Plagiarism Policies in Romania

Full report

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Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education Across Europe

Plagiarism Policies in Romania

1. Information sources

Information about Romania was collected through surveying

- students,
- academics,
- university senior managers,

430 students completed the survey representing 8 institutions. 39 teachers completed the survey, representing 8 universities. Interviews and a student focus group helped to furnish more information about the situation in Romania. The breakdown of survey participants is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Breakdown of survey responses							
Country	Student questionnaire responses	Teacher Questionnaire responses	Senior Management questionnaires, interviews	Student Focus Group	Organisations and Institutions		
Romania	430	39	11	1	8		
Breakdown of student questionnaire responses		Home students	Other EU students	Non-EU students	Not known	Bachelor, diploma	Master, doctor	Blank, other
Romania	430	418	12	0	0	300	113	17

This summary also draws on publications about research into quality assurance in Romania and some on-line material available on web sites and blogs.

2. Higher Education in Romania

Capturing information about HE Governance is important when trying to determine facts about policies for academic integrity implemented within these institutions and also when trying to influence changes to policies throughout the HE sector in Romania.

Romania has a combination of public and private higher education institutions (HEIs). Although largely autonomous, the Ministry of Education and Research oversees the operations of all HEI and provides funding for both public and private accredited HEIs. Universities are free to decide on their own policies, systems and internal arrangements, including for admissions and examinations. The independence applies throughout the university structure, which leads to significant differences between departments within one institution (EuroEducation.net).

Major cities such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Timişoara, Târgu Mureş and Craiova have well established universities that historically attracted international students to study subjects such as medicine and engineering. However, recently studying in Romania has become less popular due to

shortages in qualified professors, underinvestment in maintaining existing infrastructure and lack of funding for expansion and development of the HE sector as a whole (EuroEducation.net).

The power of the Romanian universities to help bring about change in the country as a whole is demonstrated when considering the crucial role the student movement played both throughout communist years and in the democratisation movement after 1990. Their protest activities also influenced political changes in neighbouring countries including Bulgaria and Ukraine (EuroEducation.net).

3.   Quality Assurance in Romanian Higher Education - teaching, learning and assessment

3.1 National agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Agenţia Română pentru Asigurarea Calităţii în Învăţământul Superior (ARACIS), the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education was founded in 2005. ARACIS first applied for "candidate membership" of the European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA) in 2007 and had a first review visit by an ENQA panel in March 2009 (ENQA 2009). The panel found the ARACIS to be "substantially compliant" overall with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2008 criteria, and made a number of recommendations for necessary improvements.

A second ENQA review panel that visited Romania in June 2013 found ARACIS to be fully compliant in all but one of the ESG criteria. The panel reported that "external funding [from the EU] has enabled ARACIS to promote the adoption by Romania's universities and other higher education institutions of an enhancement-focused approach to quality in higher education, so that they can move on from an approach that has been formalistic legalistic and compliance-oriented" (ENQA 2013 p2).

The panel commended ARACIS for its development programme ACADEMIS and particularly the publication of three "Quality Barometer" reports that "offered searching and constructive critical assessments of higher education" (ENQA 2013 p2, 31, 42) in Romania.

Recommendations from the 2013 ENQA visit included facilitating more student representation and a better gender balance within the quality processes, more transparency about decisions and publishing quality reports accessible for a wider audience (ENQA 2013 p42).

The remit of ARACIS includes evaluation of quality, accreditation and periodic reviews of bachelor and master's degree programmes, but not doctoral programmes. This role also covers institutional and system-wide analyses and audits. The agency responds to invitations from HE institutions and does not have any power to compel institutions to subject themselves to scrutiny. The quality assurance activities focus mainly on the verification of the study programmes and do not refer directly to the verification of the learning outcomes, pedagogy and systems. Disappointingly, this limitation also means that systems for academic integrity and plagiarism are not included in any audit of HEIs.

3.2 Higher education learning, teaching and assessment in Romania

In order to establish whether learning, teaching and assessment methods in Romania may influence or discourage the opportunities for plagiarism and cheating, the teachers' questionnaire asked respondents to comment on the typical assessment students were required to complete. 35 from the 39 teacher respondents replied to this question about typical percentages of individual and

group work in student assessments. Figure 1 summarises the responses. This feedback suggests that although some students experience more assessment in groups than working individually the majority of assessment in Romania is done individually.
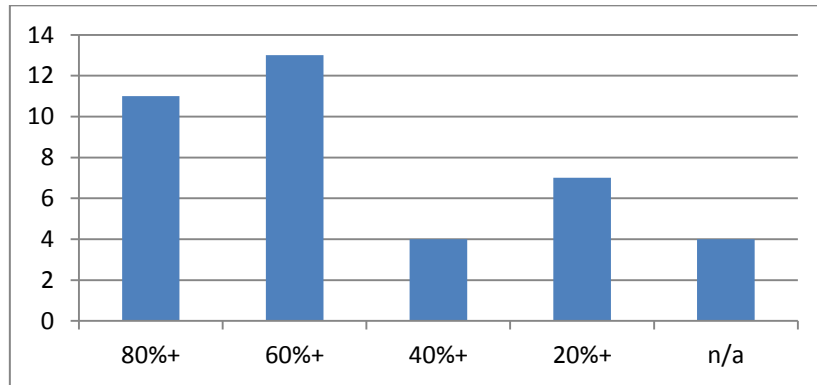

Figure 1: Typical percentage of individual work in Romanian student assessment

 All teachers who responded to the question about breakdown of assessment types said their programmes had a mixture of different types of assessment, ranging from 80% to 5% by formal examination, summarised in Table 2. Only the responses adding up to 100% were included in this table. These responses indicate that 60% is the most common percentage for assessment by examinations, but a few exceptional programmes have a higher percentage of assessment by coursework and project work than by formal examination.

