

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

International Conference

Academic Integrity in the Law School:

Past Experiences, Current Challenges, and Future Perspectives

Friday 17 June 2022 - School of Law, University of Leeds and Zoom

This hybrid International Conference, funded by the [Society of Legal Scholars](#) and the [Centre for Innovation and Research in Legal Education of the University of Leeds](#), will focus on the topic of Academic Integrity in the Law School from an international perspective.

In recent years, the violation of academic integrity rules in Higher Education has become increasingly problematic (Denisova-Schmidt, 2016), and recent pedagogic scholarship has exposed the limits of academic integrity practices worldwide (Curtis and Tremayne, 2019; Morris, 2018; Newton, 2018). Despite the growing importance of and attention to academic integrity for the work of Higher Education institutions and the learning experience of students, the research done on the topic has been geographically limited (mainly Australia) and based on non-legal subjects (especially science-related). This Conference will tackle an important aspect of legal education that has been analysed by the scholarship and academic institutions only marginally (James and Mahmud, 2014): the implementation of academic integrity in the Law School. The topic will be of interest to educators, and anyone involved in legal education worldwide. It will enhance our understandings of academic integrity issues in Law, and it will advance pivotal reflections on best practices in legal education on a global scale.

This International Conference will consider past experiences, current challenges, and future perspectives of academic integrity in Law Schools from an interdisciplinary and multi-method approach. Academics at various stages of their career, including PhD students, early-career researchers, practitioners, and experts in this area will present their papers at this one-day hybrid Conference.

PROGRAMME

09.30 - 10.00	Registration of participants and refreshments
10.00 - 10.15	Welcome and Introduction by the Organisers
10.30 - 12.00	Panel 1 - Theoretical and Experiential Views on Academic Integrity
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch break
13.00 - 14.30	Panel 2 - Interdisciplinary and Empirical Approaches to Academic Integrity
14.30 - 14.45	Coffee break
14.45 - 16.15	Panel 3 - Academic Integrity in Specific Legal Education Contexts
16.15 - 16.30	Coffee break
16.30- 17.30	Roundtable - Academic Integrity in the Law School: Past Experiences, Current Challenges, and Future Perspectives
17.30 - 17.45	Closing Remarks

Panel 1 – Theoretical and Experiential Views on Academic Integrity

10.30 – 12.00 – Moot Court Room 1.28, Liberty Building (University of Leeds) and Zoom

- Komal Sandhu - Importance of Academic Integrity in Legal Education
- Sabine Hassler - Academic Integrity and Assessment Offences: Anecdotal Observations by an AOA from Practice
- Thomas Lancaster, Michael Draper, Robin Crockett, Sandra Dann, Irene Glendinning - Unauthorised Question and Answer Sharing – Implications for Higher Education Policies

Panel 2 – Interdisciplinary and Empirical approaches to Academic Integrity

13.00 – 14.30 – Moot Court Room 1.28, Liberty Building (University of Leeds) and Zoom

- Kris Lines - Should We Be Flipping Students, Not Just Classrooms? Applying Sport’s Anti-Doping Principles to Academic Offences
- Anne Stazicker - Process Approaches to Academic Integrity
- Camille Pommel - Student Engagement and Academic Integrity: What Data Reporting Software Can Tell Us About the Engagement of Students with Academic Offences, A Case Study

Panel 3 – Academic Integrity in Specific Legal Education Contexts

14.45 – 16.15 – Moot Court Room 1.28, Liberty Building (University of Leeds) and Zoom

- Ilaria Zavoli - Academic Offences and Postgraduate International Students: Assessing Inside Views in a UK Law School
- Silviu-Dorin Schiopu - Regulation Landmarks on Chasing Plagiarism in Romanian PhD Thesis
- Rita Faria - Training on Responsible Conduct of Research: Evaluating Changes in a Sample of PhD Students

Panel 1 – Theoretical and Experiential Views on Academic Integrity

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Importance of Academic Integrity in Legal Education

Significance of legal education can be known from that law could be used as a medium to bring change in the society. Legal study promotes facility in arguments, accuracy of the expression and skill in interpreting the written words, as well as some understanding of social values. Ignorance of law is not innocence but a sin which cannot be excused. Thus, a legal educator has a responsibility not only to produce good lawyers but also to create cultured law-abiding citizens, who are inculcated with concepts of human rights as well as values. The significance of law education in a democratic society cannot be exaggerated too much. Legal education could be interrelated with the profession as advocate in courts, teaching, research and administration in different branches provided where law plays a role.

