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HEA Teaching and Learning Conference

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Leading Change Together: Building the Future of
Teaching and Learning in Higher Education



Advancing academic integrity through UL's institutional policies and procedures



Institution(s) and Partner Organisations Involved

Academic Integrity Unit, University of Limerick

Contributor(s)

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What level(s) of your institution does this work affect?

- Institutional level

Date and Timeframe

Academic Year 2024-2025

Alignment and Focus

Focus

- Best Practice in Upholding and Cultivating Academic Integrity

Frameworks, Policies, or Strategies Aligned

- University of Limerick; Action For Wisdom Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy; 2022-2027.
- QAI (NAIN) principles and guidelines:
- NAIN (2021): Academic Integrity: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms
- NAIN (2021): Academic Integrity Guidelines
- NAIN (2023): Generative AI Guidelines for Educators
- NAIN (2023); Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management

Discipline

- Teaching and Learning

Impact, Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Impact and Evidence of Success

- Staff and students were proactively engaged throughout the policy development process. Consultation took place through Faculty level workshops, surveys and one-to-one discussion. A formal review of the policy and procedures is planned for the end of the 2025/2026 academic year, when again these groups will be consulted.
- The academic integrity policy and associated procedures support transparency and fairness in the management of academic misconduct within the University and enhance the uniformity of sanctions applied in proven cases.

Top Tips

- Educators are central to understanding and managing cases: Individual module leaders retain the autonomy to investigate and sanction minor academic integrity breaches (Poor Academic Practice). More serious academic breaches are managed by the Academic Integrity Unit in the first instance, who work closely with the module leader to understand the gravity of the breach as it relates to the specific academic discipline. This approach continues to prioritise the view of the individual academic while also ensuring efficiency and transparency in the management of cases.
- Feedback is key to ongoing success and sustainability. Ensure effective mechanisms are in place for the receipt of feedback on policy and procedures to support effective periodic reviews. The stakeholders mapped in Figure 2 should be meaningfully engaged during the review process.

Initiative Description

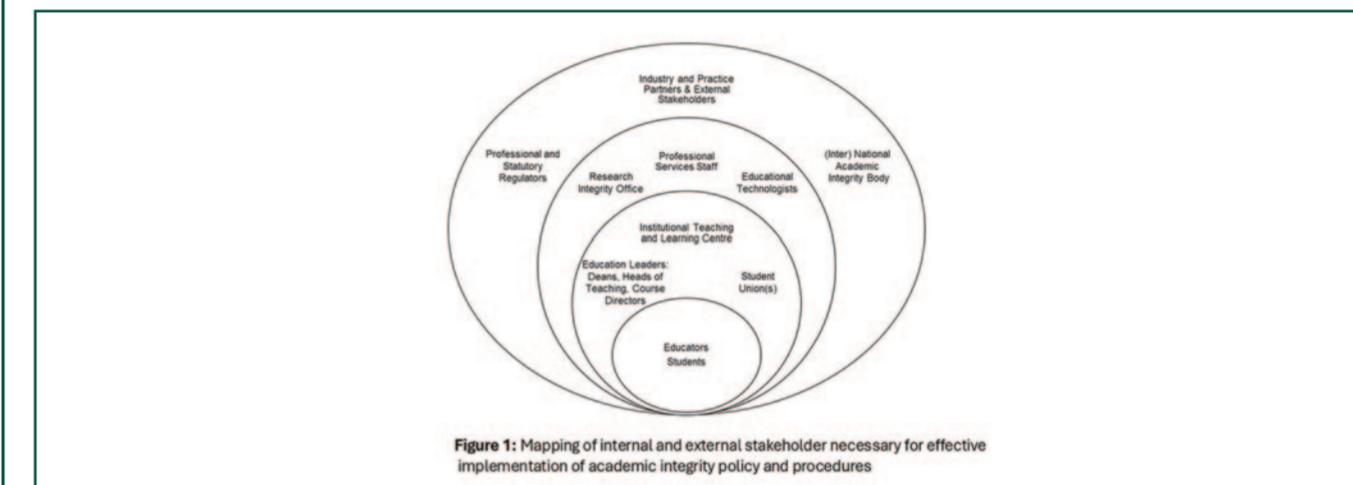


Figure 1: Mapping of internal and external stakeholder necessary for effective implementation of academic integrity policy and procedures

Aims and Objectives

- Aim: To develop and implement a robust academic integrity policy and academic misconduct procedures at the University of Limerick.
- Objective 1: To optimise stakeholder involvement in the development of policy and procedures
- Objective 2: To ensure that the policy and procedures are based on national and international guidelines and adhere to principles of natural justice.
- Objective 3: To establish sustainable structures to support the implementation of the policy and procedures.

