



OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR
**ACADEMIC ETHICS
AND PROCEDURES**
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC ETHICS MEASURES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN 2025

SURVEY OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2026, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the "Office", "OOAEP") launched the sixth annual survey of Lithuanian higher education and research institutions (hereinafter referred to as the "HERIs") on the implementation of academic ethics measures within the afore-mentioned institutions. The survey aims at providing a systematic overview of how HERIs apply academic ethics measures within their institutions.

This year, the survey not only examined how institutions familiarised themselves with guidelines, recommendations and reviews in 2025, and what statistics on complaints and violations of academic ethics are available, but also included new questions regarding institutional bodies (committees), initiatives and measures related to ensuring academic ethics, the identification of violations and the consequences for the individual. Enquiries as to whether law enforcement authorities had been contacted were also made, and questions about communication regarding academic ethics were asked.

Taking into account the proposals of the Committee on Education and Science of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the survey also included questions regarding the assessment of the activities of the Office (trust in and satisfaction with various activities of the Office) among representatives of HERIs.

Invitations to participate in the online survey were sent to 44 institutions; 41 (93 percent) institutions provided responses regarding the situation in 2025 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of HERIs participating in the survey and their share of the total number of HERIs (percent) in 2025

Number of HERIs participating in the survey and their share of the total number of HERIs (percent) in 2025				
	Colleges	Universities	Research institutes	Total
Number of HERIs participating in the survey	11	15	15	41
Total number of HERIs	13	16	15	44
Percentage	85	94	100	93

The survey overview consists of the following sections:

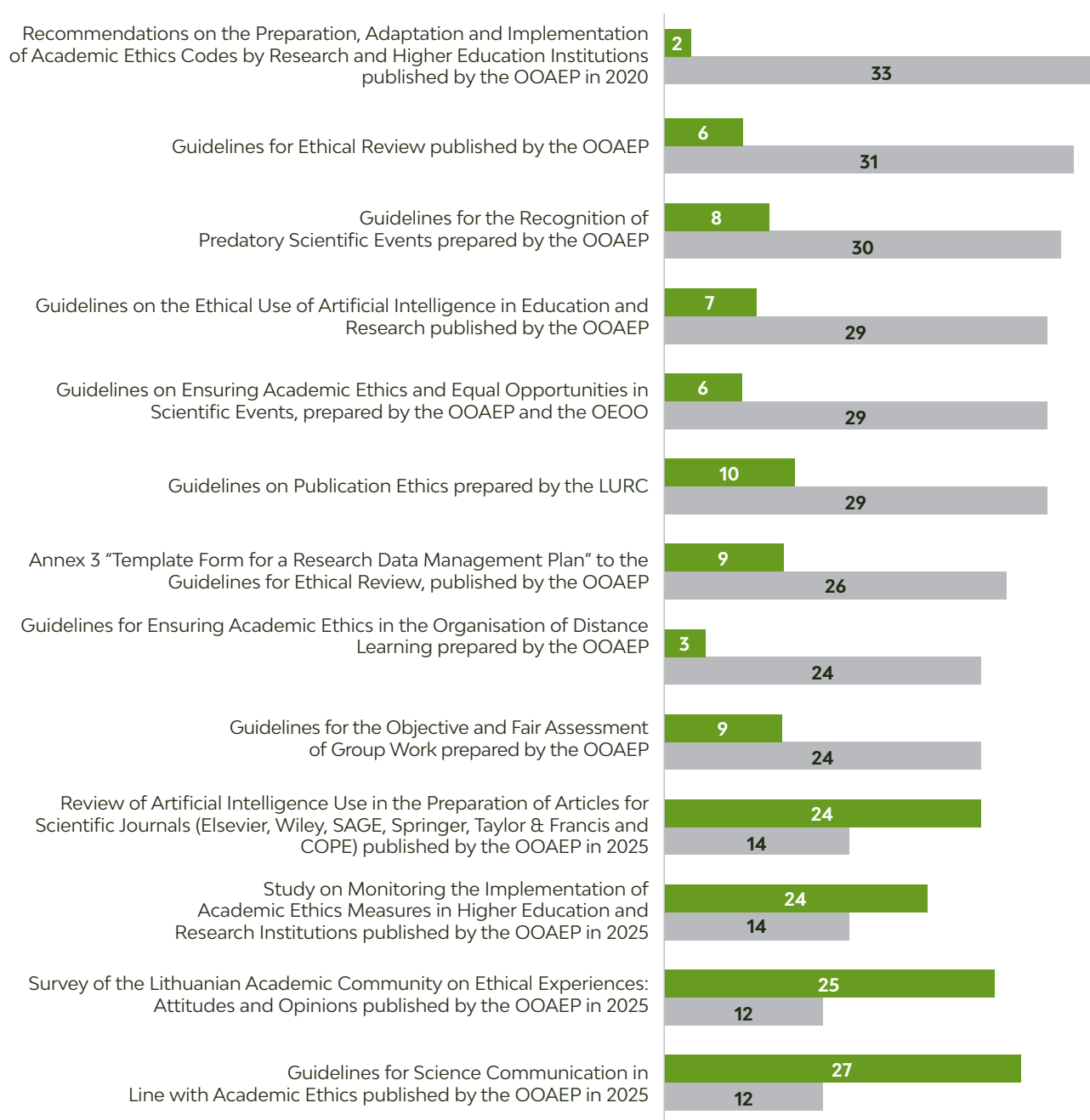
- "Implementation of the Guidelines in 2025";
- "Changes in the implementation of the Guidelines 2020–2025";
- "Institutional initiatives to ensure academic ethics";
- "Complaints and violations"; "Evaluation of the activities of the Office".

