which were run by our student researchers. While some of the questions asked were similar to those in the main student survey, these focus groups enabled us to probe more deeply regarding key aspects. These findings have also informed our recommendations in terms of teaching and learning, to further support student success.

Our second strand involved ensuring preventative strategies as the sector tries to keep pace with the rise in contract cheating and develop measures to counter it by being explicit to students about the inherent risks of using these services (Gullifer and Tyson, 2014; Medway et al, 2018; Morris 2018). In this part of the presentation we will share key insights from the Academic Integrity student survey which we ran in November to December 2020 at the

University of Leeds. Through a systematic literature and policy review undertaken in the preparatory stages of our project, we identified several key areas that we wished to investigate with the students. Having examined the survey undertaken by Bretag and Harper (2018), we included similar questions to enable some comparison with the situation in Australia, but we made several changes so that we could best examine the situation at the University of Leeds. The survey was designed so that the data can be examined in a variety of ways including (but not limited to) UG/PG, year of study, School/Faculty, Home/International students and Gender. Being able to analyse the responses in this level of detail has allowed us to make a series of recommendations at School/Faculty and University level. The results have clarified students’ attitudes to academic integrity and made us aware of the work that is required in order to further develop their understanding of academic integrity and how this might be delivered, for example using a drip-feed approach, making more guidance, discussion and practice available. It has led to a review of the role of the Academic Personal Tutor.

Our third strand focused on punitive strategies not only for the student who has plagiarized but also in combating the existence of external agencies which threaten the positive behaviours that we wish to foster. We have evaluated the key issues raised by QAA Academic Integrity Charter and our recommendations (QAA 2020). In our presentation we will discuss examples of best practice currently undertaken at the University of Leeds and also our recommendations to senior management in order to further embed a culture of academic integrity.

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