Academic honesty and integrity are basic skills in legal education because it facilitates law students to practice with ethical decision-making which is the foundation of an optimistic as well as confident professional identity necessary for life as a lawyer. The consequences for a law student found to have breached the rules of academic integrity may be serious because it is a breach of trust, which is a hallmark of the legal profession. In many of the jurisdictions require applicants for legal practice to disclose any finding of academic misconduct against them during their education and training.

Law schools can do more than teach legal ethics in meeting the high professional standard that contemporary societies need in law graduates. The regime of academic integrity may be the strongest asset law schools have to assist in that task. Like professional legal ethics, academic integrity involves a system of ethical practice, bordered by rules with real implications for breach. In creating ethical professionals, law schools can inspire students to engage with academic integrity constructively and use it to prove their competence as well as developing a positive professional identity with integrity at its core.

Bio



A versatile and passionate academic professional with over 10 years of teaching experience, Dr Komal is PhD in Corporate Law, she is also the author of a comprehensive textbook about Mergers and Acquisitions and edited book named ‘Contours of Real Estate Laws’ besides being a dedicated teacher and mentor in the discipline. She has completed courses in Intellectual Property Rights from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), published and presented papers and scholarly pieces in numerous international and national forums and journals widely contributing to the creation of knowledge in niche areas of her expertise. Her expertise in Commercial laws has

been tapped by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) for the creation of discipline specific for the benefit of the broader community of learners in the country. Dr Komal with her research and writing acumen has combined the theoretical and practical aspects of law to mould a teaching pedagogy in Law School.

* Dr Sabine Hassler – Senior Lecturer in Law at Bristol Law School, UWE, UK - Sabine2.Hassler@uwe.ac.uk

Academic Integrity and Assessment Offences: Anecdotal Observations by an AOA from Practice

Detection of Assessment Offences (AOs), it would seem, are on the rise.¹ Access to better text-matching software or a simple search engine access with key phrases have made plagiarism or collusion easier to detect. Other offences, such as falsification and/or fabrication, can be detected owing to assessment design and marker input in that data and results produced fail to reflect the assessment parameters. Even contract cheating is better known and understood.² What all of these, and other misconduct allegations, have in common is that they are said to undermine academic integrity.³ To counter and deter AOs, preventative frameworks in the form of assessment offence policies are created and continuously refined.

Such policies define the range of misconduct deemed an assessment offence and provide penalty scales that are meant to reflect the severity of the offence committed. For Law students the penalty potentially has professional qualification implications.⁴ Therefore, it could be argued that the framework to protect academic integrity is designed around deterrence and by penalising students for falling foul of wider integrity standards.

¹ This was particularly evident during Covid-19 lockdown and online tuition provision; Salle Weale, ‘Cheating on the rise in UK universities during Covid, say researchers’ (The Guardian Online, 10 February 2021) available at <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/feb/10/cheating-on-the-rise-in-uk-universities-during-covid-say-researchers>. Weale refers to a study carried out by Thomas Lancaster and Codrin Cotarlan, ‘[Contract cheating by STEM students through a file sharing website: a Covid-19 pandemic perspective](#)’, 17 Journal for Educational Integrity (2021) 3; DOI <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-021-00070-0>

² Note that to provide contract cheating services is set to become an offence: Skills and Post-16 Education Bill; <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2868> with relevant amendments by Baroness Barran and Lord Storey (paras 53-57): <https://bills.parliament.uk/Publications/42964/Documents/758> as well as the private members’ Essay Mills (Prohibition) Bill, <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2830>.

³ Arguably, however, assessment offences are not a new phenomenon; most simply went unnoticed or were unable to be advanced owing to insufficient evidence and/or because the resources for detection were not as plentiful and efficient as they are now.

