

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE IN UKRAINE

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Abstract. The article examines the role of academic integrity as a fundamental prerequisite for developing higher education and science in Ukraine, in the context of modern global requirements and integration into the international educational space. The main challenges are highlighted, notably the widespread occurrence of plagiarism, cheating, data falsification, and the insufficient awareness of ethical principles among participants in the educational process. Deficiencies in the current legislation regarding the prevention of academic fraud are analysed. The necessity of enhancing the normative-legal framework is emphasised, particularly through the adoption of a dedicated Law of Ukraine “On Academic Integrity”. Attention is devoted to the influence of technological progress, specifically artificial intelligence, on academic ethics and the potential for utilizing modern software to detect plagiarism and AI-generated texts. Promising directions for overcoming issues related to integrity violations are outlined: conducting educational outreach, establishing effective accountability mechanisms, and introducing the academic discipline “Academic Integrity” into educational curricula. A comprehensive approach to implementing ethical standards is proposed as a means of improving the quality of education and scientific research, preparing highly qualified specialists, and enhancing Ukraine's international reputation.

Key words: academic integrity, science, education, plagiarism, artificial intelligence, academic fraud, legislation, violations, responsibility.

Introduction. In the modern world, the quality of education is a key factor in the preparation of competitive specialists in any field of knowledge, capable of adapting to global challenges and contributing to scientific and technological progress. In the context of the rapid development of education and science, academic integrity remains a cornerstone of both educational and research activities. However, technological progress introduces its adjustments. Today, academic integrity extends beyond traditional issues such as plagiarism or scientific fraud, encompassing challenges related to the use of modern technologies, access to vast arrays of information, and the evolution of teaching and research methods. This makes it more complex and necessitates the search for new approaches to ensure its preservation.

Given Ukraine's aspirations to integrate into the European and global educational and scientific space, maintaining academic integrity is crucial. Without it, it is impossible to meet the international standards of educational quality enshrined in documents such as the

Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) [1] and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity Revised Edition (2017) [2]. These standards provide guidelines for creating a transparent and ethical academic culture.

Despite the regulatory framework, in particular the Laws of Ukraine “On Education” (Article 42) and “On Higher Education” (Article 16), which define academic integrity as a fundamental principle of the national education system, Ukrainian higher education faces numerous challenges in this area: plagiarism, cheating and falsification of data. This indicates a low level of awareness among students and teachers, tolerance of such phenomena and a lack of a systematic approach to overcoming them. One-off events such as plagiarism checks or training sessions do not create a lasting understanding of ethical norms. The problem affects all areas of knowledge and undermines confidence in education, the authority of science and the innovative development of Ukraine.

This topic is highly relevant as it reflects the most

significant changes that have taken place in the academic environment in recent decades. Understanding these changes and developing strategies to maintain academic integrity has become an integral part of the responsibilities of all participants in the education and research process. Only through joint efforts can we build a system that meets the challenges of the times and international standards.

The purpose of the article is to substantiate the importance of academic integrity as a fundamental prerequisite for the development of higher education and science in Ukraine, to identify key challenges and risks associated with violations of ethical norms in the modern academic environment, and to outline practical ways to overcome them with due regard for integration into the global educational space.

Research methods. The study of the role of academic integrity as a prerequisite for the development of education and science in Ukraine is based on the comparative legal method. The main focus is on a systematic analysis of the current legislation of Ukraine, bylaws and regulations, as well as international documents. Additionally, local regulations on academic integrity in force in Ukrainian higher education institutions are considered to assess institutional regulation.

The method of legal modelling is used to study the legal framework of academic integrity and its role in the development of education and science in Ukraine, and the comparative method is used to compare Ukrainian and international standards.

Results. The analysis revealed that academic integrity serves as a foundational condition for the development of higher education and science in Ukraine, aligning with global standards and facilitating integration into the international academic community. Key challenges identified include the widespread prevalence of plagiarism, cheating, data falsification, and a lack of awareness among educational stakeholders regarding ethical principles, which collectively undermine the quality of education and research. The study identified deficiencies in Ukraine's current legislative framework, particularly its limited capacity to address academic fraud comprehensively, highlighting the need for a specialized Law of Ukraine "On Academic Integrity" to unify standards and establish effective enforcement mechanisms.

