

Media Release

UNIVERSITY INTEGRITY SURVEY 2023 PUBLISHED

4 June 2024

Today the Commission has published the University Integrity Survey 2023, the second integrity survey of public officers in South Australia's three public universities.

The Commission uses integrity surveys to understand public officers' perceptions and experiences of potential corruption and other improper conduct in their workplaces.

South Australia's universities make a critical contribution to our society and economy. They advance the knowledge, productivity and wellbeing of individuals and communities alike.

However, the environment in which universities operate may provide opportunities for corruption. Respondents to the 2023 survey perceived that their workplaces were more vulnerable to corruption than in the 2020 survey. Nepotistic recruitment, misuse of authority, and improper procurement were identified as the largest corruption risks.

Respondents believed that the pressure to publish is leading to cases of fraudulent authorship. The universities hold large quantities of personally identifiable information, and the integrity of this information is at risk due to poor records management. Academics are increasingly engaging in outside professional activities, which may compromise their ability to perform their public roles. It was apparent that the universities do not always foster a workplace culture where staff feel safe and able to report.

The Commissioner said, "I encourage the universities to continue to invest in protecting the integrity of their activities. This is especially important at a time when the merger of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia will produce Australia's largest higher education institution. Organisational disruption is known for generating corruption opportunities. These are best forestalled by leadership acting in a way that is transparent and accountable. Staff must be empowered to report any suspicions of wrongdoing.

"I appreciate the participation of all those who responded to the 2023 survey and contributed to the ongoing success of this important sector."

The survey is available on the Commission's website:

www.icac.sa.gov.au/publications/research-reports

For media enquiries please contact 0428 389 493 or media@icac.sa.gov.au.