

TOPIC:

What is academic integrity? In your context how would you define academic integrity?

Thank you so much for joining me for this discussion on academic integrity. As we all know, it's really, really something that's passionate to all of us and is embedded in everything we do at UniSA. Today I just wanted to focus a little bit on how we see academic integrity. I think I'll start within your actual context, what do you define academic integrity as?

For me, it's about just having integrity as a person and that means things like acknowledging that if you're an Australian student, you're being supported by your parents and by the taxpayers to get on with your learning in a meaningful way and to construct your knowledge in ways that are quite robust so that when you graduate, you have skills that your employer can immediately deploy and not have to wait for you to catch up. Also, with respect to scholarly practices. It means acknowledging that the thinking you do is based on the thinking of people who came before you and is going to support the work of thinkers who come after you. And that means getting your referencing right, and the referencing is really the foundation of your thinking practices. But in a course like the one I coordinate, where it's very creative thinking and we don't do much referencing, it's about doing the work for yourself, doing the thinking for yourself, and being an analyst and creating new ideas out of the data that you've gathered.

And yeah, that's great. I think I agree with all of that, Kirsten. But I guess the message and the thought I have behind academic integrity is really being true to yourself and being authentic in what you do. But I guess also not showing some ignorance in terms of the work that you're doing, educating yourself, understanding the policies and the practices, being aware of your surroundings and your environment, being respectful to yourself, but also your teammates. Because a lot of the courses that we have in our programs, as you know, embrace teamwork and we promote teamwork. Teamwork is not necessarily a technical skill, but we are seeing more and more that employers want that transferable skill. A lot of transferable skills and teamwork, I think in any domain, or any discipline is really important. So embracing yourself as a learner, embracing yourself as a team leader, embracing yourself as a team member and being true to everybody that you're working with in the work that you are doing and how you are sourcing that work, I think, is really important in terms of, you know, understanding what it means to be an authentic learner and demonstrating respect and academic integrity in your own learning and in the work that you're producing.

I like to put this in a very simple way, like a simple definition. So, I like to say that academic work produce ethically and demonstrating your own learning and understanding. And if you are using any of those words, appropriate acknowledgment of others words, but actually demonstrating your own learning and understanding. And if it is any publication or anything related to research, it should be your own findings because at the end you are going to the industry and you are being a graduate and you are demonstrating your own learning because in the academia you can get help from others, but in the industry you can't do that because you are doing with it your own expertise. So it shouldn't be your own learning and understanding and it should be ethical.

I agree. And I think the comment you made about, you know, you can have conversations with others, there's nothing wrong with having conversations. And I think, in fact, I promote having conversations with peers, with other staff, with colleagues or whatever. But again, it's that acknowledging when the work is not your own work. And I think that's really important.

Absolutely. Can I add one other thought? You know, I think a lot of students come to university without a really solid understanding of what the university's social function is, both beyond learning and teaching, and it goes beyond research if we think of universities in a historical lens. Universities hold the knowledge and wisdom of humanity. People think the Internet does. It does. But it also holds the bigotry, the pornography, the crime. Universities only hold the good stuff. And so, the people who work in universities have a sense of, you know, holding that golden light of humanity's best investment, the knowledge and the wisdom that enables us to create vaccines like that when we need them in a pandemic and to, you know, make better use of the resources that we have in our natural environment. To protect our natural environment to cope with climate change. It's that knowledge and wisdom and the people who work in universities know that sometimes the students don't. And so the staff have a job to make sure that golden pond, that golden light doesn't get polluted by thinkers who are inauthentic and I think in practice.

I think it's almost a duty of care. Yes, I think that's right.