

Make it someone's job: Documenting the growth of the academic integrity profession through a collection of position postings

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Abstract

We examined specific roles in higher education specializing in academic integrity. We collected publicly advertised job postings from 2018 to 2021 ($N = 34$) from Canada ($n = 18$), the United States ($n = 14$), and Australia ($n = 2$). Our review showed that academic integrity jobs can be situated within different units including student affairs, the library, or the teaching and learning centre among others. Salaries ranged from \$49,000 CAD to over \$100,000 CAD, with salaries in senior leadership positions generally not being listed in public postings. We conclude for academic integrity work to be recognized through dedicated positions and compensated in a manner that demonstrates the work is valued by the institution. We further call for increased professional learning and training opportunities for those whose work is specialized around academic integrity.

Keywords: academic integrity, position, coordinator, specialist, manager, job description, institutional culture, Canada

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While academic integrity work in post-secondary institutions is increasingly being formalized through full-time positions that support faculty and students, there remains a paucity of literature related to these positions. As Morris and Carroll (2016) point out, one way to help build a culture of academic integrity is to have specialist positions for academic integrity within the institution or department. Specialized roles are common in the United Kingdom (UK) and one purpose of such roles can be to build capacity and engagement among staff across the institution (Morris & Carroll, 2016). The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK (2020) now recommends assigning the coordination of efforts to protect academic integrity to an existing job description or a newly created role.

In Canada, the first known academic integrity positions grew out of student advocacy work that supported academic and non-academic misconduct. Through undocumented conversations with Brandy Usick at the University of Manitoba and Deb Eerkes at the University of Alberta, we know

that these institutions, along with Ryerson University, were among the first to recognize this work through dedicated academic integrity focused staff. As access to information grows and education has gone remote, more positions have been created to support students and educators in learning about the principles of academic integrity and responding to suspected academic misconduct.

To better understand this emerging specialty of academic work, we began collecting job postings for academic integrity professionals in 2018. We have archived thirty-four full time positions in this time period found through public postings and professional networks. Eighteen postings were in Canada, fourteen postings were in the United States, and two were in Australia. Additionally, one casual position posting for 300 hours of course development was collected in Canada. Due to our active participation in the academic integrity community ourselves, we are confident that these postings represent the majority of positions publicly posted for hire in Canada, but expect there are more positions in the United States, Australia, and elsewhere that did not cross our path. The collection does not include job descriptions for positions that are already filled.

Project Overview

Ongoing and iterative dialogue about the growing number and types of professional postings available would seem to signal that academic integrity is becoming increasingly more legitimized as a profession. Although we have yet to determine what the long-term implications of this might be, the collection of job postings has documented the growth of the academic integrity profession and provided a resource for post-secondary institutions exploring the concept of an academic integrity position. Where decision-makers are not aware of models to assign cohesive academic integrity initiatives to an individual position, there is a need to demonstrate the very existence of this type of position in the post-secondary education sector. With little formal documentation available, environmental scans for comparables may not provide the depth of information needed to determine the focus for the academic integrity role, along with the reporting structure, skills required, and typical salary range. Our experience has shown that sharing the collected postings within the academic integrity-interested community has supported the development of new positions for academic integrity professionals in Canada.

Analysis

With the growing number of position postings on file, a more in-depth analysis was completed to find similarities, differences, and trends. In Canada, advertised position titles typically start with the phrase “Academic Integrity” and were followed by a noun such as “Associate,” “Coordinator,” “Manager,” “Officer,” “Senior Manager,” or “Specialist.” The addition of “Coordinator” was used most frequently, with six position titles applying this term. The positions are situated in different

educational departments including Academic Integrity Office, Enrollment Services, Extended Education, Library, Office of the Dean, Office of Vice Provost and VP Academic, Student Services, Student Success Centre, Student Engagement and Success, and Teaching and Learning Centre. Several positions are placed within academic schools or faculties. Successful candidates for these positions typically required a bachelor's degree, and in some cases a master's degree, with knowledge of academic integrity literature and practice, knowledge of policy and procedure, conflict resolution skills, and previous work experience in post-secondary education, including teaching experience. The most commonly defined tasks for these positions included educating faculty and students, advising faculty and students, case supports and appeals, data analysis, policy development and implementation, and collaborating with other post-secondary institutions. Fourteen full time Canadian positions listed salaries in the range of \$49,322 - \$122,747 CAD, with an average salary of \$74,973 CAD.

Comparatively, the position postings collected from the United States were typically for positions titled with "Coordinator" or "Director," including Case Coordinator, Conduct Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Senior Case Coordinator, Assistant Director, Senior Director (Academic Integrity and Accountability), Assistant Director of Academic Integrity, and Director (Undergraduate Academic Integrity). Half of the collected positions were a part of an Academic Integrity Office, whereas others were in with a Teaching and Learning Centre, Student Conduct Office, Undergraduate Studies Office, VP of Instruction, Dean of Students, and specific academic faculties. Successful candidates most frequently required a bachelor's degree or master's degree, experience in managing academic integrity violation cases, work experience in post-secondary contexts, and knowledge of academic integrity practice. The most commonly defined tasks were academic integrity violation case management (including appeals and resolutions), and educating faculty and students. Five postings included salary details, and none of the postings that required management or leadership of departments disclosed salary information. The listed available salaries for US-based, non-management positions were in a range of \$44,200-\$78,000 USD, with an average salary of \$56,015 USD (\$71,971 CDN).

