

Sultanate of Oman
Oman Authority for
Academic Accreditation and
Quality Assurance of Education



سلطنة عُمان
الهيئة العمانية للاعتماد
الأكاديمي وضمان جودة التعليم



POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

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Initiator	Centre for Higher Education Quality Assurance (CHEQA)		
Contact Person	Director General of the Centre for Higher Education Quality Assurance Email: CHEQA@oaaaqa.gov.om		
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Policy on Academic Integrity in Higher Education External Quality Assurance Submissions and other Related Documents

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education's (OAAAQA) academic integrity expectations from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) making formal submissions, for any OAAAQA External Quality Assurance (EQA) activity. When submitting Quality Audit Portfolios, Standards Assessment Applications or any associated supporting materials, HEIs are expected to adhere to the principle of respect for the intellectual work of others. In addition, this policy outlines the OAAAQA's response to breaches to academic integrity detected in formal submissions and any associated supporting materials.

2. Scope

This policy applies to HEIs presenting an EQA submission and supporting materials to the OAAAQA. While highlighted under specific Standards or scope areas in OAAAQA Manuals, academic integrity applies to all types of documents, all aspects of the HEI activities and all members of the HEI. The policy also outlines the actions that OAAAQA takes to check, verify and report any violations to academic integrity identified in EQA submissions.

3. Policy Statement

Respect for people's intellectual property, such as the 'production in the literary, artistic, or scientific field regardless of its genre, mode of expression, importance or purpose behind it' is enshrined in legislation (Royal Decree No 65/2008 Copyright and Related Rights Law). It is also one of the most fundamental tenets of higher education. It is the principle by which significant contributions to knowledge can properly be

identified, acknowledged and built upon. The established academic method for showing respect for the principles of academic integrity within written documentation is through the use of:

- In-text citations for materials that have directly contributed to the work
- Reference lists of cited materials
- Bibliographies of materials that have contributed to the work less directly

OAAAQA endorses the definition of plagiarism, as expressed by TEQSA, as the submission of work that was originated by another person or entity without 'acknowledging, citing or referencing the original source of the work' either accidentally or with intent, using identical or other words than the original.¹

Examples of academic integrity malpractices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Quoting verbatim or near-verbatim another person's work without due acknowledgment
- Paraphrasing another person's work (eg, by changing some of the words or the order of the words) without due acknowledgment of the source
- Using another person's ideas without reference to that person as the originator of those ideas
- Cutting and pasting from the Internet to make a 'pastiche' of online sources
- Self-plagiarism, whereby published material by the author is reused without acknowledging the original source

Academic integrity issues may affect any type of materials which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Policies, guidelines, student and staff handbooks, strategic and operational plans
- Reports, proformas and survey or review mechanisms
- EQA or other self-assessment portfolios, reports, application documents and other materials submitted as evidence in support of an EQA application
- Books, journal articles, conference papers, posters, media articles

¹ Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), 'Behaviours that Undermine Academic Integrity' [online], available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/students/understanding-academic-integrity/what-academic-integrity#behaviours-that-20undermine/20academic/20integrity> [accessed 1 September 2023].

- Computer programmes, mathematical models, maps
- Plays, speeches, performances, manuscripts, recordings and broadcasts
- Pictures, photographs, sculptures and audiovisual materials
- Online sites and downloadable files

To prevent, detect and address all forms of academic integrity misconduct, HEIs are expected to have in place policies and procedures which support the protection of academic integrity and to ensure these are implemented and adhered to by students and staff. The expectations of an HEI's approach to academic integrity is articulated in the relevant criteria of each EQA activity.

In the course of participating in EQA activities, HEIs making formal submissions must ensure those submissions fully respect academic integrity principles articulated in OAAAQA's definition of the term (see the definitions section below). The OAAAQA formally identifies and reports on any violations of academic integrity principles detected during an EQA activity, and these are reported on within the framework of the EQA activity being undertaken. In the case of Quality Audit, detection of such violations is reported on comprehensively in the Audit Report. In the case of Standards Assessment, the detection of academic integrity misconduct normally results in the HEI or programme failing to meet one or more standards (in accordance with the specific requirements of the relevant criteria and associated standards).

4. Procedures

4.1 Using appropriate tools, all submissions presented to the OAAAQA for EQA purposes are checked for adherence to academic integrity principles at the earliest opportunity and as may be required throughout the EQA activity. In so doing, the EQA Panel takes a primarily qualitative approach to determining the extent and significance of any material identified as being in violation of academic integrity principles.

4.2 Suspected academic integrity violations are explored through the external review activity within the framework of the EQA activity being undertaken. As in other areas, the EQA Panel's findings are reflected in the outcome of the EQA activity (such as standards and criteria ratings; Accreditation Outcomes and Reports).

5. Abbreviations

HEI..... Higher Education Institution

EQA External Quality Assurance

OAAAQA Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education

TEQSA Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

6. Definitions

- **External Quality Assurance (EQA):** Any OAAAQA Quality Audit or Standards Assessment activity such as:
 - Institutional Standards Assessment and Reassessment
 - Programme Standards Assessment and Reassessment
 - General Foundation Programme Quality Audit
 - Institutional or Programme Reaccreditation activities
- **Academic Integrity:** The OAAAQA endorses the definition of the International Center for Academic Integrity as 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage'.² For the purpose of this policy, and in the EQA activities carried out by the OAAAQA, this includes but is not limited to the explicit acknowledgement of other people's ideas in the intellectual works of an individual or an institution.

7. References

- International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), 'Fundamental Values' [online], available at: <https://academicintegrity.org/resources/fundamental-values> [accessed 1 September 2023].
- Royal Decree No 65/2008 Copyright and Related Laws, Sultanate of Oman, <https://qanoon.om/p/2008/rd2008065/>.
- Royal Decree No 9/2021 Establishing the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, Sultanate of Oman, <https://mjla.gov.om/eng/legislation/decrees/details.aspx?id=1302&type=L&lang=e> and <https://mjla.gov.om/legislation/decrees/details.aspx?Id=1302&type=L&lang=a>

² International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), 'Fundamental Values' [online], available at: <https://academicintegrity.org/resources/fundamental-values> [accessed 1 September 2023].

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), 'Behaviours that Undermine Academic Integrity' [online], available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/students/understanding-academic-integrity/what-academic-integrity#behaviours-that-20undermine/20academic/20integrity> [accessed 1 September 2023].