Table 2: Teachers' responses, assessment in Romania HEIs				
Examinations	Assignments	Projects	Responses	notes
80%	10%	10%	2	
70%	20-10%	20-10%	2	
60%	30-10%	30-10%	11	
50%	50-30%	20-0%	3	
40%	40-20%	40-20%	3	
30%	50-30%	30-20%	5	
25%	25%	50%	1	
15%	40%	35%	1	
5%	70%	25%	1	

This evidence about the nature the assessment students experience in Romania is important for interpretation of some of the responses to questions about student plagiarism.

One distinguishing feature of Romanian higher education that cannot be ignored in this study is the number and extent of distance learning programmes. Quality assurance on such programmes can be very difficult to manage.   Although no specific issues were raised by respondents about this, various forms of cheating, including plagiarism, ghost-writing and impersonation, are much more difficult to identify for distance learning assessment than in conventional face-to-face teaching. Much of the marketing focus for these programmes, which are often offered in English to an international audience, is based on the low fee rates.

4. *Academic Integrity and Plagiarism in Romania*

4.1 Evidence of plagiarism Romania

No specific statistics were located about cases of student plagiarism either within Romanian HEI or at national level in Romania. When asked about whether plagiarism is increasing one interview respondent said "*there is definitely not an increase. Perhaps to the contrary*" but another respondent disagreed, saying "*I noticed increase in both higher and lower levels of education (Bachelor and masters), also PhD*".

Of the senior managers that responded to the survey three said their cases of plagiarism were not increasing, two said there were no statistics, one respondent did not know and there were two more detailed comments, which have been translated below:

> *We are aware of the rise in cases of expulsions for plagiarism*

> *Yes. For students a mandatory declaration form was introduced for their final year exam in which they are mentioning the fact that the dissertation paper is original and does not constitute a plagiarised paper. For the academic personnel there were few cases, although some partially confirmed, some fully confirmed. There are stats for academic personnel.*

Taking into account the institutions these respondents represented, this feedback confirms there are great differences of perception about trends in plagiarism cases in senior managers both within and between institutions. The final comment also confirms that statistics are maintained within at least one HE institution in Romania.

From the IPPHEAE questionnaire, 51% of students and 21% of teacher respondents admitted they may have *accidentally or deliberately plagiarised at some time previously* (Annex RO-1, Qu S5k, T5o). The responses to this question are subject to individual interpretations of what constitutes plagiarism and may tend to under report occurrences through lack of personal candour.

According to one interviewee "*I think sometimes it is accidental, students have not been explained to about citation rules, or done lots of reading. Need to teach them not to plagiarise. On diploma 80% of first drafts show high matches for plagiarism checks but are not punished, particularly with exchange students*".

As with many other European countries, Romania has suffered a high-profile case of plagiarism by a politician as reported in extensively in the international press and journals including Nature (2012). In the case of Romania the Prime Minister Victor Ponta was found to have plagiarised "115 out of 297" pages from his PhD thesis, but he was "*still in post and still has his PhD*" according to one respondent at the time of the interview. The interviewee explained that although the university awarding the PhD said the thesis was plagiarised, "*the National board of Ethics said it is not plagiarism; they said that studying law, has not the same citation rules as other subjects*".

There have been mixed responses to this situation: "*In the Balkans people say he should apologise, in the West the consensus is that he should resign*". However there may be some lasting positive impacts from this case: "*anecdotally – there has been a slight change in perception, people are beginning to have more awareness; some people think things should change now, other people relax. But it has put things on the agenda, researchers will think twice about this*". Several survey

respondents commented that this sets a very poor example for the country as a whole on what is acceptable academic practice.

Teachers interviewed were asked to comment in general on whether they were aware of plagiarism by academic colleague:

> "*A lot of people would never plagiarise, but some people think the system is rotten. In the case of a colleague who plagiarised in her PhD, she kept her PhD, but promotion was blocked. There was no provision in law for an award to be withdrawn. It can be done now by the national ethics committee. However people are reluctant to dig. If people knew I was doing this interview they would be worried*".

> "*Yes they usually plagiarise their own books, republish with a different title, that's the way it is*".

4.2 Plagiarism policies in Romania

According to one interviewee, under the Romanian Law of Education plagiarism is defined as serious misconduct.

All seven senior managers who responded to the questionnaire were very clear about the rigour of their *policies for plagiarism prevention*, for example:

> *I think that our approach is medium to strong. To avoid plagiarism issues are individualized work applied by the teacher, there are serious differences from year to year making it virtually impossible to copy directly. Were introduced statements of honor requiring students to declare that their work is not plagiarism, otherwise there are penalties.*

> *Presentation to the students of the consequences of such cases from other universities. One method would be to expel from college.*

However three of the senior managers were less positive *about policies for plagiarism detection*, suggesting that more could be done in this respect.

