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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AS A COMPONENT OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The article explores academic integrity as a key element of the internal quality assurance system in Ukrainian higher education institutions. Against the backdrop of the ongoing reform of higher education in alignment with European standards, the necessity of implementing effective mechanisms for monitoring and supporting ethical conduct among all participants in the educational process is substantiated.

The authors analyze the legislative foundations of academic integrity, particularly the provisions of the Law of Ukraine «On Education», which define the concept, principles, violations, and types of responsibility for breaches of academic ethics.

The article is based on theoretical frameworks developed by scholars who consider academic integrity a crucial factor in building trust in learning outcomes, improving the quality of educational services, and ensuring transparency in assessment. Special attention is paid to a systemic approach to fostering an integrity-oriented environment, which includes adopting internal codes and regulations, implementing plagiarism detection programs, enhancing the academic culture of both faculty and students, and integrating the topic of integrity into educational curricula.

Based on an analysis of the regulatory framework of Ukrainian higher education institutions (HEIs), survey results, and the experience of implementing integrity principles, the article identifies key trends, practices, and challenges. In particular, it highlights issues such as the formalistic approach to academic integrity checks, low student awareness, insufficient motivation among faculty members, and the lack of a unified system for monitoring academic integrity.

The conclusions emphasize that academic integrity holds strategic importance for enhancing the quality of education, cultivating academic culture, and strengthening the international reputation of Ukrainian HEIs. The article proposes several directions for improving academic integrity policies, including awareness-raising activities, professional development for faculty, increased engagement of student self-governance, and the initiation of a national anti-plagiarism registry.

This material will be useful for university administrators and staff, education researchers, and all participants in the educational process who are interested in implementing effective quality assurance mechanisms based on ethics and responsibility.

Key words: academic integrity, quality of education, internal quality assurance system, higher education institutions, integrity culture.

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АКАДЕМІЧНА ДОБРОЧЕСНІСТЬ – СКЛАДОВА ВНУТРІШНЬОЇ СИСТЕМИ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ОСВІТИ ЗВО

У статті досліджено академічну доброчесність як ключовий елемент внутрішньої системи забезпечення якості освіти у закладах вищої освіти України. На тлі реформування вищої освіти відповідно до європейських стандартів обґрунтовано необхідність впровадження ефективних механізмів контролю та підтримки етичної поведінки всіх учасників освітнього процесу. Автори аналізують законодавчі підстави академічної доброчесності, зокрема статті Закону України «Про освіту», які визначають поняття, принципи, порушення та види відповідальності за недоброчесні дії.

Стаття ґрунтується на теоретичних положеннях науковців, які розглядають академічну доброчесність як фактор формування довіри до результатів навчання, підвищення якості освітніх послуг та забезпечення прозорості оцінювання. Особливу увагу приділено системному підходу до формування доброчесного середовища: прийняттю внутрішніх кодексів і положень, впровадженню програм антиплагіатної перевірки, підвищенню академічної культури викладачів і здобувачів освіти, інтеграції тематики доброчесності в навчальні програми.

На основі аналізу нормативної бази ЗВО України, результатів опитувань і досвіду впровадження принципів доброчесності визначено основні тенденції, практики та виклики. Зокрема, висвітлено проблеми формального підходу до перевірок, низької обізнаності студентів, недостатньої мотивації викладачів та відсутності уніфікованої системи моніторингу академічної доброчесності.

У висновках акцентовано, що академічна доброчесність має стратегічне значення для підвищення якості освіти, формування академічної культури та міжнародної репутації українських ЗВО. Запропоновано низку напрямів удосконалення політики доброчесності, зокрема через просвітницьку діяльність, підвищення кваліфікації викладачів, активізацію участі студентського самоврядування та ініціювання створення єдиного національного антиплагіатного реєстру.

Матеріал буде корисним для керівників і працівників ЗВО, дослідників у галузі освіти, а також для всіх учасників освітнього процесу, які зацікавлені у впровадженні ефективних механізмів забезпечення якості вищої освіти на засадах етики та відповідальності.

Ключові слова: академічна доброчесність, якість освіти, внутрішня система забезпечення якості, ЗВО, культура доброчесності.

Problem statement. Academic Integrity as a Component of the Internal Quality Assurance System in Higher Education Institutions. The reform of higher education in Ukraine in line with European standards necessitates the introduction of effective mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the educational process. One such mechanism is the implementation and observance of the principles of academic integrity, which represent not only a moral and ethical dimension but also a structural and systemic component of higher education institutions (HEIs).