The tables and figures present the numerical and percentage values of the responses, as well as the aggregated "other" responses, accompanied by the respondents' unedited explanations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES IN 2025

The representatives of HERIs were asked how various guidelines are being implemented within institutions and how familiar they are with the reviews published by the Office in 2025. Most survey participants indicated that the institution's community had familiarised itself with the mentioned documents or intended to do so in 2026 (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. HERIs that have familiarised their community with the guidelines in 2025 and intend to do so in 2026



- We plan to present this document to the community in 2026
- The community has been made aware of this document (e.g. it is publicly available on the institution's website or via internet communication channels, etc.)

The community **is** most **familiar** with the following guidelines:

- Recommendations on the Preparation, Adaptation and Implementation of Academic Ethics Codes by Research and Higher Education Institutions of the OOAEP 2020 – 33 (80 percent);
- Guidelines for Ethical Review – 31 (76 percent);
- Guidelines for the Recognition of Predatory Scientific Events – 30 (73 percent);
- Guidelines on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education and Research – 29 (71 percent);
- Guidelines on Ensuring Academic Ethics and Equal Opportunities in Scientific Events, prepared by the OOAEP and the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson (hereinafter referred to as the “OEEO”) – 29 (71 percent);
- Guidelines on Publication Ethics prepared by the Lithuanian University Rectors’ Conference (hereinafter referred to as the “LURC”) – 29 (71 percent);
- more than a half of the survey participants (26 respondents; 63 percent) also noted that the institution’s community had been made aware of Annex 3 “Template Form for a Research Data Management Plan” to the Guidelines for Ethical Review, published by the OOAEP.

In 2026, the most common **plan is to familiarise** the community with the following documents:

- Guidelines for Science Communication in Line with Academic Ethics, published by the OOAEP in 2025 – 27 (66 percent);
- “Survey of the Lithuanian Academic Community on Ethical Experiences: Attitudes and Opinions” carried out on 2025 by the OOAEP – 25 (61 percent);
- Review of Artificial Intelligence Use in the Preparation of Articles for Scientific Journals (Elsevier, Wiley, SAGE, Springer, Taylor & Francis and COPE) published by the OOAEP in 2025 – 24 (59 percent);
- Furthermore, almost a half of the respondents (20; 49 percent) indicated that they intended to familiarise their institutional communities with the Study on Monitoring the Implementation of Academic Ethics Measures in Higher Education and Research Institutions published on 2025 by the OOAEP.

In summary, it should be noted that the majority of the documents with which the academic community is planned to be familiarised were published in 2025; therefore, it is understandable that fewer than a third of institutions had familiarised themselves with them in the same year.

CHANGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES 2020–2025

Trends in familiarisation with the guidelines

The majority (4/5) of the representatives of institutions stated that they had familiarised members of their communities with the Recommendations on the Preparation, Adaptation and Implementation of Academic Ethics Codes by Research and Higher Education Institutions (2020) (Table 2). The number of communities familiarised with the document (80 percent) is similar to that in last year's survey (79 percent), and the highest relevance of the afore-mentioned document was recorded in 2023, reaching as much as 93 percent (as compared to data from previous years, a positive change of 37 percent was observed).

Significant interest was also expressed in the Guidelines for Ethical Review (2020), which were made available to the community. In this case, the trend is slightly more positive than in the previous year (from 74 percent to 76 percent). The highest popularity of the afore-mentioned document was also recorded in 2023 (80 percent).

A positive trend was also observed in familiarisation with the Guidelines for Identifying Fake Science Events (2019). As compared with data from previous years, 2025 saw the highest increase in awareness of the afore-mentioned document – from 64 percent to 73 percent (a 9 percent change).

The Guidelines on Publication Ethics (2019) remain relevant, although a gradual decline in awareness is observed: 84 percent in 2023, 71 percent in 2025.

The HERIs consider the Guidelines on Ensuring Academic Ethics and Equal Opportunities in Scientific Events" (2021) to be somewhat more relevant than in previous years. As compared to 2024, the level of awareness has risen by 9 percent (from 62 percent to 71 percent).

A significant change was observed when analysing respondents' answers regarding how the community of the HERIs is made aware of the Guidelines on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education and Research published by the Office in 2024, the level of awareness rose by 23 percent (from 48 percent to 71 percent).

Around a third of all survey respondents (29 percent and 34 percent) indicated that they had informed their communities about the documents published by the Office in 2025: "Monitoring of the Implementation of Academic Ethics Measures in Higher Education and Research Institutions"; "Review of Artificial Intelligence Use in the Preparation of Articles for Scientific Journals (Elsevier, Wiley, SAGE, Springer, Taylor & Francis and COPE)"; "Survey of the Lithuanian Academic Community on Ethical Experiences: Attitudes and Opinions"; "Guidelines for Science Communication in Line with Academic Ethics".