Responses about policies and initiatives for preventing and detecting plagiarism revealed that the initiatives rely on "*definitely individual staff, no institutional policy or awareness. It depends on whether staff care. Students are seen as clients, paying students, there is a need to keep them happy*". However a different institution has established "*a bureau of Quality Assurance … we are trying to fight plagiarism with our students – we check their theses. The students do written tests and practical tests – both, and all students have to do a thesis*". The interviewee explained that checks on final theses are conducted manually as there are no anti-plagiarism software tools provided at that institution.

It was explained by one interviewee that the national board for quality assurance conducts periodic institutional reviews "*when curriculum is reviewed, teaching staff and university policies for research. Focus is on reviewing policy - not whether it is being implemented. Policies are devised by each institution. Pretty good usually, a pat on the back. I think measures are fairly mild*". These audits do not appear to provide any oversight for policies on academic integrity.

To establish what types of sanctions are applied, Question 7 for students and teachers asked: *What would happen if a student at your institution was found guilty of plagiarism in their assignment or final project/dissertation*? The responses are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Sanctions for plagiarism				
Assignment		Project or Dissertation		
Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	
32%	46%	9%	13%	*No action would be taken*
52%	62%	21%	31%	*Verbal warning*
16%	8%	25%	18%	*Formal warning letter*
45%	49%	37%	59%	*Request to re write it properly*
40%	36%	33%	36%	*Zero mark for the work*
30%	33%	15%	26%	*Repeat the module or subject*
44%	62%	15%	28%	*Fail the module or subject*
10%	10%	22%	15%	*Repeat the whole year of study*
16%	15%	20%	23%	*Fail the whole programme or degree*
18%	10%	23%	26%	*Expose the student to school community*
10%	4%	25%	10%	*Suspended from the institution*
17%	0%	35%	0%	*Expelled from the institution*
13%	0%	22%	0%	*Suspend payment of student grant*
20%	15%	14%	13%	*Other*

Referring to Table 3, it is particularly worrying that 32% of students and 46% of teacher respondents believed there would be no consequences for plagiarising in an assignment and 9% and 13% respectively believed this was also true for plagiarism in project or dissertation. The teachers' responses suggest that the more draconian penalties listed in the options appear not to be applied in Romanian institutions. Assuming the teachers to have more knowledge of consequences than students, the differences between student and teacher perceptions for some options suggest lack of communication to students about policies.

Table 4: Additional Feedback from teachers to Question 7	
By some teachers; It depends on the teacher / leader only some teachers; For projects students take phenomena, definitions, those features in the drafting of a specific project. Sure measures are taken.	*No action would be taken*
not always; I rarely asked something and only in severe cases	*Request to re write it properly*
For some.	*Fail the module or subject*
Cannot, the institutional rules	*Fail the whole programme or degree*
I do not think it is practical. No practice	*Expose the student to school community*
No one thought of it	*Suspended from the institution*
measured with real consequences; rewriting work	*Other*

The additional comments from teachers in Table 4 provide some insight into individual practices and limitations. A conversation with a teacher interviewee highlights specific practices in one institution:

> Interviewee: "*I have not heard of any student getting caught*"

> Interviewer: "*What would happen if a student was found to have plagiarised?*"

> Interviewee "*They would be asked to rewrite and add acknowledgements*"

> Interviewer: "*What if a thesis was 100% copied? Would they be expelled or suspended?*"

> Interviewee: "*No they would get a lower grade, they would not be expelled*".

Responses to part of question 5, summarised in Annex RO-1, reveal that 54% teachers and only 40% of students responding agreed that their institution had policies and procedures for dealing with plagiarism. 41% of teacher respondents said their institution *takes a serious approach to plagiarism prevention*, with positive responses reducing to just 36% when asked the same question about *plagiarism detection*. When asked whether information about plagiarism policies was available to students, 51% of teachers responded positively compared to just 45% of students. 62% of teachers believed information about policies was available to teachers. These responses suggest that, where there are policies in place, more could be done to inform students and teachers.

Responses to questions in Annex RO-1 about penalties for plagiarism confirm that there is the perception in students and teachers of a low level of consistency of approach. Just 28% of teachers and 40% of students who responded believed there was a standard set of penalties for plagiarism. When asked about whether the same procedures are used for similar cases of plagiarism 31% of students and 41% teachers agreed. The positive responses rose to 48% and 46% respectively when asked about *consistency of procedures from student to student*. These responses add to earlier perceptions about inconsistency of sanctions, with indications of overall weaknesses in some institutional policies for upholding academic integrity and their consistency of application.

Most of the senior manager respondents had a different view to teachers and students when asked: *Do you think teachers follow a consistent approach when they find cases of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, in particular? a) All teachers follow the same procedures for similar cases of plagiarism b) All teachers are consistent in approach towards different students? If possible please provide details of the evidence you have to support your view.* Selected responses (translated) are included below:

> *There is a consistent, unified response by teachers;*
> *All teachers follow the same procedure for plagiarism because all teachers follow the same regulation;*
> *All teachers follow the same procedure for similar cases plagiarism. For example those caught copying were expelled.*

However one senior manager disagreed with the other respondents:

> *I do not think it addresses a consistent approach. Some teachers ignore the issue.*

Considering the overall feedback about sanctions, it appears that that there is no consistent approach to setting or applying sanctions either within or between institutions in Romania. Although there was mention of expulsion in one institution, the sanctions appear to be very lenient in most HEIs compared to those applied in some other places in Europe.

