

Academic Integrity Self-Evaluation Tools

Report

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Erasmus+ project “European Network for Academic Integrity”

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project “European Network for Academic Integrity” (ENAI) aims foremost to raise awareness in the matters of plagiarism, academic ethics, scholarly values and academic integrity. ENAI focuses not only on students, but on the entire academic community (including professors, researchers, post-docs, PhDs, administration staff and management, academic ethics committees, etc.).

This project envisages developing three major outputs: Educational materials for teachers and students in higher education institutions (O1), Toolkit for cross-sector cooperation in terms of academic integrity (O2) and Handbook for improvements in academic integrity (O3). The latter output consists of seven sub-outputs, such as general guidelines for academic integrity, glossary of terms related to academic integrity, self-evaluation tools for students, teaching and research, self-assessment tool for institutions / faculties / departments and policy briefs.

This report refers to sub-outputs 3B-3E (Self-Evaluation Tools) of the project.

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NOTICE ON AUTHORSHIP

All authors have contributed significantly to the development of the tools. The list of authors is arranged starting with the sub-output leader and is based on the scope of individual contributions.

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PREFACE

This report provides guidelines and an introduction to a set of on-line Academic Integrity Self-Evaluation Tools. The Self-Evaluation Tools serve to help Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) monitor and reflect on the institutional approach to academic integrity and how academic integrity is respected by the institutional community. The set is composed of four tools targeted at different actors within HEIs including students, teachers, researchers, and the institution as a whole. The Self-Evaluation Tools evaluate the current status of academic integrity for different participants, identify potential areas for development and explore ways of reducing academic misconduct.

The Self-Evaluation Tools will be of value to senior leaders of HEIs as well as individual actors (students, teachers, researchers, managers). Specifically, the tools encourage reflection on current strategies, policies and practices relating to academic integrity, which may lead to improvements at personal and/or institution levels.

SELF-EVALUATION TOOLS DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The tools were developed by an international interdisciplinary team (tools development group, TDG), based on a review of previously developed academic integrity survey tools, relevant literature and the experience of team members.

The development of the tools went through several stages.

First, TDG members proposed existing academic integrity survey tools (questionnaires) and scientific literature sources that could facilitate initial discussion leading towards conceptual and empirical framework for development of the tools. After the review of these sources and a number of virtual TDG meetings, it was agreed: 1) to develop each of four tools as a separate component focusing on a corresponding target group and the key areas relevant for maintenance of academic integrity in their daily functions; 2) to design each tool as a questionnaire complemented with scores (assigned to the answers), feedback and suggestion of useful sources; 3) whenever available and applicable, to employ existing survey questionnaires for the construction of the tools (including surveys that have been previously developed and tested with input from individual members of TDG).

Second, TGD worked on development of a working draft of each of the tools. The common structure was as follows:

1) for each target group TDG identified the key areas for self-evaluation that were included as sections of a particular questionnaire;

2) for each section, TGD constructed new or adapted existing questions to serve as self-evaluation indicators;

3) TGD developed a system of scoring of answers to each question, leading to overall score for a section and then overall score for a tool;

4) members of TGD composed written feedback at three levels: feedback linked to a score for each answer, feedback linked to a score for a section, and feedback linked to the overall score for a tool. The feedback has been designed to provide guidance, highlight potential risks or issues, and suggest useful resources.

Third, working drafts of each tool underwent thorough and iterative process of refinement. TDG members individually, in smaller groups and during numerous common virtual meetings, checked, discussed, debated and improved each item in a tool. Also, pre-final drafts were introduced to the whole consortium and additional remarks were received for further refinement of each tool. TDG aimed at producing consistent, relevant, easy to use tools containing meaningful and helpful feedback that could be applied in diverse institutional and cultural contexts.

Finally, the content of each tool approved by TDG was uploaded to an on-line survey-type system. After piloting each on-line tool (done by individual members of TDG, members of the consortium and potential users) necessary technical and content related adjustments were made.

TDG aimed to customize tools to best correspond to self-evaluation needs of each target group. The report further presents the content of each tool as well as guidance on availability and use of the tools.

