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# Readiness of Academic Lecturers for Coordination and Enhancement of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Course (KIAR) in the General Studies Curriculum (MPU): A Case Study at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

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**Abstract**

Reinforcing the implementation of Integrity and Anti-Corruption Course (KIAR) as a complimentary component of the General Studies subject (MPU) in Malaysia's Higher Education Institutions is requiring the readiness of academics comprehensively across the faculties. This study proposes to (i) assess the acceptance level of the academicians at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) regarding coordination implementation of KIAR under Faculty of Liberal Science, (ii) to identify the capacity and workload faced and (iii) to recommend strategic coordination and strengthening of implementation governance. This study utilised cross-sectional survey method via online based structured instrument accompanied by an open system, that was administered to 28 UKM's academicians from various faculties through sampling for. The findings showed more than half of respondence (57.1%, n=16) indicating full readiness to involve in KIAR if fully regulated under PPCU, meanwhile, about 32.1% (n=9) are willing to participate under certain conditions and 10.7% (n=3) are not ready; the overall acceptance rate reached 89.2%. The majority also support centralised implementation under Faculty of Liberal Science because it simplifies the coordination, but it also raises concerns with the less academic and existing academic load, particularly research or other assignments commitment (39.3%) and current academic load (32.1%). Respondents also suggesting the involvement across faculties and establish cooperation with Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) as invited lecturers, and continuous improvement through the guidelines and periodic monitoring. The research findings contributed to the curriculum design and governance of MPU that is more sustainable in higher education institutions.

**Keywords**: Academicians readiness, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Course, General Studies, Curriculum Governance, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

## Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) is vowing to oppose corruption in societies across the world as one of its missions to promote peace, justice and strong institutions for everyone. The battle against corruption begins in the classroom, where the anti-corruption education must instill a sense

of honor and a hatred for bribery in youth to create the foundation for a transparent society. Legal knowledge and institutional procedures are the main foundations in the anti-corruption education and it must develop the required moral imagination to understand how ordinary decisions become corrupt when influenced by pressure, loyalty, opportunity, rationalisation or fear (Halim et al., 2026). Integrity and Anti-Corruption Course (Kursus Integriti dan Anti-Rasuah, KIAR) has been introduced as a complimentary course in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Malaysia commencing in October 2023 as the result of the strategic cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education (KPT) and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), where every university were given the autonomy in implementation management (Norfazella Mohd Fariz et al., 2026). This initiative is a part of curriculum reformation of General Studies subject (MPU) to produce graduates with ethics and integrity-driven (Samuni et al., 2025).

Within higher education, anti-corruption education is increasingly understood not only as the transmission of legal and conceptual knowledge, but also as a means of developing students' ethical judgement and practical capacity to recognise and respond to integrity-related situations. Recent Malaysian studies indicate that the implementation of KIAR is still evolving. Norfazella Mohd Fariz et al. (2026) reported that the implementation of KIAR in Malaysian higher education involved initial resistance among academics and differences in how institutions organise and deliver the course. At the student level, Samuni et al. (2025) found that KIAR improved students' understanding of basic integrity and anti-corruption concepts, although some conceptual gaps remained. Similarly, Halim et al. (2026) highlighted the importance of applied, blended and immersive approaches to integrity education. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of KIAR depends not only on curriculum design, but also on the institutional arrangements and capacity supporting its delivery.

Despite these developments, the academic workforce responsible for implementing KIAR has received comparatively less empirical attention. Existing studies have mainly examined KIAR implementation at the institutional level and its effects on students, while comparatively less attention has been given to the readiness, capacity and workload of lecturers responsible for its delivery. This issue is particularly relevant when a university considers centralising KIAR coordination under a designated academic centre, as such a change may affect teaching responsibilities, workload distribution, lecturer involvement and governance arrangements. Therefore, examining lecturers' readiness at UKM provides a basis for understanding the proposed coordination structure and the institutional support that may be required.

In Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), the implementation of KIAR has been recommended to be coordinated under Pusat Pengajian Citra Universiti (PPCU) as a center for MPU's curriculum administration. This transition raises important questions related to the readiness of academics across faculties, especially from capacity acceptance aspect and implementation governance. Hence, this study aims to evaluate the acceptance level of UKM's academicians with implementation coordination of KIAR under PPCU, to recognize challenges capacity and the workload of academics in KIAR's implementation and recommend the coordination strategy and governance reinforcement for KIAR's comprehensive implementation.

The significance of the study is the contribution to the MPU's curriculum governance at three stages. Stage one, at the basic level of the institution, the transition of KIAR under PPCU is a governance results that is being actively implemented, not only a theoretical suggestion. Hence, the empirical proof about the real readiness of the academicians is a big necessity to have the outcome of the university's administration before the transition structure is executed comprehensively to the gap between the ground and the implementation reality at operational stage. Stage two, at the execution level, the complimentary course such as KIAR can only achive its target if it is delivered in sufficient number of academics, have sustainable capacity and accepting structural changes in a positive way.

Failure to overcome the aspect of academic readiness will affecting course delivery quality despite the good purpose of the centralisation policy. Third, at the level of national curriculum discourse, the findings of the study contributed to the governance model which can be referred by other HEI that also considering to centralise execution of MPU under joint centre of education, thus improving the implemented vision of national anti-corruption (SDG 16) through the mechanisms of curriculum governance that are more structured and sustainable.

Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is the foundation of this study framework, that explains an individual's intentions to perform specific behaviour is affected by behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs. To enhance the understanding about execution context of education integrity in higher institutions, this study also refers to the Education Theory and Social Changes (Dewey, 1937) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) that was utilised by (Mohammed et al., 2026) to build educational framework of anti-corruption in multi-platform, comprised of formal education (curriculum integrated), non-formal (collaboration and curriculum activities) and informal (role model and ethical leadership). Preliminary findings showed the proposal for involvement of MACC as guest lecturer and cooperation across faculties were parallel with non-formal platform. Meanwhile, the requirement of lecturers being role models of integrity was aligned with informal platform outlined in the framework.

To further understand the implementation context of integrity education in higher education institutions, this study draws on the perspectives of Education and Social Change and Social Learning Theory, as discussed by Mohammed et al. (2026) in developing an anti-corruption education framework. The framework emphasises a multi-platform approach comprising formal education through curriculum integration, non-formal education through collaboration and curriculum activities, and informal education through role modelling and ethical leadership. In the context of KIAR implementation at UKM, the proposed involvement of MACC representatives as guest lecturers and collaboration across faculties are aligned with the non-formal platform, while the expectation for lecturers to demonstrate integrity and act as role models reflects the informal platform. These perspectives therefore provide additional support for examining the role of academics, institutional collaboration and governance in the implementation of KIAR.

**Literature Review**

The introduction of KIAR reflects Malaysia's broader move to institutionalise anti-corruption education under the national anti-corruption agenda, positioning Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as key delivery agents of MPU reform. Norfazella Mohd Fariz et al. (2026) found initial resistance among faculty academics before KIAR was successfully implemented through collaboration between KPT and MACC, and noted that granting each university autonomy in course management leaves substantial variation in readiness and delivery capacity across institutions. Studies at the student level offer a complementary picture: Samuni et al. (2025) reported that KIAR strengthened students' basic understanding of integrity and anti-corruption concepts among UMSKAL students, yet found lingering conceptual gaps, for instance between corruption and gift-giving, that stronger lecturer readiness could help close. In parallel, Halim et al. (2026) argued that transferable, evidence-informed pedagogical models such as immersive and blended learning are needed to move integrity education beyond legal literacy towards applied ethical judgement, again underscoring that the strength of any centralised delivery model rests on the readiness of the academics who deliver it.

Beyond institutional descriptions, prior work has begun to theorise how such reforms are adopted. Mohammed et al. (2026) proposed a multi-platform anti-corruption education framework combining formal, non-formal and informal learning, drawn from Dewey's (1937) theory of education and social change and Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, showing that sustainable integrity education depends on coherent integration across these platforms rather than the curriculum document alone.