4.3 Use of digital tools for aiding plagiarism detection

The teacher and student survey contained two questions about "digital tools", responses are summarised in Tables 5 and 6.

Student and teacher Question 8: *What digital tools or other techniques are available at your institution for helping to detect plagiarism*?

Table 5: Software Tools	Student	Teacher
Software for text matching - all unnamed	3%	22%
OTHER: video camera, jamming systems, teacher skills	8%	16%
Internet, Google	15%	6%
Nothing	11%	16%
Don't know, no idea	62%	40%

Student and teacher Question 9: *How are the tools you named above used*?

Table 6: Use of software tools	Student	Teacher
It is up to the lecturers to decide whether to use the tools	62%	36%
For some courses students must submit their written work using the tools	15%	3%
Students must submit all written work using the tools	7%	13%
Students may use the tools to check their work before submitting	18%	23%

The free-format responses from students and teachers thematically analysed in Table 5 confirm the information collected in the IPPHEAE survey. Overall, it appears very few HEIs in Romania had acquired licenses for commercial software tools for aiding the detection of plagiarism. The highest responses were variations on "don't know" and "no idea". Table 6 indicates that even where there are software tools available, their use is not embedded or systematic.

According to a teacher interviewee "*there is a trial version of some software* [for aiding the detection of plagiarism] *somewhere*" and another said they would like to have access to try some software tools, but pointed out there is no database available of theses in the Romanian language for matching with student work.

Some interesting responses from senior managers, teachers and students who named video cameras and jamming devices as use of technology were explored further in a student focus group and interviews. Five of the seven senior manager respondents mentioned video camera in examinations. It was reported by both Romanian students and teachers that many students were found to be using communications devices and other technology to access notes or communicate with friends during formal examinations. The jamming devices were used by invigilators to transmit loud noises to any earpieces at random times during an examination. The cameras were used to detect and record unusual student behaviour or attempts to communicate during examinations and also to detect reactions to the jamming devices. Although this finding is not directly about plagiarism, it does indicate there is a significant problem in at least some institutions with deliberate academic dishonesty and misconduct in examinations.

Declarations of honesty are used in some countries and institutions to raise awareness and encourage students to behave ethically and professionally. One of the senior manager survey respondents reported that honesty statements had been introduced, requiring students to sign to verify the originality of their assessed work. Responses to Question 4 summarised in Table 7 suggest

that some Romanian HEIs include this type of practice, but it seems not to be applied in all of institutions.

Question 4 of the student and teacher questionnaire asked when *students are required to sign a declaration about originality and academic honesty.*

Table 7: Students signing a declaration		
Student	**Teacher**	**When**
5%	5%	On starting their degree
20%	13%	For every assessment
21%	49%	For some assessments
33%	8%	Never
20%	26%	Not sure, not applicable

4.3 Guidance and support for academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism

According to one interviewee: "*In my institution we teach the students* [how to avoid plagiarism]*. Also we have a guideline they have to follow about how to and why to use sources and write reference*". However responses below indicate this is not the experience of every student or teacher.

Referring to Annex RO-1 Question 5 (S5a and T5a) responses, although 86% of students and 49% of teachers said *students received training in academic writing and anti-plagiarism*, 7% of students and 21% of teachers believed there was no such training. 40% of students and 74% of teachers said they would like to have more training on *avoidance of plagiarism and academic dishonesty*".

Student Question 6, Teacher Question 2/3 addressed the question about awareness-raising: students become aware of plagiarism and of other forms of academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating) as an important issue through:

Table 8: Ways that students become aware about plagiarism and academic dishonesty				
Plagiarism		**Academic Dishonesty**		
Student	**Teacher**	**Student**	**Teacher**	
84%	21%	30%	28%	Web site
32%	5%	35%	5%	Course booklet, student guide, handbook
27%	15%	33%	21%	Leaflet or guidance notes
41%	49%	46%	56%	Workshop / class / lecture
17%	13%	21%	10%	I am not aware of any information about this

From Table 8, responses from students confirmed that the main source of information about plagiarism for students was through a web site and to a lesser extent in classes. There was less certainty about academic dishonesty. In general students were more aware than teachers of what information was available. A minority of respondents, teachers and students, were not aware of any sources of information about either plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

Student Question 12, Teacher Question 14 asked: *Which of the following services are provided at your institution to advise students about plagiarism prevention*? The responses are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Services and student support for discouraging plagiarism		
Student	**Teacher**	**Service or provision**
43%	15%	Academic support unit
37%	59%	Advice in class during course/module
23%	18%	Additional lectures, workshops:
13%	77%	Advice from tutors or lecturers
11%	8%	Guidance from the library
7%	5%	University publisher
28%	7%	Academic writing unit/Study skills unit

Table 9 shows that teacher respondents were much more confident than the students that teachers' advice in classes or otherwise was the main channel for student guidance. The highest scoring option from students to this question (43%) was for services provided by an academic support unit.

