National Academic Integrity Network Meeting

18th February 2021, 10:30am to 1.00pm
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees:
1. HEI members: AIT: Frances O'Connell, Catherine O'Donoghue, Cora McCormack; CCT College: Marie O'Neill; MTU Cork: Des Walsh; DBS: Lori Johnston, Grant Goodwin; DCU: Fiona O'Riordan, Gillian Lake; DkIT: Brendan Ryder; GMIT: Aedin O'Heocha, Carmel Brennan, Hugh McBride; Griffith College: Jack Leahy; Hibernia College: Aisling Reast, Aoife Lynam; IADT: Celine Blacow; IBAT College: Brid Lane, Finbarr Murphy; ICD Business School: Jason Healy; ICHAS: Denis Ryan; IT Carlow: Yvonne Kavanagh; MTU Tralee: Michael Hall; LiT: Pat Donohue; LYIT: Simon Stephens; MIC,UL: Patrick Connolly; MIE TCD: Seán Delaney; MU: Susan Gottlober; NUIG: Michelle Millar; IT Sligo: Perry Share; RCSI: David Croke, Fiona Mitchell; TUD: Kenneth Carroll; UCC: Siobhan Cusack, Paul O'Donovan; UCD: Joyce Senior, Sue Rackard; UL: Ross Anderson; WIT: Terry O'Brien

Student representatives: NCISU: Dajana Sinik; TCDSU: Megan O' Connor; USI: Kevin McStravock

Agencies representing HEIs: HECA: Patricia O'Sullivan; IUA: Nora Trench Bowles; THEA: Roisin O'Connell; NFRI: Jennifer Brennan

NAIN Steering Committee: Chair: Billy Kelly; WG#1: Yvonne Kavanagh; WG#2: David Croke; WG#3: Kevin McStravock; Sue Hackett (NAIN Coordinator); Bryan Maguire; Karen Maguire; Grainne Mooney (WG#3 Convenor); Sarah O'Connell (NAIN Administrator); Deirdre Stritch (QQI Academic Integrity Lead)

Apologies: NCI; St Angela’s NUIG; TCD; DCUSU

1. Opening by Chair and Review of Previous Minutes
At the outset of the meeting the Chair welcomed members. The note of the previous meeting was approved.

2. Update from Working Group 1
Yvonne Kavanagh, WG 1 Lead, provided a review of the ToR of the working group (see PPTs attached). Yvonne welcomed a new WG1 member, Hugh McBride (GMIT).

The WG 1 objectives for 2021 were presented, reflecting Part 3 of the WG ToR – (Collate the current approaches to prevention, detection and sanctioning of academic misconduct; review international practice and disseminate good practice guidelines).

The group continues to work on the Interim Academic Integrity Guidelines. These are being circulated to key external stakeholder groups for their high-level observations. Once received, these observations will be considered by the Working Group and a pre-final version will be produced for the NAIN members to consider at the April 15th plenary meeting. Dependent on agreement, the plan is to publish these to the NAIN webpage in April.

The Academic Integrity Principles including the Lexicon of Common Terms document is currently having some lexis added to the lexicon. Dependent on the agreement of the members at the April plenary meeting, the plan is to publish these online in April, at the same time as the Guidelines.
Objectives to 2021 include:
- The production of a Framework for Investigation of Academic Misconduct intended as a support for HEIs. It is intended that this will complement the work of WG 2. The concept of the lifecycle of academic misconduct was presented and discussed, Three WG 1 sub-groups are currently working on different aspects of this (the lifecycle; the critical stages (policy points); supporting these stages with templates). It is planned to present this framework at the April meeting of the Network for consideration by members.
- Guidelines on online proctoring: the plan, dependent on the support of an independent researcher, is to have draft guidelines ready for the consideration of members at the June plenary meeting.

Action:
- Members are requested to submit information on current e-proctoring practice in their institution to WG 1 to inform these guidelines. Information should be submitted to academicintegrity@qqi.ie.

3. Update from Working Group 2
David Croke, WG 2 Lead, provided a review of the ToR of the working group. The WG is currently working on projects to support HEIs in the detection of instances of contract cheating. To do this, the WG is collating a selection of documents on the detection and investigation of suspected contract cheating - this will be shared with NAIN members by the end of Q1 2021. From this, the WG will draw up consensus guidelines for handling academic misconduct data within HEIs.

WG 2 will also sponsor the next webinar in the NAIN series, focusing on remote assessment, and how this can be made secure. This is planned for some time in Q1 / Q2 dependent on speaker availability.