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior further explains how such structural reforms translate into individual academic behaviour, proposing that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control jointly shape an individual's readiness to take on a new responsibility such as coordinating or teaching KIAR. Applied to curriculum governance, this suggests that academics' acceptance of centralisation under PPCU is not simply a matter of agreement in principle, but is conditioned by their perceived capacity workload, expertise and institutional support to actually carry out the expected role.

Complementing this behavioural lens, Hassan et al. (2020) reviewed the understanding of ethical and moral values in HEI curricula and emphasised that value-driven courses succeed only when supported by adequate institutional structures, reinforcing that curriculum reform cannot be evaluated on conceptual acceptance alone. Taken together, existing literature establishes that KIAR has been examined mainly at the policy and student levels, and that behavioural and multi-platform frameworks exist to explain acceptance of integrity education reforms in principle. However, empirical evidence on how academics themselves, as the implementers of KIAR, perceive their own readiness and capacity under a specific centralised governance model such as PPCU remains limited. This gap motivates the present study's focus on lecturer-level acceptance, capacity and governance recommendations at UKM.

*Research Objectives*
Guided by this gap, the study is designed to achieve the following objectives:
i. To assess the acceptance level of academicians at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) regarding the coordination and implementation of KIAR under Pusat Pengajian Citra Universiti (PPCU).
ii. To identify the capacity and workload challenges faced by academics in relation to KIAR's implementation.
iii. To recommend strategic coordination and governance strengthening measures for the comprehensive implementation of KIAR.

*Research Questions*
Correspondingly, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:
RQ1: What is the level of acceptance among UKM's academicians towards the coordination and implementation of KIAR under PPCU?
RQ2: What capacity and workload challenges do academics face in relation to KIAR's implementation?
RQ3: What coordination strategies and governance measures can strengthen the comprehensive implementation of KIAR under PPCU?

**Research Methods**
This study utilised cross-sectional survey to explore the level of readiness of UKM's academics in regards of strengthening KIAR's implementation under PPCU. Research instrument was conducted via online structured qustionnaire form (Google Forms) with the characteristics of rating scale, multiple options item, one open item to collect response and open-ended questions. Research respondents were selected by using purposive sampling method, involving academics at UKM from various faculties which were directly involved or potentially involved in KIAR's management under PPCU. About 28 academicians have been completed their responses.

Table 1 showed respondents profile according to their academic positions and experience in teaching KIAR, while Figure 1 demonstrated the distribution of respondent's academic positions.

Table 1
*The Study of Respondents Profile (N = 28)*

| Respondents Characteristics | Category | n (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Position | Professor | 1 (3.6%) |
| | Associate Professor | 3 (10.7%) |
| | Senior Lecturer | 24 (85.7%) |
| KIAR's Teaching Experiences | Once | 8 (28.6%) |
| | Never | 20 (71.4%) |
| Total | - | 28 (100%) |

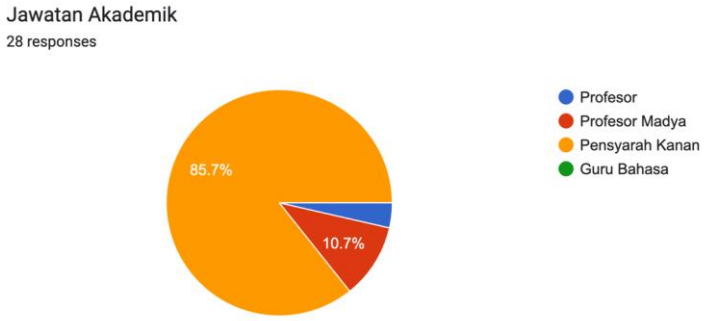



Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents' Academic Positions (N = 28)

**Results and Discussion**

The data for structured items was analysed descriptively in frequency and percentage to depict the distribution of academic positions, teaching experiences, level of readiness and the respondents' capacity factor. The open item response was analysed by using thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2022) to recognize the pattern and main themes related to readiness, challenges and recommendations to improve KIAR's implementation. The encoding process was conducted manually and repeatedly until thematic saturation is achieved and producing four main themes as presented in

. Combinations of descriptive findings and thematic analysis method have enabled triangulation between the numerical patterns and qualitative respondent narrative.

