Promoting excellence in research through integrity – developing a theoretical foundation for open-distance e-learning

Ms LB Louw
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Define tomorrow.

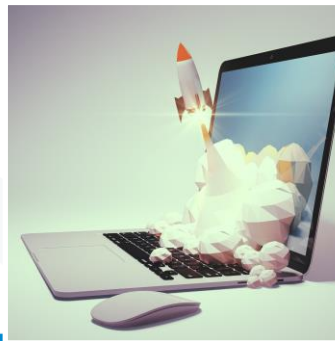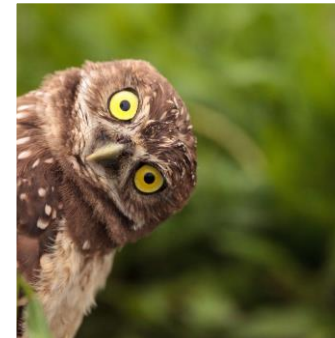UNISA | college of economic and management sciences
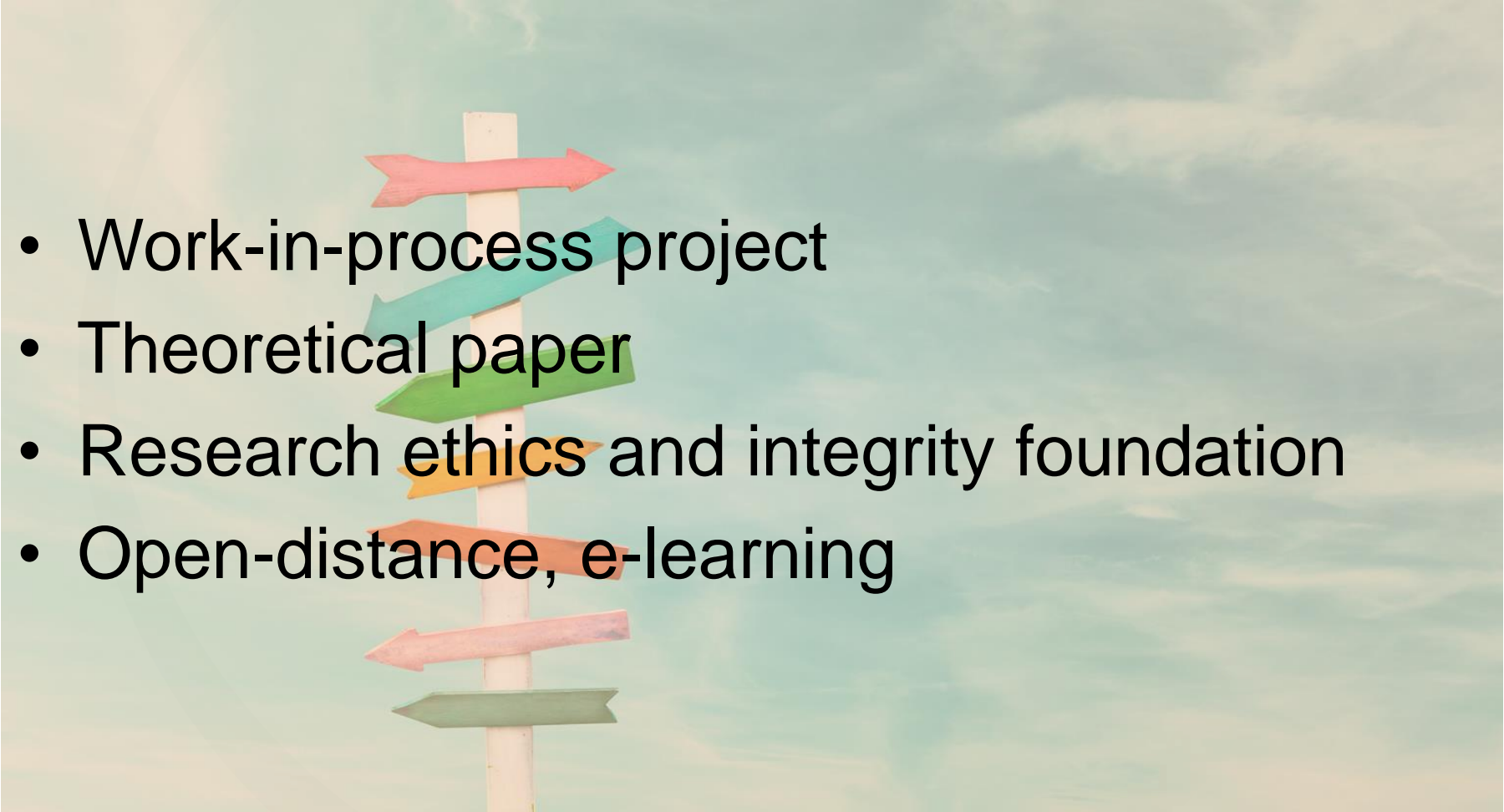
Academic dishonesty in an online world

