UNSW SYDNEY

Student Conduct and Complaints

1 January – 31 December 2023

CRICOS Provider Code 00098G

About this Report

This report, collated by the Conduct and Integrity Office (CIO), provides an insight into the incidence of plagiarism, breaches of the UNSW Student Code, and student complaints across the University between the 1 January and 31 December 2023.

Limitations

Information in this report is based on records of plagiarism, breaches of *Student Code of Conduct*, and student complaints on the online *Student Conduct and Plagiarism Register* on 1 March 2023.

The quality of data in this report depends on Schools, Faculties and the CIO maintaining accurate and up-to-date records.

Conduct and Integrity Office
Division of Transformation, Planning and Assurance
UNSW

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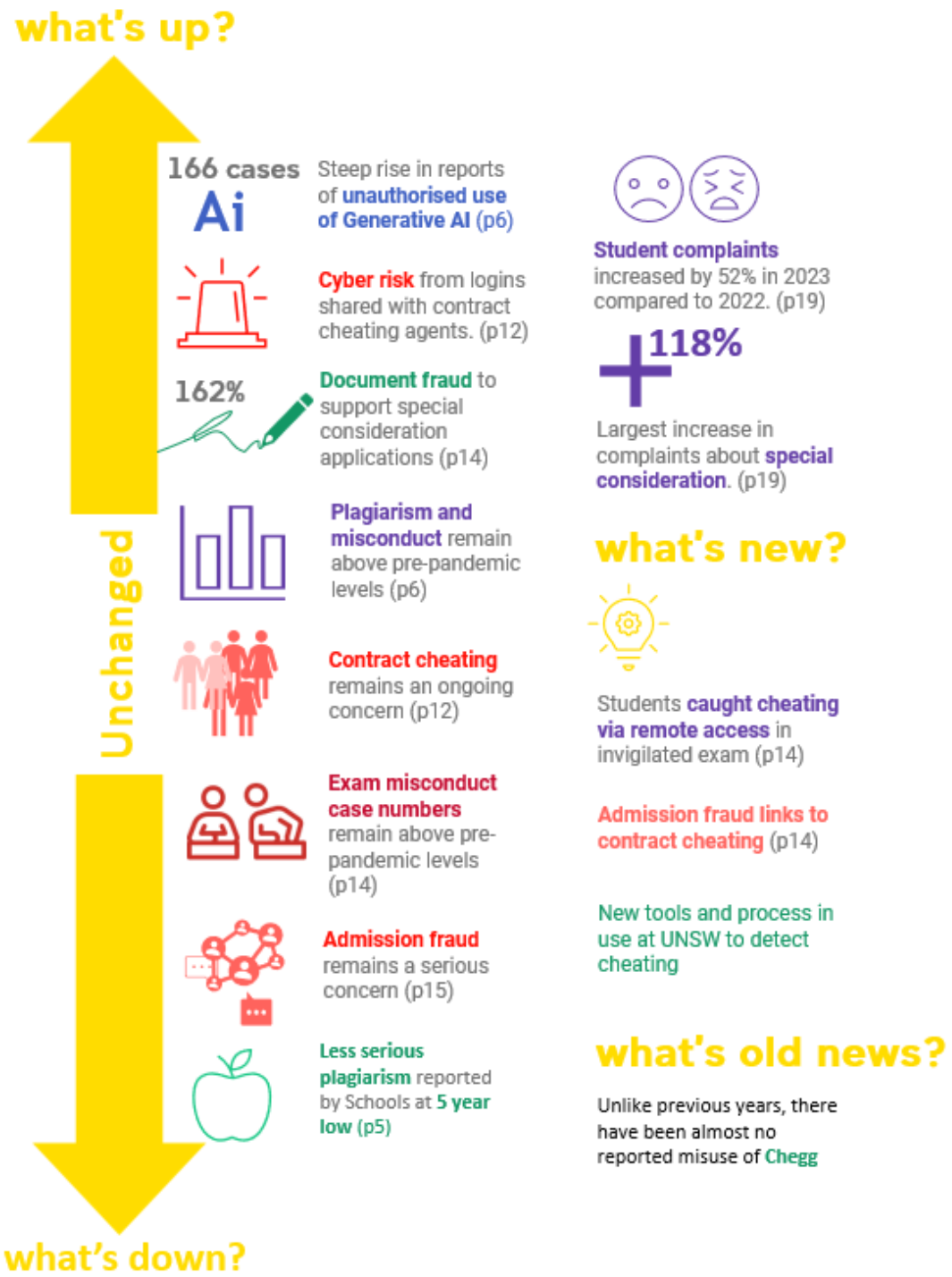
About the Conduct and Integrity Office (CIO)

The CIO investigates and resolves serious complaints and wrongdoing at UNSW, managing:

- Serious student conduct and academic integrity matters
- Research integrity matters
- Reports of serious wrongdoing
- Complex complaints
- UNSW's SpeakUp Strategy of building and fostering a culture of respect and integrity at the University
- UNSW's Complaints Management System

The CIO collaborates with Schools, Faculties and the Division of Education and Student Experience to promote, inform, educate and advise students and staff on academic integrity, and to manage instances of plagiarism and student academic and non-academic misconduct.

