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Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Academic Integrity – the National Regulatory Context

HAQEF – Building Trust in Online Teaching and Learning

08 October 2020

Dr. Deirdre Stritch
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)



Background – What is QQI?

- A quality assurance body for providers of education and training in Ireland
- An awarding body for learners in Ireland
- Custodian of the National Framework of Qualifications
- Broad and multi-faceted interest in standard of national awards



Public Trust and Confidence in Qualifications

- Important that there is public confidence and trust in education and training system and in national qualifications.
- Need for assurance that a graduate knows and has acquired the skills and competences related to their qualification.
- Cheating undermines that trust and confidence.
- Academic misconduct can pose risks to public health and safety where graduates have failed to acquire the necessary knowledge and skillsets to carry out their jobs.
- Broader implications for society and the economy in situations where that trust and confidence is lost in the qualifications system.



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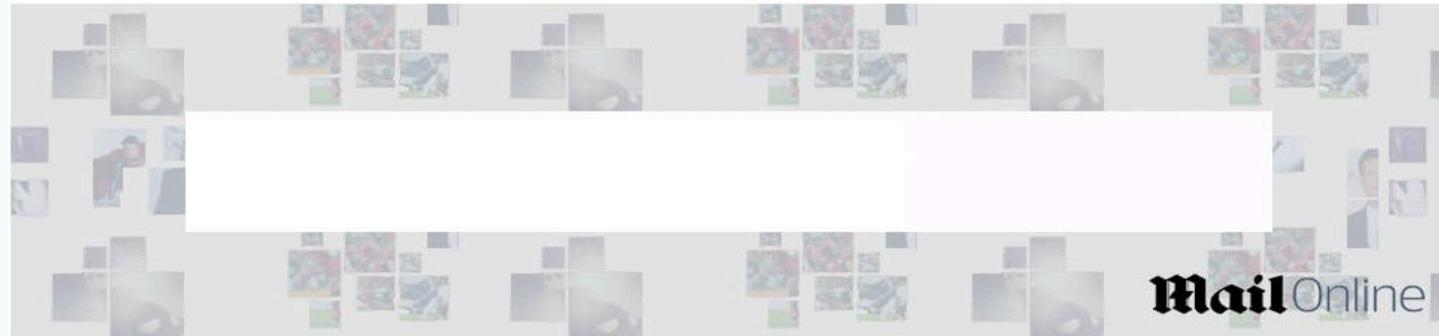
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EXCLUSIVE: Inside the African essay factories that churn out university coursework for 115,000 cheating British students every year

- For the first time, MailOnline gained access to the essay factories of Nairobi
- In a major investigation, we found the bosses raking in millions while the writers can be paid as little as a dollar an hour
- The industry is an ecosystem of big firms, small companies and individuals
- In a web of fraud and deceit, a secondary market has even sprung up for selling access to the most lucrative essay opportunities
- Essays are delivered to British students with a guarantee that they contain no plagiarism and all is 100 per cent anonymous
- Experts called the firms a 'cancer' that is 'undermining our universities' and demanded action from the Government

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By JAKE WALLIS SIMONS, ASSOCIATE GLOBAL EDITOR, IN NAIROBI, KENYA
PUBLISHED: 08:41, 23 August 2019 | UPDATED: 16:39, 23 August 2019

HOT FASHION TIP



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Illustration by The New York Times

[Leer en español](#)

By Farah Stockman and Carlos Mureithi

Sept. 7, 2019

Tuition was due. The rent was, too. So Mary Mbugua, a university student in Nyeri, Kenya, went out in search of a job. At first, she tried selling insurance policies, but that only paid on commission and she never sold one. Then she sat behind the reception desk at a hotel, but it ran into financial trouble.

Finally, a friend offered to help her break into “academic writing,” a lucrative industry in Kenya that involves doing school assignments online for college students in the United States, Britain and Australia. Ms. Mbugua felt conflicted.

“This is cheating,” she said. “But do you have a choice? We have to make money. We have to make a living.”



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https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/mymaster-essay-cheating-scandal-more-than-70-university-...



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By [Lisa Visentin](#)

March 18, 2015 – 9.39pm



EXCLUSIVE:

Two university students have been expelled and a further 70 are facing severe penalties, including expulsion, from five of NSW's most prestigious universities after being identified in connection with a widespread cheating scandal centred around an online essay writing company.

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News, News & Issues

Revoked degrees and penalties for NSW students caught in MyMaster cheating scandal

Jonathan Lian on June 2, 2015 / 2 comments

IN the latest crackdown against the MyMaster cheating service, Macquarie University and The University of Wollongong have issued penalties to students found guilty of cheating as part of a private internal investigation. Jonathan Lian reports.



