

Tricky question on academic integrity

An expert provided an answer on a tricky question on academic integrity. It was previously published in the regular [ENAI newsletter](#) (October 14th, 2018).

What To Do When: My students ask me why should they bother about rules of academic practice.

Many teachers in academia have faced following question from their students: "After I graduate, I want to work as a teacher / a marketing specialist / a doctor / an engineer, not as a researcher or scientist. Why should I be bothered about the rules of academic practice?"

Why bring a possible answer prepared by the "Refairence" Project, University of Konstanz

So you probably do not want to become a professional researcher or scientist. Maybe you 'just' want to pass your exams. Maybe you are not particularly interested in discussing research and its results. There are still a number of reasons why you need to master and apply the rules of academic practice.

First of all, because you have decided on pursuing an academic degree. And that simply includes adhering to the rules of academic practice. As you expect the doctors in a hospital to adhere to the hygiene regulations, so you are expected to master and apply the established rules of academic practice.

Secondly, there are many reasons why these rules of academic practice matter. Proper referencing makes research results comprehensible, and allows them to be reconstructed and tested. Maybe your readers are interested in reading for themselves the original version of some clever argument you used in your work. It would only be fair to give them the chance to do so. For how would you react if your friends invited you to dinner, offering you 'lightly browned Satsuma' for dessert but refused to explain what it is your eating?

Thirdly, in learning the rules of academic practice you will also acquire soft skills you will need in your future job: You will develop a style of working characterized by integrity, trustworthiness, transparency, personal accountability and respect for the work of others.

Moreover, you will be learning how to fulfil the professional standards of your field. No matter what job you end up in: your employers will expect this of you.