⁴ See both Bar Standards Board: [Guidelines determining if a person is fit and proper to becoming a practising barrister](#) (Category 3: Academic history) and Solicitors Regulation Authority: [Assessment of Character and Suitability Rules](#) (Rule 4: Other conduct and behaviour).

But why is academic integrity at the centre of such frameworks?⁵ It is not just a self-serving ideal, reflective of moral imperatives and objective standards as a means and an end in itself. On an individual level it is about being ‘open and honest’⁶ and admitting that rules were not adequately understood. On larger, institutional levels, ‘academic integrity’ can be taken to translate into reputation (both the university’s and by extension the individual student/alumnus) and value (of the degree) in terms of long-term impact. Having a degree is consequently tied to self-interest in coming from a reputable organisation. Clearly, the argument should be that when students appreciate the value of academic integrity, and therefore the long-term impact on the value of their degree, they do not engage in such (mis-) conduct. So, given that detection is easier and therefore more likely, and consequences are more serious than ever, why are students taking the risk? Something does not connect.

In order to explore why students do commit assessment offences despite clear academic policy frameworks to deter such behaviour, this paper is premised on the argument that assessment offences are not deliberate attacks on academic integrity. Rather, they are borne out of other reasons. While there is no doubt those who are looking for ways to evade detection (on occasion, successfully), it is arguable that most students who are referred for an investigation are not intentionally or deliberately committing offences or, indeed, have thought about ‘integrity’ standards, either their own or the university’s. They instead share characteristics revolving around the exercise of poor judgement which is usually or commonly precipitated by a combination of all or some of the following: poor time-management, panic, lack of engagement, insufficient understanding of the rules and, increasingly, complex personal circumstances. These will be explored and considered in light of the presenter’s personal experiences as an assessment offences adviser with thoughts on assessment design and academic support mechanisms on offer.

Bio



Sabine has more than 10 years of experience dealing with assessment offences as she is the Law School’s designated assessment offences adviser. As such, Sabine has not only fed into UWE’s Assessment Offences Policy developments but has seen a wide range of assessment offences, having spoken to hundreds of students, from undergraduate to professional programmes, about scholarship, academic practice and assessment offences, including reasons for their misconduct and the consequences not just on their academic studies but also in terms of professional impact.

⁵ For reference, see the QAA Academic Integrity Charter available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter>.

⁶ See *So You’ve Been Accused of Plagiarism: Now What?* (<https://www.plagiarism.org/blog/2018/07/24/so-youve-been-accused-of-plagiarism-now-what>) which provides some practical advice on how to deal with an allegation but also how to understand what plagiarism is.

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- * Prof Sandra Dann - Professor of Materials Chemistry, Loughborough University, UK - s.e.dann@lboro.ac.uk
- * Dr Irene Glendinning - Institutional Lead for academic integrity, Coventry University, UK - ireneg@coventry.ac.uk

Unauthorised Question and Answer Sharing – Implications for Higher Education Policies

Developments in recent years have seen students begin to interact with external services that often claim to offer them live support, albeit support that is unauthorised by their higher education institution. The student use of such services appears to have significantly increased during the pandemic. The implications of this development as they relate to law schools or higher education in general have not been widely considered in the academic integrity literature.

This session (and planned associated paper) will bring together the experiences of five of the UK's leading academic integrity experts, all of whom have observed the wider developments in this space, both from a "behind closed doors" perspective at their own institutions and from their wider communications across the sector. This forms part of a wider project the authors are working on looking at how higher education providers should review their policies and processes in light of the latest developments in the contract cheating industry.

The session will consider how questions and answers are being shared online by students, alongside the commercial providers who are encouraging students to share university intellectual property without authorisation. Although question and answer sharing may include elements of contract cheating, an industry which naturally targets much of its marketing towards law students, the problem extends far beyond contract cheating. The methods which providers use to find out the exam and assignment questions students are asked and to provide answers that are ready for sale will also be considered, as will the ways in which students are encouraged to submit their work to file swapping sites and essay banks.

The implications of this development are many. The session will consider the questions that higher education providers need to be asking in relation to their current academic integrity policies, along with associated legal questions surrounding staff and student ownership of materials, copyright and fair use. The need for academic institutions to consider the continued security and suitability of their assessments will also be discussed. Although the session will be of interest to Law practitioners and scholars, including relevant examples, it is intended that it will be of interest across a range of disciplines and will help higher education providers to ensure that their policies, procedures and regulations are fit for purpose and ready for the future.