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SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ARTICLE

Front. Educ., 30 August 2018 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2018.00067>



How Common Is Commercial Contract Cheating in Higher Education and Is It Increasing? A Systematic Review



Philip M. Newton*

Swansea University Medical School, Swansea, United Kingdom



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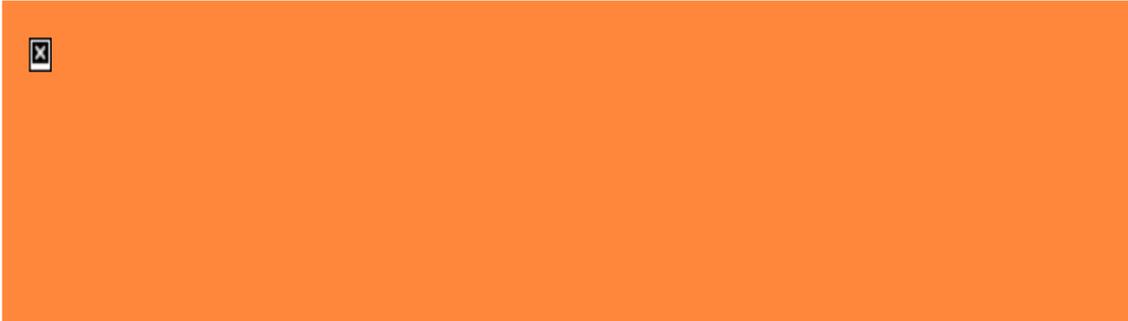
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New Legislation to Address Cheating

- An Amendment Act passed in July 2019, which introduces changes to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.
- Section 43A provides a statutory basis for the prosecution of those who facilitate cheating by learners; who advertise cheating services and who publish advertisements for cheating services. QQI will be responsible for bringing prosecutions under this Section of the Act.
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2012/a2812.pdf>
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Act
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/enacted/en/index.html>



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New Offences

Section 43A of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (as amended) creates new offences to provide or advertise cheating services:

Impersonation

- 1. Undertaking in whole or in part any work required as part of a programme in the place of an enrolled learner, without permission from the provider;
- 2. Sitting an exam, or having someone else sit an exam, in place of an enrolled learner, without permission from the provider;
- **Provision of Cheating Services**
- 3. Providing answers, or arranging the provision of answers, to an enrolled learner for an exam, during the course of that exam, without permission from the provider;
- 4. Providing, or arranging the provision of, an assignment required of an enrolled learner without permission from the provider
- 5. Before an exam, providing answers for, or arranging the provision of answers for, an exam for an enrolled learner without permission from the provider;
- **Advertising Cheating Services**
- 6. Advertising the provision of assignments for learners where this has not been authorised by the provider
- 7. Advertising the undertaking of assignments (in whole or in part) on behalf of an enrolled learner or sitting an exam, or having someone sit an exam, in place of an enrolled learner, where this has not been authorised by the provider
- **Publishing Advertisements for Cheating Services**
- 8. Publishing an advertisement for the provision of exam answers to learners during the course of an exam where this has not been authorised by the provider
- 9. Publishing an advertisement for the provision of assignments or exam answers in advance of an exam to an enrolled learner where this has not been authorised by the provider⁵.



Implementation of Legislation

First steps will focus on HE as considered highest risk (legislation applies to all levels of the NFQ).

The focus is on collaborative initiatives and communication rather than seeking prosecutions through a formal legal unit.

Online academic misconduct presents complex challenges which require new and innovative approaches and **collaboration** between agencies, institutions and learner representatives nationally and internationally.

QA is not designed to address criminality: QA is about networks of trust and balancing institutional autonomy with responsibility.



National Approach to Addressing Academic Fraud

Enhancement through a National Academic Integrity Network

Comprises members from all public HEIs and all private HE institutions that have had their QA procedures approved (reengagement), as well as learner representatives.

The network aims to help embed a culture of academic integrity in Irish HE; grow our collective understanding of academic misconduct in an Irish context; develop a common lexicon and identify priority areas where enhancement initiatives can be most effective.

Communication

Inform stakeholders - providers, learners and advertisers and publishers - of the new law and implications for them.

National Coordination and International Cooperation

Coordinate efforts with other State bodies to deal with advertising and publication of advertisements for cheating services: [The Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland](#) and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation).

Cooperate with agencies and relevant actors within and beyond the EU.

QQI is committed to working in partnership with others to address this threat to national and international qualifications systems.



Next Steps

- QQI seeking legal advice on implementation of the legislation in a number of areas;
- Looking for opportunities to include a focus on academic integrity into routine regulatory interaction with providers, e.g. in annual quality reports submitted by HEIs and in cyclical institutional reviews;
- Looking for opportunities to add value through enhancement initiatives e.g. a national academic integrity week to include peer learning events and opportunities for HEI staff;
- Working on a dedicated communication strategy targeting learners – working closely with USI;
- Will continue work with advertisers and web platforms – aiming to replicate the model with Distilled SCH
- Continue to work with colleagues internationally
- Further information and resources available at:
<https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx>