Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education Across Europe

Plagiarism Policies in the United Kingdom

Full Report

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1. *Information sources*

Information about higher education policies and procedures for plagiarism in the UK was collected through

- the three levels of on-line surveys (students, teachers, senior managers) in English and several European languages;
- structured interviews with academics, senior managers and individuals concerned with academic integrity and research from national and regional independent organisations and institutions;
- documentation and on-line evidence.

Interviews were conducted in different ways: face to face, by telephone and via Skype with senior managers from the Higher Education (HE) sector, researchers into academic integrity and plagiarism and government representatives. The national level questions focused on national and institutional policies and procedures relating to plagiarism prevention and detection in all four countries making up the UK. Responses to the national survey were from 29 influential people in HE from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Almost all people interviewed were able to draw from experience of national UK and some provided international HE perspectives through external examining, roles leading and contributing to regional and national agencies, committees and forums. The substantial amount of information collected at this level has helped the team to understand the context in HE across the UK and how this has impacted on student plagiarism. However also, because interviewees have included many influential people at national and regional level in HE quality, policy, student support, their involvement in the project has helped to raise the profile of the IPPHEAE research at national level and added to the mailing list for dissemination of the project results. Views and opinions from university students, academic staff and senior management participants added to this information from the questionnaires and focus groups. Where possible in the following report the *colour coded* voices of the participants, have been used to inform and enrich the narrative.

Table 1 summarises the responses received to different elements of the survey.

Table 1: Profile of Survey responses		Student responses	Teacher responses	Senior Management and National	Student Focus Groups	Organisations and Institutions
Country						
England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales (UK)		338	53	34	0	36

Breakdown of student responses by domicile and award		Home students	Other EU students	Non-EU students	Not known	Bachelor, diploma	Master, doctor	Blank, other
UK	338	85	77	174	2	156	182	0

Most survey participants came from a range of different types of University in all four countries in the UK. The domicile profile of the student questionnaire respondents (Table 1, lower part) is distinct from that of other EU countries with predominantly "home" students, in that only 25% of respondents were UK home students, 23% non-UK EU and over 51% were non-EU international students. This reflects the very high percentage of international students enrolled in most UK

universities, particularly at postgraduate level, which can be almost 100% on some programmes. The diversity of the student population is one of several factors that distinguish the UK HE sector from other EU countries.

2. Higher Education in the UK

There are currently 127 universities in the UK and other higher education institutions with degree awarding powers. The universities are often classified according to date founded or organised according to the "mission group" they align with within the HE sector.   Broadly speaking, the major difference is between the "research intensive", pre 1992 universities and the more vocationally focused "Post 1992" universities that developed from polytechnics and higher education colleges.

Education is funded separately and operates differently in the four regions of the UK. Secondary qualifications in Scotland known as Scottish Highers include a broader subject range than the advanced level GCEs taken by school leavers in the rest of the UK. It is possible to start university after completing the one year Highers, but Advanced Highers are also available, requiring an additional year's study.

The other main difference in Scotland is that Scottish universities do not charge fees to non-UK EU students or students with Scottish residency studying undergraduate programmes, but students from other parts of the UK are required to pay fees. In universities in other parts of the UK all EU undergraduate students have to pay fees of up to £9,000 per year, funded through a student loan system, where repayments are normally administered in a manner similar to a graduate tax. The longer term impact to the UK HE sector, resulting from the step-change to the student fees from September 2012, is not fully understood as this report is being written.

Non-EU international students studying in all parts of the UK pay "full fees" at least according to economic costs of teaching and support and sometimes much higher than this. Many UK universities operate internationally either through collaborative ventures with overseas partner institutions or have established overseas campuses. These arrangements allow international students to complete UK degrees by studying outside the UK. Several UK universities have successfully established campuses in London, which are mainly aimed at international students who prefer to be based in London. These developments account for differences between institutions and campuses and have implications with the complexities of assuring quality at a distance.

Although there is currently only one private university in the UK, the funding regime dictates that public/state universities operate on a competitive almost commercial basis for student numbers and research income. This competition is fuelled by different national and international league tables that can greatly influence students' choice of university.   Different league tables about UK universities are maintained by national newspapers, derived partly from the routine collection of statistics by the government (Higher Education Statistics Agency) and from other data that universities make freely available.

The league tables together with other initiatives such as the National Student Survey (NSS) are key factors distinct to the UK HE that influence policies and procedures across the HE sector. As a result of the pressures on funding and the culture of comparison and competition, the student voice, student engagement and empowerment have become central themes that affect how universities prioritise their spending and efforts.

3. Quality Assurance in UK Higher Education - teaching, learning and assessment

3.1 Monitoring of Quality in the UK

The Quality Assurance Agency was founded in 1997 to "safeguard quality and standards in UK universities and colleges" (QAA web site). It is partly funded through subscriptions from universities.

The agency has established subject benchmarks, guidelines and standards in the form of quality precepts, more recently formalised as the Quality Code, that have been applied throughout UK HEIs.

The QAA maintains standards in the HE sector through a programme of institutional audits where HEIs are rated according to the evidence presented and scrutinised by panels of senior academics employed in other universities. QAA operates across the UK and also conducts audits internationally, where UK universities are operating either through partners or on overseas campuses. The audit reports are publicly available through the QAA web site.

The Higher Education Academy was established in 2004 as an independent agency for enhancing teaching and learning. It is funded through government grants and subscriptions from HEIs. The activities of the HEA have provided a focus for research into higher education in the UK, first based around subject centres, then from 2012 via specialist academic leaders for disciplinary subjects and themes within learning and teaching (eg assessment, equality, employability) who act as consultants and advisers within the HE sector. In the short time it has existed the HEA has initiated many research projects, provided funding for development in learning and teaching, supported events and conferences and generated many publications and case studies of good practice.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) provides a national system for appeals for students enrolled in HE programmes in England and Wales (delivered in higher and further educational institutions and at international partner institutions) independently of the institutions. Although the OIA issues non-enforceable recommendations to institutions, to date there is only one instance on "non-compliance". The OIA also maintains national statistics provided by institutions about the number and type of student complaints and appeals. An annual report is published each year highlighting important developments, such as outcomes from judicial reviews, and providing statistics and anonymised details of categorised cases handled and the outcomes (OIA 2011, 2012). Since 2012 the OIA web site has included case studies for good and poor practice where the institutions are named. According to the 2011 annual report "*the strategic aim of the OIA is to be a major force for positive change in Higher Education*" and since the OIA was cited in many of the national interviews across many of the questions, it is clear how seriously the ombudsman role has become in the HE sector. Although the OIA caseload continues to increase each year, surprisingly for both 2011 and 2012 academic misconduct cases accounted for just 6% of the total number of cases received. However some of the outcomes for this category have been very influential for policy setting in institutions across the UK.

In particular the 2011 OIA annual report makes reference to "*Lord Woolf's landmark Inquiry Report into the LSE's [London School of Economics] links with Libya*", that presented a "*key challenge for all universities to remove … ambiguities associated with permissible assistance for postgraduate study*", (OIA 2011 p5) that referred to allegations of an unfair level of support for former LSE student Saif Gaddafi's PhD thesis (Woolfe 2011). The Woolfe Report asked institutions to make explicit what constitutes acceptable practice in student supervision, using the term "permissible assistance". The OIA report recommended "*removing ambiguity, clarifying guidance and enforcement of the rules of academic misconduct not only help to protect the reputation of universities, but… also protect the interests of the student*" (OIA 2011 p6).

In a recent judicial review reported on the OIA web site (Mustafa versus OIA May 2013) Mustafa challenged the OIA decision to uphold the institutional decision that he was guilty of plagiarism, questioning whether a decision about plagiarism was always based on academic judgement. The ruling vindicated the OIA decision in this case but also made clear that sometimes decisions about plagiarism may not rely on academic judgement.

3.2 Assessment practices in the UK

The nature of assessment can have a bearing on the amount and type of student plagiarism, therefore questions about group assessment and the breakdown of examinations, assignments and

project work were included in the teachers' questionnaire. The summary of responses in Table 2 indicates that most or perhaps all UK programmes contain some assessment that is not by formal examination and that some students have no formal examinations.