Table 2. Changes in the familiarisation of the communities of the HERIs with the guidelines, 2020–2025

	Familiarised, percent					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Guidelines on Publication Ethics (2019)	55	64	72	84	79	71
Guidelines for the Recognition of Predatory Scientific Events (2019)	45	57	68	70	64	73
Recommendations on the Preparation, Adaptation and Implementation of Academic Ethics Codes by Research and Higher Education Institutions (2020)	45	52	56	93	79	80
Guidelines for the Objective and Fair Assessment of Group Work (2020)	49	57	64	64	57	59
Guidelines for Ensuring Academic Ethics in the Organisation of Distance Learning (2020)	47	59	62	70	57	59
Guidelines for Ethical Review (2020)	41	55	66	80	74	76
Guidelines on Ensuring Academic Ethics and Equal Opportunities in Scientific Events (2021)	Not applicable	50	68	77	62	71
Annex 3 “Template Form for a Research Data Management Plan” to the Guidelines for Ethical Review	Not applicable	Not applicable	50	61	50	65
Guidelines on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education and Research (2024)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	48	71
Monitoring of the Implementation of Academic Ethics Measures in Higher Education and Research Institutions (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	34
Monitoring of the Implementation of Academic Ethics Measures in Higher Education and Research Institutions (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	34
Survey of the Lithuanian Academic Community on Ethical Experiences: Attitudes and Opinions (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	29
Guidelines for Science Communication in Line with Academic Ethics (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	29

Data sources: Židonė (2020); Umbrasaitė (2022); Liekė (2023; 2024; 2025).

Trends in plans to raise awareness of the guidelines

The majority of respondents (27 percent) indicated that they planned to familiarise their communities with the Guidelines for Science Communication in Line with Academic Ethics published by the OOAEP in 2025 (Table 3). In addition, around a quarter of all survey participants indicated that they intended to familiarise their institutional communities with the Office’s 2025 research report “Survey of the Lithuanian Academic Community on Ethical Practices” (25 percent) and the document “Review of Artificial Intelligence Use in the Preparation of Articles for Scientific Journals (Elsevier, Wiley, SAGE, Springer, Taylor & Francis and COPE)” (24 percent).

One-fifth of respondents noted that they planned to familiarise their community with the document “Monitoring of the Implementation of Academic Ethics Measures in Higher Education and Research Institutions”, published by the OOAEP in 2025.

One in ten respondents indicated that they intended to familiarise their communities with the Guidelines on Publication Ethics (2019). It appears that the above document remains relevant, and a gradual upward trend in interest has been observed since 2022 (from 4 institutions in 2022 to 10 institutions in 2026).

A similar level of interest (albeit somewhat variable) regarding the Guidelines for the Objective and Fair Assessment of Group Work (2020) and Annex 3 “Template Form for a Research Data Management Plan” is also observed. In 2026, 9 percent of HERIs intend to familiarise their communities with the afore-mentioned documents.

Table 3. Number of HERIs that indicated in the 2020–2026 surveys that they planned to familiarise their academic communities with the guidelines

	Number of institutions planning to familiarise						
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Guidelines on Publication Ethics (2019)	19	7	4	4	5	6	10
Guidelines for the Recognition of Predatory Scientific Events (2019)	24	9	8	8	9	7	8
Recommendations on the Preparation, Adaptation and Implementation of Academic Ethics Codes by Research and Higher Education Institutions (2020)	12	2	2	2	2	7	2
Guidelines for the Objective and Fair Assessment of Group Work (2020)	21	7	5	5	9	12	9
Guidelines for Ensuring Academic Ethics in the Organisation of Distance Learning (2020)	18	5	1	1	4	6	3
Guidelines for Ethical Review (2020)	24	7	4	4	6	4	6
Guidelines on Ensuring Academic Ethics and Equal Opportunities in Scientific Events (2021)	Not applicable	13	6	6	6	5	6
Annex 3 “Template Form for a Research Data Management Plan” to the Guidelines for Ethical Review	Not applicable	Not applicable	12	12	12	7	9
Guidelines on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education and Research (2024)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	13	7
Monitoring of the Implementation of Academic Ethics Measures in Higher Education and Research Institutions (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	20
Review of Artificial Intelligence Use in the Preparation of Articles for Scientific Journals (Elsevier, Wiley, SAGE, Springer, Taylor & Francis and COPE) (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	24
Survey of the Lithuanian Academic Community on Ethical Experiences: Attitudes and Opinions (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	25
Guidelines for Science Communication in Line with Academic Ethics (2025)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	27

Data sources: Židonė (2020); Umbrasaitė (2022); Liekė (2023; 2024; 2025).

INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES TO ENSURE ACADEMIC ETHICS

Research Ethics Compliance Committees

The survey included the question: “Has your institution established a Research Ethics Compliance Committee?” (Table 4). Almost a half of the respondents (19; 46 percent) gave a positive answer to this question. It is worth noting that some survey participants, selecting the option “other”, indicated that their institutions have ‘an Academic Ethics Commission, with several committees operating in separate departments’; “we have an Academic Ethics Commission”; “committees operate in departments”. It can therefore be assumed that the functions of the Research Ethics Compliance Committee are performed within these institutions by the afore-mentioned bodies.

More than one in ten respondents noted that a Research Ethics Compliance Committee would be established in 2026 (12 percent, i.e. 5 cases).

Approximately one-fifth of respondents gave negative answers – 9 institutions do not have Research Ethics Compliance Committees.

Table 4. Number and proportion (percent) of HERIs that established Research Ethics Compliance Committees in 2025 and plan to establish them in 2026

	Number of HERIs	Proportion of HERIs, percent
To be established in 2026	5	12
Other	7	17
No	9	22
Yes	19	46

Familiarisation with the principles of academic ethics

In response to the question “When and in what ways are members of your institution’s academic community introduced to the principles of academic ethics? (multiple options may be selected)” (Fig. 2), the majority of the respondents (28; 68 percent) replied that they learned about academic ethics through the institution’s newsletters and/or announcements on the institution’s intranet.

61 percent of the survey participants noted that information about the code of academic ethics and its requirements was provided during the introductory week (25 responses).

