**The School for Scandal: serious malpractice uncovered at Plzeň Law Faculty**

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Plagiarism, students’ work going missing, fast-track degrees completed within months, and dead professors still on the lecture roster – these are a few of the allegations to have been brought against Plzeň Law Faculty in recent weeks. What started as a media investigation into plagiarism claims, levied against a number of senior professors at the faculty, has turned into a much larger scandal which implicates some of this country’s best-known politicians.



**Listen:**

[RealAudio](http://helix.radio.cz:8080/ramgen/rm/EN/09/10/EN091008-13-high.rm?start=4:22.87&end=7:54.93)

[MP3](http://old.radio.cz/mp3/podcast/en/curraffrs/091008-the-school-for-scandal-serious-malpractice-uncovered-at-plzen-law-faculty.mp3)

The story began with the start of the academic year at Plzeň’s Law Faculty, when a student went to professor Petr Bezouška claiming he had found passages in vice-dean Ivan Tomažič’s thesis which were copied straight out of another legal text. What’s more, the student claimed that the dean of the faculty, Jaroslav Zachariáš, was guilty of plagiarism as well.

[[](http://www.radio.cz/en/article/121011/pictures/skolstvi/pravnicka_fakulta_plzen.jpg#pic)Plzeň Law Faculty](http://www.radio.cz/en/article/121011/pictures/skolstvi/pravnicka_fakulta_plzen.jpg#pic)

Mr Bezouška blew the whistle and then events took a rather strange turn. Another vice-dean, Milan Kindl, entered into the fray, claiming that his colleagues’ work was indeed fraudulent, but that it had been planted in the library deliberately to root out an informer who had been leaking information about the faculty to the press. Mr Kindl subsequently accused Mr Bezouška of being a snitch.

As an excuse for why senior faculty members had been plagiarizing, however, this failed to wash, and Mr Kindl, alongside Mr Zachariáš and Mr Tomažič, resigned.

Then further irregularities started to come to light. Students were, it was reported, gaining masters degrees at the faculty in a matter of months. The daily Mladá fronta Dnes reported that one student completed a law masters, which would normally take around five years, in two months over the faculty’s summer holidays. Plzeň university authorities have said that they are investigating around 400 former students, but that they believe only 37 cases to be particularly suspicious.

What doesn’t help is that, in many of these most suspicious cases, the Law Faculty has lost its copies of students’ final dissertations, as have the students themselves. Amongst those implicated is controversial mayor of Chomutov Ivana Řápková, who has said she can’t remember her teachers’ names, and the headline-grabbing mayor of Prague 5 Milan Jančík. Former Plzeň student and shamed ex-PM Stanislav Gross has also been caught up in the scandal.

The Czech Education Ministry is wondering whether to file a legal complaint against the faculty and have the police investigate what actually happened. A spokesperson said on Wednesday that the Education Ministry was considering, among other options, revoking the Law Faculty’s right to hand out degrees.

**Pre-reading activities**

1. *Discuss these questions in pairs/groups.*
2. What happened at Plzeň Law Faculty in 2009?
3. How was the scandal disclosed?
4. How, do you think, is it possible that such a scandal could happen at a university?
5. Do you think that Plzeň Law Faculty was the only one where diplomas and degrees were given for nothing?
6. Do you thing that such a thing could happen at the university you are attending?
7. *Do you understand the meanings of these expressions? Could you explain them in English?*

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| plagiarism | lecture roster | allegation | to implicate |
| legal | to fray | fraudulent | to levy |
| snitch | suspicious | to revoke | to hand out |

1. *How do you understand these phrases? Match them with the words from the menu.*
2. Plagiarism claims -
3. Fast-track degrees -
4. To blow the whistle -
5. To leak information -
6. To fail to wash -
7. To come to light -
8. Headline-grabbing mayor –

Menu: university, crime, local authorities.

**Reading activities**

1. *Scan the text and decide what the main idea is.*
2. *Listen to the article and answer these questions.*
3. What is Plzeň Law Faculty accused of?
4. Who is involved in the scandal?
5. How did the cause come to light?
6. How did the Faculty officials try to explain the irregularities?
7. What possible sanctions is the education Ministry considering in this case?

**Grammar: perfect tenses**

1. *In the text find examples of present perfect tense and try to explain why they were used.*
2. *In the text find examples of past perfect tense and try to explain their use.*

**Post-reading activities**

1. *In pairs/groups discuss these points.*
2. How would you solve the scandal if you were a responsible official at the Ministry of Education?
3. Has the scandal had any victims?
4. What eventually happened to those involved in the cause?
5. Were there any other educational facilities with the same or similar illegal activities?
6. *Imagine that a friend of yours from UK has heard about the scandal at Plzeň Law Faculty, but he/she is not sure if he/she understood it and wants to know some further details and latest news. Write him/her a letter in which you explain the scandal as you see it and include the latest development of the cause.*