The WG objectives for 2021 include:
- Collate an inventory of institutional academic integrity activities across the member HEIs;
- Pilot the national HE staff academic integrity survey in order to produce a final version for national circulation.

*A point was raised to ensure that librarian staff are not omitted in the survey.

The NAIN NFRI member expressed some NFRI members’ ongoing concerns that there remain potential overlaps between the work of the NAIN and the NFRI.

Action:
- the NAIN Coordinator will organize a meeting with NFRI members and NAIN Steering Committee members to seek to resolve any outstanding concerns.
- NAIN HEI members to contact their institution’s NFRI member to brief them on the work of the NAIN and explore ways to avoid duplication of activity / work collaboratively. It was requested that concerns are sent into academicintegrity@qqi.ie so that a collated list can be produced and made available to NAIN members for discussion.

4. Update from Working Group 3
Kevin McStravock, WG 3 Lead, provided a review of the ToR of the working group. WG 3 plans for 2021 include:

- Deepen understanding of student awareness of contract cheating through institutional student focus groups organized and chaired by each SU and coordinated by WG#3, scheduled for April 2021;
- Expand the membership of the WG to encompass a broader range of perspectives, including:
  - the appointment of an academic co-chair.
  - New members:
    - International Students [ICOS – Laura Harmon, Executive Director, confirmed]
    - Counselling/Mental Health Services [PCHEI] – asked to nominate a member
    - Library Services [LAI] – asked to nominate a member
    - Academic Support Services [Student Affairs Ireland] – asked to nominate a member
- Develop a second iteration of the student communications campaign for the start of 2021/22 academic year.

5. Update on QQI Regulatory Activities

It was acknowledged that a tremendous body of work has been produced and is ongoing by the Working Groups and the NAIN members.

The QQI Academic Integrity Project Lead gave a summary of QQI regulatory activity regarding academic integrity and QQI’s obligations in respect of Section 43a of the 2012 Act as amended.

QQI has been compiling a list of websites that appear to be offering contract cheating services to students – these represent companies and websites, nationally and internationally, sent into QQI through NAIN members, other international regulatory partners, such as the QAA, HE staff and students.

Colleagues in the UK have asked QQI to share information on a new marketing technique that has been targeting Irish learners. Essay Mill websites are offering students discounted rates on future purchases if they share the results of a submitted assignment e.g., a screenshot of written feedback and grade. These images are being used by the ‘essay mill’ for direct marketing purposes to learners using a variety of social media platforms.

Members were updated that QQI is now a member of the ENAI Addressing Contract Cheating Working Group.

**Action:**

QQI will shortly commence issuing ‘alerts’, which will be circulated to NAIN members as well as higher/further education and training providers. These alerts will contain information on websites and other entities, which appear to be offering contract cheating services to learners, as well as any other information of immediate interest. The first alert is due to be circulated the week of Feb 23rd.

6. Enhancement Activities for 2021

The second NAIN Academic Integrity Week will take place in the week beginning October 18th, 2021. This synchronises with the ENAI series of workshops to be held during this week; Global Ethics Day (Oct 20th) and the International Day Against Contract Cheating organized by ICAI.

Two parallel themes have been suggested for the week:
• Student / Staff Partnerships in Upholding Academic Integrity
• Ensuring Academic Integrity through the range of assessment methodologies employed including lessons from COVID-19 experience.

The NAIN webinar series, no 3 – it was agreed that this should be organized with an international presenter, exploring security and safety issues in remote assessment.

7 Updates from Members
Members were invited to share updates relevant initiatives or activities underway in their institutions or in which they are otherwise involved. The following updates were provided:

a) Update on E-Proctoring from DBS
DBS has just completed a pilot remote e-proctoring initiative. Whilst it was acknowledged that e-proctoring of online exams is not a magic bullet, and that good assessment design remains critical, it can still have a role to play.
The project was initiated following the college’s experience with timed online exams last year, which were not proctored. DBS did see an increase in academic misconduct from this. As students got used to the exams in Moodle, DBS saw a significant increase in cases of collusion. They put a working group together and invested in proctoring software (Mercer Mettl). Over 1000 individual e-proctored exams have now taken place. DBS is still working out the logistics and is happy to share its experiences with others in the sector.
Their biggest concern was getting the students onto the platform as they needed to have webcams etc. in place. However, it has gone remarkably well. The exam platform is deployed from a link in Moodle. No significant systemic technical issues were experienced but a lot of additional technical support was put in place by the college to deal with technical issues arising on a case-by-case basis. DBS hasn’t implemented full security on the platform yet but intends to look at this further in the next stages. One aspect that supported its successful implementation was a lot of upfront communication with students so they knew what to expect. A practical challenge was getting the exam responses out to lecturers. In the short term, DBS Exams Team and Registrar’s Office absorbed a lot of additional admin, but that is not sustainable long term.
In terms of managing accommodations for learners with additional needs, DBS found that students needed less accommodations because they have the benefits of their own computers and environment. Extra time requirements can easily be managed in an online environment. DBS has retained the option to bring students in to sit the exams in-house if needed and requested by the learner (some learners may not have suitable conditions at home in which to take exams for example).