Academic dishonesty may be more prevalent in online classes (Holden et al., 2020)

Mixed findings on whether online environments lead to higher instances of cheating compared to traditional classrooms (Beck, 2014; Black et al., 2019).

The ease of cheating in online exams and the challenges in maintaining academic integrity in remote assessment settings (Nguyen et al., 2022; Kohen-Vacs et al., 2021).

Purpose statement

- Work-in-process project

- Theoretical paper

- Research ethics and integrity foundation

- Open-distance, e-learning

Setting the scene: Facts & figures

- 370 000 students
- 54 000+ graduates (10 699 M&D)
- 110 countries
- 40% part-time
- 62% between 25 and 39 years

Setting the scene: Staff
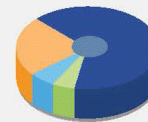
UNISA FAST FACTS

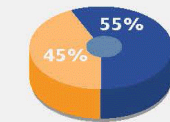ACADEMIC EXCELENCE ■

Number of Unisa staff members:

7 000

283	Professors
266	Associate professors
1032	Staff with doctorates
226	NRF-rated academics
14	Research professors dedicate most of their time and resources to research

RACE

- African **77%**
- Coloured **3%**
- Indian **3%**
- White **17%**

GENDER

- 55%
- 45%
- ● Female ● Male

8 RESEARCH CHAIRS
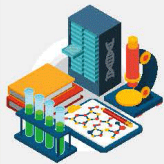
Endowed research chairs

- Exxaro Chair in Climate and Sustainability Transitions
- Commonwealth of Learning Chair in Open Education Resources and Practices
- DST/NRF SARChi Research Chair in Social Policy
- DST/NRF SARChi Chair in Information and Communication Technology for Development
- DST/NRF SARChi Chair in Law, Society and Technology
- UNITWIN/UNESCO/Unisa Chair in ODL

- UNESCO Co-Chair in Early Childhood Education, Care and Development
- UNESCO UNISA Africa Chair in Nanosciences and Nanotechnology

Unisa Research Chair

- Chief Albert Luthuli Research Chair

10 DEDICATED RESEARCH INSTITUTES

- Archie Mafeje Institute for Applied Social Policy Research
- Bureau of Market Research
- Institute for Corporate Citizenship
- Institute for Gender Studies
- Institute for Global Dialogue
- Institute for Open and Distance Learning

- Institute for the Development of Energy for African Sustainability
- Institute for Nanotechnology and Water Sustainability
- Institute for Science and Technology Education
- Research Institute for Theology and Religion

VISION

Towards *the* African university shaping futures in the service of humanity

MISSION

Unisa is a comprehensive, open distance learning institution that produces excellent scholarship and research, provides quality tuition and fosters active community engagement. We are guided by the principles of lifelong learning, student-centredness, innovation and creativity

