

How to Raise the Profile of Academic Integrity through Quality Assurance

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Takeaways from this session

- Understand the innate connection between Academic Integrity and Quality Assurance
- Learn how Quality Assurance is managed in the U.S., U.K. and Australia
- Recognize how Academic Integrity is engrained in Canadian Quality Assurance
- Learn how University of Waterloo has included AI into its QA processes
- Appreciate how AI and QA could be leveraged in your own educational institution

Academic Integrity (AI)

“..as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage”

(International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021)

Quality Assurance (QA)

- Ensures that academic programs are delivering the necessary learning and skills students need
- Adheres to accepted standards and focuses on continuous improvement
- Provides credibility and value to the degrees or credentials that are conferred
- Protects the reputation of the educational institution

Quality assurance and academic integrity are intertwined.

You cannot have one without the other.

Importance of AI & QA

Breaches of integrity chip away at the foundation of academia and it puts the credibility of higher education at risk.

There is the potential for students to graduate without having the required degree competencies.

From a job readiness perspective, students who have not earned or demonstrated their degree qualifications will not be prepared to contribute to their field; moreover, they can also pose a danger to others (IIEP-UNESCO, 2016).

Moreover ...

There is the possibility that students who engaged in academic misconduct in school might engage in this behaviour in their career.

Research indicates that students who engaged in academic misconduct may be more inclined to act with misconduct elsewhere and in their careers (Denisova-Schmidt, 2018; IIEP-UNESCO, 2016; Guerrero-Dib, et al., 2020).

Quality Assurance Agencies around the Globe

According to an advisory statement released by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2016,

“corruption in higher education has a high cost to society” (p. 2)

“...quality assurance systems must take a leading role in this battle” (p. 1)

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000249460>

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) U.K.

QAA is for world leading and independently assured higher education.

An independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in higher education. Works across all four nations of the U.K. Also builds international partnerships to enhance and promote the reputation of U.K. higher education worldwide.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-do/our-work>

Focus: quality assurance related items; policy and research and academic integrity.

QAA & AI

[Academic Integrity Advisory Group](#)

The Advisory Group provides expert advice and opinion, on behalf of the sector, on actions, policy development and activity that will protect academic integrity in the U.K. [Terms of Reference](#) (Oct. 20, 2020)

Resources:

- [Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education](#) (Oct. 21, 2020)
- [Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education: How to Address Contract Cheating, The Use of Third-party Services and Essay Mills](#) (2nd Edition, June 17, 2020)
- [Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education: How to Address Contract Cheating, The Use of Third-party Services and Essay Mills](#) (First Edition, Oct. 9, 2017)

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Australia

Purpose is to protect student interests and the reputation of Australia's higher education sector through a proportionate, risk-reflective approach to quality assurance that supports diversity, innovation and excellence.

All organisations that offer higher education qualifications in or from Australia, must be registered by TEQSA.

Focus - Sector-wide issues:

- [Academic integrity](#)
- Admissions transparency
- [Higher Education Integrity Unit](#)
- Retention
- Student well being: prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment

<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sector-wide-issues>

On 4 September 2020, the Australian Government's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 came into effect, making it an offence to provide or advertise academic 'contract cheating' services in higher education.

TEQSA supports providers to uphold academic integrity and address contract cheating, including through the development of education materials and sharing information about approaches to this issue, as well as working with providers and other stakeholders to support the implementation of these new laws. <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/protecting-academic-integrity>

Resources:

- [Academic Integrity Advice Hub](#)
- [Academic Integrity Toolkit](#)
- [Academic Integrity Toolkit Webinar](#) (Oct. 15, 2020)
- [Academic Integrity in an Online Environment](#)
- [Assessment Integrity Webinar](#) (May 21, 2020)

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) U.S.

A national advocate and voice for promoting academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is an association of degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations.

CHEA is the only national organization in the United States focused exclusively on higher education accreditation and quality assurance. It recognizes U.S. accrediting organizations, including regional, national career-related, national faith-related and programmatic accrediting organizations.