Table 2: Teachers' responses, assessment in UK HEIs - percentages			
Examinations	Assignments	Projects	Other assessment
70 - 0	100- 20	50 - 0	Practice based problem oriented role play
			10 presentations 20 practice placements

The responses showed that the nature of assessment varies across levels, subjects and institutions. A different question shows that all institutions responding appear to include some aspects of assessed group work, but this varied from 1% to 50%, with the majority of teachers estimating between 10% and 40% of credits are assessed through group-work.

4.   Academic Integrity and Plagiarism in UK

4.1 UK research and development in academic integrity and plagiarism

In 2001 the UK government funded JISC (formerly the Joint Information Systems Committee) founded the *Electronic Plagiarism Project* identifying and aiming to address the perceived growing threat from digital sources. The project included four components:

- *Technical Review of free-text plagiarism detection software*
- *Technical review of (computer programming) source code plagiarism detection software*
- *Pilot of free-text detection software in 5 institutions*
- *Development of a good practice guide to plagiarism prevention*

(JISC Electronic Plagiarism Project)

In response to a recommendation from the JISC-sponsored project, the National Plagiarism Advisory Service was established in 2002. "*As part of this holistic methodology*", based on the results of a six month trial involving 6 universities, JISC "*provided access to, and support for, the Turnitin (renamed "TurnitinUK" for the UK community) plagiarism detection software at no cost to higher and further education institutions for an initial period of three years*", (Rowell 2009, p2). The combination of a theoretical framework ('the holistic approach') and provision of relevant software at no cost transformed the way most UK HEIs dealt with plagiarism and formed the basis for much of the innovative use of digital tools in the UK today.

From about the year 2000 in parallel with and contributing to the JISC project activities, some enlightened individuals and groups of academics in the UK had identified recent increases in student plagiarism and resolved to explore the causes and find some ways to prevent it happening. A modest "*widely travelled and frequently cited*" person both then and now is Jude Carroll, who worked with colleagues from Oxford Brookes University and other institutions to develop a better way to manage plagiarism (Carroll and Appleton 2001, Carroll 2005, Macdonald and Carroll 2006). Other researchers including Chris Park at University of Lancaster, were also actively developing, researching and publishing their findings (Park 2003, Park 2004). Other dissemination activities included seminars, workshops and conference papers, all of which made the subject of plagiarism a legitimate and relevant topic for research, discussion and action in UK academic circles.

Another significant development came from a research project called AMBeR (Academic Misconduct Benchmarking Research) Project. AMBeR (2006-9) was funded by JISC to investigate policies and procedures for managing plagiarism in UK HEIs and proposed a common tariff for sanctions (Tennant and Duggan 2008, Tennant and Rowell 2010). Feedback from the current project and elsewhere showed that AMBeR results are being consulted and applied in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland (national interviews). The outputs from the AMBeR project also influenced the author's decision to propose the IPPHEAE project for EU funding.

More recently the focus of research has shifted from systems, penalties and sanctions for punishing transgressors to a more nuanced view by many academics that much plagiarism is inadvertent, brought about by carelessness or ignorance of the rules and consequences. Many more recent publications focus on difficulties faced by international students who come to study or research in the UK and plagiarise, perhaps because they have never been told it was wrong or because their command of written English may be weak (Robinson-Pant 2009, Borg 2009).

Several researchers have piloted and evaluated the use of digital text matching tools in a supportive formative way in the classroom or during project supervision, for example, allowing students to submit an early draft essay then using the text matching reports for discussing how to improve the use of sources, paraphrasing, referencing and citation. Results from such pilots have shown encouraging results for improving students' academic writing skills and reducing plagiarism (Davis 2009, Ireland and English 2011, Morris and Carroll 2011).

The above account about UK research provides a very brief overview of the many and highly important developments since the year 2000 in the UK about plagiarism. The culture of sharing good practice has resulted in researchers from the UK influencing HEIs and individual academics throughout the world with a view to raising academic standards and making student assessment fairer.

4.2 Strategies, policies and procedures for academic integrity in UK Higher Education

4.2.1 National Statistics

Despite the high level of research, understanding and communication in the UK about academic dishonesty and plagiarism, in common with most parts of Europe, no comparable or reliable statistics are available for the UK on academic misconduct or plagiarism cases in HEIs. However some newspaper reports have suggested otherwise, for example so-called "league tables of student cheating" have appeared in several national and local newspapers (Daily Telegraph 2011, Brady and Kunal 2012) based information disclosed under Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to universities. Many national interviewees expressed concern about the impact on institutional reputations from distorted claims in such articles: "*there are no consistent stats, we need to start collecting data that is similar so we can compare ourselves*" (national interview).

4.2.2 Institutional statistics

Some institutions do not hold any records of plagiarism cases centrally or departmentally but rely on individual academics to handle the cases using academic judgement. This can and does lead to inconsistencies in assessing the seriousness of cases and identifying repeat offenders. An interviewee responsible for managing a set of master's programmes at a research intensive university explained that "*I see about 100 cases per year from my students. Centrally the University only records about 2 or 3 cases a year … these are just the very serious cases of students that are likely to get expelled, the routine cases are dealt with locally*"; "*There is no consistent approach across this university, no idea what other areas are doing about this*" (national interview). There was a similar message from interviewees at two other HEIs, one added that there is "*tension between striving for consistency of approach across the institution and the prevailing ethos of academic autonomy in research intensive university system*" (national interview).

At the opposite extreme some institutions log on a central database every case of even minor transgressions. Most institutions hold some data distributed across the institution, as noted by the interviewee from a post-92 university who said that while preparing for the interview he had "just noticed that we don't have formal recording of these cases on a central database", but as he had been alerted to this deficit he would ensure that central records were maintained (national interview 46).

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4.2.3 Penalties awarded

Although the AMBeR project suggested a tariff system of penalties for HEIs to adopt and there is no national consensus or requirement to follow the advice, AMBER "raised the profile [about policies and sanctions] considerably" (national interview). A wide range of different sanctions, systems and practices for detecting and managing plagiarism and academic dishonesty was revealed.

Question 7 of the student and teacher questionnaire asked about sanctions: *What would happen if a student at your institution was found guilty of plagiarism in their assignment or final project/dissertation*? The responses are summarised in Table 3

Table 3: Sanctions for plagiarism				
Assignment		Project or Dissertation		
Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	
21%	4%	7%	2%	*No action would be taken*
41%	38%	14%	13%	*Verbal warning*
48%	55%	26%	45%	*Formal warning letter*
47%	45%	30%	26%	*Request to re write it properly*
55%	85%	45%	74%	*Zero mark for the work*
44%	55%	40%	66%	*Repeat the module or subject*
48%	57%	40%	70%	*Fail the module or subject*
21%	19%	31%	32%	*Repeat the whole year of study*
21%	25%	42%	45%	*Fail the whole programme or degree*
19%	2%	19%	2%	*Expose the student to school community*
21%	19%	30%	25%	*Suspended from the institution*
20%	2%	38%	2%	*Expelled from the institution*
17%	0%	22%	0%	*Suspend payment of student grant*
11%	17%	10%	17%	*Other*

The responses in Table 3 indicate that a range of sanctions are available in UK HEIs for cases of plagiarism that have been identified. Additional feedback from teachers suggests there is a tendency for sanctions that err on the side of being supportive rather than punitive when there is doubt, for example "*in the event of minor errors*" asking the student to rewrite their work properly, "*could be the simplest option*". The most common penalty reported was giving a zero for either an assignment or a thesis that had been plagiarised. The low responses to "*no action would be taken*" from teachers and students suggest that where clear cases are identified most of the institutions participating impose some form of penalties.   These additional comments from the teacher questionnaires are is indicative of the supportive nurturing culture in some UK institutions, which were echoed in many of the national level interviews, for example:

> *"Our institution has a number of students from a wide variety of countries and cultures and our teaching is aimed to be inclusive and encouraging, so we hope that we would be able to support dedicated students to succeed, therefore we try to offer as much academic support as we can in order to prevent a negative outcome for the student".*
> *"Other than providing academic support for the students, where we help students ensure they are citing and referencing correctly, provide workshops etc, we also provide support to International students where we can check small sections of their work to ensure they are citing and referencing correctly, as well checking the language and grammar."* (national interviews).