Just over a half of the respondents (51 percent, i.e. 21 institutions) indicated that during the first lectures it was emphasised why it is important to adhere to academic ethics and provide information about training sessions or events on the subject of academic ethics organised by other institutions (e.g. by the representatives of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania).

46 percent of the respondents (19 responses) noted that the institution organised special training sessions or seminars for those interested in academic ethics issues (e.g. training organised by the library). 41 percent (17 cases) of the survey participants indicated that a declaration of integrity is signed at the start of studies or employment.

Six respondents (15 percent) selected the option “other” explaining:

Links to sources on academic ethics are provided on the institution’s website, and where necessary, information on relevant current issues is provided via a newsletter. Relevant legislation and best practice are published on the institution’s website. Student declarations when writing academic papers, etc. Information is provided at community meetings and in writing via internal communication channels. The Principles of Academic Ethics are published on the website for review. Staff are introduced to the Code of Academic Ethics upon employment.

Fig. 2. Familiarising members of the academic community with the provisions of academic ethics



Preventive measures

In response to the question “What preventive measures are implemented at your institution to prevent violations of academic ethics? (multiple options may be selected)”, the most frequently cited response was that training sessions and seminars are held for the academic community (27; 66 percent) (Fig. 3).

More than a half of the respondents (22; 54 percent) stated that there was close collaboration between lecturers and supervisors with students (e.g. more frequent interim reviews, individual consultations).

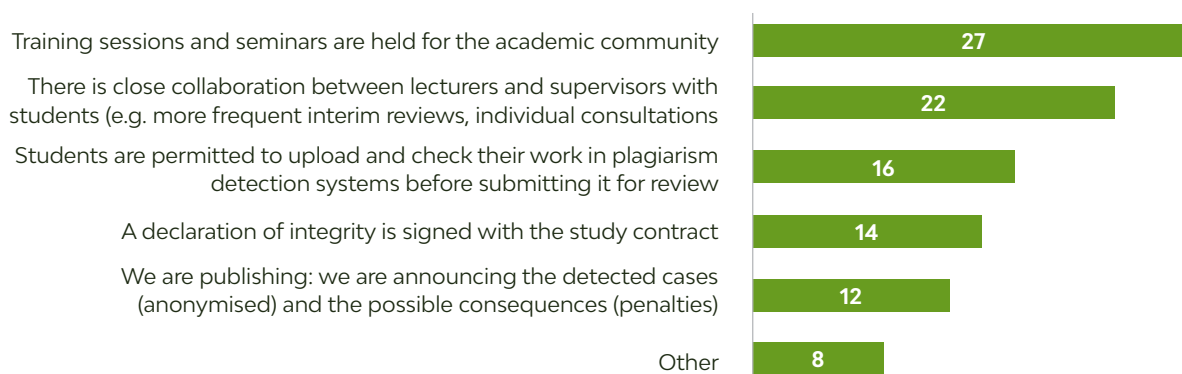
Just over a third (16; 39 percent) of the survey participants noted that students were allowed to upload and check their work in verification systems before submitting it for assessment.

Around a third of the respondents stated that a declaration of integrity was signed as part of the study contract (14; 34 percent), and also mentioned public disclosure, explaining that information regarding identified cases (anonymised) and possible consequences (sanctions) was published– this was the response of 29 percent of the survey participants, i.e. representatives of 12 institutions.

8 respondents (20 percent) explained their choice of the “other” option:

We share information about events on this topic. We share relevant information received via internal communication channels. During the employment process, candidates are introduced to the Code of Academic Ethics. A system requiring confirmation that the Code of Academic Ethics has been read has been implemented on the intranet. Anonymised decisions are published on the website of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore. The study process is not carried out by the National Cancer Institute. Every six months, students sign a pledge, sign a declaration and sign their final theses. There is a possibility to check one’s own publications using a verification system.

Fig. 3. Preventive measures taken by institutions to prevent violations of academic ethics



Communication on prevention

In response to the question “What communication regarding the prevention of violations of academic ethics takes place in your institution? (multiple options may be selected)”, the most common response was that communication takes place at the administrative level (83 percent of respondents, i.e. 34 representatives of HERIs, gave this answer) (Fig. 4).

Furthermore, more than a half of the survey participants (26; 63 percent) stated that relevant information is communicated at the department or group level. 17 respondents (41 percent) noted that information is published for the academic community on the intranet (internal website). 14 representatives of HERIs (34 percent) stated that they communicate publicly by making information available on their website. 9 survey participants (22 percent) indicated that communication takes place via prevention networks between institutions (e.g., HERIs, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the OOAEP).

Fig. 4. Communication between institutions to ensure prevention



The “Other” option contains the following explanations (4; 10 percent): *selected, anonymised cases are published during meetings; in 2026, the institution will communicate more actively on social media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.); there is no coordinated preventive communication; the necessary*

information is published on the website and discussed in departments where necessary; there were no violations – this indicates that communication regarding identified violations is understood as preventive communication.

Communication regarding cases

The question “At what levels and through what means does your institution communicate about identified violations of academic ethics?” was aimed at clarifying the extent to which identified violations are communicated and the channels through which information is disseminated (Fig. 5).