Focus: Advocacy; serving members and the public; promotes academic quality and advances student achievement; demonstrates public accountability for performance and transparency; sustains an effective accreditation structure and organization.

https://docs.google.com/gview?embedded=true&url=https://www.chea.org/sites/default/files/pdf/CHEA-At-A-Glance_0.pdf

UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the International Quality Group of the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA/CIQG) have worked together to develop academic integrity resources.

Resources:

- [Combatting Academic Corruption and Enhancing Integrity: Inventory of Key Questions for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Organizations](#) (2019)
- [Corruption in Higher Education](#) (2019) Irene Glendinning, Stella-Maris Orim and Andrew King
- [Advisory Statement for Effective International Practice: Combatting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity: A Contemporary Challenge for the Quality and Credibility of Higher Education](#) (March 2016)

References and Resources on Quality Assurance and Combatting Academic Corruption:

<https://www.chea.org/references-and-resources-quality-assurance-and-combatting-academic-corruption>

QA in Canadian Higher Ed

Canada does not have a federal ministry or department of education like the U.S.

Nor does it have a national higher education quality assurance agency (e.g., U.K.'s Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education or the Australian Government's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA))

Oversight of higher education is *decentralized* in Canada (Weinrib & Jones, 2014), with each province and territory having responsibility for the quality assurance of its university programs.

How is QA in Canadian Higher Ed. Standardized?

- Universities Canada
- Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (CDQF)

“This means that Canadian universities have a shared understanding of the value of one another’s academic credentials and that our high-quality standards are recognized internationally”.

<https://www.univcan.ca/universities/quality-assurance/>

Universities Canada

Is a national university advocacy association and it requires that all institutional members adhere to a set of criteria, and commit to:

“[a] quality assurance policy that results in cyclical or continuous assessment of all of its academic programs and support services, and which includes the participation by those directly involved in delivery of the program or service, as well as by other institutional colleagues and external experts and stakeholders” (Universities Canada, n.d., para 5).

Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework

A Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada was written and endorsed by all the Ministers of Education from every province in 2007.

Inside this document is the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework \(CDQF\)](#) which form our national standards for degrees.

Bachelors, Master's, Doctoral degrees are described, including:

- Program Design and Outcome Emphasis;
- Preparation for Employment and Further Study;
- Length of Program;
- Admission Requirements.

Degree Level Standards

The degree level standards cover 6 broad dimensions:

1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge;
2. Knowledge of Methodologies;
3. Application of Knowledge;
4. Communication Skills;
5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge; and
6. Professional Capacity/Autonomy.

Degree Level Standards

B. Degree-Level Standards			
<p>The focus of the following degree-level standards is on the expectations of graduates at each degree. The standards stipulate the demonstrable transferable learning skills and level of mastery of a body of specialized knowledge in six dimensions: 1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge, 2. Knowledge of Methodologies, 3. Application of Knowledge, 4. Communication Skills, 5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge, and 6. Professional Capacity/Autonomy. The shades of distinction between degrees are determined by the capacity of the graduate at each level to act competently, creatively and independently, and by their proximity to the forefront of a discipline and/or profession. Among other things, the degree-level standards are intended (a) to facilitate the assessment of credentials for broad purposes of credit transfer and credential recognition, (b) to provide clear learning-outcome standards to instructional and program designers, (c) as a broad framework for quality assurance purposes. The standards are intended to be cumulative — each degree level presupposes the accomplishment of an earlier one.</p>			
	BACHELOR'S DEGREE	MASTER'S DEGREE	DOCTORAL DEGREE
EXPECTATIONS	<i>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated</i>	<i>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated</i>	<i>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated</i>
1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge	<p>(a) Knowledge and critical understanding in a field of study that builds upon their secondary education and includes the key assumptions, methodologies, and applications of the discipline and/or field of practice</p> <p>(b) Basic understanding of the range of fields within the discipline/field of practice and of how the discipline may intersect with fields in related disciplines</p> <p>(c) The ability to gather, review, evaluate, and interpret information, including new information relevant to the discipline, and to compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline</p> <p>(d) The capacity to engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context</p> <p>(e) Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline</p> <p>(f) The ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline</p>	<p>A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.</p>	<p>A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice.</p>

The link between AI & QA

Academic integrity is embedded in our national degree standards under the section of Professional Capacity/ Autonomy (Council of Ministers of Education, 2007).