Technological advancements, most notably the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), have been demonstrated to present both opportunities and threats to academic integrity. While AI enhances efficiency in data processing and learning, its misuse in generating texts exacerbates ethical dilemmas, necessitating updated detection tools and ethical guidelines. The research also underscored the inadequacy of sporadic measures, such as plagiarism checks or isolated training sessions, in fostering a sustainable culture of integrity. The integration of an "Academic Integrity" course into educational curricula has been identified as a systemic

intervention with the potential to enhance ethical awareness and reduce violations, as evidenced by international studies (e.g., McCabe & Trevino, 1993; Whitley, 1998; Bertram, Gallant & Drinan, 2006).

Proposed strategies to address these issues include legislative reform, widespread education, technological solutions for monitoring compliance, motivational incentives and clear accountability mechanisms. The findings of this study suggest that a holistic approach to embedding ethical standards can enhance the quality of education, strengthen Ukraine's international academic reputation, and produce competent professionals capable of meeting global challenges.

Discussion.

1. The concept and importance of academic integrity

The Law of Ukraine "On Education" (Art. 42) defines academic integrity as a set of ethical principles and rules established by law that should guide participants in the educational process during learning, teaching and conducting scientific (creative) activities [3]. The purpose of adherence to these principles is to ensure confidence in learning outcomes and scientific (creative) achievements. This encompasses not only the imperative for accurate citation and the prevention of plagiarism, but also the cultivation of a comprehensive culture of responsibility, transparency, honesty, and ethics within the dynamic relationship between "higher education students - teacher - higher education institution".

However, the definition provided is rather vague. For example, the lack of specificity as to which ethical principles or rules are meant leaves room for subjective interpretation, which may lead to different understandings of academic integrity by enforcement agencies. The definition focuses on traditional aspects, such as correct citation or avoiding plagiarism, but does not mention new forms of dishonesty, such as the use of AI to generate texts or paraphrasing. This makes the law somewhat outdated in the context of the rapid development of technologies that education is already facing. Furthermore, the definition is of a declarative nature, focusing on the goal of trust in results, yet the current legislation offers no practical mechanism for achieving this. It does not specify how to detect irregularities or foster a culture of integrity, especially in an environment where tolerance for cheating or borrowing is widespread in Ukraine. It also limits the relationship to three actors (students, teachers, institutions) and ignores the wider context - the role of administration, supervisors or external partners who influence the academic environment.

The International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) defines academic integrity as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: **honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage**. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action. The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity describes these core values in detail and provides examples of how to put them into practice on campuses, in classrooms, and in daily life. [4].

Concomitantly, these principles are deemed acceptable not only for the academic community of higher education institutions but also for participants in the

educational process at any level.

Instead, the European Network of Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, practices and a consistent system of values, that serves as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research and scholarship [5].

In other words, the approaches of ICAI and The European Network for Academic Integrity are more structured and universal, but their idealisation may make it difficult to adapt to the realities of the Ukrainian education system, which lacks a systemic culture of ethical behaviour.

In the context of the considered definitions of academic integrity, both Ukrainian legislation and international approaches, there is a need to move from a theoretical understanding to a practical understanding of ethical principles. Since the understanding of the content of the principles of academic integrity is necessary for every participant in the educational process. Their implementation and observance are perhaps the most important priority in higher education, as they contribute to the formation of an honest and transparent academic environment, improve the quality of education and science, and strengthen confidence in the results of education and research. Without it, it is impossible to ensure the development of critical thinking, innovation and professional ethics, which are the basis for successful business in the modern world. Violation of the principles of academic integrity destroys the educational system and has a negative impact on the quality of research [6, p. 52-56].

Therefore, based on the key values of academic integrity - honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage - it is worth considering their practical manifestations in the academic environment.

The first principle of academic integrity is honesty, which is the basis of trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Dishonesty damages the reputation of the academic community, violates the rights of its members and undermines the image of educational institutions. Knowledge is gained through intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research and professional activities [7, p. 16]. Honesty begins with each individual and extends to the community. Students and teachers should be honest with themselves and with each other. Trust is a value for the academic community and the basis for the exchange of ideas and the development of science. It arises gradually through honest actions, not words, and is essential for academic work [7, p. 18]. Educational institutions should promote trust by setting clear standards and supporting unbiased research. Teachers should set clear expectations and transparently assess work, and students should be responsible for completing it.

Trust in the results of others allows you to substantiate your own research, collaborate and protect copyright. Fairness in the interaction between students and teachers, as well as in the performance of administrative duties, means that everyone gets what they

deserve [7, p. 20]. Teachers act fairly by clearly setting expectations, responding to dishonesty, upholding integrity, and demonstrating it by example. They should use assessment that stimulates creative thinking and new possibilities. Students expect fair and transparent assessment and act fairly when doing their own work. Authors do when they cite correctly, and administrators do when they act with integrity.