VALUES

- Ethical and collective responsibility
- Integrity
- Innovation and excellence

Integrity, Batho Pele & Ubuntu
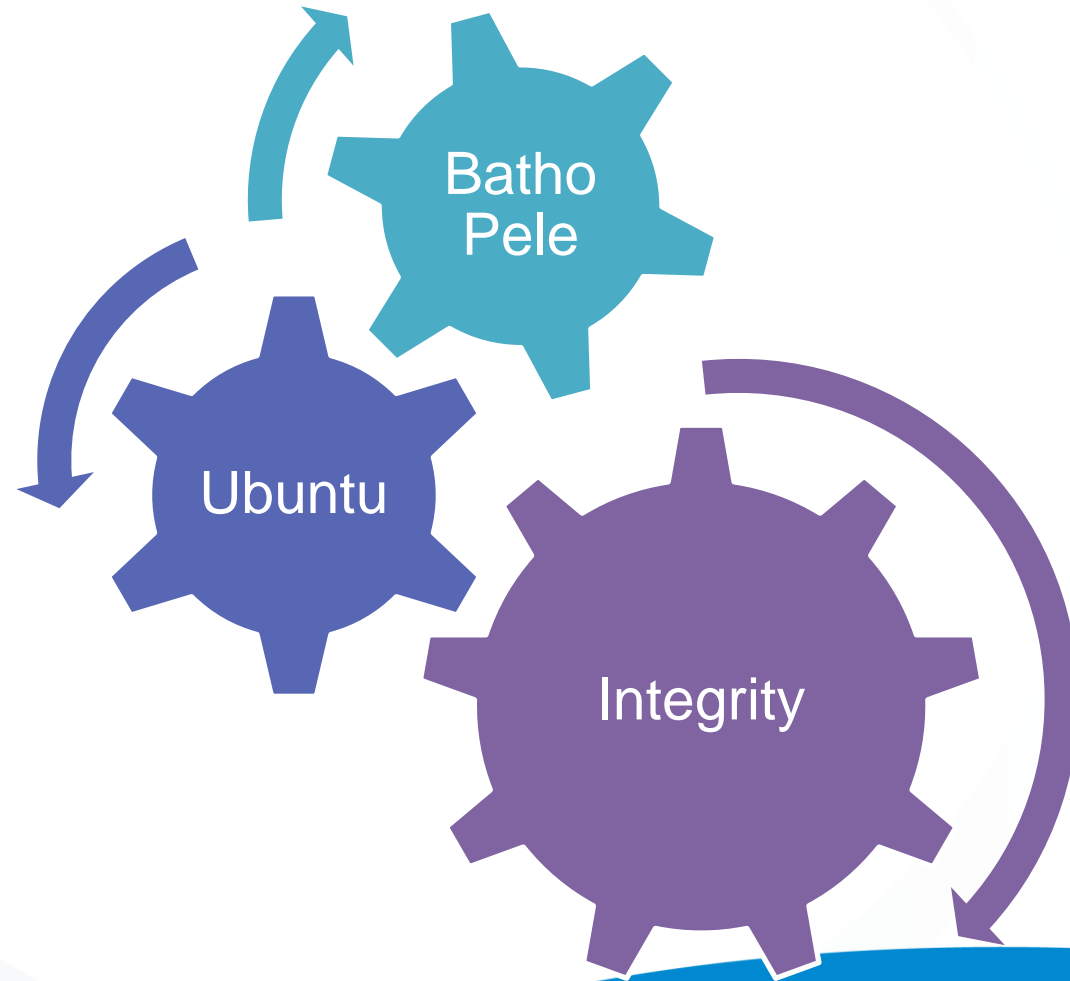
Integrity, Batho Pele & Ubuntu

Batho Pele

- Consultation
- Standards
- Equal access
- Courtesy
- Accurate information
- Openness and transparency
- Value

Integrity, Batho Pele & Ubuntu

Ubuntu

- Justice
- Responsibility
- Equality
- Collectiveness
- Relatedness
- Reciprocity
- Love
- Respect
- Helpfulness
- Community
- Caring
- Dependability
- Sharing
- Trust
- Integrity
- Unselfishness
- Social change

Integrity in the context of Andragogy

- Deeper engagement with research
- Lifelong commitment to excellence
- Making a difference in communities
- Readiness to learn
- Self-concept and self-directedness
- Orientation
- Experience

Cape Town Statement

- Diversity and inclusivity
- Fair practice
- Mutual respect – Trust
- Shared accountability
- Indigenous knowledge recognition and epistemic justice

What would this look like in practice?

- Collaborative learning environments
- Peer-to-peer support
- Ethical research practices
- User-centric design
- Principles of courtesy and consultation
- Access and equality
- Code of conduct
- Training and workshops
- Community engagement
- Regular feedback loops
- Further research on educational practices

Acknowledgements

- Organising committee and reviewers of the 8th World Conference on Research Integrity

- University of South Africa

- UNISA College of Economics and Management Sciences

- UNISA RIO Team

- Attendees

References / Further reading

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Reclaiming Africa's Intellectual Futures

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Define tomorrow.