The purpose of this article is to analyze academic integrity as an integral part of the internal quality assurance system and to identify

the conditions for its effective implementation within the educational environment of HEIs.

Analysis of recent research and publications. According to Article 41 of the Law of Ukraine «On Education» (2017), the components of quality assurance in educational institutions include an internal quality assurance system that comprises: policies and procedures for quality assurance; systems and mechanisms for ensuring academic integrity; public disclosure of criteria, rules, and procedures for student assessment; availability of necessary resources for organizing the educational process, including students' independent work; and the presence of information systems for effective institutional management (Pro osvitu, 2017).

Thus, academic integrity is a core element of the internal quality assurance system.

The concept of academic integrity encompasses adherence to ethical standards and rules in educational and research activities: honesty, objectivity, responsibility, respect for intellectual property, among others. Article 42 of the Law of Ukraine «On Education» defines academic integrity and outlines violations and corresponding accountability measures. Specifically:

«Academic integrity is a set of ethical principles and legally defined rules that all participants in the educational process must follow in learning, teaching, and conducting research (or creative work) to ensure trust in the results of learning and/or scientific (creative) achievements» (Pro osvitu, 2017).

Major violations of academic integrity under the law include academic plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, cheating, deception, bribery, and biased assessment (Pro osvitu, 2017).

In scholarly literature (O. Spyrina, L. Lysenko), academic integrity is viewed as one of the key factors in improving the quality of education and building trust in learning outcomes (Spirina O., 2019; Lysenko L., 2020).

Researcher I. Dotsenko emphasizes that academic integrity is one of the main drivers of an effective quality assurance system in higher education institutions. Adherence to academic values, mutual respect among participants of the educational process, and the promotion of ethical and moral principles create a favorable environment for productive interaction between students and instructors. Based on honesty and responsibility, academic integrity is a crucial factor in improving the training of future professionals. Strategic documents and policies in higher education and scientific activities should include the implementation of transparent mechanisms for monitoring compliance with academic integrity and ethics-this includes regular monitoring, strict adherence to review procedures for violations, transparency, and inevitable accountability for misconduct (Dotsenko I., 2022).

Presentation of the main material. The internal quality assurance system in HEIs includes policies and procedures for quality assurance, monitoring of educational activities, ensuring transparency, and adherence to academic integrity.

Key components of a systemic approach to academic integrity include: adoption of internal regulations (codes of honor); development of plagiarism detection procedures; enhancement of academic culture among students and academic staff; use of anti-plagiarism software; and inclusion of academic integrity topics in educational programs.

According to the Law of Ukraine «On Education», every participant in the educational process in a higher education institution (HEI) may be held academically accountable for violations of academic integrity:

- for academic and teaching staff, this may include: refusal to award an academic or creative degree or academic title; revocation of an awarded degree or title; denial or revocation of a pedagogical title or qualification category; disqualification from participating in certain legally defined bodies or holding specific positions prescribed by law.

- for higher education students, this may include: retaking an assessment; repeating a specific component of the educational program; expulsion from the institution; revocation of academic scholarships; or loss of tuition fee privileges provided by the institution (Pro osvitu, 2017).

However, the specific forms of academic accountability are determined by each HEI autonomously, in accordance with internal regulations approved by the institution's collegial governing body in coordination with the student self-government body.

An analysis of the websites of Ukrainian HEIs shows that the key regulatory documents governing compliance with academic integrity, as well as the identification and handling of violations, typically include: Code of Ethics; Code of Academic Integrity; Procedures for Detecting and Establishing Violations of Academic Integrity; Regulations on the Prevention and Detection of Academic Plagiarism; Procedures for Checking Dissertations for Academic Plagiarism; Regulations on the Academic Integrity Support Group; Orders and guidelines supporting academic integrity, among others.

To assess awareness and promote academic integrity among educational process participants, HEIs periodically conduct surveys among students and academic staff.

Based on an analysis of reports, conclusions, and survey results, the following observations can be made:

At the university level, rules for academic integrity have been approved. The main documents regulating academic integrity, as identified by educational process participants, include: the Code of Academic Integrity, the Regulation on the Academic Integrity Support Group, the Code of Ethics, and guidelines for preventing and detecting plagiarism in academic work.

Responsibility for upholding academic integrity principles within the university is shared by the academic integrity support group, university administration, and all participants of the educational process.

