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Real-life example: Minister

See the attached presentation to see the complete example.

Date: 2019-05-03

## About this document

This document is a real-life example illustrating importance of the values of academic integrity in professional life. It was created as a part of *Toolkit for cross-sector cooperation in terms of academic integrity* within Erasmus+ project.

It is a ready-to-use case study accompanied with didactic notes and discussion questions and/or other tasks for the audience. Find more case studies in [ENAI database of educational materials](http://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/all-materials/?key-words%5b%5d=real-life-example).

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# Real-life example: Minister

# Basic information

* **Target audience:** students, teachers, young/future decision makers
* **Study field**: any
* **Summary:** Student plagiarised in her master thesis which ruined her career many years later. The story is based on a real case, which is exposed at the end of the example.
* **Objective:** Understand consequences of fraudulent behaviour in later professional reputation and the importance of honest behaviour.
* **Length:** up 60 minutes with all proposed activities

# Message of the story

A mistake done during the school years, even in a desperate situation, can ruin successful career many years later.

Denial your mistakes and not facing them straightly might result into deeper troubles.

# Material

* This presentation to be projected
* Last page of this document – the text of the story, as handouts for the audience

# Teaching methods and activities for the audience

* Discussion over the presented case study.
* The presentation contains multiple activities for the audience:
  + Press conference (as an ice-breaker)
  + General discussion over the story
  + Ethical committee (for advance audience)
* Please select or adjust the proposed activities according to the need of the audience.

# The story

The story is on the following separate page.

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# Agronomy Studies

It‘s the beginning of the new millennium. Internet and digital is very slowly getting to every-day life of people of small country named Lelkoland. Even the universities are using internet and computers in very limited way.

Kate is a young woman from Lelkoland, the first one from her family who went to study to university. She chose a study field in agronomy because it’s close to traditional business of her family.

In the middle of her studies she became pregnant and then gave birth to a beautiful baby. Her family greatly supported her, so she decided to continue in her studies. Of course it was very hard to study with a little baby, anyway Kate was a hard-worker and she was managing it quite well.

Before the end of her studies she became very exhausted. For her master thesis she was performing research on a distant rabbit farm where she had to travel every day. Being tired by the research she just decided to give up writing literature review for the thesis. She is doing all the measurements and analysis, right? She doesn’t need to spend dozens of nights in library. She’d rather be with her baby who is growing so fast…

Kate found a few years old thesis from the same study field, on a very similar topic. The literature review was written really well, she just changed something here and there, deleted few needless chapters and wrote by herself few chapters demanded by her supervisor. Kate successfully defended her thesis, her supervisor and opponent were satisfied with it, claiming that the literature review was well written and research well performed and analyzed.

Kate’s thesis is stored in university library. Starting with the next year after Kate’ s graduation, all theses at the university are submitted electronically published in publicly available online database.

# Law Studies

The year of graduation is very happy for Kate – she meets a man of her dreams and marries him. He is an ambitious man and a lawyer. This inspires her and she wish to become a lawyer as well realizing that she doesn’t want to work in the field of agronomy that she previously studied.

Kate enrols to a law school. Soon she becomes pregnant and the scenario from her previous study repeats. Despite having a great support from her husband, the study and motherhood are demanding. At the end of her studies she repeats what worked when she studied agronomy: she uses texts written by somebody else in her thesis.

The law school doesn’t use any text-matching software and Kate graduates successfully receiving compliments both from her supervisor and opponent.

# Few Years Later

Young ambitious woman Kate with two university degrees joins politics. Through local politics she climbs up to national level. Her party wins the elections, the leader of this party becomes a prime minister and appoints Kate for minister of justice.

Journalists are curious about the new minister, who almost nobody heard about her before. They take a look into her thesis from the law school which publicly available online… and find obvious plagiarism from many sources!

They also visit library of the first university and compare Kate’s thesis with older ones on a similar topic. They find a thesis defended few years before Kate’s one: out of 25 pages of Kate’s literature review, 16 are identical with this older thesis.

Obvious double plagiarism of the new minister is the breaking news of the next days.