



Educational Discipline “Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions” for Training Future Biologists, Ecologists and Public Health Specialists

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ABSTRACT

In the context of highlighting the ethical principles and rules defined by law that must be followed by participants in the educational process at the university, the program and expected results of the educational discipline “Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions” are presented. The content of the discipline is presented by the following topics: The concept of integrity as a criterion of morality, a historical outline of its formation; Academic integrity in legislation; Principles of academic integrity when performing educational tasks, tasks of current and final control of learning results, certification. Citation rules. Plagiarism and classification of its types. Academic writing. The discipline “Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions” aims to help students make ethical choices both within and outside of the walls of their educational institutions and once they join the workforce at implementing fundamental values of academic integrity in the student environment.

Keywords: Academic Integrity, University, Ovation Process, Biologists, Ecologists, Public Health Professionals

Introduction

McCabe & Pavela (2004) formulated ten (updated) principles of academic integrity developing. These include a commitment to learning, understanding the teacher's role as a mentor, optimizing one's abilities, increasing students' awareness, focusing on learning goals, creating effective learning models, avoiding academic fraud, upholding one's integrity, and responding to academic fraud. Okoroafor et al. (2015) note that students' engagement in academic misconduct could be related to deontology, utilitarianism, rational fair exchange, justifying dishonest act by assuming it publicizes the work of others, Machiavellian perspectives, cultural relativism and situational factors including familial pressure or unforeseen circumstances.

Academic integrity is 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 (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021). The main principles and fundamental values of academic integrity and the ethics of academic relationships include: honesty, decency and truthfulness, trust, justice and legality, respect, responsibility, self-improvement and conscientiousness, courage (Academic integrity, 2025). These principles and values present a foundation for guiding the behavior of students and other members of the academic community and translating written norms and ideals into practice (Kadayam Guruswami et al., 2023). Stoesz & Yuditseva (2017) note that educational institutions must be made to change the academic culture from one where cheating is the norm to one where integrity is expected. Adherence to academic integrity is very important for future biologists and ecologists, as well as public health professionals. To achieve program learning outcomes and special competencies, the T.H. Shevchenko National University “Chernihiv Colehium” (Ukraine) has introduced a normative course “Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions” into the educational programs for the training of the above-mentioned specialists. This educational course is aimed at revealing the ethical principles and legally defined rules that should be followed by participants in the educational process during learning, teaching, and conducting scientific activities in order to ensure trust in learning outcomes and scientific achievements.

Content of the academic discipline “Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions”

Content module 1. Academic integrity as a guarantee of quality education and sustainable development.

Topic 1. The concept of integrity as a criterion of morality, a historical outline of its formation.

Lectures. The concept of integrity as a criterion of morality, a historical sketch of its formation. Academic integrity in legislation.

Practical works. The modern world and the concept of integrity. Introduction to the Regulation on Academic Integrity of Higher Education Institutions
International documents on integrity. The legislative framework of Ukraine for academic integrity. Conflict of interest

Topic 2. Academic integrity in legislation.

Content module 2. Applied aspects of implementing the principles of academic integrity

Lectures. Principles of academic integrity when performing educational tasks, tasks of current and final control of learning results, certification.

Practical works. The Social Model of Plagiarism in Higher Education. Distance Learning. Current, Final Control and Certification: The View of a Bachelor's Degree Student

Topic 3. Principles of academic integrity when performing educational tasks, tasks of current and final control of learning results, certification.

Topic 4. Citation rules. Plagiarism and classification of its types.

Lectures. Rules of citation. Plagiarism and classification of its types

Practical works. Information sources in the educational process and scientific activity. Citations and references. Tools (services) for checking text documents for plagiarism.

Topic 5. Academic writing.

Lecture. Academic writing.

Practical work. Writing scientific texts.