The teacher questionnaire Question 6 asked who is responsible for monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures for academic integrity and plagiarism. The responses were:

Table 10: Who is responsible for overseeing policies for academic integrity and plagiarism				
	National	Institutional	Faculty/Subject	Don't Know
Monitoring	15%	8%	44%	44%
Reviewing	18%	23%	41%	41%
Revising	23%	10%	13%	59%

The important message from responses to this question is that over 40% of teacher respondents were not aware about processes and responsibilities for monitoring, reviewing and revising institutional policies concerning academic integrity.

A further area to note here is development of staff skills and awareness. Of the seven senior manager respondents, only one was aware of any training for academic teachers, and that was not strictly about academic integrity. It was encouraging that all these respondents agreed that more training should be provided for staff and students preventing plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

5. Perceptions and understanding of Plagiarism

Certain survey questions were designed to provide insight into what participants understood by plagiarism in order to be able to validate and interpret responses to other questions.

Referring to Table 11 comparing responses from students and teachers, there is a broad level of agreement on most options, with the three most commonly selected reasons: *they think they will not get caught*, *they run out of time* and the ease of *cut and paste from the Internet*. However it is important to consider where there are differences in perceptions. Students were much more likely to select options concerning lack of student knowledge or skills than the teachers. This suggests that more dialogue between students and teachers would go some way to reducing plagiarism.

The free-format responses summarised in Table 12 echo and elaborate on many of the pre-defined options on the student and teacher questionnaires. Different themes arising from this feedback are: convenience (mentioned three times), and panic or desperation.

Student Question 14 and teacher Question 17: *What leads students to decide to plagiarise*?

Table 11: Reasons student plagiarise – student and teacher questionnaires		
Student	**Teacher**	***Possible reason for plagiarism***
34%	41%	*They think the lecturer will not care*
72%	80%	*They think they will not get caught*
70%	67%	*They run out of time*
66%	59%	*They don't want to learn anything, just pass the assignment:*
12%	10%	*They don't see the difference between group work and collusion*
49%	54%	*They can't express another person's ideas in their own words*
43%	33%	*They don't understand how to cite and reference*
57%	44%	*They are not aware of penalties*
49%	23%	*They are unable to cope with the workload*
44%	26%	*They think their written work is not good enough:*
32%	15%	*They feel the task is completely beyond their ability*
69%	72%	*It is easy to cut and paste from the Internet*
27%	0%	*They feel external pressure to succeed*
32%	28%	*Plagiarism is not seen as wrong*
31%	46%	*They have always written like that*
27%	26%	*Unclear criteria and expectations for assignments*
33%	18%	*Their reading comprehension skills are weak*
35%	36%	*Assignments tasks are too difficult or not understood*
18%	23%	*There is no teacher control on plagiarism*
43%	26%	*Consequences not fully understood*

Additional free-format responses from senior managers surveyed:

Table 12: Reasons students plagiarise (translated)
Lack of confidence
Panic
Perception that everybody does it (but not true)
Convenience
Because teachers allow it for convenience, and very very much based on the systems to do this
Out of desperation, ignorance, poor education, awareness of poor preparation.
Teachers are not clear enough.
One reason would be because of material is too large and time is short for that material to be accumulated

Student respondents generally expressed confidence that they understood the technicalities of academic writing and plagiarism:

Student Question 2: *I became aware of plagiarism…*

74% said they learned about plagiarism before they started bachelor degree education and 23% said this happened during their bachelor degree. Only 3% of students said that they still were still not sure about plagiarism

Student Question 3: *I learned to cite and reference…*

66% said they learnt this before they started bachelor degree and 28% said they learnt this during bachelor degree, only 6% of students said they were still not sure.

Responses in Tables 13 and 14 provide some encouragement that student respondents had been advised about acknowledging sources in academic writing and there is a clear message that respondents saw the connection with plagiarism.

Student Question 10 asked: *What are the reasons for using correct referencing and citation in scholarly academic writing?*

Table 13: Reasons for referencing and citation	
79%	*To avoid being accused of plagiarism*
60%	*To show you have read some relevant research papers*
49%	*To give credit to the author of the sourced material*
41%	*To strengthen and give authority to your writing*
12%	*Because you are given credit/marks for doing so*
4%	*I don't know*

Student Question 11, Teacher Question 10a:

Table 14: Referencing styles						
yes		No		Not sure		Question
student	teacher	student	teacher	student	teacher	
46%	49%	23%	26%	30%	21%	*Is there any referencing style students are required or encouraged to use in written work?*
69%		8%		21%		*Are you confident about referencing and citation?*

The teacher and student responses indicate that just under half respondents were aware of a referencing style. Although 69% of student respondents said they were confident about academic writing conventions, 29% indicated they may have difficulties with this.

Student Question 13: *What do you find difficult about academic writing?*

Table 15: Difficulties with academic writing	
67%	*Finding good quality sources*
26%	*Referencing and citation*
24%	*Paraphrasing*
41%	*Understanding different referencing formats and styles*

The responses in Table 15 indicate, according to student respondents, where the emphasis needs to be in supporting students' academic writing skills. However this finding must take into account how knowledgeable and skilled the student respondents actually were about scholarly activities, academic writing and what constitutes plagiarism.

The following analysis will provide further evidence to verify whether the confidence of students and teachers about academic writing protocols is justified. Students (question 15) and teachers (question 19) were asked to identify possible cases of plagiarism based on a brief scenario, and suggest whether some "punishment" should be applied. The answers are summarised in Tables 16 (student responses) and 17 (teacher responses).

