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Writers' Guide for Prospective Contributors to
Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity

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Abstract

In this article we present resources and ideas for prospective writers of Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity. The purpose of this article is to generate ideas and build confidence among prospective contributors. Our intention is to provide support for those who have wisdom and insights to share, but who may be inexperienced or lack confidence with their professional writing skills.

Keywords: Academic integrity, Canada, writers' guidelines, call for submissions

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What is omitted from formal literature in educational contexts can be just as important as what is included (Sergiovanni, 1992). We have identified a gap in the scholarly and practitioner contributions to the body of literature on academic integrity (AI) in the Canadian context. While there are ample numbers of practitioners working in Canada with deep expertise and experience, they have yet to share their knowledge and wisdom through formal writing. In particular, student services practitioners working in the Canadian context may be excellent at professional networking, but are less than prolific when it comes to sharing their knowledge through formal communication (e.g. writing) (Seifert, 2016). Preparing a submission for a practitioner-focused journal may feel less intimidating than writing a paper for a peer-reviewed publication (Hatfield & Wise, 2015). The purpose of this article is to provide support and guidance to practitioners who are interested in contributing to the body of knowledge on academic integrity in Canada, but who may lack writing and publishing experience.

Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity is a practitioner-focused resource for and by those working in Canada. While we recognize that practitioners working in other countries also have valuable experience, our focus is limited to Canada. Contributors must have an affiliation with a recognized Canadian institution. Independent professionals working in Canada who are not affiliated with an institution should contact the editors.

We have created a number of topic-area resources to provide inspiration and structure as you begin the process of writing up a selected topic based on your professional practice. Using these resources is completely optional. They are not meant to be prescriptive, but

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rather to help you reflect on your own practice and to identify work that you could write up into a paper to share with other practitioners in Canada.

General writing guidelines

We start with these general guidelines for contributors:

- We encourage a plain language approach to writing, so it is easily readable and accessible.
- Your tone should be neutral and professional. Avoid inflammatory language or hyperbole.
- Do not mention other individuals by name, unless you have explicit written permission to do so.
- Do not mention specific cases about individuals. Even if you do not mention an individual's name, the person may be identifiable by the particular case you are writing about. Avoid singling anyone out or using particular individuals as an example.
- Remember your reader. The audience for this journal is academic integrity professionals working in a Canadian context.
- There is freedom in how to write up your paper compared to a peer-review article. Allow the topic of your paper to determine the structure (Hatfield & Wise, 2015).

To help with selecting a topic to write about, we have identified seven topic ideas that we believe will resonate with practitioners working in AI. Hatfield and Wise (2015) explain that practitioners "appreciate learning about what they can do right now or what has worked at other institutions to address common challenges" (p. 42) and they also remind us that we have "firsthand experiences in [our] area, so write about issues that [we] care about and that will have a practical relevance for others" (p.43). We encourage you to use these ideas as a point of departure to generate your own contribution.

Topic idea 1: An existing presentation

Many of us develop and deliver workshops and presentations for different audiences on a variety of topics related to AI. These audiences may include students, staff, or faculty at our respective institution or it may involve colleagues at academic or professional conferences, such as the International Centre for Academic Integrity. Parlaying an existing presentation into a written document is arguably one of the quickest ways to prepare a contribution. If the presentation was for a conference, you have the added benefit of your proposal submission which could be refashioned for purposes of the paper. Otherwise, the content of the presentation, along with your supporting materials, can help you develop your manuscript.

An effective starting point is to look to your slides, script, and any notes to determine what your main headings might be and create an outline. You may be able to bring your content over and reorganize it according this outline. You might be able to see where there are gaps and where you may need to add more content. Sections in your paper may include:

- The reason for creating the original presentation. Was it to share a project, service, or program with colleagues (these are covered below as other topic ideas)? Was it to fill an educational need?
- Any background information that may be relevant. For example, were you attempting to solve an identified problem?
- Review of the content that was covered in the presentation which may be organized under its own subheadings. Note, you may want to decide if you wish to share your materials as a way to help other practitioners for example the slide deck, activities, evaluation form). These materials can be included as appendices.
- Decisions regarding the delivery of the presentation. How were the needs of the learner considered? Were there activities that you used to engage the learners?
- Feedback from the intended audience. Was there a formal evaluation? What changes would you make to the content and delivery if you were to offer the session again?

Topic idea 2: Faculty-specific or institutional-wide academic integrity initiatives

Most practitioners working in the area of AI are involved with leading or supporting initiatives at their respective campuses to promote the importance of AI. This may be faculty-specific project with a couple of key goals or it may be an institutional-wide initiative with a multi-pronged approach targeting multiple constituent groups. Documents that have been prepared to seek funding or support (e.g. briefing paper or report) may be a good starting point for a paper. See Loie Gervais' article in Issue 1, Volume 1 for an example of how to prepare a paper on an AI initiative. Additionally, here are some questions to consider when constructing your paper.

- Why was the initiative created? Was is a grassroots or top down decision?
- Who was involved and how did they become involved? Was a committee formed and what were the roles of those involved? Give an indication of the stakeholders and their level of involvement.
- What shape did the initiative take?
- How was the initiative supported? Dedicated funds? In-kind support?
- How did you know the initiative was successful? Share details on how you were able to assess levels of engagement or receive feedback.
- What were the lessons learned? What were the challenges and successes of the initiative?

Topic idea 3: An AI event

Preparing for and hosting a AI event can be challenging time consuming work. Some of us may be fortunate to have assistance in carrying out an event including from active campus stakeholders and partners, engaged student leaders, knowledgeable marketing and communications units, as well as financial support from the institution. If you have experience in carrying out AI events, consider sharing your experience from start to finish. Suggested areas of a paper about an AI event might include the following.

- What led to the decision to host an event? Was there a purpose or set of intended outcomes?
- Who was the intended audience? Was this an institutional wide event? Was it for a specific student population? Or was it for a particular faculty or academic program?
- Who was involved? Was there a planning committee? How were decisions made?
- How did you promote your event?
- Buy-in: how was that achieved and what were the challenges? This may include various aspects including approvals to host the event, inviting participation of units to help host, accessing funds and space, and receiving dedicated time to plan the event.
- Lessons learned: Was the event a success? How was this measured? What were the challenges? What would do you do differently?
- Keep in mind that colleagues will be looking for practical advice, including tips and cautions. Particular recommendations might be shared about funding, partnerships, promotion, and evaluation could be sections within the document, along with reference to concrete examples (e.g. funding proposals, promotions plan, email communication templates, evaluation surveys or focus group questions).

Topic idea 4: Student initiatives

Students are a critical ally in in our work on AI within post-secondary institutions. Working with students may include partnering with student leaders (e.g. student union) or engaging students to work or volunteer their time. The following are suggested areas you may wish to cover in your paper.

- What was the initiative? Was there a particular program? For example some campuses have created an academic integrity ambassador program. Was it a particular event or
- What led to the creation of the initiative? Was it a program offered by your unit? Was it student initiated?
- Student involvement is transient in nature, what are the plans for recruitment and retention?
- How the program is organized? Share specific details about the structure, for example, the application process, training, tracking of hours, and incentives including, for example, notation on a co-curricular transcript.
- What are the student learning outcomes? What skills and experiences do you hope they will gain through participation in the program?

- What have been the achievement and struggles of the program? What advice do you have for colleagues thinking about getting something started on their own campuses?

Topic idea 5: Outreach activities or programs

AI practitioners engage in outreach activities or programs with particular student populations on campus (e.g. international students), as well as off-campus (e.g. high school students). The article by Leeanne Morrow in Issue 1, Volume 1 is an excellent example of an article focused on outreach activities. In preparing your own paper keep in mind others will want to hear about:
- The reason for your outreach activity
- Summary of research or data that underscored the need
- Review the steps taken from development to implementation
- Identify how you worked with stakeholders and role they played
- Share lessons learned including tips for those interested in carrying out similar activity at their institution.

Topic idea 6: Policy or codes of conduct

Policies or codes of conduct feature prominently in work related to AI on our campuses. There are many topics that may be explored within this area including, but not limited to:
- Experiences creating new or revising existing policies or codes of conduct,
- Initiatives related to sanctions or disciplinary outcomes (e.g. educational/restorative),
- Processes for handling allegations of misconduct; or
- Development and delivery of training for disciplinary authorities or committee members.
- In all four of these examples the content will likely be institutional-specific. To help a fellow practitioner apply what you have learned, consider what information might be helpful. This may include a summary of the problem or issue, explanation of the steps taken or process followed, identification of successes and challenges, and finally offering of practical hints or guidance.

Topic idea 7: Reflections

While the above resources are practical in their guidance, we also encourage papers that are exploratory in nature. Perhaps there is an emerging AI issue for which there may not be a ready answer. Your reflections are informed by your professional practice and knowledge of the field. Reflections should maintain a neutral and professional tone, providing evidence to inform and substantiate the discussion. We encourage authors to refrain from criticizing their employers (or any other institution) and to adopt an approach that fosters readers to think deeply about the topic in productive ways.

Additional considerations

- Submissions should be checked for spelling and grammar before you submit. Practitioner articles are not peer reviewed, though we may give feedback asking for clarification or make suggestions to improve the overall writing.
- You will need to include a short abstract and key words for your article.
- The minimum length for contributions is 500 words, excluding abstract, keywords and references.
- There is no a page length limitation, however the editors determine a piece is too long, it may still be considered for inclusion if the submission is shortened.
- The preferred referencing style is APA.

These guidelines are intended as a starting point, but are not meant to be exhaustive or restrictive. As editors, we welcome questions from prospective contributors.

References

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