



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Supporting Academic Integrity – A View from Ireland

ENQA: Protecting and promoting academic integrity:
How quality assurance agencies can take action

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What is QQI?

- A quality assurance body for providers of education and training in Ireland
- An awarding body for learners in Ireland
- Custodian of the National Framework of Qualifications
- Broad and multi-faceted interest in standard of national awards



Legislation to Address Contract Cheating

- An Amendment Act passed in July 2019, which introduces changes to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.
- Section 43A provides a statutory basis for the prosecution of those who facilitate cheating by learners; who advertise cheating services and who publish advertisements for cheating services. QQI will be responsible for bringing prosecutions under this Section of the Act.
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/enacted/en/>
- New Section 43A
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/section/15/enacted/en/html#sec15>



Implementation of Legislation

First steps focused on HE as considered highest risk (legislation applies to all levels of the NFQ). Extension of programme of activity into FE in 2021

The focus is on collaborative initiatives and communication rather than seeking prosecutions through a formal legal unit.

Holistic approach taken aimed at raising awareness; increasing institutional capacity and skills; modifying learner behaviour and disrupting the business model for 'essay mills' targeting Irish learners.

Legislation has had important 'soft' impacts and has been an important catalyst for action at a senior level.



Working With Advertisers

- QQI agreed arrangements with Distilled SCH, operator of www.DoneDeal.ie and www.Adverts.ie in early 2020
- Agreed that Distilled SCH will remove all advertisements for cheating services which QQI brings to its attention.
- A formal process for sharing information on persons placing such advertisements is being developed.
- Intend to replicate this model where possible.



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National Academic Integrity Network (I)

- Network established in November 2019 on foot of new legislation prohibiting the facilitation of learner cheating
- Comprises membership from all public HEIs: universities and institutes of technology, as well as those private HEIs who have recently had QA procedures approved by QQI. Three student reps in addition to reps from USI
- Members are institutional leads in the area of academic integrity – many are registrars or operate within that space
- Chaired by Billy Kelly, Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching & Learning at Dublin City University (DCU)
- QQI acts as facilitator and secretary. Relevant documentation is published to QQI website: <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx>



National Academic Integrity Network (II)

- The purpose of the network is to advise and offer guidance on the identification of:
 - common definitions;
 - the current landscape of academic integrity in Ireland;
 - current approaches to the prevention, detection and penalising of academic misconduct and the roles and responsibilities of identifying the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in addressing this issue: HEIs, learners and QQI;
 - good practice with regard to prevention of, and addressing suspected and confirmed instances of, academic misconduct reflecting the responsibilities of staff and learners to ensure academic integrity within institutions;
 - a working methodology/procedures for the reporting and prosecution of instances of cheating within HEIs that are offences under the recently amended legislation;
 - a strategy for HEIs to engage with learners as key partners in the embedding of a positive culture of academic integrity;
 - key elements of a dedicated communication strategy for stakeholders;
 - areas for dedicated enhancement activity to support a culture of academic integrity in Irish HEIs
- The Network has convened three working groups to progress these objectives.



NAIN Activities

- Finalising two documents, to be published end of April 2021:
 - Principles and National Lexicon
 - Interim (non-statutory) QA Guidelines on Academic Integrity
- Have launched student-facing campaign to raise awareness of dangers of engaging in contract cheating and directing learners to local supports and resources: [Your own work, Your own degree, Your own achievement! \(qqi.ie\)](#)
- New initiatives:
 - Research and Guidance on e-proctoring
 - Developing a Framework for Academic Integrity for HEIs to identify best practice nationally and internationally and produced a database of resources
 - Addressing the detection of instances of contract cheating - collate a selection of key guidance documents on the detection and investigation of suspected contract cheating for circulation to NAIN members
 - Develop consensus guidelines & recommendations for the categorization, gathering & reporting of academic misconduct data within Irish HEIs (all informed by the Lexicon).
 - Series of webinars to support CPD f academic and support staff
 - National Academic Integrity week in October 2021



Next Steps for QQI...

- Continue to seek legal advice on implementation of the legislation in a number of areas;
- Look for opportunities to inform, educate and develop through enhancement initiatives;
- Promote understanding for students through a dedicated communication strategy targeting staff and learners – working closely with USI;
- Continue to work with advertisers and web platforms – aiming to replicate the model with Distilled SCH
- Continue to collaborate and liaise with colleagues internationally
- Further information and resources available at:
<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx>
- **Identify opportunities to include a focus on academic integrity into routine regulatory interaction with providers, e.g. in QA approval; annual quality reports submitted by HEIs and in cyclical institutional reviews; programme validation; data returns etc.**