

Organizational Culture and Academic Integrity in Romania: Moral Leadership and the Contemporary Legislative Framework

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Abstract

Introduction: Academic integrity represents a central pillar of organizational culture within higher education institutions. In Romania, the consolidation of an ethical academic environment depends not only on formal regulations, but also on leadership practices and institutional governance mechanisms, where coherence between declared values and institutional behaviour is essential.

Materials and Methods: The study employs a normative and analytical approach based on a systematic review of Romanian higher education legislation, focusing on Law no. 199/2023 and Government Decision no. 305/2024 approving the Code of Ethics and University Deontology. The analysis addresses three dimensions: principles of academic ethics, typologies of misconduct and sanctions, and institutional obligations, alongside the role of moral leadership in shaping ethical culture.

Results: The Romanian legislative framework provides a comprehensive normative structure, defining principles such as legality, academic freedom, equity, merit, intellectual honesty, transparency, and responsibility, while identifying misconduct including plagiarism, data falsification, conflicts of interest, discrimination, harassment, and evaluation fraud, with corresponding sanctions. However, regulations alone are insufficient; moral leadership plays a decisive role in ensuring consistent application, impartial evaluation, and the promotion of ethical behaviour. Weak enforcement undermines institutional credibility and trust.

Conclusion: The effectiveness of academic integrity in Romania depends on aligning robust legal provisions with strong organizational culture and ethical leadership. Transparency, accountability, and consistent governance practices are essential for embedding ethical values and ensuring the sustainability and credibility of higher education institutions.