

The Importance of Honesty in an Academic Library

Introduction

Today, I would like to briefly discuss **the importance of honesty in an academic library**.

As library staff, we play an important role in supporting students, lecturers, researchers, and the wider academic community. Honesty is one of the key values that helps us build trust and provide a reliable and professional service.

What Does Honesty Mean in a Library?

Honesty means being **truthful, transparent, fair, and accountable** in everything we do.

For library staff, this can include:

- Providing accurate information to library users.
- Admitting when we do not know the answer and seeking the correct information.
- Following library policies and procedures consistently.
- Handling library materials, records, and equipment responsibly.
- Protecting users' privacy and keeping their information confidential.
- Treating all library users fairly and without favouritism.

Why Is Honesty Important?

1. It Builds Trust

Students and staff need to trust the library and the people who work in it.

When we give accurate information and keep our promises, users know that they can depend on us.

2. It Supports Academic Integrity

Academic libraries are closely connected to **academic integrity**.

We help students understand the importance of using information responsibly, acknowledging sources, avoiding plagiarism, and presenting their own work honestly.

Our own behaviour should reflect the same principles we encourage in our users.

3. It Promotes Accountability

Mistakes can happen. Honesty means taking responsibility when something goes wrong rather than hiding the problem or blaming someone else.

For example, if a book is misplaced, a transaction is recorded incorrectly, or incorrect information is given to a user, reporting the mistake allows it to be corrected quickly.

4. It Creates a Positive Workplace

Honesty encourages **open communication, teamwork, and respect** among colleagues.

When staff members are honest with one another, problems can be addressed constructively, and the workplace becomes more supportive.

5. It Protects the Reputation of the Library

Every interaction we have with a user contributes to the reputation of the library.

Honest and ethical behaviour demonstrates professionalism and strengthens the confidence that students, academics, researchers, and the institution have in our services.

Honesty in Everyday Library Practice

We can demonstrate honesty through simple actions:

- Give correct information, even when the answer may be inconvenient.
- Never manipulate or falsify library records.
- Report lost, damaged, or incorrectly processed materials.
- Follow procedures for fines, payments, and resources.
- Respect confidentiality and user privacy.
- Give credit to colleagues for their contributions.
- Avoid favouritism when assisting users.
- Ask for help when we are uncertain rather than providing misleading information.

A Simple Message to Remember

“If we expect our users to practise academic integrity, we must model it ourselves.”

Honesty is not only about avoiding wrongdoing. It is about consistently choosing to do what is **right, fair, and responsible**, even when nobody is watching.

Conclusion

In an academic library, honesty is more than a personal quality — it is a professional responsibility.

By being truthful, accountable, fair, and transparent, we create a library environment where people feel **trusted, respected, and supported**.

Let us continue to lead by example and make honesty part of everything we do.

Thank you.