A comment was added by an academic from a healthcare-related discipline about the consequences of plagiarism for professional accreditation and fitness to practice. This important point was explored in depth as part of interviews with senior managers and national representatives. It is common in the UK for students studying in some fields, including health, medicine, social-work and law who are found guilty of any academic dishonesty cases during their studies, to be debarred from professional registration even before they have qualified and therefore become unable to practice if

and when they graduate. Some extracts below from a few of the discussions demonstrate that this is a serious factor in some subject areas.

> *"Yes – some cases where if they have plagiarised they are barred from practice … varies between disciplines, engineering, law and medicine"* (national interview);

> *"… medical staff are reluctant to identify problems with student work because they know about for students' fitness to practice status"* (national interview);

> *"Nursing, Midwifery, health professional council, they look at this as part of their remit"* (national interview);

> *"..fitness to practice record, if student found guilty – stays on record and has implications for professional body, may not be fit to practice, particular in Law"* (national interview).

Several interviewees said they were concerned about the potential life-changing impact on students from making a simple mistake while they were learning how to write in a good academic style, calling for a more nuanced approach, for example:

> *"We're trying to get nursing bodies to recognise that plagiarism is not theft, not permanently depriving someone of their property … There is no evidence that academic dishonesty equates to professional dishonesty"* (national interview).

> Taking the case where "*if the nurse is already qualified and [is found guilty of] poor judgement, then they will get disciplined, but not [normally] lose their job or professional status*".

The last example shows how disproportionate it may be to assume that all cases of plagiarism are equivalent when considering serious professional misconduct.

4.2.4 Teachers' views on the efficacy of policies and procedures

89% of students and 98% of teachers agreed that *this institution has policies and procedures for dealing with plagiarism* and the great majority of teachers agreed with the statement that *this institution takes a serious approach to plagiarism prevention* (85%) *and detection* (83%) (Annex UK-1).

Two participants (national interviews) were unhappy about the amount of time accusations of cheating took to be resolved, particularly as their system involved convening a central panel to ensure consistency of approach. Other institutions said they had successfully adopted an approach based on "Oxford Brookes model", pioneered by Jude Carroll and colleagues, (discussed later under examples of good practice). The latter approach generally provided more efficient and timely outcomes.

4.2.5 Student involvement in policy and procedures

Evidence emerged from interviews across all parts of the UK that several universities are involving student representatives in institutional working groups for establishing disciplinary policies and in some cases student representatives are full members of disciplinary panels, for example

> "*We have student reps on the panel – brilliant. Student input is very helpful… we have been providing training for student empowerment since 2004, through the Student Union*".

> *"Interestingly in the working group the two student reps wanted to "make it more scary", hammering [the message] in letters about for example about hurting their degree classification, they might not graduate on time"* (national interviews).

Both respondents quoted above indicated that student representatives tend to be much more draconian in terms of sanctions than most university staff would be.

4.3 Use of digital tools for aiding detection and prevention of plagiarism

Tables 4 and 5 explore the use of software tools for aiding plagiarism detection in UK HEIs. As described earlier, pilot studies supported by JISC and funding provided for the UK HE sector for trials of Turnitin ensured that many UK HEIs were early adopters of digital tools.

"Students submit their coursework assignments electronically and the course admin team submit the work to Turnitin. Projects are submitted directly to Turnitin by the students".

As this quote from the teacher questionnaire indicates, the widespread and often systematic use of digital tools, particularly in Anglophone countries, has ensured that the available repository of information for searching and matching continues to expand greatly. Although the tool does not have access to all published information in English and resources in many other languages are limited, it is clear from many responses at all levels that the capability for automatic matching, particularly to research publications, Internet resources and other student work within an institution and in other universities across the world, serves as a serious deterrent to students. However, as discussed earlier, research into innovative formative applications for such tools has shown that their potential value for improving educational standards is not yet fully understood or realised (Davis 2009, Ireland and English 2011, Morris and Carroll 2011).

Table 4: Digital tools and other techniques for detecting plagiarism – number of responses	Student #	Teacher #
Software for text matching (Turnitin (263 responses), Sherlock, Euphorus, submit.ac.uk, unnamed)	287	45
Google, search engines	0	3
Harvard, academic style	2	1
Academic writing support unit, library	3	0
Manual checking	2	0
Nothing	1	0
Don't know	14	1

Student and teacher Question 9: *How are the tools you named above used*?

Table 5: Use of software tools - percentages	Student	Teacher
It is up to the lecturers to decide whether to use the tools	36%	49%
For some courses students must submit their written work using the tools	41%	62%
Students must submit all written work using the tools	46%	30%
Students may use the tools to check their work before submitting	39%	51%

"Students have as much access as they want to Turnitin – this was a policy decision in several Scottish HEIs, started with one module in semester 1 and benefits became clear" (national interview). *"The view is here to allow submission as drafting, students can see report. Students using as a learning tool, formative, with guidance and support on how to apply. Learning, teaching and assessment resource bank – colleagues put examples of good practice there"* (national interview).

On the negative side, there is a commonly held fear about the consequences of giving students access to digital tools, as expressed in this response from the teacher questionnaire: *"We have some instances of courses where students are able to 'launder' their work using Turnitin. This is dreadful as it creates an idea that there is an acceptable level of plagiarism permitted"*. Several other respondents picked up on the same issue, suggesting *"it would be good for students if they were able to submit work more often, formative assessment, learning the craft"* (national interview 2), in a supportive way and that students and teachers *"need to be trained in using Turnitin, to use formatively, interpreting reports"* (national interview).

Below are examples of other feedback from the student questionnaire about the use and value of digital tools:

> *"Assignments were handwritten. The only possible way to detect plagiarism was to browse the source from where it had been taken".*
>
> *"Lecturers are able to tell when reading assignments as well as a tool which i am not quite sure how works but has been mentioned. It is best to make a note of every source you use within writing your work as a back-up".*
>
> *"When the tutor is marking, he/she can notice that he/she has read this work before, on another's paper".*
>
> *"We had the chance to use turn it in before handing in our dissertation with a tutor to see an average plagiarism percentage. For every essay we use turn it in but don't get to see our percentage plagiarism".*

The last comment demonstrates a common misunderstanding (by some students and academics) that the "similarity index" percentage is showing the level of plagiarism.

4.4 New trends and growing threats to academic integrity

57% of teachers and 49% of students responded positively to the statement *I think that translation across languages is used by some students to avoid detection of plagiarism* (Annex UK-1 S5p, T5u). In response to the question about digital tools two international postgraduate students from China and Oman referred to the use of "translate software" as a tool for detecting plagiarism. It is not clear whether question S5p prompted the students to add this comment or how to interpret their responses. According to some interviewees and personal experience of the team, digital tools are beginning to develop some capability for detecting potential cross-language plagiarism.

Ghost writing is an extreme form of plagiarism, which typically involves students asking family or friends to complete assessed work or commissioning work for payment. There are many web sites, often called "paper mills" or commissioning sites, and also computer programming code-writing sites that offer a ghost writing service. Agents actively procure business by targeting campuses to distribute leaflets or by sending mass email mailshots directly to students and sometimes to staff. Three teacher participants made references to this problem:

> *"Some lecturers monitor paper mill sites and sites such as Rent-a-coder, to detect requests for papers, code to be written, and let their colleagues know. Lecturers from other institutions also contact us".*
>
> *"Unfortunately a lot of staff (and students) are unaware that [digital tools are] useless for detecting 'commissioned plagiarism' or collusion where mummy or daddy kindly rewrites their offspring's work in correct English".*
>
> [how digital tools are used] *"Google: Post submission, when there's a gut feeling. Also for searching for coursework requests on places like CodeMonkey".*
>
> (selected responses, teacher questionnaire)

These comments highlight this growing phenomenon which presents a great threat of as yet unmeasured significance to academic standards across the world. The difficulty of recognising and challenging such cases makes it a priority for action and more effective systems are needed before it can be claimed that the problem is adequately managed.

Although there may be some alternative explanations, one significant trend that emerged from the UK national interviews is that on the few (4) occasions when a respondent said their institutional systems processed relatively few cases of plagiarism, the interviewees had confirmed that their student population included "predominantly UK students". Copying from text books, lecture notes,

other students or inappropriate collaboration between one or more students on individually assessed work can be a common form of plagiarism if not checked. This type of plagiarism can apply to all students, but it is often assumed to be common among international students who are studying in a second or third language and who often come from educational environments where shared or jointly produced work is the norm. Several respondents made reference to this problem:

There was a "*collusion case where the student copied because they did not feel articulate enough in English*"

Even when international students' English is OK, they "*still have tendency to copy from each other or from the year ahead*" (teacher questionnaire).

"*There are cultural differences (e.g. Chinese students) they say 'I could not write it any better', deference to authority, professor, summarising, précising is challenging in a second language*" (national interview);

"*International students have a Confucian model of education, sitting at the feet of the guru*" (national interview).

4.5 Sharing good practice and working with partners

Many senior UK academics serve at some time as external examiners or on audit or accreditation panels at other institutions, with opportunities for observing practices and systems across the HE sector. Specifically "*auditing other institutions can lead to peer sharing of good practice between colleagues on the team, external examining, working with partners makes you clarify your own procedures*" (national interview). Some UK institutions work with diverse and numerous partner institutions, for example one interviewee represented an institution with "*33,000 students and 18 partner [further education] colleges with learning agreements*". Clearly, ensuring equity of academic standards and application of policies across a large partner network can be quite challenging. "*Staff developers are working with the colleges, use of Turnitin and localising academic regulations*"; " *It took some time to get this right*" (national interview). However networking can have positive impacts in influencing practices across the sector and vertically within national education, in that academic staff can influence policies in other institutions, cascading (up and) down to encourage a similar culture of high quality and standards at all levels of education.

The theme of working with international partners was discussed in several national interviews:

"*It is difficult to get overseas students to conform to our practices, it is cultural*"; Managing aspects of quality and dealing with plagiarism with international partners is "*one of the areas of risk in any university is arrangements done by a partner on your behalf*"; There were problems with an international partner "*handing out answers during a formal exam*"; The experience of collaborative provision "*depends on what quality arrangements you have with a partner down road or in other country*". There needs to be an "*equivalent role* [in quality assurance] *together with good staff you can depend on* [at the partner college]"; It is important to take steps to maintain "*the reputation of UK HE abroad, without being too colonially minded*" (national interviews).

There were also many points raised by different respondents about how to "*prepare potential students before they come to University, secondary schools, feeder institutions and partners overseas*" (national interview). One senior manager saw great benefits of: "*working with overseas partners to help them to understand our value and policies*". The great diversity of student populations in most UK institutions compared to the situation in other parts of the EU has helped to drive UK developments in academic integrity in the last decade.

4.6 Improving systems and procedures

When asked for suggestions about what more could be done to reduce student plagiarism, a range of free-format responses from all levels of respondent suggested that the current provision for support, guidance and sources of advice is not seen as sufficient. Table 8b summarises the responses by common themes.

The most significant themes by far were the need for more information for students about academic writing practices and academic integrity in the form of workshops, tutorials or a module. There was no consensus about whether support should be at the outset of study, continually during the study period or whether embedded within the curriculum or kept distinct and separate. Many students asked for free access to digital tools, but many others showed awareness that formative development and use of tools with tutor support was likely to be more effective. The differences and overlaps in responses between the four categories are of interest. The deterrent effect of penalties, threats and student understanding consequences featured in 20 of the student responses compared to only 2 other responses in total from the other levels. The number of useful and relevant suggestions in this list demonstrates how knowledgeable the participants were about this subject and high levels of interest in the IPPHEAE research. Adding to this evidence about prevention measures, 78% of teachers and 67% of student questionnaire participants agreed that *it is possible to design coursework to reduce student plagiarism* (Annex IE-1 Qu S5o, T5t) and this was reflected in many open responses from students, suggesting ways that this could be achieved. An interesting suggestion, made by 2 separate students was to require all new students to write an essay about plagiarism.

Table 8b: Thematic summary of ideas for how to reduce student plagiarism	Number of Responses			
	Student	Teacher	Senior Man	National
Staff training or development, codes of practice/conduct		1	2	3
Student education about plagiarism, codes of practice/conduct	80	11	2	7
More transparent access to resources, good case studies, study aids	6	4	2	2
Per-arrival, preparing potential students working with feeder schools	1		1	4
Academic Personal tutors, specialist support services, libraries	6	1		2
Community of learners, co-creation, staff and students as partners,	1		1	4
Student formative use of software, in controlled way, peer marking	8	9	2	5
Teachers setting example of good practice for students	1		1	1
Assessment design, not recycling, criteria – be clear what you want	15	6	2	4
Embedding academic integrity in the curriculum		6		2
Focus on learning, teaching critical thinking, philosophy, originality	6	1	1	4
Share/challenge cultural values, support language transition, international	2	2	1	2
Don't harm the messenger or whistle-blower				1
Connections between offence, level of severity and applying penalties	10	1		3
PG Certificate in teaching and learning for new teachers				1
App that reminds students (nagging) about different stages				1
Teaching academic writing skills, writing for different audiences	22	6	2	3
Consistency in guidance between teachers, Internal reviews for consistency	1	1		
More exams		1		
Hold a viva voce examination or interview for students	1	1		
Encourage reading, guide on use of sources	6			
Use of referencing software (eg Refworks), simplifying referencing	3			
Use of digital tools, student access to digital tools	30		1	
Ensure students understand the consequences, threats	10			
Time management, less homework, using books rather than on-line	4			

In response to this question: *Do you believe your institution/faculty has a robust approach to the detection of student plagiarism? Please explain what methods you adopt for detecting plagiarism,* institutions that participated in the survey provided some views about current practices:

"*There is no institutional code of practice*".

"We use a mixture of detection tools (eg Turnitin) plus the expertise of the examiner, which detects work that does not feel to be written in the right register or with the resources/references you would expect. Sources such as Google Scholar are used. An academic who is an IT law expert deploys a range of additional tools in cases which are proving difficult".

"This is improving. In the past it has relied on staff marking work identifying plagiarism. With the introduction of Turnitin which will be available to all staff and students from 2012 it is hoped the process will become easier and therefore more consistent".

"Safe Assign detection tool is available but markers will of course also use their judgment and pursue possible instances. We do not mandate electronic submission of use of software yet".

(Senior management survey responses)

Seven of the eight senior management responses referred to just the use of digital tools, with varying qualification about how widespread, consistent or embedded the deployment of the tools has become within their institution. A view emerged from some responses at the senior and national levels expressing perhaps over-confidence that the adoption of digital tools together with vigilance of academic staff would be sufficient measures for responding to student plagiarism.

The above findings were reinforced by responses from senior managers about whether teacher responses to plagiarism and academic dishonesty were consistent (Senior Management Qu 16). One person's response was simply "*no*", but three other respondents provided more elaboration:

"technically yes but in practice no, I do think there is variation between teachers and between students some supervisors might point out potential plagiarism in reading drafts, e.g. of dissertations, others might not there are also variations in academic's understanding of academic conventions in relation to citations"

"Most teachers follow the system, but some find ways around it, ignore cases of plagiarism mainly don't care, too lazy to be bothered, or think they can deal with it themselves. Sometimes tutors who are not native English speakers find it difficult to spot plagiarism, but Turnitin can help them; Interviews with colleagues for research have provided evidence to support my views"

"The answer is probably no but it is difficult to provide any evidence to back up either way. Once cases are highlighted by a member of staff then all are treated in the same way in accordance with policy and procedures. It is those that are not raised that may be treated differently"

The last point is significant, in that whatever the system it is difficult to find out how many potential cases of plagiarism or dishonesty go unreported by the academic markers and how these are handled. Four of the senior managers expressed confidence that their systems were robust enough to ensure consistency of response.

