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## **IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PRINCIPLES AT THE I. HORBACHEVSKY TERNOPIL NATIONAL MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF UKRAINE: PRACTICE AND PROSPECTS**

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## **РЕАЛІЗАЦІЯ ПРИНЦИПІВ АКАДЕМІЧНОЇ ДОБРОЧЕСНОСТІ У ТЕРНОПІЛЬСЬКОМУ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОМУ МЕДИЧНОМУ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІ ІМЕНІ І. Я. ГОРБАЧЕВСЬКОГО МІНІСТЕРСТВА ОХОРОНИ ЗДОРОВ'Я УКРАЇНИ: ПРАКТИКА ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ**

**Abstract.** The article presents that academic integrity is determined by certain factors, including the globalization of science, the formation of ethical and civic values, the strengthening of trust and reputation, the digital transformation of the educational process, and society's growing demands for the quality of professional training of specialists. The scientific investigation includes aspects of academic integrity at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Academic integrity is regulated by the following recommendations and regulations: «Regulations on academic integrity and ethics in academic relations at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine», «Regulations on the detection and prevention of academic plagiarism at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine», «Regulations on the Academic Integrity Promotion Group at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine», «Regulations on the Academic Integrity Commission and the Ethics and Conflict Management Commission at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine», «Recommendations for higher education institutions on developing and implementing a university system for ensuring academic integrity».

The scientific study analyzes the activities of the scientific and educational department of independent testing of knowledge of applicants to higher education institutions. The main tasks of the department are: organizational and methodological work on the creation, accounting, and proper storage of test tasks for conducting independent testing of higher education applicants' knowledge; planning and organizing centralized independent assessment of higher education applicants' knowledge during the exam session; monitoring the effectiveness and quality of testing higher education applicants' knowledge.

**Key words:** academic integrity; academic dishonesty; TNMU; plagiarism; educational and scientific department for independent testing of higher education applicants' knowledge.

**Анотація.** У статті представлено наукове обґрунтування академічної доброчесності, яка визначається певними чинниками, серед яких – глобалізація науки, формування етичних і громадянських цінностей, зміцнення довіри та репутації, цифрова трансформація освітнього процесу, а також сильні вимоги суспільства до якості професійної підготовки фахівців. Наукове дослідження охоплює аспекти академічної доброчесності в Тернопільському національному медичному університеті імені І. Я. Горбачевського Міністерства охорони здоров'я України.

Академічна доброчесність у ТНМУ регулюється такими рекомендаціями та положеннями, як: «Положення про академічну доброчесність та етику академічних відносинах у Тернопільському національному медичному університеті імені І. Я. Горбачевського Міністерства охорони здоров'я України»; «Положення про виявлення та запобігання академічному плагіату в Тернопільському національному медичному університеті імені І. Я. Горбачевського Міністерства охорони здоров'я України»; «Положення про групу сприяння академічній доброчесності в Тернопільському національному медичному університеті імені І. Я. Горбачевського Міністерства охорони здоров'я України»; «Положення про Комісію з академічної доброчесності та Комісію з етики та управління конфліктами у Тернопільському національному медичному університеті імені І. Я. Горбачевського Міністерства охорони здоров'я України»; «Рекомендації для закладів вищої освіти щодо розроблення та впровадження університетської системи забезпечення академічної доброчесності».

У науковому дослідженні проаналізовано діяльність науково-освітнього відділу незалежного тестування знань абітурієнтів вищих навчальних закладів. Основними завданнями відділу є: організаційна та методологічна робота зі створення, обліку та належного зберігання тестових завдань для проведення незалежного тестування знань абітурієнтів вищих навчальних закладів; планування та організація централізованого незалежного оцінювання знань абітурієнтів вищих навчальних закладів під час екзаменаційної сесії; контроль ефективності та якості тестування знань абітурієнтів вищих навчальних закладів.

**Ключові слова:** академічна доброчесність; академічна недоброчесність; ТНМУ; плагіат; навчально-науковий відділ незалежного тестування знань здобувачів вищої освіти.

**Introduction.** The relevance of researching the phenomenon of academic integrity (AI) is an essential component of the modern educational process in higher education. In the modern educational space, AI is determined by certain factors, including the globalization of science, the formation of ethical and civic values, the strengthening of trust and reputation, the digital transformation of the educational process, and society's growing demands for the quality of professional training of specialists. Despite the continuous improvement of control mechanisms, manifestations of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, data falsification, misuse of works, cheating during assessment) remain a negative phenomenon for the functioning of higher education institutions and research institutions.