b) Update on Academic Integrity projects from CCT
CCT employs a multi-prong approach to embedding a culture of academic integrity which has resulted in a decrease in academic impropriety offenses:

Student Partnership Initiatives
• In 2020 CCT co-opted two students to the organising committee of its annual Academic Integrity week which has resulted in an increased uptake of academic integrity initiatives by students institution wide.
• CCT and AIT organised a joint online panel discussion on the perils of contract cheating as part of National Academic Integrity Week involving both students and staff.
This successful event was another example of student partnership.

**Technology**

- CCT has developed an online platform called the Learning Space which provides guides on referencing, academic integrity and essay writing for students. The College recently produced an online guide for faculty on academic integrity and assessment design as an example. See: [http://40.115.124.2/sp/subjects/guide.php?subject=AIAssessment](http://40.115.124.2/sp/subjects/guide.php?subject=AIAssessment). The College also shares the outputs of talks and events on academic integrity and other subjects on its institutional repository. See: [arc.cct.ie](http://arc.cct.ie)
- During CCT’s Academic Integrity Week in October 2020, the College leveraged multimedia to promote student engagement. Students were asked to make a video on what academic integrity means to them. This elicited a really strong and high quality response from learners. The exercise helped to re-energise the local discussion on this topic.

**Education and Knowledge Sharing**

- CCT runs a “student success” programme which includes classes on academic writing, referencing, academic integrity and critical thinking. Marie cited research which shows that when academic integrity is embedded in programme design and assessment, you get reduced academic misconduct and better overall learner participation and retention (see references below). CCT is now formally integrating these educational initiatives into its programme design to maximize student reach.
- The QQI student campaign on academic integrity ([Your own work, Your own degree, Your own achievement! (qqi.ie)](http://www.qqi.ie)) has been posted to CCT’s academic integrity page on its Moodle instance.
- CCT runs an [Excellence in Teaching Series](https://arc.cct.ie/guest_lecture/6/). This year, Dr Laura Costello (MIC) spoke on academic integrity and assessment design. See: [https://arc.cct.ie/guest_lecture/6/](https://arc.cct.ie/guest_lecture/6/). This talk was open to the sector.
- CCT promotes the educational as well as the detection component of Urkund plagiarism detection software

**Innovation**

- CCT is currently researching the potential use of short audio vivas where learners are required to submit a short recording to explain their use of computer code as part of their assessments. The use of audio vivas militates against some of the limitations of software such as MOSS. CCT is currently reaching out to other academic institutions that use audio vivas to inform the implementation process at the College.

**References**

CONUL (2011) Integrating Information Literacy into the Curriculum. Available at: [https://library.nuigalway.ie/media/jameshardimanlibrary/content/documents/support/CONULACILbookletfinal.pdf](https://library.nuigalway.ie/media/jameshardimanlibrary/content/documents/support/CONULACILbookletfinal.pdf) (Accessed 15th March, 2021)


c) **Update from IT Sligo**

Gavin Clinch was unable to attend and provided the text below which was read out to the members:

> An initiative we undertook at IT Sligo was the development and implementation of student and staff facing academic integrity courses, in collaboration with Epigeum. I’m sure you are aware the development group was led by the late Tracey Bretag. The student-facing AI courses are 2 hours 30 minutes long and have been available to all our
students since September 2020. We include a digital badge for completion of the course and, as of today, have awarded badges to 585 students.

ICAI annual conference – Gavin Clinch negotiated a NAIN Members discount which was announced to members with the Code to use when registering.

In the discussion on e-proctoring, TU Dublin reported that it has piloted 2 proctoring systems in the run up to the January exams. There was some student resistance to this and work is ongoing. The developers also found that some platforms limit the questions assessors are allowed to ask.

8 AOB
The next NAIN plenary meeting is on April 15\textsuperscript{th} 2021 at 10.30-13.00

The 2021 ICAI annual conference will take place from 1-4 March.

The 2021 ENAI annual conference takes place in June. March 15\textsuperscript{th} is the deadline for proposal submissions.