

# Upholding Integrity in Academic Practices: Perspectives from Uitm Academicians

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.924ILEIID0013>

Received: 23 September 2025; Accepted: 30 September 2025; Published: 29 October 2025

## ABSTRACT

In this study, the perspectives of UiTM academics are explored to highlight honesty in their intellectual behaviour. The literature review highlights ongoing issues that continue to evolve, particularly with the rise of technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). Several key elements are encompassed within integrity, namely honesty, openness, responsibility, and ethical awareness. Through institutional policies, proactive movements were discovered which include integrity as the main component. However, the underlying cases of academic dishonesty and abuse or misuse of technology tools continues to threaten the integrity of scholarly projects. Research indicates that academic integrity is governed by institutional rules, cultural values, and teachers' role modelling. Moreover, it paves the way for culturally specific models in Islam to develop and improve the quality of moral behaviour among students in Malaysian universities. Additionally, the study has greater implications for the ongoing development of the policies, ethics awareness, and adaptation to new academic challenges that would enable UiTM to implement its plagiarism laws simultaneously secure its academic reputation and rankings.

**Keywords:** Integrity, academic integrity, Artificial Intelligence

## INTRODUCTION

The essential foundation of higher education is upheld through academic integrity, as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility are required to be maintained in academic work. Universiti Teknologi MARA's (UiTM) faculty maintain their academic credibility and ethical conduct by upholding integrity. The understanding of integrity among UiTM academics is investigated in this conceptual paper, while concern is also shown regarding the rising trend of artificial intelligence, which has significantly impacted students' academic honesty. In addition, the importance and application of integrity at UiTM are highlighted in this paper, while institutional programmes for ethical conduct are evaluated and existing academic challenges are analysed. Present-day conditions are united with institutional actions and academic research in this paper to create a framework through which integrity at UiTM is promoted while academic integrity across the entire institution is supported.

### Academic Integrity and Institutional Initiatives

In the academic context, the meaning of integrity is understood to go beyond mere rule observance, being regarded as a substitute for the broader framework of ethics that guides scholarly activities. According to Alias et al. (2019), integrity is seen not only as the opposite of corruption but also as being shaped by values such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, responsibility, transparency, productivity, and wisdom. This definition helps set a common belief that fits naturally with the roles of academicians.

UiTM has put a lot of effort into protecting and supporting staff integrity. Alias et al. (2019) point out that the university has put together various programmes and modules to instil these values, starting with academic staff and later reaching administrative staff. Through this kind of institutional commitment, the value of integrity really comes across as a core part of UiTM's academic culture.

## Technological Advancements and Ethical Frameworks

At UiTM, learning has really changed tremendously due to AI, and it has raised several complex issues related to honesty and ethics. Mohammad et al. (2025) point out that universities all over Malaysia are facing the same problems, and UiTM is also included. Their study shows that some students have used AI to take shortcuts, but at the same time, the same tools can actually help them do assignments better. This act is seen as satirical, because it still affects the idea of integrity in general. Moreover, new problems keep coming up, making things more confusing, and it has forced teachers to pay closer attention to students' work. The researchers also note that integrity is not something that you can just set and forget as it has to be updated all the time to keep pace with how fast technology is moving. As a result, it ends up pushing academics to take even stronger action, just to keep up with AI and try to deal with how students might manipulate their work.

In addition, research on student academic dishonesty has given some useful insights into the true state of the ethical climate at UiTM. Rasdi (2024) reports that many accounting students at the UiTM Machang campus openly admitted to engaging in these practices. While the study primarily focused on student behaviour, it also highlighted that a strong moral and ethical environment had previously been fostered by both students and academicians. The findings also make it really clear that keeping up ethical behaviour is not just one person's job; everyone in the academic community has to involve in, otherwise this trend could just keep spreading.

The learning environment is heavily influenced by what instructors believe and value. Zabidi et al. (2020) points out that lecturers' beliefs in teaching practice matter a lot, and they stressed that moral and professional ethical values are essential for building integrity in education. But it is not just about individual beliefs; the bigger problem of academic dishonesty has also been noticed. Mustapha et al. (2020) emphasised that academic dishonesty among Malaysian higher education students between 2018 and 2020 and found that it is still happening in a large scale. Similarly, misconduct among university students during the COVID-19 period of remote learning was explored by Azzman et al. (2023), showing that new ways of teaching and learning can actually encourage dishonest behaviour. All in all, these studies suggest that constant vigilance and flexible strategies are needed to keep academic integrity strong in a system that is always changing.

