



## ***SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PSYCHOLOGY:***

### **STARTING FROM THE BEGINNING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN “TRANSITION” UNITS**

Students in Social Sciences programs in SSAP enrol in first year 'core' units. These units are part of our suite of first year 'transition' to university studies, which design scaffolded and calibrated assessments. Inculcating academic writing skills, including referencing, are essential for students to act with academic integrity.

The two Spring units, People, Place and Social Difference and Working with Communities, designed and coordinated by Drs Garth Lean and Sarah de Nardi,

respectively, have drop-in assessment clinics (online and on-campus) to review students' draft written assessments for feedback and guidance, including on appropriate referencing. As these units each have over 1,000 students, this is a significant and strategic allocation of teaching resources.

In an Autumn 'transition' unit, The Individual in Society, time is allocated to pro-actively develop students' referencing, quoting, paraphrasing and summarising skills in a discipline-specific context. The unit starts with a discussion of expectations about academic integrity. Students complete a set of

activities related to academic integrity in preparation for their first assessment – a learning journal. The activities were designed by Dr Tim Griffin and Sky Hugman in partnership with Fiona Webber, Library Academic Literacy Advisor.



The activities model the elements of referencing and strategies for academic writing drawing on discipline- and assessment-specific materials. They involve:

- completing a quick quiz on referencing,
- discussing principles

of academic integrity,

- getting introduced to the Turnitin software,
- learning about the elements of referencing,
- practicing strategies for quoting, paraphrasing and summarising in relation to their assessments and drawing on the set readings for the unit.

For more information on these activities, see this [document](#)

#### **WHAT MAKES THE APPROACH EFFECTIVE?**

The approach taken by the School is to pro-actively



**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY



prepare students for acting with academic integrity in their assessments. Students are made aware of the importance of academic integrity from the very beginning and encouraged to use existing academic integrity resources and support services at Western. Moreover, students are given an opportunity to practise skills related to academic integrity in a supported environment, using the materials specific to the discipline of Social Sciences, the unit and the upcoming assessment. Accompanied by class discussion on academic integrity, tutors' support and feedback, these strategies give students a good idea of discipline expectations around academic integrity and demonstrate why they should care about integrity as future social scientists.

Does your unit have similar embedded activities to support students in acting with academic integrity? Feel free to share with us in comments to this post.

Please contact Dr Tim Griffin, School of Social Sciences and Psychology, for any further information at [t.griffin@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:t.griffin@westernsydney.edu.au)