"University Regulation … applies to all University students regardless of level of study or department; penalties are imposed by Heads of Departments and are specified by University Regulation ... There is therefore a degree of consistency at departmental and University level".

"We provide guidance to be followed in all cases in the handling of investigations, with standard letters to students, and a requirement for penalties to be confirmed by senior staff, who can see the reports of hearings. I would not say all staff understand plagiarism in the same ways, but we do have checks on the handling of cases".

"I think some tutors are able to identify cases before checking Turnitin, but as all work goes through Turnitin, this is not such an issue. All tutors are given the same training, so the approach should be consistent".

"The University has a standard procedure which involves Faculty academic leaders at an early stage, to try to ensure consistency. Within individual Schools there is considerable emphasis on individuals not taking their own view, but referring it up. Of course, some individuals will still make their own judgements, which will not always be visible".

There is strong positive indication from student and teacher participants about institutions having policies and procedures for plagiarism and academic dishonesty and about these being made available to students and staff (Annex UK-1 Qu 5). However, responses to questions about consistency of application of the policies and procedures were rather less positive, with relatively high numbers of respondents not sure about some answers. Only 25% of the teachers and 49% of the students believed that all teachers *follow the same procedures for similar cases of plagiarism*, with 53% and 11% respectively disagreeing with the statement (Annex IE-1 Qu S5l, T5q). Only 36% of the teachers agreed with the statement *I believe the way teachers treat plagiarism does not vary from student to student*, with 42% disagreeing and 21% not sure. However 57% of the students agreed with the same statement, with 9% disagreeing and 29% not sure (Annex IE-1 Qu S5m, T5r).

It became clear from the national interviews that many UK universities have strongly enforced institutional policies and procedures, but it is common for other universities, particularly some of the more established "research intensive" universities, to rely on academic judgement from individual professors rather than to standardise policies across the institutionally or even within department, faculties or colleges. The scale and consequences of this autonomy could not be established because it proved difficult to gain access to information from some universities that did not accept invitations to participate in this research.

5. Perceptions and Understanding of Plagiarism

5.1 Raising awareness about academic integrity

One way of showcasing academic integrity is to ask students to sign some form of statement about integrity and honesty. In some countries (USA, Germany) and institutions this can be a formal ceremony, but in other institutions it can be more a more routine process. Responses about when *students are required to sign a declaration about originality and academic honesty* from the student and teacher questionnaire are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: When do students sign a declaration? (select as many options as apply)		
Student	Teacher	When
22%	8%	*On starting their degree*
36%	49%	*For every assessment*
12%	32%	*For some assessments*
2%	0%	*Never*
15%	11%	*Not sure*

The teachers' responses suggest this is fairly common practice in UK at subject or assessment level, either for all or for some assignments. However students' experience implies that not all institutions or teachers ask students to sign such statements. On a related issue, there is a recent initiative from the UK government to encourage student HEIs to establish Student Charters, setting out roles, responsibilities and obligations for HEIs and students. The Charter is underpinned by "Key Information Sets" on performance and partnership between the institution and students, normally via the Students' Union (Porter 2011, Willets 2011).

IPPHEAE

Education of students about good academic practice is a key element of a preventative strategy. Students were generally confident that they understood plagiarism, but there was slightly less certainty about the technicalities of academic writing:

Student Question 2: *I became aware of plagiarism*…
37% of students said were aware about plagiarism before they started university, 27% became aware of this during their undergraduate degree and 32% during their masters of PhD. Only 1% said they still were still not sure about this.

Student Question 3: *I learned to cite and reference*…
13% of students said they learnt about writing conventions before they started bachelor degree, 47% during bachelor degree, 31% during master's degree and 2% said they were still not sure about this.

The above responses reflect the diverse nature of the UK HE student population, with many international students joining UK universities to study at different levels.

5.2 Support and guidance

It is clear that many UK student participants received guidance, in techniques for scholarly academic writing and anti-plagiarism issues according to 74% of students and 89% of teacher respondents (Annex UK-1 Qu S5a, T5a), but 57% of students and 43% of the teachers said they would like to have more training (Annex UK-1 Qu S5b, T5p).

Student Question 6, Teacher Questions 2 and 3 asked about awareness-raising: *students become aware of plagiarism and of other forms of academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating) as an important issue through*:

Table 7: Ways that students become aware about plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Plagiarism		Academic Dishonesty		
Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	
47%	72%	27%	51%	*Web site*
66%	93%	38%	79%	*Course booklet, student guide, handbook*
50%	68%	31%	51%	*Leaflet or guidance notes*
73%	94%	45%	77%	*Workshop / class / lecture*
17%	0%	16%	8%	*I am not aware of any information about this*
29%	14%	18%	12%	*Other*

The responses in Table 7 confirm that a range of information about plagiarism and academic dishonesty is made available to most UK students through various channels and media. However, comparing percentages of positive responses suggests that universities may be placing more emphasis on deterring plagiarism than the wider range of possible academic dishonesty or cheating categories.

Student Question 12, Teacher Question 14 asked: *Which of the following services are provided at your institution to advise students about plagiarism prevention*?

Table 8a: Services and student support for discouraging plagiarism

Student	Teacher	Service or provision
63%	57%	*Academic support unit*
67%	83%	*Advice in class during course/module*
54%	55%	*Additional lectures, workshops:*
66%	93%	*Advice from tutors or lecturers*
45%	79%	*Guidance from the library*
20%	2%	*University publisher*
48%	58%	*Academic writing unit/Study skills unit*

15

The responses are summarised in Table 8a. The main channel for education of students about plagiarism and academic dishonesty appears to be through tutors, in classes and through course handbooks and study guides. The responses confirm that there is also provision in some institutions of specific and dedicated services and information for supporting students in academic integrity, perhaps through the university library or an academic support unit. The summary of feedback in Table 8a included suggestions for many workshops, classes, information and guidance on academic writing conventions and skills.

All UK senior management respondents said their institutions provided training for teachers on dealing with cases of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, the frequency and focus for these sessions varies considerably. Five of the eight senior manager respondents agreed there should be more training for prevention of plagiarism. Four managers responded about the amount of information and training available or provided already and two said that scarce resources should be prioritised.

51% of the student participants agreed with the statement that *the previous institution* [where] *I studied was less strict about plagiarism than this institution,* with 19% disagreeing (Annex UK-1 S5q).

All four levels of survey included questions that explored respondents' understanding about what constitutes plagiarism and the underlying reasons why it occurs. The responses to the question about why students plagiarise are summarised in Tables 9 and 10.

Student Question 14 and Teacher Question 17: *What leads students to decide to plagiarise*?

Table 9: Reasons student plagiarise – student and teacher questionnaires		
Student	Teacher	Possible reason for plagiarism
7%	17%	*They think the lecturer will not care*
17%	87%	*They think they will not get caught*
22%	77%	*They run out of time*
16%	43%	*They don't want to learn anything, just pass the assignment:*
7%	42%	*They don't see the difference between group work and collusion*
28%	66%	*They can't express another person's ideas in their own words*
35%	62%	*They don't understand how to cite and reference*
23%	13%	*They are not aware of penalties*
33%	43%	*They are unable to cope with the workload*
31%	42%	*They think their written work is not good enough:*
27%	13%	*They feel the task is completely beyond their ability*
52%	77%	*It is easy to cut and paste from the Internet*
28%	2%	*They feel external pressure to succeed*
17%	49%	*Plagiarism is not seen as wrong*
28%	45%	*They have always written like that*
22%	8%	*Unclear criteria and expectations for assignments*
30%	47%	*Their reading comprehension skills are weak*
26%	9%	*Assignments tasks are too difficult or not understood*
8%	2%	*There is no teacher control on plagiarism*
6%	2%	*Other – see below*

Table 9 reveals a great difference between students (17%) and teachers (87%) believing that a reason why students plagiarise is believing they would "not get caught", but there was more of a consensus about the ease of cutting and pasting from the internet. More teachers than students selected weakness in academic skills for study and writing, which is also reflected in Table 10.