It is worth noting that generally recognized violations of academic integrity (Stone, 2022; Davis, 2023; Sozon et al., 2024; Tammeleht & Löfström, 2025; Academic integrity, 2025) are: academic plagiarism – publicising (partially or completely) scientific (creative) results obtained by other persons as the results of one's own research (creativity) and/or reproduction of published texts (publicised works of art) of other authors without indicating authorship; self-plagiarism – publication (partially or completely) of one's own previously published scientific results as new scientific results; fabrication – invention of data or facts used in the educational process or scientific research; falsification – deliberate change or modification of already available data related to the educational process or scientific research (including forgery of signatures in official documents); cheating – performance of written works involving external sources of information other than those permitted for use, in particular, during the evaluation of learning outcomes; deception – provision of knowingly false information about one's own educational (scientific, creative) activity or the organisation of the educational process; bribery – provision (receipt) by a participant of the educational process or an offer to provide (receipt) funds, property, services or any other benefits of a material or non-material nature in order to obtain an undue advantage in the educational process; biased assessment – deliberate overestimation or underestimation of the learning outcomes of higher education applicants; false co-authorship – entering into the list of authors of a scientific or educational-methodical work persons who did not participate in the creation of the product. That is why special attention is paid to the analysis of the listed generally recognized violations of academic integrity using specific examples

Effective knowledge and skills

Stoesz & Yuditseva (2017) note the effectiveness of an educational intervention to promote academic integrity depends on the instructional methods utilized, and environmental and individual factors on students' perceptions, learning outcomes, and behaviors.

As a result of studying the discipline "Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions", students should know: international and national legislative framework of academic integrity, principles of academic integrity, structure and main ideas of the Regulations on Academic Integrity at the University, basics of academic writing, citation rules, types of activities that are manifestations of academic misconduct (academic misconduct, dishonesty).

As a result of studying the discipline, students should must adhere to the rules and norms of obtaining education, based on the principles of academic integrity, independently perform educational tasks, tasks of current and final control of learning results, certification (for persons with special educational needs, this requirement is applied taking into account their individual needs and capabilities), refer to sources of information when using ideas, developments, statements, information, comply with the norms of the legislation on copyright and related rights, provide reliable information about the results of one's own educational (scientific, creative) activities, research methods used and sources of information.

In the process of studying the discipline, it is expected that students will develop the following competencies: ability to apply knowledge in practical situations; ability to act on the basis of ethical considerations (motives); ability to act socially responsible and conscious; ability to communicate in the state language both orally and in writing; ability to use the regulatory, legal and organizational foundations of the educational process in higher educational institutions; ability to comprehensively plan, organize and implement project activities, prepare analytical reporting documentation and presentations; ability to organize work related to the assessment of the ecological state, environmental protection and optimization of nature use; ability to justify one's own point of view in the field of biology, ecology, environmental protection and sustainable use of nature, as well as public health.

The academic discipline will contribute to the achievement of the following program learning outcomes: plans and implements professional activities based on regulatory legal acts; understands the importance of ecological culture as a form of human existence, appreciates the diversity and multiculturalism of the world and is guided in his/her activities by modern principles of tolerance, dialogue and cooperation; resolves controversial issues regarding personal beliefs and ethical considerations; independently organizes the process of lifelong learning and improves with a high level of autonomy the professional competencies acquired during training.

In the context of war in Ukraine, student learning is mostly taking place online. Holden et al. (2021) note that when examining academic integrity in the online environment, it will be necessary for continued research exploring cheating culture and the nature of, and motivation for, cheating on different types of assessments.

Conclusion

Promoting academic integrity is part of the internal system of ensuring the quality of education and the educational process of the T.H. Shevchenko National University "Chernihiv Colehium". The discipline "Academic Integrity in Higher Education Institutions" aims to help students make ethical choices both within and outside of the walls of their educational institutions and once they join the workforce. This academic discipline is aimed at implementing six fundamental values of academic integrity in the student environment: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

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