Table 2
*Summary of main theme based on study findings*

| Themes | Description |
|---|---|
| Support the implementation under PPCU | Majority of respondents agreed that KIAR should be fully standardized under PPCU to ensure effortless management and avoid complications as in former governance. |
| The need for academic lecturers and workload | Concerns about the shortage of PPCU's lecturers and requirement to review teaching workload by TDA; sharing the responsibility across the faculties was suggested. |
| Comprehensive involvement and coordination | Requires cooperation with all academics across faculties, involvement with MACC as guest lecturers and implementation by hybrid and mass lecture. |
| Programme enhancement | Suggestions given were clear guidelines, regular monitoring, constant improvement based on feedback and early planning for the national conference regarding KIAR. |

The academics acceptance of KIAR's coordination under PPCU was demonstrated in Figure 2. Survey findings showed majority UKM's academics (57.1%, n=16) mentioned full readiness to involve in KIAR's coordination if it is fully standardised under PPCU, whereas about 32.1% (n=9) were conditionally ready and only 10.7% (n=3) remarked not ready, resulting the overall rate of acceptance (combination of ready and conditionally ready) about 89.2%. Interestingly, majority of the respondents (71.4%, n=20) have not taught KIAR previously, showed some signs of acceptance even though most academicians have no previous experience in KIAR. Open responses also support the findings, with the respondents were agreed about the course centralisation under PPCU can facilitate the course management, avoid confusion in governance that once happened and keep aligned with the vision to empower MPU under Citra structure. Based on the perspective of Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), this high acceptance rate is reflecting positivity and subjective norms which supports centralise curriculum governance, whereas for group of conditionally ready and not ready, each demonstrated the acceptance rate of 32.1% and 10.7% respectively. Hence, these confirmed perceived behavioural control also being influenced by the capacity factor that was discussed in Objective 2.




Figure 2. The level of readiness in academics to involve in KIAR's management under PPCU

In Figure 3, the capacity challenge and workload were discussed. For respondents which were less prepared or not ready, the important factors involved were having research commitments or serving other official duty (39.3%, n=11), facing current teaching load (32.1%, n=9), less exposure to KIAR's lesson (21.4%, n=6) and less suitable in areas of expertise (10.7%, n=3). However, in terms of real capacity, about 60.7% (n=17) respondents were ready to have one set of lesson while another 25% (n=7) of respondents were conditionally ready. This demonstrated the source of academics can be mobilised if the structure challenges can be overcome. Next, respondents also voiced out some concerns which are; the shortage of PPCU's lecturer in ensuring the sustenance of the KIAR's teaching requirements across faculties and the need of Deputy Dean's Office (Academic) to review the existing teaching workload in every faculty if KIAR is fully operated under PPCU. As resolutions, respondents recommend that every faculty should sharing the responsibility by offering Citra's courses across faculties to balance the teaching workload of MPU's subject that is allocated to PPCU. Numerical findings and this narrative are parallel with literature review related to the understanding of moral ethics value in HEI's curriculum, which also emphasize the importance of institution support structure to ensure the effectiveness of value-driven course delivery (Hassan et al., 2020).

