

# Student Guide

## Academic Integrity Matters

### Scope

At Heriot-Watt University (HWU) we adopt the [International Centre for Academic Integrity \(ICAI\)](#) definition of Academic Integrity: *'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage'*.



Academic integrity is at the heart of the University's core values and ethical practice, and is a commitment, always, to promote trust, honesty, and fairness. It is an integral part of ensuring that our skilled graduates are respected throughout the global community. Academic integrity underpins all our educational activity at Heriot-Watt University.

Academic integrity is key to assuring the quality of our degree programmes as well as imbedding trust in our student and staff learning and teaching community. HWU expects all students to *learn with integrity*, which means doing the best within their own ability to demonstrate their acquired knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject. In doing so you will develop the professional values and skills which are sought by employers.

Failure to always act with integrity, but more importantly during assessments, demonstrates a lack of these fundamental qualities, qualities that we value highly at HWU, as do your future employers. It is therefore vital that you and your peers uphold these values and avoid all types of academic misconduct.

It is essential that you always practice proper academic and professional conduct, as per the guidance provided, and act with integrity and honesty when you are working on your assessments, regardless of the type of assessment.

There are many reasons to uphold academic integrity and avoid academic misconduct. You have come to university to learn to know and speak your own mind, not merely to reproduce the opinions of others - at least not without attribution. At first it may seem very difficult to develop your own views, and you will probably find yourself paraphrasing the writings of others as you attempt to understand and assimilate their arguments. However, it is important that you learn to develop your own voice. You are not necessarily expected to become an original thinker, but you are expected to be an independent one - by learning to assess critically the work of others, weigh up differing arguments and draw your own conclusions. Students who plagiarise undermine the ethos of academic scholarship while avoiding an essential part of the learning process<sup>1</sup>.

A range of [resources](#) are designed to help you understand the importance of academic integrity and the strategies you can use to avoid academic misconduct, including a range of resources on good academic practice available through the Skills Hub. Resources for staff are designed to help support students as they develop and put into practice the professional values expected of a Heriot Watt graduate.

## Academic Integrity and Learning with Integrity

To learn with integrity, is to always demonstrate professional values. This applies not only to your experience as a student, but to all academic staff involved with teaching, with research and their own learning. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring all work submitted for assessment is your own,
- Not presenting other people's work as your own,
- Not doing others work for them, nor sourcing others to do your work for you,
- Reporting research findings truthfully and accurately,
- Always acknowledging sources of information,
- Submitting your own work, and not presenting other people's work as your own,
- Not presenting text that has been generated by generative artificial intelligence tools, where was not allowed,
- Following the University's ethical guidelines when conducting research,

Acting with Integrity is about taking responsibility for your own actions and as a student taking responsibility for your own learning. It is about self-respect and proving you are truly the best you can be as a learner, graduate, and person. It is also about having the courage to do what's right, to stand up and be accountable for the decisions you make. Academic Integrity Matters.

## The Professional Graduate

A Heriot-Watt degree is something to be immensely proud of. It represents your qualification in your field, it speaks of the subject you are expert in, and it shows the work and effort put in by you to achieve these results. But it also demonstrates internationally respected professional values and standing. The relationship between academic integrity and these professional values is direct and inseparable. Integrity, honesty, and responsibility are all part of this, and together represent one of the four pillars of Graduate Attributes we strive towards for all our students, as highlighted in the following diagram. As part of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, a series of four [Global Changemaker Graduate Attributes](#) is being introduced for students on all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. They define the skills and capabilities a HWU graduate will have on graduating. They align with the institution's strategic ambition, reflecting and amplifying the aspirations we have for our students and the attributes they can expect to gain through their time at HWU.

The Heriot-Watt Graduate Attributes



Quite simply, without integrity one cannot call themselves a professional graduate.

To ensure this level of professional standard is maintained, HWU takes Academic Integrity extremely seriously. Any violations can have significant impact on a student's path through the university, both academically and personally. The university will always look to uphold the highest standards of Academic Integrity and will always investigate and act on any violations. This is to ensure fairness, professionalism, and integrity for all.

## Academic Integrity Matters

The ambition to become the best professional graduate one can be is something most students proudly strive for. To continue to protect that ambition, to ensure that professional standards are always met, and to respect all students and staff, Academic Integrity will always be at the forefront of what we as a university deliver.

<sup>i</sup> [The University of Oxford](#), Academic good practice – a practical guide