Academic integrity is promoted through: events (seminars, webinars, conferences, colloquia, competitions, etc.), the study of academic disciplines, the inclusion of academic integrity topics and content modules in educational components, preparation of research papers, and more.

To detect violations of academic integrity in academic, qualification, and coursework projects, HEIs use specialized software and appoint review commissions.

Many higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ukraine are implementing comprehensive approaches to the promotion of academic integrity. These include mandatory plagiarism checks for qualification papers, regular training sessions for both students and faculty, and the operation of electronic academic integrity monitoring systems.

Such practices contribute to the development of a robust culture of integrity, which reduces the frequency of violations and enhances public trust in degrees awarded by Ukrainian HEIs.

Despite the positive progress in integrating academic integrity principles into the educational environment of HEIs, a number of significant issues persist. A considerable proportion of students still demonstrate a low level of awareness regarding the meaning of academic integrity and the potential legal or academic consequences of its violation. This points to an insufficient level of preventive and informational efforts within the educational process.

At the same time, there is a lack of a unified methodology for assessing compliance with academic integrity standards, which complicates the objective comparison of indicators across different faculties, specializations, or institutions. Measures aimed at verifying academic integrity

are often formal in nature, limited to using anti-plagiarism software without further analysis or systematic follow-up, thereby reducing the effectiveness of overall integrity policies.

Another pressing issue is the insufficient motivation of academic staff to actively participate in cultivating a culture of integrity. This may be due to a lack of time, resources, or clear understanding of the mechanisms for implementing integrity principles in daily teaching practices.

Having considered various aspects of academic integrity – from the need for its popularization among all participants in the educational process to mechanisms for recognizing and responding to violations – several effective strategies for overcoming current challenges can be identified.

First and foremost is the need for a systemic and targeted awareness-raising effort. This should include familiarizing students with the principles of academic integrity, presenting practical case studies and the consequences of violations, integrating this subject into educational disciplines, and adapting the information to the age and educational background of students.

The second important step involves improving the professional qualifications of academic staff in the areas of academic ethics, integrity standards, and modern anti-plagiarism technologies. This not only allows teachers to serve as role models for students but also helps deepen their understanding of their role in shaping an academic culture.

Special attention should be given to the active involvement of student self-government bodies in monitoring academic integrity compliance. Student participation in relevant committees, development of honor codes, and organization of awareness campaigns fosters an atmosphere of mutual accountability and equal partnership in creating an ethical academic environment.

In addition, it is important to initiate the creation of a unified national anti-plagiarism registry. Such a registry would ensure transparency in checking students' written works, prevent duplication of texts across different institutions, and support centralized monitoring of academic plagiarism cases. This registry should function not only as a technical tool but also as a means of institutionalizing academic integrity at the national level.

Thus, academic integrity is not only a behavioral norm for educational process participants but also a fundamental principle that determines the quality,

credibility, and legitimacy of learning outcomes. It serves as an ethical framework upon which the modern higher education system – oriented toward European and global standards – is built.

Its full integration into the internal quality assurance system of HEIs promotes the development of academic culture, transparency, and accountability, while also creating conditions for fair evaluation, mutual respect, and collaborative interaction between educators and students.

A systematic and consistent implementation of academic integrity policies enhances the reputation of HEIs, builds trust among employers, the academic community, and international partners. In the context of educational globalization and expanding academic mobility, adherence to high integrity standards is a prerequisite for integrating Ukrainian higher education into the European Higher Education Area.

As a result of the analysis of academic integrity as a key element of internal quality assurance systems, it can be concluded that integrity forms the foundation of trust, openness, and responsibility within the educational process. Academic integrity not only

defines ethical standards for behavior among all participants in the academic environment but also acts as a strategic factor in improving the quality of educational services, shaping academic culture, and enhancing the international reputation of HEIs.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Effective implementation of academic integrity principles requires a comprehensive approach that includes systematic outreach, faculty professional development, active student involvement, refinement of regulatory frameworks, and the introduction of modern technological tools for preventing violations. Establishing a unified national control mechanism – such as an anti-plagiarism registry – and a transparent accountability system for violations are necessary to strengthen both the internal quality of education and public trust in educational institutions.

Therefore, ensuring academic integrity is not only a timely necessity but also a guarantee of the sustainable development of Ukrainian higher education institutions in the context of European integration and global competition in the educational sphere.

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