



# Understanding Attitudes Towards Academic Integrity in Irish Higher Education

Leading and Learning in a Changing  
Landscape

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## Our project focus:

“Using the ICAI-McCabe Survey to Measure Beliefs and Knowledge about Academic Integrity in Irish Higher Education”

## Our project aim:

“Evaluate the challenges, costs, and benefits of adapting the ICAI-McCabe surveys of faculty and student attitudes and beliefs about academic integrity for use within the HEI sector in Ireland”

## Research Team



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# McCabe-ICAI Surveys of Academic Integrity



## **Goal of these surveys:**

Generate data for researchers, and an assessment tool for institutions and policymakers.

## **McCabe ICAI Student Survey:**

Demographics, motivation, moral judgment, moral disengagement, peers, behaviour, climate

## **McCabe ICAI 'Faculty' Survey:**

Background, frequency of cheating behaviours and moral judgment, teaching beliefs and course design, graded vs ungraded work, reporting and integrity climate

# Project overview

## 1. Initial basic CBA

Contacting past users (email, interview)

*Q: What did it cost\* to implement?*

## 2. Literature review

Looking at academic integrity, with a specific focus on McCabe-ICAI surveys

*Q: How is academic integrity approached?*

## 3. Semi-structured interviews

Academic, higher education and policy realms

*Q: How is academic integrity understood in Ireland?*  
*Q: How would a survey assist us?*

## 4. Focus groups

Separate groups with staff and students

*Q: How could surveys be adapted to Ireland?*

# Cost-Benefit Analysis

## *Q: What did it cost to implement?*

- **Cost** question: price of institutional membership of ICAI (\$650 per annum), 'overall costs' not worked out or given. Considerably more expensive if 'billable hours' (meetings etc.)
- **Challenges:** ethical & DPO approval, low response rates & survey fatigue, choice of optimal time of year, waiting for comparison results, making a concise report for leadership
- **Impacts:** even doing a survey is beneficial in itself; 'data driven' & enhanced understanding of issues; informed decision making for leadership & governance; 'buy-in from administration and faculty'; 'improved student experience' and raised awareness.
- **Things they wish they knew prior:**
  - 'Building and maintaining **relationships** is key to a smooth rollout'
  - 'I thought it was going to be a much larger undertaking to administer the survey than the reality. I spent **more time working on the results** to create a report than I did on collecting the data.'
  - Generating data is the easy bit – **harder to take action** (but see above, now easier to *argue* for resources with the data)

# Focus Groups

*Q: How could surveys be adapted to Ireland?*

1 academic staff, 1 student focus group. Framing interest: bridging the distance between implementation and policy

**Educational** dimension: just doing the survey is beneficial as a reflective piece, especially if language and definitions aligned across existing materials e.g. students are being exposed to

Observations about **ambiguity** of wording/terms used

**Collaboration** as important pedagogically (to both staff and students), but tensions in terms of how that is framed in terms of academic integrity

# Semi-structured Interviews

*Q: How is academic integrity understood in Ireland?*

*Q: How would a survey assist in with this?*

Total of 24 interviews, chapter 4 of the report.

- Understandings of Academic Integrity among participants
- Academic Integrity issues, and the responses that respondents take
- Existing resources and policy, responsibilities and support
- Specific views on the McCabe-ICAI surveys (observations, risks/drawbacks)
- Alternatives to the McCabe-ICAI surveys

# Quickfire conclusions

- Beneficial to use surveys – but **not in isolation** (mixed methods, but pedagogical workshops, conversations, workshops, seminars, focus groups)
- Important to maintain focus on the **pedagogical and restorative dimensions** of academic integrity (beware ‘policification’)
- Interest in maintaining what is **culturally specific to Ireland’s** higher education context
- Leading, learning, but also important to ***listen...***





# ‘Measuring Attitudes Towards Academic Integrity in Irish Higher Education’

Draft final report available from TARA:

- <https://hdl.handle.net/2262/110302>