Respect in the academic environment means equality of rights, consideration of interests and beliefs, courtesy and sensitivity. The success of scientific communities depends on respect for diverse opinions and methods of arriving at them [7, p. 22]. Productive learning environments encourage debate, alternative views and rigorous testing of knowledge. Respect should be reciprocal: students demonstrate it by actively participating, listening to others and striving to succeed, while inappropriate behaviour undermines it. Respect is a shared responsibility. Responsibility in the academic community means the willingness of individuals and groups to behave responsibly, to uphold standards of integrity and to respond to breaches of those standards. Everyone has a personal responsibility to uphold the principles of integrity in learning, teaching and research [7, p. 24]. It is both an individual duty and a collective effort that inspires others. Responsibility includes confronting violations and setting an example.

Courage, as a principle of academic integrity, is the willingness to uphold ethical standards even when it is difficult or risky to do so. It means openly confronting misconduct - whether plagiarism or fabrication - and speaking out despite pressure or fear of judgment. In an academic environment, courage is required both for students to honestly admit their mistakes or report the dishonesty of others, and for faculty to maintain fairness and transparency, even when this goes against common practice. This principle strengthens integrity by fostering a community where truth and ethics prevail over convenience or conformity.

2. Challenges of implementing the principles of academic integrity

In Ukraine, there is a lenient attitude towards violations of academic integrity, which has become a systemic problem in higher education and science. Participants in the educational process often appropriate other people's ideas - from individual passages and statements to entire works - ignoring the principles of authorship and ethical standards. The majority of student work is far from original: instead of proper reference to primary sources, there is misquotation, plagiarism or the use of artificial intelligence and technological tools to produce texts. Teachers and administrators of higher education institutions have repeatedly drawn the attention of the academic community and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to the extent of academic fraud and stressed the need for effective mechanisms to combat it. However, the problem is not limited to students: even degree candidates, who are supposed to be a model of integrity, are increasingly resorting to plagiarism, data fabrication or other forms of deception. Such disregard for

ethical standards not only undermines trust in Ukrainian education, but also devalues its quality, destroys the meaning of learning, and slows down scientific progress, depriving it of the innovative potential necessary for the country's development.

In the public consciousness, academic integrity is often limited to the fight against plagiarism, although other forms of academic fraud are no less serious for Ukrainian higher education: cheating, using cribs, presenting other people's work as one's own (downloaded from the Internet or made to order), borrowing texts without references, illegal translation, or circumventing anti-plagiarism systems through technical tricks. Academic integrity has the potential to transform this space, but change begins with the personal responsibility of everyone – students, teachers and university administrators. Unfortunately, many of those involved in the educational process still do not understand its nature, believing that it applies only to academics.

Thus, the implementation of the principles of academic integrity in Ukraine faces systemic challenges, such as the spread of plagiarism, fraud and lack of awareness among participants in the educational process, which undermines the quality of education and science. Overcoming these problems requires not only effective control mechanisms but also the formation of an ethical culture from an early age, which requires the joint efforts of all parties – from students to university administrations.

3. Forms of Academic Integrity Violations.

Although academic integrity is often associated with plagiarism in the public consciousness, the Law of Ukraine “On Education” covers a much wider range of violations, covering various aspects of educational and scientific activities. Specifically:

academic plagiarism – (partial or complete) disclosure of research (creative) results obtained by other persons as the results of their one's research (creativity) and/or reproduction of published texts (works of art) by other authors without attribution;

self-plagiarism – (partial or complete) disclosure of one's own previously published scientific results as new ones;

fabrication – making up data or facts used in the educational process or scientific research;

falsification – deliberate change or modification of existing data concerning the educational process or scientific research;

cribbing – making written work with the involvement of external sources of information, except for those permitted for use, in particular when assessing learning outcomes;

deception – deliberately providing false information about one's own educational (scientific, creative) activities or the organization of the educational process; forms of deception include academic plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, falsification and cribbing;

bribery – giving (receipt) or an offer to provide (receive) funds, property, services, benefits or any other benefits of a material or intangible nature by the participants of the educational process to obtain an

undue advantage in the educational process;

biased assessment – deliberate overestimation or underestimation of the assessment of learning outcomes of education seekers [3].

However, regardless of the forms of academic fraud used to imitate educational or research activities, they damage the authority and reputation not only of the participants in the educational and scientific process but also of the national scientific and educational system as a whole.