Bios

Thomas Lancaster is a Senior Teaching Fellow in the Department of Computing at Imperial College London. He has been researching in the academic integrity field since 2000 and is a member of the associated QAA advisory group. Thomas is known for research into contract cheating and his recent research has considered the student use of question and answer sites to breach the integrity of examinations and assessments. Thomas regularly works with student partners to conduct research and developed the world's first academic integrity research module aimed at undergraduate students. He also coordinates the London and SE England Academic Integrity Network.



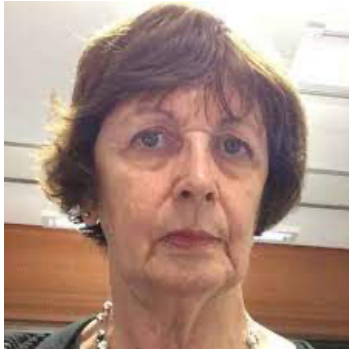
Michael Draper is a solicitor and Professor of Law and Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Education at Swansea University. He is Chair of the Law Society's Conveyancing and Land law Committee and a member of their Education and Training Committee. He is a part time Judge of the Residential Property Tribunal. He is co -chair of the Welsh Integrity and Assessment network and a consultant expert with the ETINED platform of the Council of Europe. He is a member of the QAA Advisory groups on Academic Integrity and an advisor on the subject benchmark statement for Law.



Robin Crockett is University Academic Integrity Officer at the University of Northampton and Academic Visitor at Loughborough University. He is a co-founder of the Midlands Integrity Group and a member of the QAA Academic Integrity Advisory Group. In 2021 he had meetings with MP Chris Skidmore and Universities Minister Michelle Donelan to advise with regard to the proposed UK legislation to ban essay mills. He is a mathematician-ethicist with particular interests in the identification of contract-cheated material.



Sandie Dann is a Professor of Materials Chemistry at Loughborough University and chairs the University Academic Misconduct Committee. She has been a life-long listener to the student voice and co-produced materials with a series of Student Union officials and student representatives for encouraging academic integrity and preventing academic misconduct. She is the current chair of the Midlands Integrity Group and a member of QAA's Academic Integrity Advisory Group.



Irene Glendinning is institutional lead for academic integrity at Coventry University. She has led and contributed to many international research projects concerning aspects of academic integrity, corruption and quality assurance in higher education. After serving as the vice-president for the European Network for Academic integrity (ENAI), she was awarded the 2020 ENAI Member Award for her outstanding contributions to Academic Integrity. She leads the ENAI working group on Ethical Publishing and Dissemination (EPAD). As a member of QAA's Academic Integrity Advisory Group, she regularly contributes to webinars and national guidance in the UK and related events on this subject.

Panel 2 - Interdisciplinary and Empirical approaches to Academic Integrity

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Should We Be Flipping Students, Not Just Classrooms? Applying Sport's Anti-Doping Principles to Academic Offences

While much has been written about the growth and drivers of plagiarism, the sophistication of modern practices has led to a virtual arms-race between universities and cheats. The more that universities have relied on (somewhat blunt) text-matching software such as Turnitin, so students have mechanically paraphrased, recycled or simply formatted assignments to game 'similarity indices'. As faculties have become wise to these approaches, so the availability of 'contract cheating' sites have become more mainstream. Indeed, we are now in a situation that in order to detect some forms of cheating, we are forced to utilise specialist forensic linguistic software, or lobby for statutory interventions from government.

The same is equally true of sport. Having spent much of my early academic career researching the use, and abuse, of performance enhancing drugs in sport, I was struck by the parallels between ensuring academic and sporting integrity. This paper will draw on the lessons from recent anti-doping investigations to show how targeted, intelligence-led or redemptive strategies may ultimately prove more effective in reducing academic cheating. At the very least, utilising these strategies may help to balance the inherent harshness of a corrective regulatory system based on punishment and deterrence.

