

Ethical Touchpoints For Graduate Students

GUIDANCE: Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching - even when doing the wrong thing is legal. (Aldo Leopold)

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Personal Ethical Behaviour

- Your actions in relation to the rules (i.e., laws and regulations)
- Your action in relation to what you believe is right in your community and society, i.e. morales
 - Outcome is most important (*teleological*)
 - Intent is most important (*deontological*)
 - Importance depends on the other factors in a situation (*relativistic*)
 - Inner guidance is most important (*virtues*)

Professional Ethical Behaviour

Athabasca University's rules:

- Academic Integrity
- Research Ethics

Academic Integrity

Applies to everything you do as a student at AU.

Regulations are clear, disciplinary process is thorough, and penalties are applied.

Read more at Student Code of Conduct and Rights to Appeals

(<http://calendar.athabascau.ca/undergrad/current/student-code/academic-misconduct-offences.php>)

Academic offences include:

1. admissions offences
2. plagiarism
3. cheating
4. collusion
5. unauthorized use of Athabasca University materials
6. misrepresentation of facts and fraud
7. aiding another in committing an academic offence

Academic Integrity Self Check

Common academic offence beliefs:

I want my degree and/or to have learnt about this topic, getting caught means I risk gaining my degree - Outcome is most important (*teleological*)

I want to succeed in learning and passing the course, by cheating I compromise my learning - Intent is most important (*deontological*)

Cheating is wrong and I won't do it, I don't want to waste time, I don't want to spend more money - Inner guidance is most important (*virtues*)

Most likely to get you in trouble -> Importance depends on the other factors in a situation (*relativistic*) – extenuating circumstances are best dealt with ahead of the problem and appeals exist to help understand complexity of the issue!

Research Ethics

Ethics applied your research process – covered by Vive - **Fabrication, Falsification, or Plagiarism**

Start your research (subject) ethics checks **BEFORE** your research (*this is a rule*).

Research Ethics Portal at <http://research.athabascau.ca/portal/index.php>

Lots of useful information about:

1. what needs ethics approval (and thus what does not)
 - Involves humans (alive, dead or parts of); public figures (private data); animals; secondary data (i.e, collected for another reason and not anonymized); quality assurance or evaluation research questions. <<Interviews and surveys involving people need approval.>>
2. application process
 - Well structured online form
 - Concerned with respect for the **person, impact of research, fairness of research**
 - Full review for human subjects, document review for other.

What doesn't need REB review and approval?

- Research about individuals in the public arena using only publicly available or accessible records without contact with the individual/s.
- Research involving naturalistic observation in public venues.
- Quality assurance studies, program evaluations, performance reviews, and testing within normal educational and/or organizational requirements, to be used for assessment and/or improvement purposes; and there is no research question involved.
- Research based on review of published/publicly reported literature.
- Research involving secondary use of data (Article 5.5) which is provided without any identifier or group of identifiers which would allow attribution of private information to an individual.
- Consulting, unless carried out under the auspices of the university.

Government Research Panel on Ethics provides training for all researchers (faculty and students) -
Course on Research Ethics (CORE) - https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/education_tutorial-didacticiel.html