Research into academic integrity is an investment in the future of society, as it concerns not only rules but also the fundamental values on which a healthy, educated, and responsible community is based.

**The aim of the article** is to present aspects of academic integrity in higher education institutions, in particular at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

**Methods.** The following research methods were used for a thorough analysis of the scientific article: analysis – to identify key concepts and principles; synthesis – to create a comprehensive theoretical understanding of AI; modeling – to develop theoretical models illustrating the relationship between factors that influence the level of AI; the descriptive method – for characterizing and summarizing the collected factual material.

**Results and Discussions.** Academic culture requires mandatory adherence to the principles of integrity in teaching, research, and educational activities. The concept of AI is clearly defined and enshrined in modern Ukrainian legislation and the regulatory documentation of every higher education institution in Ukraine (Hrebenuk, 2021, p. 6).

Article 42 of the Law of Ukraine «Education» contains the following definition of academic integrity: «Academic integrity is a set of ethical principles and rules defined by law that must be followed by participants in the educational process during learning, teaching, and conducting scientific (creative) activities in order to ensure trust in the results of learning and/or scientific (creative) achievements» (The Law of Ukraine, 2017). AI means, first and foremost, taking an active stance to create and support a high-quality, ethical, and honest educational and scientific environment.

At I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (TNMU), AI is regulated by the following recommendations and regulations: «Regulations on academic integrity and ethics in academic relations at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine» (TNMU, 2022a), «Regulations on the detection and prevention of academic plagiarism at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine» (TNMU, 2019a), «Regulations on the Academic Integrity Promotion Group at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine» (TNMU, 2019b), «Regulations on the Academic Integrity Commission and the Ethics and Conflict Management Commission at the I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine» (TNMU, 2022b), «Recommendations for higher education institutions on developing and implementing a university system for ensuring academic integrity» (TNMU, 2019c).

It should be noted that «Regulations on academic integrity and ethics in academic relations at the I. Ya. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine» (TNMU, 2022a) consists of general statements, a system for promoting compliance with the princi-

ples of AI and ethics in academic relations at TNMU, management of the process of compliance with AI at the university and local levels, responsibility for compliance with AI, the procedure for checking educational, qualification, scientific, methodological and scientific works for signs of academic plagiarism, measures to prevent violations of AI in educational and scientific activities, and final statements.

It should be noted that violations of AI have also been recorded in the educational sphere. This phenomenon refers to actions that contradict ethical principles and established rules of teaching and scientific activity. Such behaviors undermine trust in the educational process and the quality of scientific results.

«An important aspect of ensuring academic integrity in the teaching and student environment is the fight against plagiarism», – A. Kolesnikov notes (Kolesnikov, 2020, p. 125). It is worth adding that, in addition to violations related to intellectual property (in particular, plagiarism and self-plagiarism), scientific literature also highlights violations related to research data (fabrication, which consists of inventing data, and falsification, which is their deliberate alteration), fraud, and conflicts of interest. There are also violations related to research data (fabrication, which consists of inventing data, and falsification, which is their deliberate alteration), fraud during assessment (cheating, deception, unauthorized use of sources), as well as complicity, which consists of providing unlawful assistance. Thus, AI research is a key imperative for creating a mature and responsible academic environment capable of generating reliable and socially significant knowledge.

In order to comply with AI, TNMU established an educational and scientific department for independent testing of higher education applicants' knowledge (Department). The main tasks of the department are: organizational and methodological work on the creation, accounting, and proper storage of test tasks for conducting independent testing of higher education applicants' knowledge; planning and organizing centralized independent assessment of higher education applicants' knowledge during the exam session; monitoring the effectiveness and quality of testing higher education applicants' knowledge.

The following are the Department's rules that promote AI.

1) Higher education students who have no outstanding debts are admitted to semester tests.

2) On the eve of the test, in the presence of members of the Commission and department staff, an automated computer selection of test questions is carried out using special software from a database of test questions formed before the start of the session.

3) The IT Department of TNMU takes measures to prevent this computer from connecting to the global information network Internet, including via wireless connection (Wi-Fi network).