Table 10: Additional feedback about reasons for plagiarising	Responses: S=student, T= teacher M-senior manager, N=National
Lack of guidance, skill, understanding of concepts	S TTT MMMMNNNNNNNN
English second language, language problems	S MNN
International, cultural, educational differences	S T MMNNNNNNNN
Time pressures, leaving until last minute	S T MMMNNNNNNNNNNN
Ignorance, error, forgetting to cite, naïve	S MNNNN
Lazy, easy solution, short-cut, cut and paste	TT MMMNNNNNNNNN
Don't see the difference between discussion and collusion	TNNNNN
Not expecting to get caught or punished	T MNNN
Encouraged to do it at school, not told it is wrong	TNNN
Desperate, pressures, unable to cope	MMNNNNNNNNNNNNNN
Lack of confidence	MMMNN
Extenuating circumstances	MNN
See nothing wrong with it	MMNNN
Lack of engagement	NNNN
Lack of role models from politicians and teachers	NN
Peer pressure, fear of failure	NNN
Intentional cheating, make a judgement, pragmatic	NNNN
Same assignments set every year	N
Sharing resources with other students, eg pen drives	N
They get higher marks by copying than using own voice	N
Navigating journals can be quite daunting	N

Table 10 looks at the full range of additional responses from all respondents. Lack of guidance and understanding, inability to cope were common themes in the additional feedback. Workload and time factors emerged strongly in earlier research about reasons for plagiarism (for example Park 2003) and in most elements of the UK survey, but very few of the student questionnaire respondents (22%) selected this as a reason for plagiarising and only one student made an additional comment about this aspect.

Some of the feedback in table 10 suggests a growing understanding among people responsible for managing aspects of academic integrity in institutions that much student plagiarism stems from cultural difference or previous educational experience, ignorance of the rules or poor study skills and relatively few cases of plagiarism are deliberate attempts to cheat.

5.2 Views about rates of occurrence of student plagiarism

There was no consensus between respondents at senior management and national levels about whether the number of cases of plagiarism is rising in the UK. There is general agreement that there are still too many cases arising, but many participants said the number of cases has risen because of greater awareness and enhanced tools and systems for detecting cases and a few institutions reported a downturn in cases through implementing better policies.

When asked whether or not plagiarism is always academic dishonesty, most interviewees believed it was possible to inadvertently plagiarise, for example "*My particular view is plagiarism is not necessarily dishonesty, there is a continuum; it is not helpful to merge the two, but this is not everyone's view*" (national interview); "*Accidental? – yes, that is not academic dishonesty*" (national interview); "*Not always – it is often confused students who lack information literacy, don't know how to necessary use and present information*" (national interview); "*Blatant dishonesty and lack of understanding are different*" (national interview). However some interviewees expressed a different

opinion, for example "*It is strict liability - you've done it or not*" (national interview) and "*it is an absolute offence in my mind with penalty for offender, mitigation will have an impact on the penalty*" (national interview).

Some institutions said they thought it was important to have separate policies for plagiarism and academic dishonesty, but other HEIs said they have implemented a combined set of policies and procedures for handling all accusations of potential academic dishonesty with "*sliding scale dealing with levels of culpability and intention*" (national interview).

Tables 11, 12 and 13 summarise responses to questions about different aspects of academic writing. Table 11, question 10 explored students' understanding of basic academic writing conventions: *What are the reasons for using correct referencing and citation in scholarly academic writing*?

Table 11: Reasons for referencing and citation	
71%	*To avoid being accused of plagiarism*
60%	*To show you have read some relevant research papers*
58%	*To give credit to the author of the sourced material*
57%	*To strengthen and give authority to your writing*
26%	*Because you are given credit/marks for doing so*
2%	*I don't know*

It was disappointing but significant to see from responses in Table 11 how many student respondents (71%) believed the purpose of referencing and citation is to defend themselves against accusations of plagiarism. Other than that observation, over half the students appeared to have a good grasp of why referencing and in-text citations are required. It appears that a referencing style convention is applied in most of the subject areas and institutions that responded, where 69% of students said they were *confident about referencing and citation* (Table 12). *Finding good quality sources* and *paraphrasing* were the aspects of academic writing where most difficulty was reported by student respondents (Table 13).

Table 12: Referencing styles, Student Question 11, Teacher Question 10a						
yes		No		Not sure		Question
student	teacher	student	teacher	student	teacher	
88%	94%	5%	4%	4%	0%	*Is there any referencing style students are required or encouraged to use in written work*?
69%		11%		17%		*Are you confident about referencing and citation*?

Student Question 13: *What do you find difficult about academic writing*?

Table 13: Difficulties with academic writing	
59%	Finding good quality sources
38%	Referencing and citation
44%	Paraphrasing
35%	Understanding different referencing formats and styles

Students (Question 15) and teachers (Question 19) were asked to identify possible cases of plagiarism based on a brief scenario, and suggest whether some "punishment" should be applied. The purpose of this question was to try to establish what behaviour different people viewed as plagiarism, whether they believed some sanction should be applied in such cases and whether there was any correlation between these two aspects. Tables 14 and 15 summarise the responses from students and teachers respectively.

All six cases (a-f) in Table 14 may be categorised as plagiarism, but some (c,f) could be construed as poor academic practice or perhaps patch-writing due to poor language skills could account for some matching (b,e). However given that the scenario says 40% of the paper is identical to other work with no acknowledgement, it is difficult to justify why a HE student should be given academic credits for this work without some investigation.

Considering the responses in Tables 14 and 15 to part (a), the most obvious example of plagiarism, it is notable that while the vast majority of students and teachers were clear this was a case of plagiarism, only 57% and 59% respectively said that punishment may be appropriate for such conduct. The lower number of students identifying possible plagiarism examples from the remaining options suggests that students' confidence in academic writing conventions may be misplaced. Compared to responses from some other countries to this question, a higher percentage of the teachers were able to identify that most or all scenarios described possible cases of plagiarism, but up to 26% of the teachers indicated uncertainty about these cases and there was no a consensus about applying sanctions.

Student Question 15, Teacher question 19: Examples of possible plagiarism:

Table 14: Student responses to possible cases of plagiarism					
Qu	Is it plagiarism?			Punish ment?	Assuming that 40% of a student's submission is from other sources and is copied into the student's work as described in (a-f) below, indicate your judgement on plagiarism
	Yes	No	Don't know		
a	88	3	3	57	word for word with no quotations
b	68	6	22	33	word for word with no quotations, has a correct references but no in text citations
c	41	24	28	16	word for word with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations
d	62	11	20	34	with some words changed with no quotations, references or in text citations
e	44	12	37	17	with some words changed with no quotations, has correct references but no in text citations
f	23	47	22	8	with some words changed with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations
Table 15: Teacher responses to possible case of plagiarism					
Qu	Is it plagiarism?			Punish ment?	Assuming that 40% of a student's submission is from other sources and is copied into the student's work as described in (a-f) below, indicate your judgement on plagiarism
	Yes	No	Don't know		
a	98%	0%	2%	60%	word for word with no quotations
b	91%	0%	9%	49%	word for word with no quotations, has a correct references but no in text citations
c	67%	11%	21%	28%	word for word with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations
d	94%	0%	6%	51%	with some words changed with no quotations, references or in text citations
e	74%	0%	26%	36%	with some words changed with no quotations, has correct references but no in text citations
f	44%	30%	26%	17%	with some words changed with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations

6. Examples of good practice

The UK has so many examples of good practice that have already been mentioned and many more that could have been included in this report. The following quoted examples have not been referred to in detail earlier in the report.

"We have a special application that helps students with assignment submission process – it sends emails about what students should do at different stages of working on their assignments – workflow process. Starting with assignment, reminds them at different stages what they need to be doing, prompts them, including plagiarism checks by email. Like a personal tutor nagging you" (national interview).

"Online training package for students when they arrive before or during induction – we are making it universal" (national interview).

"Managed through VLE (virtual Learning Environment) we have a series of quizzes to help practice and re-practice what they are doing, with staff support for that" (national interview).