## DISCUSSION

### The Role of Academician Integrity in Upholding Institutional Credibility

The quality and credibility of academic institutions are strongly influenced by the integrity of academicians at UiTM, and more broadly across Malaysian higher educational system. It is suggested by the literature that, although frameworks and ongoing efforts to promote integrity have been established, new and evolving challenges continue to arise, making constant observance and adaptive strategies necessary.

One major finding is that integrity is not just about following rules; it is much broader than that and it involves a whole set of ethical values and virtues (Alias et al., 2019). This is particularly important for fostering a culture in which academicians do not merely avoid misconduct, but actively demonstrate honesty, transparency, and responsibility in all aspects of their work, including teaching, research, and community engagement. Reports that academicians in Malaysian public universities show high self-reported integrity (Alias et al., 2023) are encouraging and suggest that institutional efforts are working, at least to some extent. However, there is still a noticeable drop when it comes to research and publications, which probably shows that more focused support and interventions are needed in this area.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies have made things even uncertain. Mohammad et al. (2025) note that AI misuse by students puts more pressure on academicians, who need to understand these tools and figure out ways to integrate them ethically into teaching. Educators also have to teach students to use AI responsibly. Since technology evolves rapidly, integrity guidelines cannot remain static and must be continuously updated to address emerging forms of academic dishonesty while simultaneously promoting the responsible use of AI (Mohammad et al., 2025).

Academic dishonesty should not be viewed as merely a problem among students. Rasdi (2024) found that even academicians experience pressures that could tempt them to act unethically, such as lack of moral grounding, the rush to achieve promotion, and heavy workloads. This indicates that universities need to carefully examine promotion criteria, workload distribution, and support systems to ensure that they do not unintentionally encourage unethical behaviour. Furthermore, the fact that misconduct is rarely reported suggests the existence of a culture of silence or indifference, which highlights the need for clearer reporting mechanisms and stronger protection for whistleblowers.

### **Emerging Ethical Challenges in the Digital Era**

Even studies that focus on students, like Rasdi (2024), remind us that ethics is not just the responsibility of one person. Creating a strong ethical environment really requires everyone to play a part. Academicians, as mentors and role models, have a major influence on shaping the ethical behaviour of future professionals. Their commitment to integrity goes beyond simply following rules; it is a real moral responsibility that affects the whole academic ecosystem.

Culturally sensitive approaches also help. Proposals for Islam-based academic integrity models (Alias et al., 2023; Wan Khairuldin et al., 2024) suggest that rooting ethics initiatives in local values can make them more effective and meaningful for Malaysian academicians. Even so, the rise in ethical issues, despite all the current guidelines, really makes it clear that we need more comprehensive and culturally relevant strategies, and they need to be put into action without delay. On top of that, the digital age brings a whole new set of challenges. Social media, for example, can easily blur the line between personal and professional behaviour, and as Ramlan et al. (2025) point out, academicians have to be extra careful about what they post. Clear guidance and practical strategies for using social media ethically are really necessary, because even a small slip online can hurt both the institution's reputation and public trust.

Integrity also comes down to personal beliefs and moral values. Zabidi et al. (2020) emphasised that policies alone are not enough. Academicians need to have a strong personal ethical compass as well. Programs that focus on moral decision-making and ethical reasoning can really help turn ethical behaviour into a habit, rather than something you just follow because it is required (Zabidi et al., 2020).

Overall, keeping integrity alive at UiTM is not just about following rules or dealing with AI. It is about creating a culture that truly supports ethical behaviour, offers clear guidance, and encourages open conversations about new and emerging challenges. By facing these issues head on, UiTM can maintain high academic standards and continue to earn the trust of students, the wider community, and the nation.

### **CONCLUSION**

Upholding integrity among UiTM academicians is crucial for maintaining high academic standards and ensuring public trust in the institution. Based on what the literature suggests, UiTM seems to have made quite a bit of progress with its programs and initiatives to promote a culture of integrity. Due to constant changing, especially with AI becoming more common and the ongoing pressures on academics, challenges keep coming up which eventually need attention and continuous effort. Acting with integrity, being honest, open, and responsible in teaching, research, and community work, is still very imperative. In the future, it seems that more effort will be needed to improve the guidelines, provide regular education on emerging ethical issues, and apply culturally relevant approaches so that academicians can continue to uphold high standards of integrity across all aspects of their academic work.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I want to sincerely thank my teammates for all the support and input they gave while working on our conceptual paper, "Upholding Integrity in Academic Practices: Perspectives from UiTM Academicians." Their help, ideas, and teamwork were really important in completing this work. Everyone brought something different, which improved the paper, and I am truly thankful for their dedication and effort through the whole process.

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