6. Professional Capacity/ Autonomy	Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement, and other activities requiring (i) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts, (ii) working effectively with others, and (iii) behaviour consistent with academic integrity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring (i) the exercise of initiative and of personal responsibility and accountability and (ii) decision-making in complex situations, such as employment (b) The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development (c) The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations (b) The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current (c) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts
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How Waterloo boosted AI through QA

- Connection between AI & QA is strengthened by my position overseeing both offices
- I looked for ways we could leverage AI in our QA processes
- Conducted an environmental scan to see if other universities included academic integrity in their QA processes
- Queen's University had academic integrity embedded into their self-study template for cyclical program reviews and used their template as a reference
- Waterloo adapted its self-study template to include a section specifically on Academic Integrity (we also added a section on Equity and Diversity)

Waterloo's Self-Study includes

Questions that programs must answer:

- What does your program currently do to enhance academic integrity?
- What initiatives does your program plan to adopt in order to increase academic integrity?

We include hyperlinks in the template to resources, should programs need them such as:

- Office of Academic Integrity
- One page handout on how to complete the AI section

By adding a section on academic integrity - it means that these same questions must be addressed and monitored for improvement in every subsequent academic program review cycle.

Enhancing attention on academic integrity in academic program reviews at universities helps solidify students, instructors, staff and administration's understanding of academic integrity, AND its place as the foundation for academia and maintaining the quality of our degrees.

What's next for AI in QA at Waterloo

- We need to boost awareness of academic integrity in the degree level standards and ensure that programs are including these in their curriculum maps etc.
- The added AI questions are relatively new, and we need to work on improving the quality of the responses we receive in the self studies
- For example, programs often just point to the fact that there is an AI statement in each syllabi or that we have a policy that covers academic offences. This is not enough ...
- We need to help move this beyond the basic regurgitation of what exists and ensure that programs are actively thinking of how they can promote AI going forward
- In addition, we will be monitoring of the Academic Integrity sections every seven years when programs are required to complete their cyclical review

Ways to further leverage AI in QA in Canada

AI is built into the national degree standards, but it isn't *explicitly* covered in other parts of the QA process.

For example, TEQSA's QA standards ensure universities have the following:

“TEQSA will need to be satisfied that there is an institutional policy framework to maintain and support academic integrity of students and staff that is backed by processes and practices that implement institutional policies effectively. Providers will need processes for detecting and addressing instances of plagiarism and other forms of ‘cheating’. Once a provider is operating, evidence of effectiveness will be provided in part by records of management of incidents as required” *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*

More specifically, TEQSA requires:

- to have policies that promote and uphold academic and research integrity and policies and procedures which address allegations of misconduct
- to take action to mitigate foreseeable risks to academic and research integrity
- to provide students and staff with guidance and training on what constitutes academic or research misconduct and the development of good practices in maintaining academic and research integrity, and
- to ensure that academic and research integrity are maintained in arrangements with any other party involved in the provision of higher education.

Next steps for Canadian QA Agencies

- To recognize the importance of AI and explore ways to raise the profile of it in QA
- Review the work of the CHEA, QAA and TEQSA in AI
- Revisit their QA frameworks and processes and see where and how academic integrity can be emphasized
- In the Province of Ontario, I will be approaching the leadership of the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance to open discussions on AI and QA
- I encourage my AI and QA colleagues in Canadian Universities in other provinces to do the same

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QUESTIONS?

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