"Universities are more universally using software eg Turnitin on a routine basis to expose plagiarism. Pre-submissions allowed in some areas, especially business, informal assessment" (national interview).

"What has been foregrounded is that there are many different types of writing that graduates may have to engage in for the workplace, these days more common for graduates to be self-employed – so it's not just the old distinction between studio work (art design) and dissertation (art history) – more expectations, report writing, grant applications etc. Skills in writing are much broader than we previously thought. Not just academic writing, other forms of writing. This is new for studio staff – we are helping in the transition, on-going project" (national interview).

"One thing that is really clear is where libraries have come into their own, taken it on board as part of academic literature, incredibly creative almost always libraries leading it. Teaching it to international students, so blatant – a provoker of these issues – started the ball rolling. Lots of places have quickly moved on to working on academic writing skills in interesting and creative ways – awareness raised. It was triggered by international students but all students benefit" (national interview).

Funding provided historically in the UK for conducting research into aspects of plagiarism policy and related student conduct has ensured that the UK has a critical mass of publications and expertise for advising on suitable measures that HEIs can adopt, backed by evidence of successful implementations. By understanding better the reasons for plagiarism, HEIs can more effectively respond to the challenges.

The ubiquity of sources of information and publicity about plagiarism and "cheating", both within the HE sector and more generally, has helped to make academic staff more alert to the need to respond to potential plagiarism cases. The systematic or partial adoption of digital tools has helped to act as a deterrent to student misconduct in many UK institutions, but with some emerging consequences. One side-effect is that plagiarism cases may tend to rise as the new detection systems become embedded before they begin to stabilise and hopefully decline. A different area of concern to some respondents is that giving students access to software tools without adequate supervision or understanding can encourage bad writing and study practice. This has been addressed in some HEIs through formative use of matching software tools in some institutions, going a step farther, by using the tool's reports for draft written work to guide students on how to make more appropriate use of good quality sources.

There is a growing recognition in the UK that the present high level of student plagiarism in some institutions is not inevitable, for example *"it has a lot to do with assessment design"* (senior manager), and that fairly simple measures can help to reduce opportunities for plagiarism and inappropriate sharing of work between students (collusion).

Encouraging and *"creating a culture of intellectual curiosity and honesty - leading by example"* (senior manager) by inspirational teaching and innovative pedagogical initiatives has been adopted

in some UK HE contexts, with remarkable results, not just for reducing plagiarism but also potentially enhancing student employability.

The evidence-led approach to revision of policies for academic integrity in many UK HEIs has ensured that student disciplinary cases are more likely to be handled consistently with sanctions proportional to the nature of the offense, taking into account the student's background and educational maturity. As mentioned earlier, the "Oxford Brookes Model" must feature highly in any account of good practice for disciplinary and plagiarism policies in the UK. This holistic approach ensures that there is a preventative culture and consistency of dealing with accusations across the institution, while providing a fair, local and swift means of response and resolution to individual cases. The model is based on appointment and training of a team of departmentally based staff, typically called Academic Conduct Officers (ACO), who act as the local champions for promoting good practice and also deal with disciplinary cases that arise, according to a set of standard rules. Local and central coordination and communication systems ensure that ACOs remain up to date with new developments and ideas and that their decisions remain fair and consistent institutionally. Many institutions have adopted and adapted this system for their own use (Carroll and Appleton 2001).

In a relatively short time since its foundation the ombudsman for HE in England and Wales, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), has become a powerful force for positive change that appears to have no parallel elsewhere in the world. Although compliance with OIA decisions is not a requirement for universities, the recent policy of the OIA to publicly name universities where poor practice is revealed ensures that institutions almost always follow the advice provided to avoid risk of harming institutional reputation. Moreover, across the sector it is becoming common for institutions to monitor the OIA web site for new guidance arising from cases at other institutions, and judicial reviews, adjusting their policies accordingly.

7. Discussion

The findings from all information sources confirm the difficulty in determining the nature, frequency and seriousness of student plagiarism within UK Higher Education. Even if it was possible for all identified plagiarism and academic dishonesty cases to be recorded consistently across HEIs, this still would not provide a fair comparison of academic misconduct in HEIs. Barriers to consistency include variations in how cases are recorded, disagreements on what constitutes a case, reluctance of some academics to identify cases and differences in assessment regimes. Of course, this variation is present in all countries, not just UK.

This report has focused on text-based plagiarism, but it is important to note that plagiarism exists in other media. Dealing with these cases can be very different:

> *"The potential for visual plagiarism quite different from say English Literature. Visual work requires judgement around whether individual has been visibly referencing somebody else's great ideas – possibly ironically – or wilfully nicking them for their own gain? Oral referencing in music: this is a difficult area …. Great works of art include within then elements of other people's work. Whether or how the person in the frame has acknowledged the sources of their work or passed it off as their own. There are mechanisms that students can use to indicate publicly on influences – even at undergraduate level – submit workbooks of images and ideas, evaluations"* (national interview).

More research would be useful in this underexplored and complex area.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are not static phenomena than can be eradicated through punishment and/or education. Plagiarism existed long before the Internet and will never be stamped out completely. Deliberate dishonesty evolves and adapts over time as opportunities come and go. HE needs to stay informed and if possible abreast of the developments to ensure that counter-measures are developed. This process can only be effective if all academic staff remain

vigilant, aiming for a degree of consistent understanding and applying the same approach towards similar cases.

This research suggests that the UK is generally ahead of most countries in research, awareness and understanding of issues surrounding academic integrity. Many institutions have implemented effective policies and systems to provide support and guidance for students and academics, but the findings here indicate that there is still some way to go. UK HEIs must continue to try to eliminate cases of plagiarism that arise through student ignorance by ensuring students and those teaching them develop a shared vision and understanding of acceptable practice in using and acknowledging academic sources and the complex processes of academic writing.

A recurring theme in the survey responses was that students arrive at a university (regardless of entry level) with a set of prior values, expectations and assumptions, which are often not compatible with those of the HE institution they have just joined. Several people suggested that it would help if some earlier influence should be exerted prior to their arrival in HE about academic integrity, for example for "*International Baccalaureate papers all over the world , at the moment this is just about honestly, it needs to be much more, about what students should do for academic integrity; If IB, an enquiry based system, is being done correctly, all over the world, sometimes children don't realise what they are being asked to do is different from what their neighbours' children have been asked to do, even more crucial for IB schools to make it clear what is needed*" (national interview). A similar message was raised by several participants about students joining UK HE institutions from international partner institutions where policies for plagiarism and academic dishonesty are low-key or not developed. If more was done to alert international students before departure and inform them about what UK HEIs expect, they may have a much easier transition.

By far the most difficult type of academic plagiarism to detect and respond to is ghost writing in all its forms. The World Wide Web provides a lucrative e-commerce opportunity for the write-to-commission "Paper Mills", and programming code factories. This phenomenon must be taken seriously as a major threat to academic standards and potentially to institutional reputations. Some UK institutions are already responding to this challenge, but the evidence collected and presented here suggests that academics in some or perhaps many HE institutions have a "head in the sand" attitude to this growing problem. This finding is unsurprising when taking into account the complexity of the problems and potential solutions surrounding plagiarism and all forms of academic dishonesty.

8. Recommendations for the UK

8.1 Nationally

8.1.1 Capturing a national view on academic dishonesty and plagiarism is hampered by having no consistent way to compare policies, systems and cases across institutions. There is a real tension between the desire for institutional autonomy and the gains of some form of systematic monitoring of institutional policy. Most interviewees at UK national level expressed strong opposition to more intrusion and monitoring. However UK HEIs already have audits and monitoring by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), although soon moving it a "light touch" approach. It is recommended that QAA audit guidelines are modified to require institutions to

Explain their policies and procedures for discouraging, detecting and managing student plagiarism and academic dishonesty at all levels;

Demonstrate how effectively and consistently these policies are operating;

Explain their systems for monitoring and revising their strategy.