AT A GLANCE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INTRODUCTION

Student conduct and integrity

In 2023 the UNSW *Student Code of Conduct* [1] (Student Code) outlined the University's commitment to provide students with a fulfilling and rewarding learning and research experience, and a learning environment to enable students to achieve their full potential, and with academic integrity.

At the University, faculties, schools, divisions, and the Conduct and Integrity Office (CIO) work in close collaboration to uphold integrity and support student success by:

- educating students about good scholarship practices and academic integrity
- ongoing promotion of academic integrity
- improving assessment design to enable students to demonstrate learning outcomes while deterring cheating
- continuously improving detection of student academic misconduct
- facilitating reports of poor scholarship and potential student academic misconduct
- facilitating students speaking up when they have concerns.

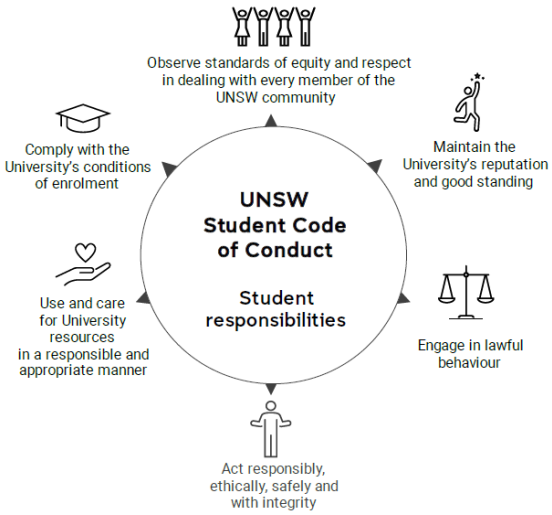

Figure 1: Student responsibilities according to the UNSW Student Code of Conduct

The University's Plagiarism Policy defines plagiarism and its varied forms, and student complaints are managed according to Student Complaint Procedure[2].

Breaches of academic integrity

The University recognises expected academic conduct, poor scholarship, plagiarism and breaches of the Student Code as occurring along a spectrum.

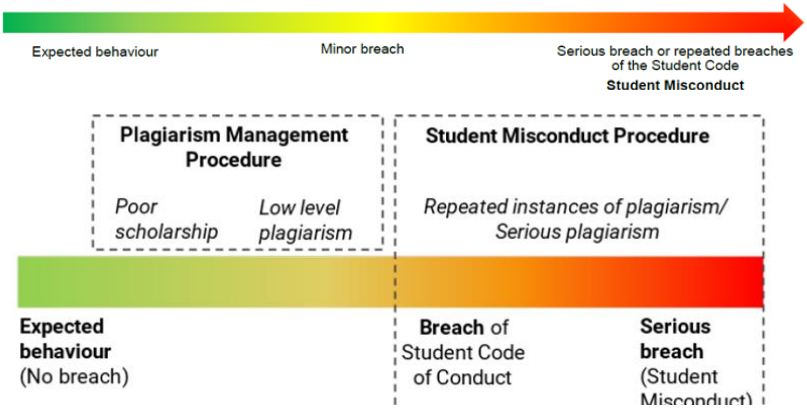

Figure 2: UNSW recognises expected academic conduct, plagiarism and breaches of the Student Code as occurring along a spectrum

[1] Replaced by the UNSW *Code of Conduct and Values* in May 2024.

[2] Replaced by the *Complaints Management and Investigations Policy and Procedure* in February 2024.

Plagiarism involves a person using words or ideas of others and passing them off as their own.

Academic misconduct refers to actions taken by students to gain an unfair academic advantage for themselves over other students, or to help others to do the same.

Incidents of poor scholarship and less serious levels of plagiarism[3], recognised as gaps in academic skill, are managed locally by the appropriate school and faculty according to the University's *Plagiarism Management Procedure*.

Cases of serious plagiarism in submitted detected by Schools are referred to the CIO to manage as a breach of the Student Code, and potential student academic misconduct, according to the *Student Misconduct Procedure*[4]. This includes work which is wholly/almost wholly plagiarised, contract cheating, collusion or copying where there is evidence of deliberate intent, or deliberate intent to disguise plagiarism, exam misconduct, and falsification of documents.

