

Tuesday lunch and poster walk (Track B), Tuesday, Sep 23 2025, 13:00-14:00

Location: Seminar 1

Session: Posters

PO-15

Academic Integrity in Latvian Higher Education Institutions: Insights of Survey Findings

Laila Silamiķele, Matīss Reinfelds, Anna Stikāne, Rasma Pīpiķe, Raimonda Soloha

Latvian Association of Young Researchers, Latvia

At the national level, there is no publicly available, representative data on academic integrity and questionable research practices in Latvian higher education institutions (HEIs). To address this gap, in 2023 the Latvian Association of Young Researchers conducted a study to gain a predominantly qualitative insight into the culture of academic integrity in Latvian HEIs and to assess understanding, common practices, and attitudes towards academic ethics.

Responses were collected from 110 HEI employees and 14 HEI ethics committee representatives from all Latvian HEIs providing doctoral-level studies, using anonymous online surveys. The survey covered topics such as the role of academic integrity in institutional values, employee awareness and training, risks leading to integrity violations, trust in institutional mechanisms for addressing issues, and experiences with academic integrity problems. In addition, ethics committee representatives were asked to provide statistics on cases of academic misconduct.

The main results of the study highlight incoherent perception of academic integrity subject matters and a disconnect between HEI ethics committee representatives and HEI employees. Nearly one-third (31%, n=34) of HEI employees reported first-hand or second-hand experience with academic integrity violations. An additional 22% (n=24) were uncertain whether a particular violation could be considered serious. Key identified risks include pressure to publish, administrative burden, and insufficient institutional support, pointing to areas in need of improvement. The results also indicate a lack of trust in institutional governance, such as ethics committees, reporting procedures, and enforcement policies. Notable discrepancies exist between ethics committee representatives and HEI employees: 79% (n=11) of ethics committee representatives expressed confidence in their institution's ability to recognize and appropriately address academic integrity violations, compared to 33% (n=36) of HEI employees.

To foster a unified culture of academic integrity, Latvian HEIs should focus on transparent processes, effective communication of institutional policies, and regular, targeted training for academic, scientific, administrative staff, and students. Strengthening institutional mechanisms, such as establishing an independent national-level research integrity office, could help build trust and ensure an objective review of violations. Addressing broader structural issues is crucial to creating a sustainable academic environment where ethical conduct is prioritized over short-term productivity metrics.