4. Consequences of academic fraud.

The consequences of academic dishonesty have a wide and varied impact on education, science and society. Students who plagiarise by avoiding independent work do not develop analytical skills, which limits their professional growth and makes their studies superficial and uninteresting. At the same time, tolerance of plagiarism by teachers and administrators demotivates honest students, undermines respect for teachers who accept unoriginal work, and creates the illusion of impunity.

At the level of academia, academic fraud leads to stagnation: falsification of data and plagiarism hinder intellectual and research progress, misinform the scientific community and impede innovation. Examples of dishonesty by prominent scientists or politicians only exacerbate the situation, giving students the idea that violating ethics is an acceptable way to succeed and encouraging them to sacrifice principles for profit. For faculty, it adds to the workload: identifying plagiarism, reviewing papers and reporting violations take time that could be spent on productive activities. Finally, universities where cheating is rampant lose their reputation among employers. As a result, the national education system is failing to produce qualified professionals, contributing to the brain drain and exacerbating the staffing crisis in key sectors such as education, medicine and engineering.

5. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Academic Integrity.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly penetrating education and science, transforming how students and researchers interact with information. While this opens up new opportunities, such as speeding up data retrieval and information processing, it also poses challenges to academic integrity. The ability of AI to generate or paraphrase text with high accuracy and speed raises questions about the ethics of its use, as the line between assistance and deception becomes blurred. How can AI be integrated into educational and scientific processes without violating ethical principles?

In our opinion, the key to solving this dilemma is a balanced approach, where AI acts as an assistant rather than a replacement for human effort. It can help explain complex concepts or processes, which is particularly valuable in the context of online learning where students are managing their own time. However, to preserve integrity, clear standards for AI use, technical tools for detecting generated texts, and the cultivation of a culture of critical and ethical attitudes toward

technology are essential. Only under these conditions can AI become an ally of academic ethics, enhancing efficiency without compromising honesty in education and research.

6. Directions for Overcoming Academic Integrity Challenges

Addressing the challenges of academic integrity requires a comprehensive approach combining regulatory, educational, technological and cultural measures. First and foremost, efforts should focus on improving the normative-legal framework. At this stage, it is advisable to emphasize the need to adopt a special Law of Ukraine “On Academic Integrity”, which would serve as the foundation for systematically resolving existing issues in this area.

Firstly, the existence of a clear legal framework would enable the unification of rules and standards of behaviour for all participants in the academic process - students, teachers, researchers and administrators of educational institutions. Secondly, a dedicated law would facilitate the creation of effective mechanisms to prevent and punish violations such as plagiarism, data falsification or corruption in education. Thirdly, it would demonstrate the state's support for a culture of integrity, which is crucial for instilling ethical principles in the younger generation and enhancing the international reputation of Ukrainian science and education. Fourth, in today's context, such a law is necessary to adapt to the challenges posed by technological progress. AI and other innovations raise new ethical dilemmas - from determining authorship to ensuring transparency in research processes. Without proper legal regulation, these issues will remain undefined, making oversight difficult and potentially leading to abuse.

The second direction is educational outreach. Regular training, seminars, and courses on academic integrity for higher education students, teachers, and university administrations will help raise awareness of the principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. It is important to promote not only an understanding of the rules but also their value for education and science, shifting the tolerant attitude toward violations of academic integrity. In addition, outreach efforts should include explanations of contemporary challenges, such as the ethical use of artificial intelligence, and the promotion of positive examples of integrity in academic settings. This will contribute to the development of a culture in which violations are not perceived as the norm but as an exception requiring immediate action.

The third direction is the systematic implementation of technology. The introduction of modern software to detect plagiarism and AI-generated texts, the creation of open databases of academic works, and the establishment of electronic platforms for the verification of assignments will make monitoring more effective. At the same time, it is necessary to develop standards for the ethical use of AI in education and research.

The fourth direction is fostering motivation, i.e., encouraging students and teachers to adhere to integrity principles through a system of incentives such as awards, research scholarships, or distinctions, which reinforces

integrity as a value. This encourages responsible behaviour.

Finally, the fifth direction is to establish accountability for violations of the principles of academic integrity. Taken together, these steps create a systemic approach to promoting academic integrity.

7. The need to introduce the academic discipline “Academic Integrity”

Deepening the understanding of the nature and principles of academic integrity, as well as their practical application, is an urgent need for the modern educational and scientific environment. To effectively combat plagiarism, falsification and other forms of academic dishonesty, it is not enough to limit ourselves to isolated measures such as checking texts for plagiarism or holding occasional educational seminars. Instead, it is necessary to systematically integrate the principles of integrity into the educational process, making them an integral part of the academic culture.

