

## Should students acknowledge significant learning assistance with their assignments or theses?

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In light of increased institutional focus on the issues of academic integrity and plagiarism, this paper asks the question of whether students should acknowledge any significant assistance with their assignments or theses provided by a Learning Adviser (LA). It is argued that given that academics and other writers consider it right and proper to acknowledge significant help (e.g., thanking colleagues for 'fruitful discussions' or for 'helpful feedback on the manuscript'), then it is somewhat anomalous that students generally do not acknowledge significant assistance from LAs. It is further argued that lack of acknowledgements also leads to a 'muddying of the waters' regarding academic integrity because on the one hand course profiles tell students that individual assignments must be 'entirely their own work', but on the other recommend students seek help with assignment writing from LAs. While student acknowledgement of learning assistance would force an explicit resolution of such seeming contradictions in policy, and have the added benefit of making the work of LAs and its value more visible to the wider university community, it does appear to be at odds with learning assistance being offered as a confidential service. It is argued however, that confidentiality can still be maintained to a large extent even if students are required to write acknowledgements. Other issues, such as how the required policy changes might come about and the possibility of students giving inappropriate acknowledgements like thanking a LA for 'proof-reading' their assignment, are also addressed.

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