Student Question 15: *Examples of possible plagiarism, with 40% matching text*

Qu	Is it plagiarism?			Punishment?	Assuming that 40% of a student's submission is from other sources and is copied into the student's work as described in (a-f) below, indicate your judgement on plagiarism
	Yes	No	Don't know		
a	90%	1%	8%	61%	word for word with no quotations
b	64%	4%	28%	41%	word for word with no quotations, has a correct references but no in text citations
c	36%	14%	45%	24%	word for word with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations
d	35%	15%	45%	22%	with some words changed with no quotations, references or in text citations
e	29%	15%	52%	18%	with some words changed with no quotations, has correct references but no in text citations
f	16%	33%	47%	10%	with some words changed with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations

Table 16: Student responses to possible cases of plagiarism

Teacher Question 19: *Is it plagiarism?*

Qu	Is it plagiarism?			Punishment?	Assuming that 40% of a student's submission is from other sources and is copied into the student's work as described in (a-f) below, indicate your judgement on plagiarism
	Yes	No	Don't know		
a	95%	3%	3%	49%	word for word with no quotations
b	59%	8%	18%	33%	word for word with no quotations, has a correct references but no in text citations
c	41%	18%	36%	26%	word for word with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations
d	39%	21%	31%	23%	with some words changed with no quotations, references or in text citations
e	46%	15%	26%	26%	with some words changed with no quotations, has correct references but no in text citations
f	21%	31%	38%	13%	with some words changed with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations

Table 17: Teacher responses to possible case of plagiarism

All six cases (a-f) in the question may be categorised as forms of plagiarism, but some could be construed as poor academic practice or perhaps patch-writing due to poor language skills, which could account for some matching. The two most serious cases from the six are cases (a) and (d) because neither of these has any acknowledgement of the sources used. Although almost all respondents correctly identified case (a) as serious plagiarism, there was a marked shift in perception for case (d), with just 50% of students and 60% of teachers believing this was a case of plagiarism, whether deemed to be serious or otherwise. It is also noteworthy how few respondents thought some punishment should be made that the scenario. Given that 40% of the paper is identical to other work, it is difficult to justify why a student should be given academic credits without at least some investigation. It is of concern to see the complacency in a high number of respondents, students and teachers, who implied through their responses that most of these examples would be acceptable practice for assessed work. It is notable to recall that in Student Question 11 (Table 13) 69% of the same student respondents said they were confident about referencing and citation. Their responses to this question cast some doubts on their understanding.

6. Discussion

6.1 Examples of good practice

The survey revealed that some institutions in Romania have developed policies to support their efforts to improve academic integrity.

Some institutions are actively supporting other institutions in various ways, such as offering seminars and workshops, to highlight good practice and discourage plagiarism.

Institutions are beginning to see the benefits of acquiring high quality commercial software tools, but the license costs are very high for institutions within the Romanian economy.

Interviewees report that some individual colleagues are taking steps to design student assessments that discourage plagiarism.

These pioneers, institutions and individuals, need to be supported and encouraged to continue this good work.

6.2 Ideas for countering plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Several academic respondents talked about a culture within senior management in some Romanian universities of denial and almost of fear about plagiarism, for example when asked about research funding for research and initiatives to counter plagiarism, one response was "*there is definitely funding, but we need to have the cooperation of the institution. Plagiarism among* [senior] *academics is a worry*". To make any progress, this reticence needs to be overcome to allow open dialogue across the higher education sector, involving all stakeholders, about how to address aspects of quality and standards compromised by academic dishonesty.

All respondents were asked to nominate suggestions to reduce student plagiarism, a selection of these ideas from teachers and senior managers (mostly translated) are listed below, categorised according to topics.

College admissions rules

Let the college entrance exam not be file based and put strict and clear rules about plagiarism because students are unaware of this fact!

Student information, training

Making sure students are aware of what this is – web resources making it clear. It is in the big regulations, PDF, what it is.
Improvement programs for students, regardless of whether it is paid or not.
First, students will be informed about what it means to plagiarize also set consequences incurred if plagiarism. Introduction to academic writing course, which sensitize them to the problems of plagiarism. Work individually with students to track progress and to correct bad habits. The more time for the teacher to dedicate to students;
A better presentation by the tutor of what plagiarism and consequences are. Better preparation of students in terms of writing scientific papers.
Mandatory bibliographic records before writing project ideas (license/dissertation) hours taught better
To prevent plagiarism the best would be for the students to be very carefully examined by teachers to read sentence by sentence and a student asked how to draw that conclusion
Projects easier and more affordable to have access to more information from the teacher; to have a much larger ongoing support.
Increasing hours devoted to academic writing, initiating their research appropriate reading recommendation. Students must be explained in detail what plagiarism means, why it is not acceptable and how it can be avoided.
Tutorials focused on explaining the rules of academic writing, coherent policy on plagiarism at the institution.

Institutional policies, culture

Don't necessarily want to present this as a law with punishment for breaking it. Should be part of the academic community, respond positively, address good researchers.
Measures should be consistently applied
Action at institutional level devoted to cases of plagiarism
The institution should have clear and consistent policies in this regard
a strong student community.

Sanctions

I think that measures taken against should be clearer and harsher.
We should have international law sanctions for all people who resort to plagiarism
Students with trenchant attitude in this respect - isolation from the community of peers

> *It is necessary that the faculty are selected to be very strict and rigorous about plagiarism (2)*
> *Work from home should be loaded on platforms that allow their verification.*

Resources and software tools

> *The correct course of a text, purchase of software, which has access for students to check plagiarism*
> *Specific software for text but also for the image*
> *Search engines allow for a sweep today, but databases at college / university could provide extremely useful support.*
> *Cameras were installed to detect student plagiarism.*

Changes to student assessment

> *Oral defence of student work.*

Support for teachers and researchers

> *Conference with information on methods to prevent plagiarism.*

Public information and perception

> *Ways to change the public opinion which comply problems not constitute plagiarism or theft.*

Clearly the most common suggestions concern providing guidance and advice for students through various channels. However it is encouraging to see that consistency of institutional policies and more stringent sanctions featured in the responses.

An interesting observation that has appeared in the survey for many other EU countries related to pre-university education: "*In mainstream schools, plagiarism will always exist. There are no effective enforcement measures. The correct relationships* [should be] *based on mutual respect between student and teacher*". It would certainly help to address the problems if students were more prepared on admission to university.

There is one comment that implies assessment for distance learning programmes, translated as "working at home", can be problematic. A small case study was conducted with this focus as part of the IPPHEAE research (Kokkinaki et al 2013), which suggested there was scope for further detailed research into this very specific area. This would be particularly useful to help maintain academic integrity in countries like Romania, where a high proportion of distance learning programmes are offered.

Student respondents also provided many intelligent and mature suggestions on how to reduce plagiarism, in total 288 constructive comments were recorded, far too many to reproduce here. Many of the comments echoed those expressed above, particularly those about use of software for detection, more teaching and information about this subject. Some student respondents called for more stringent punishment of students found to be plagiarising and proper implementation of the existing sanctions by teachers; others asked for longer time for project work, better briefing on the requirements or more demanding assignments, for example "*Encourage and empower students to read scientific papers and many more explanations and sources that can help us to develop a project*" and "*To have more time to resolve the matter projects and be structured so that you understand exactly what you study and how to solve projects*". It appears that students are very much aware of

shortcomings in policies and support services and would welcome measures to improve quality and standards in higher education qualifications.

6.3 Reflections

In common with most other countries in Europe, the lack of statistics to show trends in plagiarism in Romania makes it impossible to know how extensive the incidence of plagiarism is and how it is being handled by individual academics within institutions. Even if this information was available, Romania has a number of compounding problems that would make it difficult to take any quick actions to put in place workable systems to improve academic quality and student writing practices.

The strong culture of autonomy between institutions and of departments within institutions will make it difficult to promote consistent approach to any changes agreed. However the historical evidence of the influence of student movements in bringing about radical change in Romania, provides some encouragement that anything is possible if there is a consensus that change is necessary.

Arguably the greatest challenge will be to reach a common understanding in academic communities of what constitutes plagiarism and what is acceptable academic practice in student work. Ideally these need to be defined EU-wide (or even globally) rather than locally, but clearly this level of consensus will be very difficult to achieve.

It is commendable that the national accreditation agency ARACIS has taken great strides in the last few years to achieve compliance with EU standards for quality assurance in higher education. However their remit is still focused on verification of the study programmes and not on the evaluation of education quality and standards including policies and procedures to counter plagiarism and academic misconduct.

Several people within the academic community in Romania have already made good progress to promote good policies and strategies for tackling academic dishonesty and improving the quality of higher education in Romania. The evidence presented here from the IPPHEAE survey points to the urgent need for concerted action throughout Romania.

7. Recommendations for Romania

7.1 National and international

7.1.1   The national government should consider either establishing a national agency for monitoring and supporting academic integrity in higher education or extending the remit of the current accreditation agency ARACIS to cover this area;

7.1.2   A national programme of research and development should be established to explore ethical conduct, integrity, deterring plagiarism and academic misconduct in higher education;

7.1.3   Funding and support should be provided for institutions to acquire high quality digital tools to aid the detection and prevention of plagiarism;

7.1.4   The national government should consider commissioning the development of a national archive of academic papers and theses in the Romanian language.

7.2 Institutional

7.2.1   Each institution should set up an internal consultation process involving representatives from across the full spectrum of the academic community to establish and implement a set of institution-wide policies and procedures for managing academic integrity and deterring plagiarism. These policies should apply to all levels of education and research and include in-built monitoring and review mechanisms; Romania can draw on many good examples of holistic policies implemented elsewhere to use for guidance and experts who can provide advice;

7.2.2   All students should receive comprehensive guidance and support throughout their studies to ensure they fully understand how to avoid plagiarism, the intricacies of academic writing conventions, expectations and requirements for scholarly research;

7.2.3   The institution should set up a professional development programme for all academic, administrative and management staff to ensure the new policies and procedures are fully understood and that they are being implemented as intended in a transparent and consistent manner.

7.2.4   Institutions should attempt to provide access for staff and students to effective software tools that can be deployed to aid the detection of plagiarism and to help students to learn about good academic practice.

7.2.5   Institutions should encourage and support academic staff and researchers to engage in research and development work to improve policies and systems for academic conduct

7.2.6   Collaboration, networking, sharing with other institutions

7.2.8   Collecting statistics institution-wide about cases of plagiarism and misconduct occurring and the outcomes from the investigations provides a good starting point to observe where more effort is needed and whether progress is being made to promote good practice.

7.2.9   Specific focus should be placed on developing robust policies and systems for quality assurance of assessments on any distance-learning programmes that institutions offer.

7.3 Individual academics

7.3.1   It should be seen as the responsibility of all academic staff to ensure students receive adequate support and guidance to learn about good academic practice and how to make use of academic sources and write in an acceptable scholarly style;

7.3.2   Each academic should ensure they comply personally with scholarly conventions and set an example to colleagues and students, demonstrating exemplary standards in ethical conduct and integrity;

7.3.3 Academic staff have a responsibility to acquaint themselves with institutional and departmental policies and procedures for upholding academic integrity and ensure they apply rules with transparency, consistency and fairness;

7.3.4 Although apparently unusual in Romania, academic staff at all levels of seniority should engage regularly in professional development activities for updating and developing personal understanding and skills (for example non-subject-based pedagogy and academic practice) and supporting other colleagues in their development. Contributing to initiatives for improving academic integrity is a particularly important area of focus from which Romanian academic standards would greatly benefit;

7.3.5 Academic staff and researchers are encouraged to engage in research and development in promoting high standards of academic integrity and discouraging plagiarism;

8. Conclusions

Although a comprehensive survey of Romanian HEIs was not possible, the IPPHEAE survey of Romania has revealed some weaknesses and a few examples of good practice that should be of relevance to the whole HE sector and to the wider European community.

Suggestions for actions in this report target three levels in the hope that all readers can take from this study messages that directly impact on their situation.

It is important to note that HE students should be seen as not just the focus of the problem, but essentially central to any solution. The student input to this study demonstrated that the majority of students are honest and ethical in their outlook and attitude and have good ideas for how to improve the situation in Romania. However they are in need of much more guidance and support.

There seems to be reticence by many nationally active educationalists and senior managers in universities to engage with the concepts of ethics, integrity, plagiarism and academic misconduct, for example by commissioning research projects or organising sector-wide seminars and dialogue into how Romania can develop consistent and fair policies and procedures for academic conduct.

The IPPHEAE researchers hope this report will be taken seriously by all people who can influence such matters in Romania.

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Annex Ro-1: Responses to Question 5 (1=strongly disagree – 5=strongly agree)

Qu	Negative (1,2)		Don't know		Positive (4,5)		Question
	student	teacher	student	teacher	student	teacher	
s5a t5a	7%	21%	5%	23%	86%	49%	Students receive training in techniques for scholarly academic writing and anti-plagiarism issues
s5b t5p	25%	10%	21%	10%	40%	74%	I would like to have more training on avoidance of plagiarism and academic dishonesty
s5c t5b	7%	18%	45%	26%	40%	54%	This institution has policies and procedures for dealing with plagiarism
t5c		18%		33%		41%	I believe this institution takes a serious approach to plagiarism prevention
t5d		26%		31%		36%	I believe this institution takes a serious approach to plagiarism detection
s5d t5e	10%	21%	38%	28%	45%	51%	Plagiarism policies, procedures and penalties are available to students
t5f		13%		23%		62%	Plagiarism policies, procedures and penalties are available to staff
s5e t5g	8%	26%	47%	46%	40%	28%	Penalties for plagiarism are administered according to a standard formula
s5f t5h	13%	15%	34%	23%	49%	56%	I know what penalties are applied to students for different forms of plagiarism and academic dishonesty
s5g t5i	17%	15%	43%	49%	36%	33%	Student circumstances are taken into account when deciding penalties for plagiarism
s5h t5m	7%	8%	41%	36%	47%	54%	The institution has policies and procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty
t5j		38%		54%		5%	The penalties for academic dishonesty are separate from those for plagiarism
t5k		15%		28%		54%	There are national regulations or guidance concerning plagiarism prevention within HEIs in this country
t5l		26%		41%		31%	Our national quality and standards agencies monitor plagiarism and academic dishonesty in HEIs
s5i t5n	47%	26%	30%	26%	19%	46%	I believe one or more of my teachers/colleagues may have used plagiarised or unattributed materials in class notes
s5j	32%		24%		37%		I have come across a case of plagiarism committed by a student at this institution
s5k t5o	22%	51%	23%	28%	51%	21%	I believe I may have plagiarised (accidentally or deliberately)
s5l t5q	23%	26%	44%	23%	31%	41%	I believe that all teachers follow the same procedures for similar cases of plagiarism
s5m t5r	22%	28%	28%	23%	48%	46%	I believe that the way teachers treat plagiarism does not vary from student to student
s5n t5s	11%	21%	31%	26%	56%	54%	I believe that when dealing with plagiarism teachers follow the existing/required procedures
s5o t5t	8%	10%	13%	18%	76%	69%	It is possible to design coursework to reduce student plagiarism
s5p t5u	15%	13%	31%	23%	52%	62%	I think that translation across languages is used by some students to avoid detection of plagiarism
s5q	33%		27%		29%		The previous institution I studied was less strict about plagiarism than this institution
s5r	6%		11%		80%		I understand the links between copyright, Intellectual property rights and plagiarism

Table 16: Student and teacher responses to questionnaire Question 5