

ACCREDITATION & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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What's the connection between academic *integrity* and higher education accreditation?

Why is AI within the ambit of higher ed accreditors' responsibility?



One answer: Because that's what accreditation is about. Accreditation is about the integrity of the educational enterprise; it announces, for example, that promises made in statements of learning outcomes, or competencies, for example, are being kept. "Accreditation is validating that we are doing what we are supposed to do."

(CHEA Initiative 2011-2012: the Fourth Year p. 4)



Another answer: Accreditation focuses on quality and success in the mission of accredited institutions. Thus, much as with professions, answers to questions about what ought to be done in practice are found in the practice itself; practitioners “own” the norms of their practice. “Accreditation isn’t about ‘the federal government made me do it.’” (Ibid., p. 2) These norms articulate expectations of integrous practice; they are *ethical* norms.



Still another answer: AI enhances the quality of higher education, or more precisely, it is a condition of its possibility. Teaching and learning cannot take place if the reciprocal responsibilities of teachers and learners are not fulfilled.



One more: Like critical thinking, math, science, and communication skills, ethical reasoning is an essential learning skill. AI is an excellent starting place for efforts to develop skill in ethical reasoning because, among other things, faculty, regardless of discipline, believe that it is important.



Accreditors can do much to advance the cause of academic integrity because when it is said that “It’s woven throughout” they want to be able to see the weave.

They are well positioned to encourage institutions to help students see that and how integrity is a critical strand in the fabric of learning *and* life.