In Australia, where academic integrity is woven into higher education through the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), academic integrity work has reached parliament and laws have been enacted to protect the academic integrity of higher education (Australian Government Department of Education, 2021). We collected two position postings, one for an Associate Director and the other for a Case Manager. These positions were in the office of Academic Quality, Curriculum Management, and Policy, and the Conduct and Integrity Office respectively. Level of education was not provided, but the positions required experience with curriculum design, academic integrity, and academic conduct case management. The work included developing curriculum and student integrity services, as well as managing cases and supporting the research integrity team. One position listed a salary range of \$89,000-106,000 Australian dollars, which calculates as a median salary of \$87,701 CAD.

The analysis shows that academic integrity positions are placed in a range of departments across post-secondary education, but that within the United States in particular, academic integrity work often overlaps with managing cases of academic misconduct. This may speak to the culture of ‘honor codes’ that are more prevalent in American schools, compared to Canadian schools. Academic integrity work in the US appears more embedded within institutional honor systems, whereas academic integrity work in Canada seeks to align with support services such as libraries, student success centres, student services, and enrollment services. The emergence of a dedicated Academic Integrity Office (AIO) in Canada has occurred at a few larger colleges and universities in Ontario, who have been formally engaging in academic integrity work for over five years, but the AIO is not yet a common addition to Canadian post-secondary.

Developing Skills for the Academic Integrity Profession

Individuals who would like to work in the academic integrity profession will find that there are limited opportunities for formalized training for academic integrity in Canada, although one could choose to focus on aspects of academic integrity or academic misconduct in master’s or PhD level work. Individuals who would like to gain knowledge of academic integrity principles to meet the position requirements can participate in ongoing professional development activities in Canada and abroad. Provincial networks in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario organize workshops and full day sessions to share information and grow the capacity of academic integrity supporting work. The Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity has offered a multi-day conference format every two years since 2019, with the next event scheduled for 2023. The International Center for Academic Integrity also coordinates workshops throughout the year, regional conferences, and an annual multi-day event. The European Network for Academic Integrity offered the first summer school in 2021, consisting of five full days of sessions delivered by leading academic researchers and practitioners from around the world. Participants were selected from a pool of applicants, with PhD students given the priority for acceptance. ENAI issued a certificate of attendance to those who participated in all sessions. With the move to remote delivery models due to COVID-19, attending professional development in faraway regions has become possible, expanding the options to develop skills as an academic integrity professional. However there remains a gap in formally recognized training to support the growth of academic integrity professionals.

The question unanswered by the collection of job postings is about the previous professions commonly held by those who now work in academic integrity full-time. We have observed that practitioners networking in the academic integrity community in Canada come from specializations such as student advocacy, teaching and learning centres, assessment centres, libraries, and academic support units. These are the same departments who are now hiring full-time academic integrity professionals, reflecting the grassroots origins often found in the Canadian academic integrity movement. Additionally, EAL instructors and faculty in areas such

as communications, science, and law are also active. With such a broad range of previous training and work experiences, it might seem like a diverse group of professionals establishing the academic integrity profession in Canada. The underlying thread that connects these individuals and the departments they work in is the passion to support academic integrity and the drive for positive outcomes in post-secondary education. Academic integrity professionals typically relate to the six fundamental values promoted by the International Center for Academic integrity – honesty, trust, respect, responsibility, fairness and courage – and strive to promote them in their work. They seek clearly communicated messages, improved student success, and maintenance of institutional academic quality. Additionally, these individuals are attuned to the complexities of academic integrity in teaching and learning. Academic integrity professionals are often firm but empathetic, and well-informed but curious to know more.

Moving Forward

Champions are needed across a post-secondary institution to create an institutional culture that supports the development of academic integrity (Gallant & Drinan, 2008). However, when academic integrity work is not allotted recognized time or assigned at all, it falls to a side-of-desk project that devalues its importance. The move towards dedicated academic integrity professionals has been captured in the Twitter hashtag started by Cath Ellis and Kane Murdoch – #makeitsomeonesjob. As Amanda White (2021) argues in her Times Higher Education article, in systems with poor academic integrity supports, students have the most to lose.

Figure 1. Screenshot of Twitter Post by Kane Murdoch



Additionally, instructors struggle to carry the weight of upholding academic integrity on their own (Openo & Robinson, 2021). Educators can no longer rely on “reading the riot act” or “laying down the law” on the first day of classes, and expect academic integrity to flourish in an age where answers are readily available with minimal effort. In a diverse and digital world, it cannot be assumed that all members of educational communities apply their personal values in the same way to complex academic situations. Post-secondary institutions need to recognize the time, energy, and skill required to guide learners and educators through the process of developing academic integrity and responding to academic misconduct. Learning how to navigate ethical challenges in education, as well as professional careers, is the work of post-secondary education, making academic integrity professionals an essential part of a successful post-secondary learning environment.

In order to formally document the work carried out by academic integrity professionals, future research projects could examine all academic integrity positions across Canada, rather than limiting to those posted for hire. Legitimizing these roles through research opens pathways for all institutions to recognize the work of academic integrity with dedicated employees who support the institution’s academic integrity mission.

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