Outline or Description

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responsible for creating quality assured learning and assessment environments that support graduates with the development of the skills, knowledge or behaviours valued within their chosen academic discipline. Academic integrity is a fundamental part of quality assured education and is a long-standing priority for HEIs. Robust policies and procedures should be in place to effectively foster a culture of academic integrity within HEIs. While approaches to policy development may differ between HEIs, we have gained a number of insights from our policy development and implementation work that we believe to be of importance regardless of the nature of the educational organisation:

1. Optimising Stakeholder Involvement

A co-design approach was adopted for the policy development process in our institution. A Policy Working Group composed of staff from across the University and representatives of UL Student Life and the Postgraduate Students Union, worked closely with the Academic Integrity Lead over an 8-month period to develop the policy and procedures. Following this initial development period, there followed a period of consultation with University stakeholders. Figure 1 maps key stakeholders that may have an active role or interest in academic integrity within an educational organisation. This is adapted from the 4M

framework (Kenny & Eaton, 2022) (a) micro (individual); (b) meso (departmental); (c) macro (institutional); and (d) mega (community).

2. Incorporating Best Practice Guidelines

The NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigations and Case Management (2023) and the NAIN Academic Integrity National Principles and Lexicon of Terms form the backbone of the UL Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Procedures. Working with the Policy Working Group, a number of features of these guidelines were adopted and slightly adapted to meet the specific operations of the University but also to ensure that the policy and procedures would be acceptable to both staff and students. For example, building on the model of Courageous Conversations as they relate to academic integrity, initially described by the University of New South Wales. The model proposes that if a student provides an honest and clear explanation to an academic integrity concern, then the institution takes no further action. Although Courageous Conversations were not wholly adopted as a model at UL, honesty and transparency by both students and staff is of paramount importance. Upholding these values during academic misconduct investigations is normally taken into account as mitigation in the case.

3. Establishing Sustainable Structures for Implementation

While policies and procedures may be developed centrally within HEIs, successful implementation commonly relies upon the support of individuals from across the HEI. Academic Integrity Champion are academics appointed within each Faculty who possess expertise and experience in the academic disciplines represented within the Faculty. Twenty-one Academic Integrity Champions have been appointed to date. These individuals provide advice to educators on disciplinary-specific queries that might arise relating to academic integrity, and where necessary direct educators to the appropriate resources or supports within UL. Figure 2 outlines the various responsibilities of these Academic Integrity Champions.

Funding & Acknowledgements Details

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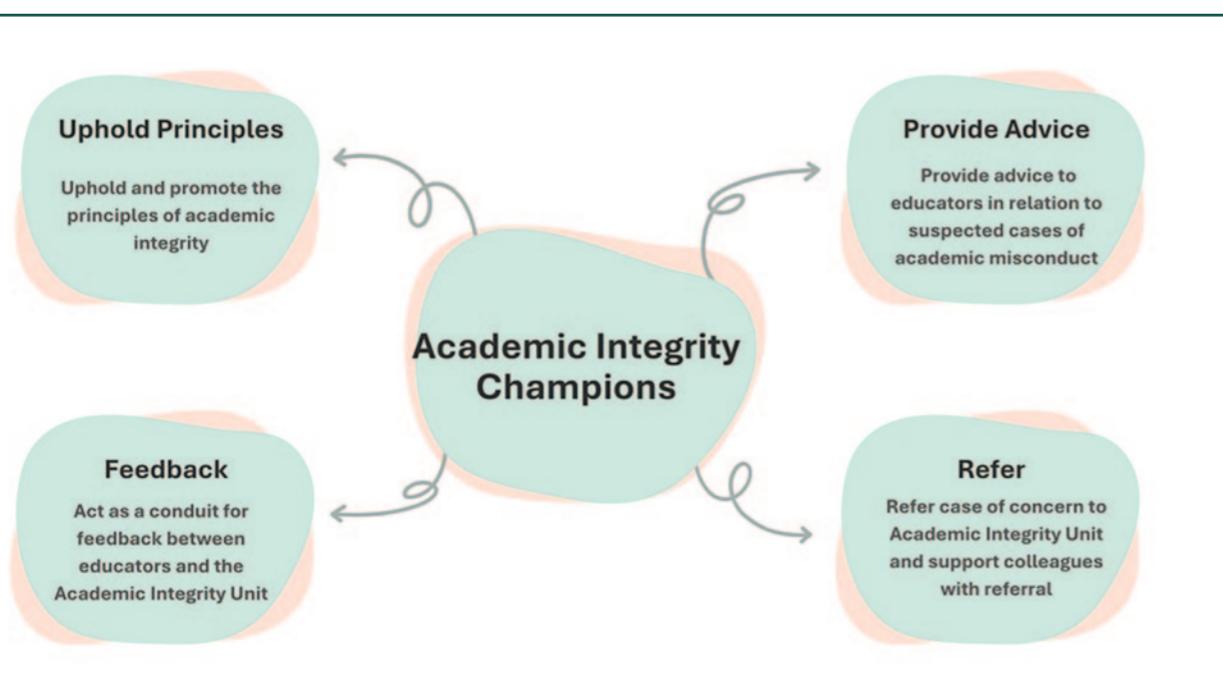


Figure 2: Summary of Responsibilities of Academic Integrity Champions