In particular, the article will focus on three key tools: The use of time-limited amnesties, where punishment is waived in return for a greater understanding of the depth and scope of the problem. Secondly, the provision of suspended and/or reduced sentences could be explicitly integrated into the sanctioning options for faculties. For example, there are clear provisions within anti-doping codes that allow athletes to receive reduced penalties if they engage either in rehabilitation programmes or educational campaigns. A useful analogy can be made with Police speed awareness courses - offered to low-level offenders who have exceeded speed limits (typically by up to 10% +9mph). The rationale behind these courses is one of re-education and reflection, rather than punishment. The same logic could equally be applied to academic offences, where the violation in question is comparatively minor, a first-time offence and/or the student is new to academia

The final section will discuss how 'Substantial Assistance' or whistle-blowing protections could apply. The paper will recommend that reductions or suspensions to any penalty should be considered for any students who can evidence intelligence on academic breaches. The paper will also suggest that penalty deductions could also be used to streamline basic cases. For example, if a student pleads guilty at an early opportunity having been confronted with the evidence and demonstrates remorse, then the savings in administrative time from an uncontested charge could thereby justify a reduced charge.



Bio

Kris presents widely nationally and internationally within the sports law community. He is an active writer in both sports law and learning and teaching, particularly in the field of e-learning application. He has also appeared as a guest speaker on sports law issues on both radio and television (live and pre-recorded). In 2016, he joined Aston University and is a Senior Lecturer and College Academic Offences Officer. He is currently co-writing a textbook on Tort Law, and he is midway through researching an EdD on the role of lectures in higher education <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4407-9166>.

- * Ms Anne Stazicker – Academic Integrity, Assessment, Admission and Progression Lead in the Language Centre, University of Leeds, UK - A.Stazicker@leeds.ac.uk

Process Approaches to Academic Integrity

The role of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is arguably more important than ever because of the increased emphasis on internationalisation in UK HE contexts. Such strategies, referred to by Ding and Bruce (2017) as the ‘marketisation’ or ‘commercialisation’ of education, it is argued, are driving the surge in international student recruitment and result in HE programmes increasingly being delivered to students whose first language is not English. This has far-reaching implications and consequences for teaching and assessment.

The drive towards international recruitment, in combination with the rapid move online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, may have contributed to the sharp increase in academic integrity issues. However, it could be argued that AI issues were already rife and moving to online provision simply acted to make the problem more visible and, therefore, potentially harder to ignore.

With limited engagement, less contact time and a packed syllabus, lecturers may resist the call to reduce content in favour of AI-related input but a students’ ability to communicate as a member of their academic community is an equally important aspect of successful academic study as content knowledge. Therefore, this talk will highlight the benefits of relationships such as that between the School of Law and the Language Centre (LC). We seek to empower international students wishing to embark on UG and PG studies in Law. The purpose of our courses is to facilitate the development of students’ academic language and literacies for successful study in a UK HE environment, and appropriate ways of communicating content within discipline-specific communities. Our assumptions are that students do not instinctively know what UK HE academic conventions are or how to follow them, and that they are likely to make mistakes during their learning journey. Therefore, our focus is predominantly formative, using content as a vehicle for cumulatively acquired academic language and literacies competence through initial input and practice followed by meaningful, authentic, formative and summative assessments for learning. Students have the

advantage of working in small groups where their work is rigorously checked, including for AI issues, with feedback/feedforward forming an integral part of the process. The LC ‘Three tries system’ works alongside our courses and treats most (but not all) AI ‘transgressions’ as evolving practice. A bank of targeted worksheets has been created as part of this developmental process. As a result of this approach, the majority of students passing through the LC and finding themselves in breach of AI conventions, are minded to acknowledge their poor or mal practice.

Internationalisation can be viewed as part of the broader commodification of HE education which values product over process. Opportunities for individual growth may be stifled in favour of achievement over attainment thus high jacking ‘pure’ educational purpose (Gibbs and Iacovidou,2004). It could be argued that this, in tandem with working in second languages, has driven an increase in (perceived) AI infringements. A shift towards more learner-centred, process approaches to AI, such as those taken by the LC, could help redress this balance.