Educative approach to acceptable and unacceptable conduct

The University focuses on early intervention and an educative approach with restorative outcomes to breaches of its Code of Conduct, including poor academic integrity. The University's Code of Conduct, policies and procedures enable Schools and the CIO to assess different levels of academic and non-academic misconduct and to apply the most appropriate outcome, with a view to reducing recidivism and a focus on building a culture of respect and integrity.

Poor scholarship, less serious levels of plagiarism and non-academic conduct are addressed at the local level by Schools with a warning and/or remedial educative action, such as, opportunity to take re-submit work; and/or referral of students to re-sit academic integrity learning modules; reduction of assessment marks commensurate with the extent of plagiarised content in submitted work; and/or apology for poor conduct. Students with identified gaps in academic skills are referred for appropriate academic intervention and support, with more serious non-academic conduct referred to the CIO to manage.

The CIO centrally monitors the University's plagiarism and misconduct register to identify repeated incidents of unacceptable academic and non-academic conduct across students' courses so that appropriate intervention may be undertaken. Students with multiple instances of unacceptable academic and non-academic conduct receive notification cautioning them that a further breach of the Code of Conduct may result in more serious outcomes, along with advice on where to seek support from various University support services available.

The University has deliberately shifted from a punitive approach and adopted an educative and integrity-driven approach when managing incidents of misconduct, where appropriate. A *Courageous Conversation* provides students with an opportunity to be honest and to admit to their behaviour, in a supportive environment. Students who admit to their mistakes in before a full investigation takes place may be entitled to a lesser penalty.

[3] Low-level plagiarism comprises 'minor', 'moderate' and 'significant' levels of plagiarism described in the UNSW *Plagiarism Management Procedure*

[4] In February 2024, the *Student Misconduct Procedure*, along with the *Complaint Management Policy* and six other University complaint and misconduct management procedures, was replaced by the UNSW *Complaint Management and Investigation Policy and Procedure*.

PLAGIARISM AND MISCONDUCT - REPORTED

In 2023, out of 69,573 enrolled students there were 1,584 cases of plagiarism and student misconduct recorded in the University's Student Conduct and Plagiarism Register. While this represents a 16% drop in the number of cases reported between 2022 and 2023, this is still 42% above pre-pandemic levels. This follows record number of cases in 2021 with the University's shift to entirely online assessments during the pandemic.

The table below provides a more detailed breakdown of the cases raised by the University in 2023 compared with previous years, and percentage change compared to 2022. Of the 1,586 misconduct matters recorded in 2023, 957 (60%) were serious[5] cases managed by the CIO.

Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% change 2022-2023
Poor scholarship		86	98	75	78	4%
Less serious plagiarism	778	827	1379	853	546	-35%
Serious plagiarism	56	449	764	411	587	43%
Exam misconduct	81	459	224	402	189	-53%
Falsified documentation (course related)	40	46	21	33	107	224%
Falsified documentation (Admission or conferral)	112	53	41	71	18	-74%
Other academic misconduct	16	15	5	7	19	171%
Non-academic misconduct	33	38	17	37	42	14%
Total number of cases	**1,116**	**1,973**	**2,549**	**1,889**	**1,586**	**-16%**
Students enrolled (headcount)	63,067	63,958	77,868	61,322	69,372	
Cases as % of enrolled	1.8%	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%	**2.3%**	**-0.8**

Table 1: Annual comparison by case type of with percentage (%) change between 2022 and 2023. For serious misconduct, this table represents referred matters, not substantiated/partially substantiated matters.

[5] Comprising serious plagiarism (587 cases), exam misconduct (189), falsified documents (course and admission related) (107) other forms of academic misconduct (19) and non-academic misconduct (42).

2023 Highlights and Trends

Unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) becoming common

While the University encourages appropriate use of AI, it has seen an increase in unauthorised use of generative AI in submitted assessable work – this trend is consistent across the industry and TEQSA has been closely monitoring the situation[6]. In 2023, 166 cases of serious misuse of generative AI[7] were referred to the CIO by Schools for investigation. While most cases involved the use of ChatGPT and Bard, use of translation, text spinning and polishing (rewriting or paraphrasing) tools were also detected.

Serious plagiarism reported surpasses less serious plagiarism as most common form of plagiarism

For the first time, the number of serious plagiarism cases has surpassed less serious plagiarism cases to become the more common form of plagiarism reported in 2023.

As indicated by Table 1, in 2023, Schools recorded 546 cases of less serious plagiarism and referred 587 cases of serious plagiarism to the CIO for investigation. This represents a 35% drop in less serious plagiarism cases compared to 2022, and significantly fewer cases than in pre-pandemic years (-28% compared to the number of cases in 2019). This shift may partly be attributed to the previously reported increase in unauthorised use of generative AI, which accounted for almost a third (28%) of serious plagiarism cases in 2023.