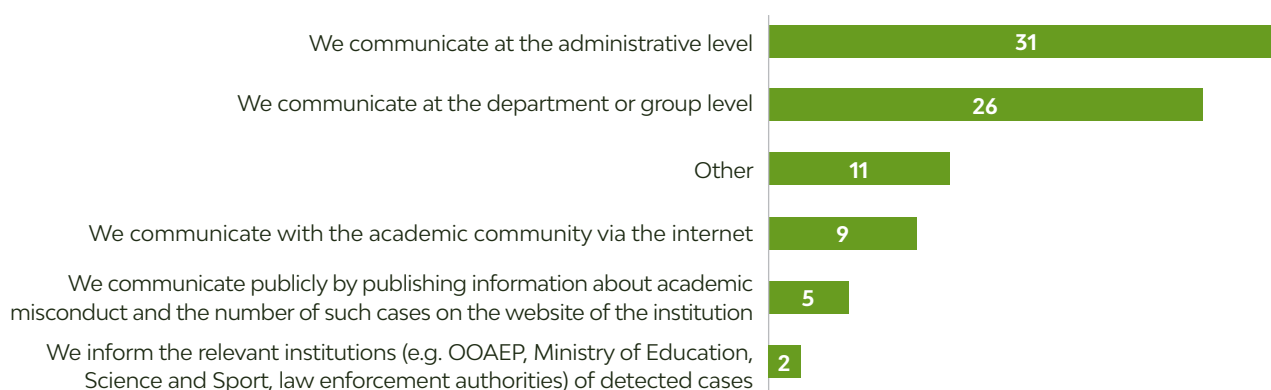
As many as 31 respondents (76 percent) indicated that communication takes place at the administrative level. More than half (26; 63 percent) of the survey participants replied that communication occurs at the departmental or team level.

When asked about communication regarding identified cases, almost a third of the respondents (11; 27 percent) selected the option “other”, providing the following explanations:

We would inform the relevant authorities. No such violations have been recorded to date. If violations occur, we publish anonymised information at staff meetings. Anonymised decisions of the Ethics Committee and the Committee’s activity reports, including ethics statistics and summaries of practice, are published on the University’s website. We publish this in newsletters. We share statistics with the OOAEP and also complete questionnaires related to academic ethics. No violations of academic ethics were identified, so no communication took place. There were no precedents. Not applicable. There has been no need recently.

Just a fifth of the respondents (9; 22 percent) noted that the academic community is informed of identified cases via the intranet. Around one-tenth (5; 12 percent) of the survey participants indicated that information about violations and the number of violations is made public. Just two respondents (5 percent) stated that the relevant authorities are informed about identified cases.

Fig. 5. Communication regarding identified violations of academic ethics among institutions



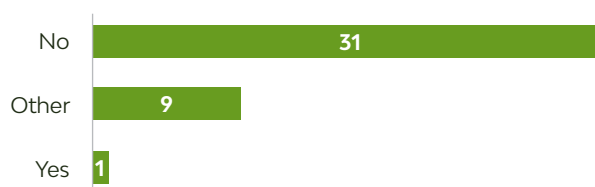
Reporting to law enforcement authorities

A follow-up question regarding reports to the relevant authorities about identified cases “Has your institution reported identified cases of academic work obtained via contract cheating to the relevant law enforcement authorities?” was asked. Only one respondent (2 percent) gave a positive answer (Fig. 6), whilst 31 survey participants (76 percent) gave negative answers to this question.

9 respondents (22 percent) selected the “other” option, providing the following explanations:

Not applicable. There were no precedents. No such violations have been recorded to date. There has not been a case like this yet. It depends on the situation. There was no need to report it, as there have been no such cases. At our institution, such work is not prepared, or if it is, it is checked by the universities. The study process is not carried out at the National Cancer Institute. No such cases have been recorded.

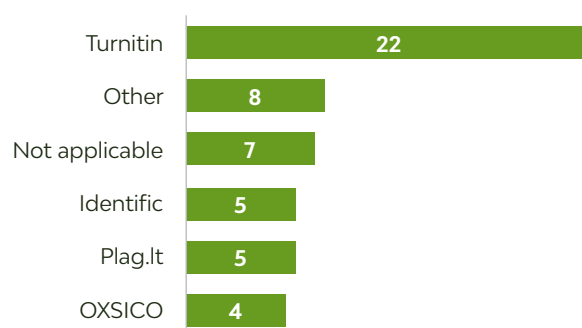
Fig. 6. Reporting of academic or study work prepared by others to law enforcement authorities by institutions



Technological means of detecting violations

The representatives of the HERIs were asked: “What technological tools are used at your institution to detect violations of academic ethics? (multiple options may be selected)” (Fig. 7). Just over a half, and the largest share of the respondents, replied that their institution uses the “Turnitin” system (22; 54 percent).

Fig. 7. Technological tools used by institutions to detect violations



One-fifth of respondents (8; 20 percent) selected ‘other’ and provided explanations:

eLABa repository’s ESAS similarity check system. Turnitin. EPAS. Various plagiarism detection applications. Theses prepared within a joint doctoral programme are checked at the coordinating

university. None of these tools have been used so far. The Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences (LCSS) is a research institution, but not a provider of first-cycle and second-cycle studies; therefore, technological tools for detecting violations of academic ethics are not relevant and are not applied. No study process is carried out at the National Cancer Institute. Lecturers and editors of academic publications may choose the method of verification at their discretion.

7 respondents (17 percent) noted that verification systems are not applied at their institution. Approximately one-tenth of the survey participants (12 percent and 10 percent, representing 5 and 4 higher education and research institutions respectively) indicated that their institutions use the verification applications "Identific", "Plag.It" and OXICO.

Imposed penalties

In response to the question "What penalties does your institution impose on a person found to have committed a violation of academic ethics by submitting a research or study paper that was not written independently? (multiple options may be selected)", 26 respondents (63 percent) stated that a warning or a reprimand is issued. Almost a half (20; 49 percent) of the survey participants indicated that the exam is retaken (Fig. 8).