Many researchers emphasise that the development of a culture of academic integrity is the key to improving the quality of the educational process and creating a virtuous environment in higher education institutions [8, p. 218]. Developing this idea, it is advisable to emphasise a number of arguments that justify the need to introduce a separate academic discipline “Academic Integrity”. Studies (McCabe, Trevino, 1993 [9]; Whitley, 1998 [10]) show that systematic training reduces the propensity to cheat by influencing students' attitudes and preventing violations (Bertram Gallant, Drinan, 2006 [10]). International experience, such as the University of Toronto's modules or Harvard's resources, confirms the effectiveness of this approach, which can be adopted in Ukraine to change tolerance of dishonesty. It is worth noting that the academic discipline “Academic Integrity” can become a platform for the development of critical thinking and responsibility, helping students not only to learn formal rules but also to realise their value for personal growth and professional development.

In addition, the introduction of such a discipline will have a broader social effect. In the context of globalisation and Ukraine's integration into the European educational space, where academic integrity is a standard, preparing students to meet these standards will increase the competitiveness of domestic graduates. It will also contribute to the harmonisation of Ukrainian education with international practices, strengthening the credibility of our diplomas and scientific achievements. Thus, the discipline will not only be a tool to combat violations but also a step towards the modernisation of the education system, focusing on ethics, quality and transparency.

According to current legislation and the reality of the educational process in Ukraine, each university should implement mechanisms to prevent violations of academic integrity. The most effective solution is to include the discipline “Academic Integrity” as a compulsory or optional part of the curricula of the first (bachelor) level of higher education in all fields of knowledge. The aim is to develop students' knowledge and skills in the principles, rules and ethical standards of scientific and educational activities, which will contribute to the creation

of a virtuous academic environment.

However, the teaching of academic integrity should not be limited to general calls for academic integrity, stories about foreign experiences, explanations of international standards, or instruction in proper citation and academic writing. While these elements are important and useful, they are not sufficient on their own to achieve a deep understanding and practical application of the principles of integrity. Learning should be lively and applied: it should include analysis of real-life situations, discussion of ethical dilemmas, and practical exercises that develop critical thinking and a responsible attitude to learning. It is also important to create an environment where students feel personally responsible for adhering to these principles, rather than seeing them as formal requirements. In addition, the specificities of different fields of study should be taken into account, as academic integrity may have its own peculiarities depending on the discipline. Only a comprehensive approach will help to foster a true culture of academic integrity, which will become an integral part of each student's professional and personal development.

Thus, the introduction of the academic discipline "Academic Integrity" is a key step towards the systemic overcoming of academic fraud. This discipline will provide students with the knowledge and skills for ethical behaviour and contribute to the formation of a culture of integrity. This discipline is particularly relevant in the context of modern challenges, including the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence on the educational environment. Its implementation will contribute to the reform of Ukrainian education in line with European standards, ensuring a high level of educational quality and academic responsibility.

8. Conclusions

Academic integrity is a fundamental condition for the development of education and science, as it ensures transparency in the educational process and research, increases trust and promotes innovative progress. In Ukraine, there are still significant

shortcomings in the fight against various forms of academic fraud, including plagiarism, cheating, falsification of data and other violations. These phenomena undermine the quality of education, demotivate honest participants in the process, slow down scientific progress and devalue diplomas, which hurts the country's competitiveness. Technological developments, including the spread of AI, exacerbate these problems and require new mechanisms for the control and ethical use of digital tools.

A systemic solution to the situation requires comprehensive measures: from improving the legal framework, including the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On Academic Integrity", which would unify the rules, define effective prevention and accountability mechanisms, and enable the development of a unified ethical culture. It also requires systematic strengthening of accountability mechanisms to educate and motivate students and teachers. The most effective step to create a virtuous academic environment will be the introduction of the academic discipline "Academic Integrity", which will strengthen the principles of honesty, trust, fairness and responsibility in the university environment.

This approach will ensure the competitiveness of Ukrainian graduates and the recognition of scientific achievements at the international level, bringing the national higher education system closer to European standards.

Thus, the systematic implementation of the principles of academic integrity through education, legal regulation and cultural changes will not only eliminate fraud, but also improve the quality of Ukrainian education and science, bringing it closer to European standards of educational quality. This will ensure the training of competent specialists, guarantee confidence in the results of scientific research, open opportunities for further development and self-realisation of students, and ensure sustainable progress in the educational and scientific sphere of Ukraine.

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