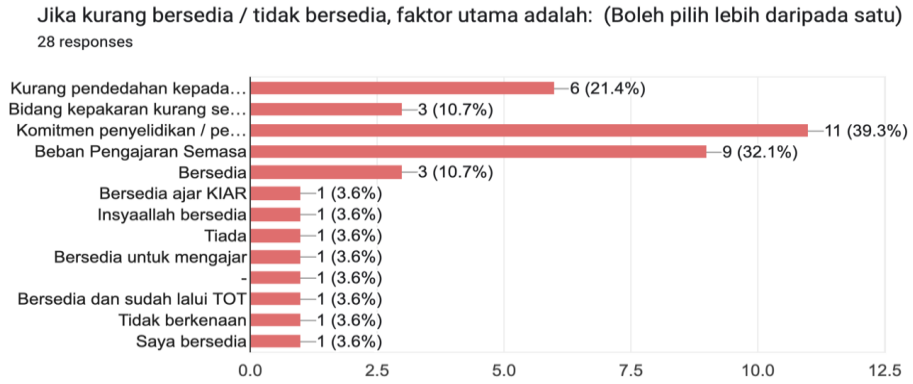



Figure 3. Main factor of less readiness in academics

The strategies to standardise and enhance governance are showed in Figure 4. For respondents who were not involved directly as lecturers, most of them remarked that they would like to contribute in various forms, which are development of teaching module/material (35.7%), becoming as panellist of content check (14.3%) and as a guest lecturer or trainer training coach (7.1%), showed some potential from the contributions of the academic lecturers can be expanded beyond a lecture hall. The findings also stressed out the requirement of comprehensive involvement of all academic lecturers from all faculties, including language teachers and lecturers who have attended Training of Trainer (ToT), considering cross-faculty involvement can be seen as an added value to students experience in education. Meanwhile, MACC's involvement as guest lecturers and KIAR's implementation by way of hybrid and mass lecture have been suggested as the way to optimise teaching resources. In terms of programme enhancements, respondents were suggesting that KIAR's implementation under PPCU should be accompanied by clear guidelines, regular monitoring, constant improvement based on feedback and early planning towards organising national conference related to KIAR. These suggestions were parallel with the study from Norfazella Mohd Fariz et al., (2026) which also highlights the importance of university autonomy balanced with comprehensive guidelines from the ministry level.

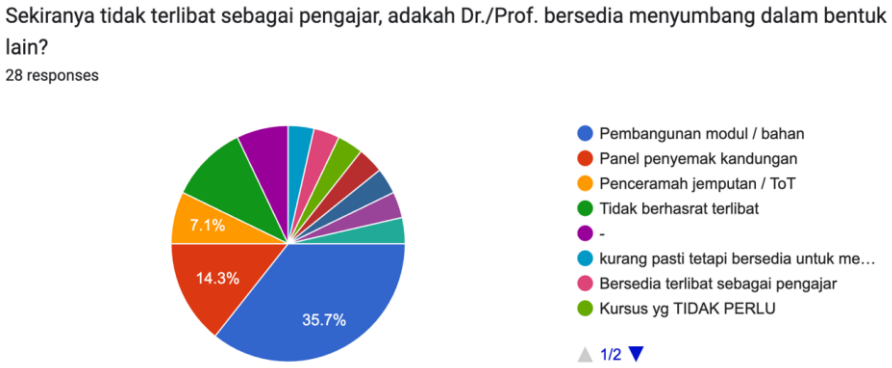



Figure 4. The readiness to contribute into other aspects for respondents who were indirectly involved as lecturers

The summary of themes in demonstrated that UKM's academic readiness is not limited to acceptance of the concept only, but also influenced by structural factor such as workload distribution and governance support. The findings supported the statements of Mohammed et al., (2026) that the effectiveness of anti-corruption education is depends on comprehensive integration between the normal platform, non-formal and informal. Results of the study also aligned with the assumptions of Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) that says perceived behavioural control in this matter, the

capacity and institutional resources plays an important role in determining the real readiness of academics to implement this new responsibility.

**Conclusion**

This study showed the readiness of UKM's academic lecturers in emphasizing KIAR's implementation under PPCU was influenced by the stability between the conceptual acceptance towards the coordination of MPU's curriculum and sustainability of the institutional capacity. Even the presence of minority supports towards governance centralisation under PPCU, the effectiveness of its implementation depends on the improvement on support structure such as fairness distribution of workload, cross-faculty involvement and clear guidelines. The results contributed to the discourse on curriculum design and MPU's governance to become more wider. Hence, this research also recommends further studies on governance curriculum integrity model across higher education institutions in Malaysia.

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