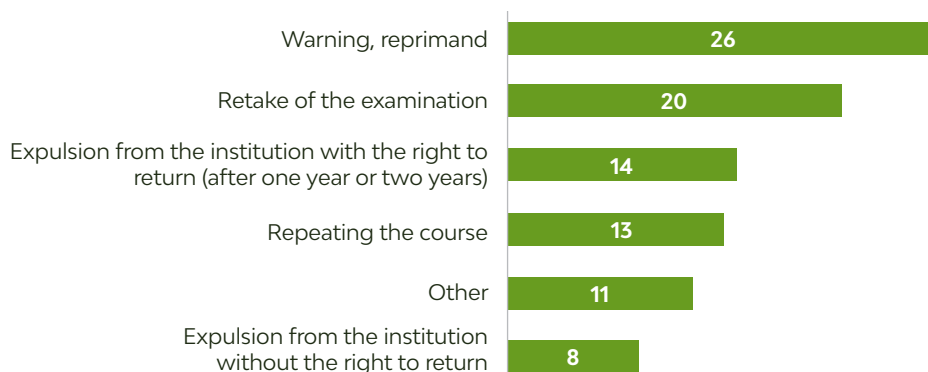
Just over a third of the respondents (14; 34 percent) identified expulsion from the institution with the right to return (after one or two years) as the penalty in such cases; a further third of the representatives of the HERIs (13; 32 percent) cited repeating the course as the consequence of submitting academic or study work that was not prepared independently.

One-fifth of the survey participants (8; 20 percent) stated that submission of work not prepared independently would result in expulsion from the institution without the right to return.

11 respondents (27 percent) selected the option "other", providing the following explanations:

It depends on the type of work. No penalties have been applied so far, as no violations of academic ethics have been identified. There were no violations of ethics. There was no need to apply penalties. Not identified. Not applicable. The study process is not carried out at the National Cancer Institute. No violations were identified. We do not assess coursework; it is not the university's role, and a scientific article would be assessed specifically by the academic ethics committee. There has not yet been such a case. There have been no such cases.

Fig. 8. Penalties imposed by institutions upon detection of a violation of academic ethics



COMPLAINTS AND VIOLATIONS

Trends in the number of complaints

Table 5. Number of complaints 2017–2025

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
144	181	202	209	307	222	174	222	199

Data sources: Židonė (2020); Umbrasaitė (2022); Liekė (2023; 2024; 2025).

A total of 199 violations were recorded in relation to the conduct of students, academic and administrative staff (Table 5). It should be noted that in 2025, a total of 31 cases of other types of identified violations were recorded, but these were not included in these calculations for the sake of methodological consistency. Respondents provided the following comments:

Most violations are related to unethical interpersonal relationships. Violations of final thesis procedures, use of plagiarism detection software, disclosure of personal data and study results, failure to accommodate special needs. 10 violations of general ethics. 2 cases relate to a violation of the principle of respect. One violation was identified. A student and a lecturer violated sub-clause 22.1 of the College's Code of Academic Ethics: "A failure to observe full integrity whilst studying, teaching, researching and performing one's duties in other academic activities". Use of unauthorised software: 2; 1 case of incorrect affiliation with the institute; 1 case of submitting work not prepared individually. One complaint regarding the actions of administrative staff was received. The Commission's decision included recommendations for more ethical conduct. No violations were identified.

Trends in the number of complaints by subject

Since 2017, a changing trend in the number of complaints has been observed depending on the subject of the violation (Table 6).

The number of complaints regarding violations arising from students' actions is decreasing, and a certain positive trend can be observed. According to data from 2025, 65 percent of complaints (129 cases) fell into this category; in previous years, the percentage of such violations exceeded 70 or 80 percent of all cases.

A less positive trend is evident when looking at the number of complaints regarding the actions of academic staff. In 2023, more than a fifth of all violations (38 cases; 22 percent) were of this type; by 2025, they had risen to a quarter (54 complaints; 27 percent) of all violations.

Similar figures emerge (albeit with a slightly negative trend) when looking at the percentage of complaints regarding the actions of administrative staff. For two years from 2023, these stood at around 5 percent (9–10 cases), but in 2025 they jumped to 8 percent, corresponding to 16 cases of this type of violation.

Table 6. Number of complaints 2017–2025 by entity

Year	Regarding the actions of students		Regarding the actions of academic staff		Regarding the actions of administrative staff		Total	
2017	113	78%	16	11%	15	10%	144	100%
2018	141	78%	27	15%	13	7%	181	100%
2019	158	78%	29	14%	15	7%	202	100%
2020	167	80%	35	17%	7	3%	209	100%
2021	266	87%	34	11%	7	2%	307	100%
2022	184	83%	33	15%	5	2%	222	100%
2023	127	73%	38	22%	9	5%	174	100%
2024	167	75%	45	20%	10	5%	222	100%
2025	129	65%	54	27%	16	8%	199	100%

Data sources: Židonė (2020); Umbrasaitė (2022); Liekė (2023; 2024; 2025).