4) Booklets for testing, together with blank sheets (signed on the reverse side by the chair of the Commission), are placed in paper envelopes, which are sealed with the signatures of the chair and two members of the Commission, the inspector, or the head of the Department.

5) The plan of the auditorium, printed codes and seat numbers (signed by the chair of the Commission) are placed in envelopes and, together with the booklets, are placed in the Department's safe, which is sealed with the signatures of the chair, members of the Commission, the inspector, and the head of the Department.

6) One hour before the start of the exam, members of the Commission's working group, in the presence of the head (deputy head) of the Department, shall remove the sealed envelopes containing booklets, encryption and seating numbers, and the plan of the auditorium from the safe.

7) The chair of the Commission's working group (in the presence of the Commission members) marks the layout of the booklets (by option) on the plan in such a way as to prevent identical options from being placed next to each other. The plan is certified by the signature of the head (deputy head) of the Department.

8) Applicants are required to enter the auditorium, show their student ID card or identity document to the members of the Commission, and draw a seat number indicating the seat in the auditorium that they are required to occupy.

9) Higher education applicants are prohibited from using means of communication, devices for reading, processing, storing, and reproducing information, printed or handwritten materials, other means, objects, and devices not provided for in the testing procedure, briefcases, bags, outerwear, or use pens (other than those distributed by the Commission), pencils, markers, or other stationery for the test.

10) After completion, all works are encrypted by the Commission.

11) Electronic verification of test results (answer sheets of student work) takes place in the classroom, in the presence of applicants and members of the Commission, using a scanner connected to a system unit (laptop) with appropriate special software.

12) After the examination is completed in the presence of the candidates, the group leaders are given printouts of the exam results, indicating the codes of the papers and the grades.

13) If an unsatisfactory grade is received, the applicant is required to retake the exam. If the applicant disagrees with the grade received, they may ask the members of the Commission in the auditorium to recheck their work.

14) If the applicant wishes to appeal, he or she shall submit a written statement to the head of the

Department within one day after the announcement of the results of the semester test (exam, differentiated credit).

15) In order to prevent errors, inspectors from the Department assign individual tasks for manual verification. After that, a document is drawn up in which the Commission enters the comparative results. If they differ, then the head of the Department reviews the work himself and makes an appropriate decision regarding violations.

16) After completing the testing, printing the results, examination reports, and answer sheets, the members of the Commission submit them to the Department Inspector and then to the relevant university dean's office.

It should be added that, of course, there are some shortcomings in the educational and scientific department for independent testing of higher education applicants' knowledge, in particular technical and organizational problems. For example, incorrect scanning of works due to technical problems, but this is always easy to notice and correct; power outages, because we are living in wartime, so we have to delay scanning works; the human factor, which can affect the seating arrangement or the work option, but there are four people on the Commission, so such a shortcoming is practically impossible. At the same time, we note that such shortcomings are rare and do not affect the overall quality of the Department's work.

The strengths of the educational and scientific department for independent testing of higher education applicants' knowledge include: objectivity and impartiality of assessment, such as minimizing subjective factors, standardizing testing procedures, and

anonymity regarding higher education applicants, commission members before testing begins, and test options. Other positives include the speed of processing results, understanding of how to work with standardized forms, and maximum compliance with AI.

**Conclusions and Prospects for Research.** Thus, TNMU demonstrates the existence of a formally defined and developed institutional framework for ensuring AI. This is reflected in approved documents that promote AI, clearly defined procedures for responding to violations, and the functioning of specialized bodies (e. g., ethics committees and conflict management departments). At the same time, the challenge remains to transform formal rules into a real, sustainable culture of integrity among all participants in the educational process. The implementation of the scientific department for independent testing of higher education applicants' knowledge is a strong point of the university, as it ensures a high degree of objectivity and standardization of knowledge assessment. The use of automated systems and randomized test banking significantly minimizes the subjective factor and, accordingly, reduces the opportunities for cheating during exams, promoting compliance with AI.

TNMU conducts systematic and structured work to ensure AI using modern tools for objective assessment, and works to improve provisions for ensuring academic integrity. However, in order to completely eradicate violations, it is necessary to constantly strengthen not only control mechanisms and sanctions, but also the educational component – the formation of a conscious, value-oriented attitude towards AI as the basis of professional medical ethics.

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