

Academic Integrity: *What Do Professors Think?*

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***On screen:* We asked professors what academic integrity means to them. Here's what they said.**

Dr. Kathy Greaves, Department of Sociology:

So to me, academic integrity means being honest, being honest about the process of knowledge and information and where you get that. And so if you, for example, if you have to write a paper, anything that you put in that paper that is not your original idea, then you have to give credit to that person who came up with that idea. Or if it's knowledge, then like—let's say it's a research paper and you have to find a peer-reviewed article and find the results of that study. If you put that in your paper, you have to cite that study because that person went to a lot of trouble to conduct that study and find out that information. And so if you claim that to be your own information, that's not really fair. That's not, that's not honesty, right?

Dr. Neil Armitage, Department of Sociology:

Always a big question, but thinking around how that's probably changed since myself as a student and becoming a professor. It was framed slightly differently from when I was doing it. I was getting the impression that sometimes it was kind of like framed or conceptualised as this dark cloud of plagiarism that hands over students. As a result, sometimes there's a bit of fear or anxiety around academic integrity. So much so that when you ask me the question, what is academic integrity to you? It's kind of a loaded question.

So I try to kind of like simplify and just try to connect it back to why we do it. Because you need to understand that you have to give credit to and also know where you're contributing, that we're laying on top of each other. And that's probably the most important thing is because then you can start to see how do I add to this and how do I see myself as part of this. So it's kind of fundamental really to everything I think.

***On screen:* Has your view on academic integrity changed in the past few years with the rise of AI?**

Dr. Kathy Greaves:

I think AI is amazing and it's an amazing tool. And it should be a tool that you use to then create something on your own, but it shouldn't be your end product. And there are ways that you can use AI as a tool even as a student. So for example, you could, you know, you

could track down information. AI is a helpful tool for creating an outline. But using AI to create your end product, that's not academic integrity.

So, it's very clear that AI can complete entire assignments for students and I understand that. But [as] someone who has just a huge love of learning like I do, I just think it's sad that students sometimes don't want to go through the process of figuring something out on their own and writing something on their own and that they just want to sort of bypass the learning to create that end product and submit that.

Dr. Neil Armitage:

Obviously it's confused the situation. It's muddied the waters.

My job is not only to disseminate knowledge and teach whatever I'm teaching, but also I'm kind of like the gatekeeper to further courses. I'm the gatekeeper to further knowledge. I'm the gatekeeper to making sure that students can achieve a certain level of competence before moving on. And one of those competences is understanding the scientific method and why we do what we do and playing by the rules.

AI muddies those waters again because I don't know generally, the student, if they are going to have those skills or if they've outsourced those skills. And therefore if they've outsourced those skills, I still don't know, do they understand the why? And if I don't get the information that they understand why they're doing it or why they're not doing it, that's a problem. Because then they'll leave maybe university with a degree and they don't know the scientific method. They did not practice the scientific method and, therefore, that brings into question my integrity because then I'm not doing my job. Because the reason I've got to where I got to is that supposedly I'm an authority on the scientific method. But I think as a gatekeeper of knowledge, I need to know character, and integrity talks to character, and it talks to your character as a scholar.

On screen: **Do you have any tips for students when it comes to approaching academic integrity?**

Dr. Kathy Greaves:

I mean I think my number one tip is do your own work. I think that's sort of pretty obvious. A big part of your university experience isn't just acquiring knowledge. And I think sometimes that's the message that the university as a whole sends to students. Here we're going to give you all this information and then you're going to go out in the world and use that information.

But the process is important too. And so the process of how you go about learning, you acquire really important skills. And so if you bypass the learning and just get the end product, then you might acquire some of that knowledge. But when you go out into the world, you're not going to be any good at synthesizing information or critically thinking, and those are skills that employers are looking for. And so if you just do all of your own work, not only are you being honest and fulfilling the ideals of academic integrity, but you're learning that information and you're going through the process. And all of that is

important.

Dr. Neil Armitage:

I think if you start to frame it in that it's something that you're going to have to learn and become familiar with and that you're going to make mistakes in the beginning. And like any language, you sometimes have to go, how do you say this? Like anything to learn, you have to ask questions.

And I think if you can show that you're willing to ask questions—I think, you know what I say to students is that be proactive instead of reactive. Because often we kind of submit something, something comes back, it's not the grade we want and we then react. But we haven't really asked any questions beforehand. All the questions are coming afterwards and not before. So ask the questions before instead of after. And even challenge professors, I would say. So be proactive and not reactive.

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