Bio



Anne Stazicker is currently Academic Integrity, Assessment, Admission and Progression Lead in the Language Centre at the University of Leeds. She has a background in teacher training, assessment and practitioner-based CPD. In particular Anne has conducted scholarship on tutor confidence in the role of assessor. She has developed the LC Three Tries system and accompanying bank or resources, raised staff and student awareness of AI in general, and of contract cheating in particular. Anne is keen to continue to raise the profile of AI and to champion the work of the LC in this area to wide-university and external audiences.

* Dr Camille Pommel – Senior Lecturer and School Academic Integrity Officer, Hertfordshire Law School, UK – c.pommel@herts.ac.uk

Student Engagement and Academic Integrity: What Data Reporting Software Can Tell Us About the Engagement of Students With Academic Offences, A Case Study

Many law schools are equipped with reporting software showing a wide range of metrics measuring the academic performance and engagement of their students, including their formative and summative grades, their participation in online activities and quizzes, and their access and viewing of online lectures, module pages and online libraries. The individual engagement of students with training on academic integrity can also be recorded.

I have used this wealth of data to compare the level of engagement of students with academic misconduct offences against those students without misconduct offences within the same cohort with the hope that this can enhance our understanding of what might trigger or help to trigger

student academic misconduct. For if a rigorous examination of the data can shed some light as to the level and nature of engagement of students who have academic offences, we can better understand which methods of learning might support and assist them.

The three key questions and aims are as follows:

First, how to design a method rigorous enough to provide meaningful insights from datasets and analytics which, for all their value, will inevitably remain partial and imperfect. I will share my approach and strategy.

The second aim is to verify whether a close correlation exists between academic misconduct offences and weak engagement with the course. Intuitively, it may be expected that the more students watch their online lectures, read the recommended materials, and test their understanding by way of quizzes and other online activities, the less will be their propensity to engage with plagiarism, collusion, or cheating. I will share and discuss my initial findings.

Finally, the intention will be to compare students with a similar level of engagement and to ask why some have engaged in academic misconduct but not others. Can we observe that, for example, despite a comparable overall level of engagement, students with an academic offence submit fewer formative assignments or access the reading list noticeably less than students without academic offence?

Bio



Dr Camille Pommel is a Senior Lecturer at the Hertfordshire Law School and has been, for the last four years, the School Academic Integrity Officer within the School. As part of this role, Camille investigates and addresses incidents of plagiarism, collusion, and cheating, including contract cheating within the Law School. Camille also contributes, in collaboration with the Associate Dean for Academic Quality, to designing and implementing academic integrity policies in the Law School.

Panel 3 – Academic Integrity in Specific Legal Education Contexts

* Ilaria Zavoli – Lecturer in Law, School of Law, University of Leeds, UK – I.Zavoli@leeds.ac.uk

Academic Offences and Postgraduate International Students: Assessing Inside Views in a UK Law School

In recent years, the violation of academic integrity rules in Higher Education has been at the centre of lively scholarly debate, focusing on the objectives of academic integrity, the type of academic offences and their definition, the driving factors, and prevention and detection strategies. The analysis has been done mainly from an academic perspective, with the creation of a regulatory framework where objectives and aims are clearly defined, and HE institutions rely upon strategies that best fit their agenda (e.g. financial and pedagogical). However, this approach is limited because it gives scarce consideration to students' views and expectations. Therefore, the theoretical discussion on academic integrity and the design of prevention strategies do not necessarily evaluate the perspectives of the direct recipients of academic integrity rules, i.e. the students. This is pedagogically incorrect because it disregards the need to create a partnership with students and get them involved actively in the academic integrity learning process. It is also counterproductive and ineffective. Indeed, HE institutions' approaches risk disregarding students' ideas and views, which might provide insightful elements to inform and improve the existing regulatory framework.

This paper will discuss the topic by providing a critical analysis with original data obtained through the author's empirical research involving TPG international students enrolled at the School of Law of the University of Leeds. The paper seeks to answer the following research question: *What are the key aspects to consider to design effective preventive measures for academic offences committed by PGT international students in the UK HE?* In so doing, this study will shed light on key aspects that emerge from postgraduate international students' views on academic offences (and their avoidance). Ultimately, it is posited that that the findings obtained in this project will be beneficial to inform future policies and prevention strategies of Law Schools.

