

## The Support Needs Of Lecturers In Conveying Academic Ethics In Distance Learning

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### Abstract

In the applied research “Academic Ethics as Lecturer’s Toolkit in Teaching Process – Adapting to the Changing Environment”, conducted in Tallinn Health Care College, the lecturers’ need for support in conveying ethical values during distance learning was explored. Maintaining high levels of academic integrity in an academic environment has always presented challenges, especially in higher education. This is because higher education learners are highly independent and focused on their own learning processes and involvement (Khan et al., 2021). Preventing unethical behaviour in distance learning requires a diverse approach, and one pivotal factor here is the support and communication of colleagues (Dixon et al., 2021). The literature on successful interventions is scant, but effective practice demands actionable strategies that can be shared among educational staff for better outcomes (Openo, 2019). Twenty semi-structured interviews with lecturers revealed they primarily rely on peer support. Consensus exists on academic ethics encompassing proper citation, cheating, and respectful communication. However, a noted deficiency in discussions and specialised ethics knowledge prevails, with a more considerable emphasis on technicalities like navigating Zoom rather than on ethical instruction. The findings indicate that while aware of academic ethics, instructors seldom discuss or seek assistance on these issues. Therefore, increasing dialogue on academic ethics, sharing experiences, and forming support networks are vital. If all instructors are consciously supported in academic ethics, the emphasis on ethical aspects occurs consistently throughout the teaching process and is conveyed to the learners resulting in increased awareness.

**Keywords:** communication; integrity; learners; peers; teaching