EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS COLLABORATE IN FACING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY THREATS (FAITH)

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Abstract

Academic integrity (AI) is fundamental to teaching, learning, and research (Bretag, 2016). Promoting AI boosts the quality of an institution's educational provision by maintaining six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage, according to the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI, 2021). The European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI) "Academic Integrity Policies" working group believes that such an approach helps to prepare individuals to contribute to society in an ethical manner (Academic Integrity Policies, n.d.). A culture of academic integrity and sustainable change are achieved by designing and implementing effective policies (Morris, 2016). Relevant to this, the goal of this presentation is to announce the ongoing FAITH project to the academic integrity community and to invite conference participants to provide feedback, express their needs with respect to the project outputs and invite them to share their ideas which might be useful for the project team. Attachment to ethical values in lifelong learning will be enhanced if individuals familiarise themselves with the principles of academic integrity during their student journey. HE brings together students from across the globe to study. Mobility of students is encouraged to enrich learning, facilitate the exchange of culture and ideas, and develop second/foreign language skills (L2/FL). Yet, avoiding plagiarism is difficult for students writing in a second/foreign language, especially when they face new educational expectations and institutional culture. International students arrive in host institutions with a wide range of preconceptions about academic conduct, largely based on their previous educational experiences, some of which may not align with the host institution's values and expectations. Even students studying in their own country struggle during the transition from school to HE. It is incumbent on every HE institution to exercise their duty of care to all students through the provision of suitable guidance and support, to ensure students maximise their opportunities and potential for success. Institutions should also ensure that in a diverse student population, no student is disadvantaged through discrimination on any grounds.

Policies should be carefully developed and implemented with the collaboration of all stakeholders. However, previous research by some ENAI members revealed serious problems with policies in many European HE institutions (e.g., Glendinning et al., 2022). The deficiencies in these policies can be seen as a threat to the realisation of AI and accordingly, to the quality of educational outcomes. AI policies should have three fundamental dimensions, namely detecting breaches of AI, reacting to unacceptable academic conduct, and promoting academic integrity values. Many policies focus on the detection and reaction dimensions. However, we believe that policies should prioritise education and deterrence, for creating and maintaining a sustainable culture of AI. The most frequent type of academic integrity breach in HE is plagiarism, but contract cheating is a growing threat. Student conduct can be influenced sustainably by raising the awareness level of all stakeholders in HE institutions. Therefore, policies should prioritise the deterrence dimension and formulate detection and reaction dimensions in a way that promotes academic integrity.

Considering the aforementioned issues, a consortium constituting of AI researchers from Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University (COMU), ENAI, University of Konstanz, University of Maribor, and University of Porto has been awarded project funding from the European Union for an Erasmus+ cooperation partnership in higher education entitled "Facing academic integrity threats (FAITH)". The FAITH project is coordinated by the COMU Centre for Academic Integrity and within three years aims to reach three main goals relating to the project results, as described below.

The project result entitled "Policy for good practice" aims to establish a benchmark for minimum standards for AI policies in Europe and beyond based on good practice internationally. For this purpose, consortium members will collect higher education academic integrity (HEAI) policies across Europe to create an HEAI policy corpus. We will analyse each AI policy and decide how much of the policy is detective, reactive or preventive to create a framework based on emerging themes. We will develop evidence-based guidelines for HE institutions that frame the detective, reactive, and deterrence perspectives of policies. Based on the guidelines, we will develop a webinar for HE policymakers on how to develop and benchmark effective AI policies.

The second project result, entitled "Proactive approach to deter academic misconduct", aims at providing evidence-based guidance and training materials on how to detect and deter inappropriate academic conduct in education. To achieve this goal, we will develop educational materials based on the policy framework and guidelines from the first project result. Our educational materials will be based on detection, reaction, and deterrence of academic misconduct and address students, teachers, and administrative staff including librarians and managers in HE institutions.

The third project result entitled "Support for victims of academic misconduct" promises the development of an interactive portal and support network to aid victims of unethical practice. The restorative perspective of AI will be delivered through an online discussion portal and a network of qualified advisors. The first stage of the portal is an ENAI platform for connecting victims of academic or research misconduct to suitably qualified advisors, which will be launched during ECAIP 2022 in Porto.

The FAITH consortium aims to disseminate the aims of the project at the ECAIP 2022 in Porto and will present the results during ECAIP 2024 in Canakkale, Turkey. In addition, two "learning, teaching, training activities" will be organised during the project in Maribor, Slovenia and Konstanz, Germany.

To conclude, the FAITH project prioritises a preventive approach by teaching academic writing skills to deter plagiarism and contract cheating. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to changed instruction methods, with increased concerns about academic misconduct. We are also 'promoting inter-connected higher education systems' as an additional priority in the FAITH project as it is easier for any institution or country to reduce academic misconduct by collaborating with others. Multi-disciplinary collaboration across institutions covering several countries with diverse cultural values is an effective way to

identify best practice models so that they can be adopted by others.

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