Trends in the number of complaints by type of higher education and research institution

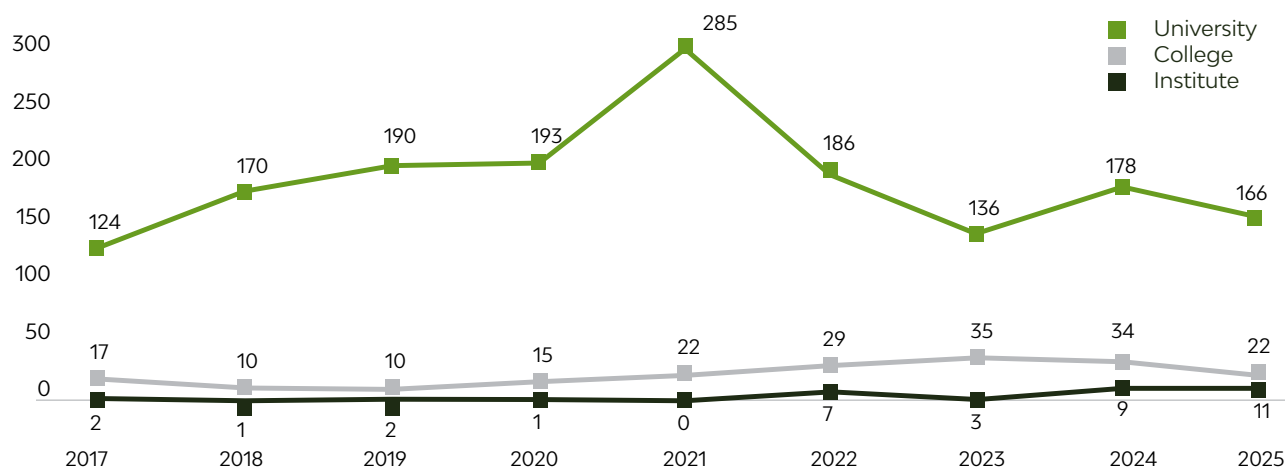
Looking at the trend in the number of complaints by type of higher education and research institution, it can be seen that, as in every year under review, the proportion of complaints at universities is the highest (Fig. 9).

As compared to the overall trend, the figures for 2025 (i.e. 166 cases, corresponding to 83 percent) seem to bring the fluctuation in these violations back to the trend that existed prior to 2021, when an exceptionally high number of violations was recorded at universities – 285 cases, accounting for 93 percent of violations. While this period could relatively be described as a crisis, this year's figures are gradually returning to pre-crisis levels, resembling the situation in 2018, when gradual annual upward trends were observed. In this case, as compared to last year, we are seeing a gradual downward trend in violations – the number of cases at universities has fallen by 12 since last year.

The lowest number of violations continues to be recorded in the group of institutes. However, a slight upward trend in the number of complaints (with the exception of 2022) has been observed since 2021, when no complaints were recorded. This year, as many as 11 cases were identified, accounting for 6 percent of all violations.

The average number of complaints about cases is relatively stable among the colleges, in 2025 there were 12 complaints less than in 2024. In 2025, 22 complaints were received, which accounts for 11 percent of all complaints this year. In numerical terms, it returns to the situation of 2022.

Fig. 9. Number of complaints 2017–2025 by type of HERIs



Data sources: Židonė (2020); Umbrasaitė (2022); Liekė (2023; 2024; 2025).

Dynamics of complaint handling

When observing the dynamics of complaint handling since 2017, it is worth noting that over the last three years, i.e. 2022–2025, there has been a marked trend towards the recognition of unfounded complaints, which reached its highest numerical and percentage levels in 2025 – 99 complaints were deemed unfounded, accounting for 41 percent of the total number of complaints (Table 7).

In subsequent years (i.e. 2026), 12 (5 percent) of the complaints examined were recorded, which is slightly higher than the average (mean 3.5) percentage.

Table 7. Examination of complaints in 2017–2025

Year	Number of complaints deemed to be unfounded		Number of complaints deemed to be unfounded		Total number of complaints
2017	20	14%	0	0%	144
2018	28	15%	0	0%	181
2019	24	12%	21	10%	202
2020	30	14%	14	7%	209
2021	50	16%	5	2%	307
2022	68	31%	21	9,5%	222
2023	35	20%	6	3%	174
2024	69	26%	3	1%	264
2025	99	41%	12	5%	242

Data sources: Židonė (2020); Umbrasaitė (2022); Liekė (2023; 2024; 2025).

The total number of identified violations in 2025 comprises the afore-mentioned violations by entity (199), 31 cases of other violations, and the number of complaints under investigation in subsequent years (at the start of 2026) (12). The percentages calculated for this total number are shown in Table 7.

Types and distribution of identified violations in 2025

When asked about the number and type of identified violations, it became clear that the majority of violations of academic ethics were related to plagiarism – 39 percent of violations (53 cases) were classified as “academic cheating” (Table 8).

The increasingly prevalent submission of non-independently written work (including information generated by artificial intelligence), i.e. almost a quarter of violations (53 cases, 24 percent), is in the second place in terms of frequency, followed by plagiarism, with 43 identified cases, accounting for almost a quarter of the violations (19 percent).

Responses categorised as ‘other violations’ (17 cases; 8 percent), ‘unethical authorship’ (9 cases; 4 percent) and ‘discrimination’ (8 cases; 4 percent) do not reach the 10 percent threshold and, when combined, account for 16 percent of all violations.

Table 8. Number and proportion (percent) of violations identified in 2025.

