

DEONTOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES IN TUTORING ACTIVITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. *This article explores the significance of deontological competencies in the tutoring activities of higher education institutions. Deontological competencies, which refer to ethical and professional standards, are essential for tutors to effectively support students' academic, social, and personal development. Through qualitative analysis, the study identifies key challenges tutors face in upholding these competencies and discusses their impact on student outcomes. Recommendations are provided to strengthen deontological competencies in tutoring practices, emphasizing their role in fostering a supportive and ethical academic environment.*

Keywords: *deontological competencies, ethical practices, academic integrity, professional development, tutor-student relationships, mentorship, ethical decision-making, confidentiality, student support, institutional policies.*

Introduction. Tutors in higher education institutions play a critical role in supporting students' academic and personal development. Their responsibilities extend beyond academic advising to include mentorship, emotional support, and promoting ethical behavior. Deontological competencies—ethical and professional standards that guide tutors—ensure that this multifaceted role is performed with integrity, fairness, and accountability.

Despite their importance, deontological competencies are often overlooked in the professional development of tutors. Tutors frequently encounter ethical dilemmas, such as conflicts of interest, favoritism, or breaches of confidentiality, which require them to navigate complex situations responsibly. This article aims to analyze the role of deontological competencies in tutoring activities, identify challenges tutors face, and propose strategies for strengthening these competencies in higher education institutions.

Methods. The study employed a qualitative research design to explore the role and challenges of deontological competencies in tutoring. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with tutors and focus group discussions with students.

The comprised 20 tutors and 30 students from three higher education institutions. Tutors were selected based on their experience in academic advising, while students were chosen to provide diverse perspectives on tutoring practices.

Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Key themes relating to ethical

practices, challenges, and the impact of deontological competencies on student outcomes were identified.

Results. Tutors emphasized that deontological competencies are crucial in building trust and professionalism in their interactions with students. These competencies include:

- Ethical decision-making in academic advising.
- Maintaining confidentiality in student matters.
- Providing equitable support to all students, regardless of background.
- Promoting academic integrity and discouraging misconduct.

Participants highlighted several challenges in applying deontological principles, including:

- Lack of formal training on ethical tutoring practices.
- Ambiguity in institutional policies regarding tutors' roles and responsibilities.
- Balancing the demands of institutional goals with the personal needs of students.
- Managing ethical conflicts, such as favoritism or maintaining neutrality during disputes.

Students reported that tutors with strong deontological competencies contributed to their academic success, personal growth, and overall satisfaction with the educational experience. Conversely, unethical practices, such as bias or lack of confidentiality, undermined trust and created dissatisfaction.

Discussion. The findings highlight the critical role of deontological competencies in fostering an ethical and supportive educational environment.

Tutors serve as role models and mentors, making it essential for institutions to invest in their ethical and professional development. However, the lack of clear policies, training, and support systems poses significant challenges.

Recommendations:

1. Policy Formulation: Institutions should establish clear guidelines on ethical tutoring practices.
2. Training Programs: Regular workshops on deontological competencies should be mandatory for tutors.
3. Support Mechanisms: Tutors should have access to resources and mentorship to address ethical dilemmas.
4. Continuous Feedback: Periodic evaluations of tutors' ethical practices can enhance accountability and performance.

Conclusion. Deontological competencies are integral to effective tutoring in higher education institutions. They ensure that tutors fulfill their responsibilities ethically and professionally, contributing to students' academic and personal development. Strengthening these competencies through targeted policies and training will enhance the quality of education and foster a more ethical academic environment.

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