Bio



Dr Ilaria Zavoli is a Lecturer in Law at the School of Law of the University of Leeds. Ilaria's research interests lie in the areas of Criminal Law, International Criminal Law, International Law, and Academic Integrity. Ilaria has been the Academic Integrity Officer of the School of Law between 2018 and 2021. With her research, she is interested in examining students' role in shaping academic integrity policies in Higher Education and in understanding the role of academic integrity for the development of Law students' professional profile.

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Regulation Landmarks on Chasing Plagiarism in Romanian PhD Thesis

It is well known that a deficient implementation of academic integrity in law schools can lead to plagiarism. This topic acquired a high profile in Romania after a Prime Minister was accused of plagiarism. The facts proved true, and subsequently his doctor's degree in law was revoked. Not long after, the General Prosecutor came under the same accusation, and, although her PhD thesis was judged not up to the quality standards of a doctoral thesis, she retained the PhD title. The first case mentioned was the main catalyst for legislative changes. These were aimed to strengthen the control over deviations from good conduct in scientific research including plagiarism.

In addition to the individual cases of plagiarism sanctioned with the withdrawal of the PhD title, in late 2020 the accreditation of a state doctoral law school had the same fate. It follows that the implementation of academic integrity must also be viewed from an institutional perspective, hence the necessity for every law school to act in this direction.

However, self-regulation in this matter did not yield the desired results in Romania, so the legislator had to intervene. These legislative interventions need to be analysed to determine if the current national legislative framework – if properly implemented – is able to prevent the emergence of plagiarism in the case of doctoral theses. A recent order issued by the Minister of Education, which requires the verification of theses for which doctoral degrees were issued between January 1990 and June 2016, is also of particular interest.

Since a similarity report generated by a piece of software is not infallible, not exceeding a pre-established alert threshold does not necessarily indicate the absence of plagiarism in a PhD thesis. It follows that the emphasis on the implementation of academic integrity must not fall on technology, which, however useful, cannot replace the skills of the PhD student's supervisor, which should be the most qualified in preventing and detecting early-stage plagiarism, nor the institutional support that the law school should provide through courses in ethics and academic integrity.



Bio

Silviu-Dorin Şchiopu is a PhD Candidate at Nicolae Titulescu University of Bucharest (Romania). His research focuses on data protection and on civil law with an emphasis on funeral legislation. From his former experience as Junior Lecturer at Transilvania University of Brasov and from the current position derives his interest in academic integrity and more specifically on plagiarism. For more details see: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9927-1016>

- * Dr Rita Faria – Assistant Professor at the School of Criminology, Faculty of Law, University of Porto, Portugal - rfaria@direito.up.pt

Training on Responsible Conduct of Research: Evaluating Changes in a Sample of PhD Students

Promoting research integrity (RI) or responsible conduct of research (RCR) and preventing research misconduct (RM) have become central activities for most European Universities. Training, especially for PhD students, has been offered on RI but existing research evaluating the effectiveness of such training has been inconclusive.

Using mixed methods (including a semi-experimental, ex ante and ex post, approach), the current research described short- and medium-term changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors towards RI and RM. Participants were PhD students at a training on RCR from a European University. Data was collected using 3 waves of a survey, interviews to former trainees and classroom observation. Interviews to trainers were also conducted.

Despite the small sample size, results, overall, show that, after the training, participants become more confident about being able to promote RCR, more aware of what Questionable Research Practices (QRP) are, more aware of existing rules and regulations to promote RI. They also become more aware of how important RCR is for their university. Results demonstrate as well that some former trainees maintain high degrees of commitment towards RCR even after years have passed since the training and after completing the PhD, exporting good practices to their new laboratories or departments.

Bio



Rita Faria is Assistant Professor at the School of Criminology – Faculty of Law of the University of Porto. In 2016, Rita completed her PhD in Criminology on “Research misconduct in Europe: practices and social control”. In 2015, she was awarded the Excellence in Doctoral Research on Research Integrity Award for “Creative and critical use of theory for understanding research behavior”, at the 4th World Conference on Research Integrity. Three years later she authored a book on the topic, titled “Research Misconduct as white-collar crime”. She has been presenting her research on multiple conferences and talks throughout Europe and South America.