

# ENSURING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY DURING EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING

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It is aimed to discuss concerns related to academic integrity during distance learning. To achieve this, we seek to present the Guidelines for Ensuring Academic Integrity during Emergency Remote Teaching (Guidelines), developed in 2020 because of urging to address pandemic issues in higher education.

The Guidelines were designed to help Lithuanian higher education institutions (HEIs), especially teaching staff, to prevent observed violations of academic integrity and to identify opportunities that would still safeguard high education quality and lead to fairer remote study process.

The Guidelines are based on the insights of the survey “Challenges of Distance Learning for Academic Ethics during the COVID-19 Pandemic” carried out in Autumn 2020 by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures in Lithuania. Lithuanian HEIs revealed main challenges and the ways to solve the problems of organising studies remotely during the pandemic and turned to become the main aspects that were discussed in the Guidelines.

First, we carried out a survey of Lithuanian HEIs by asking to specify challenges and possible solutions in online teaching during the pandemic. 13 out of 39 Lithuanian HEIs filled in the questionnaire and provided open-ended answers. Core questions were sent to main official correspondence emails of HEIs. Internally, the institution gathered experiences from members of its academic community (mainly lecturers) and presented the answers for us in a summarized form. We analysed survey results and complemented it with literature review using qualitative content analysis. The literature review helped to overview

good practice in this regard and to enrich the overall study. This allowed us to develop comprehensive and up-to-date Guidelines.

The HEIs identified the main challenges of student misbehaviour, such as cheating in individual assignments (e.g. colluding with other students, unknown persons; use of unauthorised aid; plagiarism); apparent culture of impaired communication (e.g. use of curse words; fake (only login-based) attendance; distracting by changing virtual background); violation of intellectual property rights (e.g. making unauthorised screen shots of an exemplified other’s work; unauthorised recording of a teacher’s lecture; unauthorised circulation of teaching material). As consequences for such student misbehaviour, HEIs listed warning notice, exam failure and some other penalties.

Given the fact that Guidelines were publicized in early Winter 2020, we further studied how Lithuanian HEIs accept Guidelines. During December 2020, HEIs ( $N = 50$ ) were very progressive in absorbing these Guidelines. Guidelines were among the most popular ones in academia in terms of spreading them out to academia (46 per-cent within one month; 36 per-cent intended in 2021) while one third of the HEIs (32 per-cent) have already adopted these Guidelines and 10 per-cent of them are going to pursue their adoption in 2021. This statistic testifies a significant relevance and contribution of Guidelines to distance learning to promote academic integrity.

We were also invited to introduce Guidelines to several HEIs. The latter induced additional sharing of teaching experiences and discussions.

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