

MEDIA STATEMENT

Unisa Launches Academic Integrity Course to Uphold Excellence in Online Education F

Approved for public release

Tuesday, 28 January 2025

The University of South Africa (Unisa) proudly announces the launch of its innovative fully online Academic Integrity Course as part of its student orientation activities from the 2025 academic year. This important initiative is designed to strengthen the institution's commitment to academic excellence and ethical scholarship.

The course addresses challenges posed by the rapid rise of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and ghost-writing services. Despite existing interventions such as tutorials and training, cases of academic misconduct continue to emerge, necessitating the need for enhanced measures to protect academic integrity.

The course will empower students to embody the values of honesty, respect, fairness, and accountability in their academic and professional journeys. It will also provide foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary to navigate their studies ethically and responsibly. Topics covered include the principles of academic integrity, academic writing, strategies to avoid plagiarism, ethical usage of artificial intelligence tools, and the importance of ethical decision-making in assessments and research. The integration of the various interactive digital tools and scenario-based activities ensures students are well-prepared for the unique demands of the online learning environment.

With the launch of this course, Unisa reinforces its commitment to nurturing a culture of ethical behaviour and transparency within its academic community. Prof Eunice Seekoe, Acting Vice-Principal of Teaching, Learning, Community Engagement, and Student Support, emphasises the shared responsibility of maintaining academic integrity:

"Academic integrity is more than a policy; it is the foundation of trust, respect, and excellence that defines Unisa. This course is designed to empower our students to embody these principles, ensuring that Unisa remains a leader in ethical online education. By completing this course, students will not only protect the value of their qualifications but also strengthen the trust between themselves, the university, and the broader academic and professional communities".

As Unisa continues to adapt to the digital age, Ms. Phindiwe Kamolane, Chairperson of the Examination Committee, highlights the role of academic integrity course in the context of online assessment:

"The transition to online assessments has presented both opportunities and challenges. Safeguarding the credibility of our assessment processes requires a proactive approach, and this course is integral part to online assessment strategy. By understanding and championing academic integrity, students not only strengthen the credibility of their qualifications, but they also demonstrate the principles of ethical leadership."

This initiative marks a significant step in Unisa's efforts to lead the way in ethical academic practices. Through integrating ethical principles into its educational framework, Unisa continues to shape graduates who exemplify academic achievement and are ethically grounded and ready

to contribute meaningfully to society. The university urges all students to complete the compulsory Academic Integrity Course during the registration period and embrace its principles.

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