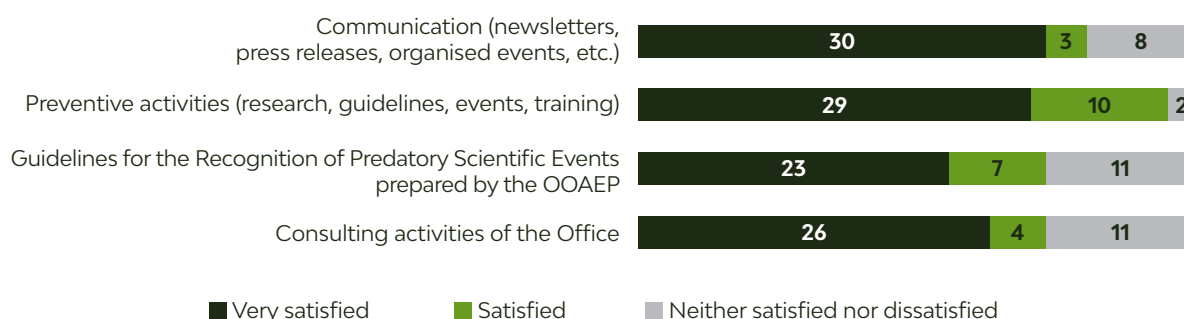
	Number of complaints	Proportion, percent
Discrimination	8	4
Fabrication (e.g. of research data, documents)	0	0
Falsification (e.g. of research data, documents)	4	2
Corruption	0	0
Unethical authorship	9	4
Submission of a written assignment obtained through contract cheating (including information generated by artificial intelligence)	53	24
Academic cheating	87	39
Plagiarism	43	19
Other (<i>please specify</i>)	17	8
Total	221	100

EVALUATION OF THE OFFICE'S ACTIVITIES

This year, the survey of the representatives of the HERIs included questions relating to the evaluation of the Office's activities. Respondents were asked: "How satisfied are you with the Office's activities?" (Fig. 10).

As many as 39 respondents, i.e. 95 percent of the representatives of the HERIs, indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Office's preventive activities. 33 survey participants (80 percent) indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with communication (newsletters, press releases, organised events, etc.). 30 respondents (73 percent) replied that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Office's complaint handling procedures, whilst 29 representatives of the HERIs (71 percent) were satisfied or very satisfied with the Office's consulting activities.

Fig. 10. Satisfaction with the Office's activities



The representatives of the HERIs were also asked: "To what extent do you tend to trust the activities of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania?" (Fig. 11).

As many as 40 respondents, i.e. 98 percent of the representatives of the HERIs, indicated that they trust and/or fully trust the Office's consulting activities. 39 survey participants (95 percent) noted that they trust and/or fully trust the Office's preventive activities, whilst 38 respondents (93 percent) trust and/or fully trust its communication (newsletters, press releases, events organised by , etc.). 31 representatives of the HERIs (76 percent) stated that they trust and/or fully trust the Office's complaint handling procedures.

Fig. 11. Trust in the Office's activities



It is important to note that not a single respondent gave a negative response regarding the Office's activities (none indicated that they were dissatisfied, completely dissatisfied, or lacked trust or had very little trust).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The academic community is most familiar with the guidelines **relating to the preparation of their institution's key documents and procedural manuals**, e.g. the Recommendations on the Preparation, Adaptation and Implementation of Academic Ethics Codes by Research and Higher Education Institutions published on 2020 by the OOAEP, or the Guidelines for Ethical Review (these will be updated shortly in collaboration with representatives of HERIs).

It is also encouraging that around a third of respondents have **also** introduced their communities **to documents published by the Office in 2025**, such as the 2025 OOAEP report "Review of the Use of Artificial Intelligence by Different Publishers in the Preparation of Scientific Publications"; Guidelines for Science Communication in Line with Academic Ethics . Furthermore, the majority of the documents planned for dissemination to the academic community are publications released by the Office in 2025, which attests to the relevance of the Office's documents.

The responses highlight **the importance and need for communication**; for example, the majority of the respondents stated that they learn about academic ethics through the institution's newsletters and/or announcements on the institution's intranet. The induction week and the first lectures also play an important role in familiarising students with the principles of academic ethics. Most survey participants mentioned that communication regarding information on violations of academic ethics takes place at the administrative and departmental or group levels. Only one in ten respondents indicated that violations and their numbers are publicly disclosed, and only a few higher education institutions inform the responsible authorities about identified cases.

An analysis of the distribution of responses raises questions about **the inconsistency of consequences and the lack of a common approach in cases of serious violations of academic ethics**, such as when a case of contract cheating is established. The majority of the respondents indicated that, upon detection of work not produced independently, the student faces a warning, a reprimand or having to retake the exam. Only one-fifth of the representatives of the HERIs noted that submitting work obtained through contract cheating carries the risk of expulsion from the institution without the right to return.

An analysis of the dynamics in violations shows that the number of complaints regarding violations caused by students' actions is decreasing, and a certain positive change can be observed. A less positive trend is evident when examining the number of complaints regarding the actions of academic staff.

Prevention is mainly **ensured** through intensive cooperation between lecturers and supervisors with students; students are also allowed to upload and check their work in plagiarism detection systems before submitting it for assessment; most institutions use the "Turnitin" system, one-fifth of institutions do not use plagiarism detection systems of the HERIs.

Assessment of the Office. For the first time in the survey, which has been conducted for six years, questions regarding the assessment of the Office's activities among representatives of the HERIs were included. The Office's activities were assessed positively; the respondents noted that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Office's preventive activities, and that they trusted, or fully trusted the Office's consulting activities. Motivated and committed by such a positive assessment, and with such a high level of trust, we will strive to meet the expectations of the community of the HERIs in the future.

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The survey overview is freely available on the website of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania at <https://etikostarnyba.lt> (see Analytical Studies).

Citation

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If you have any questions regarding the survey review and/or its application, please contact us by email info@etikostarnyba.lt or by telephone +370 694 43 992.