CONTENT OF SELF-EVALUATION TOOLS

Three of the tools (for students, teachers and researchers) are intended for individual use and give personal feedback. The institutional tool is designed to evaluate the approach to academic integrity across the whole institution, based on responses, ideally provided by an institutional leader familiar with the institutional strategy and policies.

Self-Evaluation Tool for Students (AISETS) has been developed to help students evaluate their own knowledge, attitudes and skills regarding academic integrity. The tool consists of three sections:

- Study skills
- Academic writing
- Plagiarism

Self-Evaluation Tool for Teachers (AISETT) provides an opportunity for teachers to reflect upon their teaching approach and practices as well as related knowledge and skills. Some of the items are common to AISETS and AISETT (e. g., perceptions about plagiarism, academic writing skills) as they are relevant both for students and their teachers. AISETT consists of five sections:

- Approach to teaching and student motivation
- Interaction with students and guidance about integrity
- Awareness of institutional policies
- Dealing with student dishonesty
- Knowledge and skills about plagiarism and academic writing

Some of the questions in ASETS and ASETT have been adapted from GAP quiz (with permission of its authors Liz Cox and Stella-Maris Orim (Coventry University)) and Project on Academic Integrity in Caucasus, Kazakhstan and Turkey survey (PAICKT).

Academic Integrity Self-Evaluation Tool for Researchers (ASETR) focuses on research conduct and integrity aspects at various stages of the research process. It encourages researchers to reflect upon their research practices and commitment to responsible conduct of research. The tool consists of four sections:

- Policies and practices
- Questionable research practices
- Reporting and publication
- Commitment to responsible conduct of research

Some statements linked to questionable research practices and publication ethics are based on survey reports by Agnoli et al. (2017) and Artino et al. (2018). Selected items from these surveys have been adapted for the purposes of self-evaluation and aligned with the feedback.

Academic Integrity Self-Evaluation Tool for Institutions was conceived and developed as Scorecard for Academic Integrity Development (SAID) by Irene Glendinning of Coventry University (United Kingdom), and Tricia Bertram-Gallant and Jennifer Eury, representing the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI). SAID has been adapted for use by the ENAI with input from members of the TDG. It is designed to provide feedback on the effectiveness and maturity of commitment by an institution to promoting and upholding academic integrity. The tool consists of eight sections:

- Institutional governance and strategic commitment towards academic integrity
- Policies, sanctions and procedures for academic integrity
- Engagement and buy-in for deterring academic misconduct
- Institutional culture of integrity and appreciating the value of learning
- The role of students in academic integrity
- Transparency and communication
- Enhancement of strategy, policies, procedures and systems
- Institutional engagement with research and development on academic integrity

USE OF SELF-EVALUATION TOOLS

Academic Integrity Self-Evaluation Tools are provided as interactive online tools accessible freely via the website of the ENAI: <http://academicintegrity.eu/survey/>. Whether or not to make use of any of these tools is a decision for the individual or institution concerned. The tools are designed to be administered individually (or within the institution being evaluated) therefore the responses and feedback are intended for the user of a selected tool only. The tools do not aim at data collection therefore answers and the feedback are only available for the users and by default are not otherwise recorded. However, we plan to use the tools for research in the future. If a user ticks the consent box under the demographic information, all responses are recorded to the database together with demographic data provided. Even in this case we do not collect any information which would allow us to identify a particular respondent.

If a user holds several roles (e.g. teacher and researcher) they may consider completing separate self-evaluations targeted specifically at each role.

Limitations

The TDG aimed at designing the tools that would be useful in diverse social, cultural, linguistic, institutional contexts and scientific fields. Even though the TDG members come from various countries, disciplines and institutional settings, we acknowledge that there might be specific situations where some items in the tools (e.g. a question or a feedback statement) may not be fully applicable. We believe this does not diminish the usability of the tools as their primary goal is to convey the best practices in upholding academic integrity and provide guidance. However, the authors will appreciate any feedback from users to serve for improvement of the tools (please, contact by email surveys@academicintegrity.eu).

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