8.1.2 Although a national system of recording plagiarism and academic dishonesty cases would be desirable to allow progress to be monitored, the current inconsistencies and disparities in internal policies and systems within and between HEIs would make such data meaningless and open to misinterpretation.

8.1.3 Unlike most EU countries, over the last 10 years significant research has already been conducted in the UK into plagiarism and academic dishonesty on higher education. Research funding has been provided through JISC, HEA and the EU (IPPHEAE). However funding would be useful for:

a) Dissemination and development, applying the findings from HE to secondary education;
b) Applying procedures developed for taught programmes to PhD and at research level within HEIs;
c) Research into paper mills and ghost-writing services;
d) Research into plagiarism in non-text forms and media.

8.1.4 Responses by professional accreditation bodies to student plagiarism and academic dishonesty as it affects "fitness to practice" status of graduates, need to be more nuanced. Sanctions need to be commiserate with the scale of the offence and equitable with workplace disciplinary procedures. In particular, references to plagiarism as theft should be removed since theft is often seen as a disbarment criterion. Plagiarism is specifically excluded from UK laws governing theft because unacknowledged use does not permanently deny the owner use of the work product.

8.2 Institutionally

8.2.1 UK HEIs that do not currently have an institution-wide strategy for academic dishonesty and plagiarism need to develop consistent policies and procedures in keeping with the recommendation in paragraph 8.1.1 above for managing, detecting, applying sanctions and discouraging student plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. There is plenty of documented research, support and experience available within the UK HE sector to assist with the necessary developments.

"… a good place to start, the basic requirement, is the Policy Works document (Morris 2011) *… policy turns out to be a very good point of enquiry. Where policy is wrong it often stops everything else …"* (national interview).

8.2.2 "*People recycle things, no surprise, year-before papers, lack of originality – it is incumbent on staff to encourage a higher level of critiquing, not using wikis*" (national interview). On-going and regular staff development programmes should be available within HEIs to ensure that all "front line" academic staff concerned with student assessment avoid this type of recycling mistake and consistently follow the correct procedures for dealing with plagiarism and academic dishonesty, including "designing out" plagiarism and use and limitations of digital tools for aiding detection.

8.2.3 HEIs should centrally monitor cases of academic misconduct for the whole institution to ensure consistency and fairness of approach. HEIs not already doing so should monitor their progress towards sustained genuine reductions in cases of student plagiarism, potentially leading to improved academic standards. "*Evaluate the effectiveness of what we do, on-going task*" (national interview).

8.2.4 Guidance and information must be readily available and accessible via a range of media and embedded throughout the study programmes to ensure that all teaching staff and students are aware of and fully understand about all aspects of academic writing, academic integrity, plagiarism, policies and procedures for academic misconduct, available sanctions

and consequences for misconduct. "*Academic skills – nobody is born with these skills, need to be taught*" (national interview).

8.2.5   Staff support, development and collegiality is really critical, "*if your first language is not English, for teachers, even strong English speaking colleagues, can't spot plagiarism in the same way a native speaker can see it*" (national interview). Existing systems for double/second marking can be utilised to ensure cases of plagiarism are not missed.

8.3   Individual academics

Not all teaching staff participants agreed that more staff training was needed, but this observation suggests there is need for some change of attitude at least: "*We could do more, it depends on academics being compliant with a set of principles – that's where it falls down*" (national interview). The following observation was about students' need for training: "*It goes back to training and awareness, getting it into their heads, good practice, ethics of scholarly work, working in ethical manner with integrity*", but the same point could be applied to some less engaged teaching staff.

Individual academics have a responsibility to acquaint themselves and regularly update their knowledge and skills to ensure they

a) Have a consistent view of what constitutes student plagiarism and other different forms of academic dishonesty;

b) Understand and comply with the regulations, policies and procedures for potential cases of academic misconduct;

c) Know about the value and limitations of digital tools for aiding detection of plagiarism

d) Ensure that their students receive levels of support and advice, according to their individual needs, as described in paragraph 8.2.5;

e) Be vigilant about and respond to potential threats to academic standards, such as ghost-writing: "*Buying essays – (burden of proof problem) this is an academic judgement call, the balance of proof*"; "*Cheating changes over time*" (national interviews).

9. Conclusions

This study, particularly the enlightening conversations with many highly influential people and input from students, academics, administrators, researchers and national authorities, confirms that the UK has been and remains the most active part of the EU for research and interventions into academic integrity and plagiarism, "*speaking for the sector I have the feeling that work that has been done over the past 10 years or so has been helpful in drawing students' attention to plagiarism as an issue, why and how they should avoid it and universities manage it*" (national interview). However "*there is generally a lack of evidence and evaluation of empirical studies about impact*" of all the research and development (national interview). A view was proposed about how the R&D in UK HE sector has led to maturity of approach over time: "*where we have moved on – we are now talking to students about academic literacy, more innovative assessments*", but the same interviewee was also aware of less good practice, "*unfortunately, at some institutions they don't use any new ways of assessing students – they are where they were*" (national interview), implying that there is still work to do to reach a consistently high standard of practice across all HEIs in the UK.

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Annex UK-1: Responses to question 5: (1=strongly disagree – 5=strongly agree)

Qu	Negative (1,2)		Don't know		Positive (4,5)		Statement
	student	teacher	student	teacher	student	teacher	
s5a t5a	14%	4%	7%	6%	74%	90%	*Students receive training in techniques for scholarly academic writing and anti-plagiarism issues*
s5b t5p	24%	37%	15%	15%	57%	43%	*I would like to have more training on avoidance of plagiarism and academic dishonesty*
s5c t5b	3%	2%	4%	0%	89%	98%	*This institution has policies and procedures for dealing with plagiarism*
t5c		9%		6%		85%	*I believe this institution takes a serious approach to plagiarism prevention*
t5d		9%		6%		83%	*I believe this institution takes a serious approach to plagiarism detection*
s5d t5e	4%	2%	12%	2%	80%	96%	*Plagiarism policies, procedures and penalties are available to students*
t5f		2%		8%		87%	*Plagiarism policies, procedures and penalties are available to staff*
s5e t5g	5%	11%	28%	17%	64%	72%	*Penalties for plagiarism are administered according to a standard formula*
s5f t5h	14%	11%	24%	15%	58%	74%	*I know what penalties are applied to students for different forms of plagiarism and academic dishonesty*
s5g t5i	17%	19%	43%	28%	36%	53%	*Student circumstances are taken into account when deciding penalties for plagiarism*
s5h t5m	4%	2%	11%	4%	80%	90%	*The institution has policies and procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty*
t5j		21%		60%		19%	*The penalties for academic dishonesty are separate from those for plagiarism*
t5k		23%		51%		26%	*There are national regulations or guidance concerning plagiarism prevention within HEIs in this country*
t5l		19%		72%		9%	*Our national quality and standards agencies monitor plagiarism and academic dishonesty in HEIs*
s5i t5n	42%	26%	30%	32%	22%	41%	*I believe one or more of my teachers/colleagues may have used plagiarised or unattributed materials in class notes*
s5j	42%		22%		28%		*I have come across a case of plagiarism committed by a student at this institution*
s5k t5o	41%	57%	23%	6%	31%	38%	*I believe I may have plagiarised (accidentally or deliberately)*
s5l t5q	11%	53%	36%	21%	49%	25%	*I believe that all teachers follow the same procedures for similar cases of plagiarism*
s5m t5r	9%	42%	29%	21%	57%	36%	*I believe that the way teachers treat plagiarism does not vary from student to student*
s5n t5s	4%	23%	22%	25%	70%	53%	*I believe that when dealing with plagiarism teachers follow the existing/required procedures*
s5o t5t	9%	6%	20%	14%	67%	78%	*It is possible to design coursework to reduce student plagiarism*
s5p t5u	10%	4%	35%	36%	49%	57%	*I think that translation across languages is used by some students to avoid detection of plagiarism*
s5q	19%		11%		51%		*The previous institution I studied was less strict about plagiarism than this institution*
s5r	10%		13%		69%		*I understand the links between copyright, Intellectual property rights and plagiarism*

Table 16: Student and teacher responses to questionnaire Question 5 (percentages)