Contract cheating and cybersecurity risks in focus

Contract cheating[8] remains a challenge for the sector, with a total of 232 contract cheating matters referred by Schools to the CIO in 2023. This is consistent with 2022, where 261 contract cheating matters were referred to the CIO for investigation.

Of concern is the cybersecurity risk posed by students sharing their login credentials with contract cheating providers to enable the provider to access, complete and submit assignments and exams online via the University's learning platform. This has enabled contract cheating services, or their proxies, to potentially gain access to confidential UNSW data and intellectual property, including names, details and university email addresses of other students and course materials. The CIO believes that this has led to an increase in communications from contract cheating services targeting students via their university email addresses. The University has introduced Multi-Factor Authentication as one control to increase access security.

Drop in admissions fraud detection

Referrals of admissions fraud fell sharply across 2023, with only 18 referrals to the CIO, down from 112 referrals in 2018. This drop in the number of referrals may be attributed to the Federal Government's recent crackdown on student visas.

Rise in document fraud to support special consideration applications

Falsified course related documents, specifically submission of falsified medical certificates to support applications for special consideration for assessable work and fee remission rose from 33 in 2022 to 107 instances in 2023 (224%).

Rise in non-academic misconduct

As indicated in Table 1, reports of serious non-academic misconduct increased by 14% to 42 matters in 2023.

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[6] https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/higher-education-good-practice-hub/artificial-intelligence

[7] Unauthorised use of generative AI was not recognised as plagiarism prior to 2023. The University's *Plagiarism Policy* and *Plagiarism Management Procedure* has now been amended and records of unauthorised use of generative AI will now be recorded on the Student Conduct and Plagiarism Register.

[8] Also known as 'ghost writing' where a student engages another person to complete work for them and submits it as their own.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT - CLOSED

This section of the report covers plagiarism and academic misconduct cases closed by the University in 2023

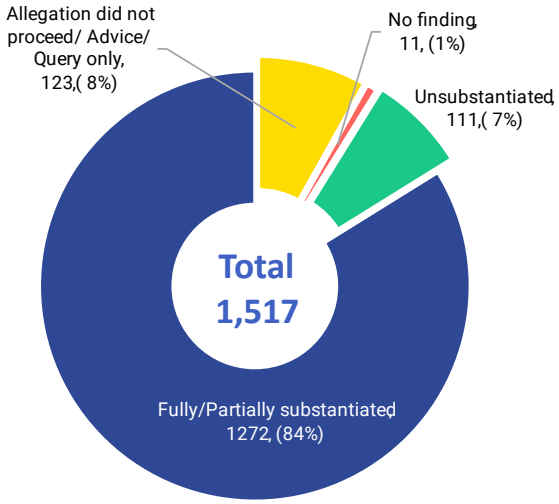


Figure 3: All plagiarism and academic misconduct cases closed by the University in 2023.

As shown in Figure 4, the University closed 1,517 cases[9] in 2023. Of these, most (84% or 1,272) of the cases closed were substantiated or partially substantiated. Of the 123 cases in which did not proceed, most of which were initially referred to the CIO as serious plagiarism, were returned to the School to manage as less serious level of plagiarism as they did not meet the threshold of serious plagiarism.

An outcome of 'unsubstantiated' or 'no finding' is made, and the case dismissed, where the CIO has put an allegation to a student, and they were able to adequately address the concerns raised.

As indicated in Table 2, of the 1,272 cases:

- 1,272 cases of plagiarism or academic misconduct were substantiated or partially substantiated. Of these:
  - 18 cases related to use of falsified documents to gain admission (admission fraud)
  - just under half involved poor scholarship (6%) or a less serious level (43%) of plagiarism

    As expected, just over half (53%) of cases of poor scholarship and less serious plagiarism, where poor academic skill or academic inexperience are primary factors, involved copying.
  - about a quarter (29% or 363 cases) related to students found to have engaged in serious level plagiarism. Of these, most (64% or 232 cases) involved contract cheating
  - about a quarter (22%) involved a serious breach of the Student Code, with exam misconduct cases comprising almost half (47% or 169) of the cases.
- 18 cases related to admissions fraud, which are not considered to relate to plagiarism or academic misconduct.

The following sections will examine these in greater detail.

[9] Only substantiated cases of Poor Scholarship and less serious (Minor, Moderate and Significant) level plagiarism are registered on the University's Student Conduct and Plagiarism Register by Schools and Faculties according to the UNSW *Plagiarism Management Procedure*. Instances of plagiarism assessed at the 'Serious' level are referred to the CIO for investigation.

Substantiated/partially substantiated cases by type	Number	Percentage of (%) total
Poor scholarship	**78**	**6%**
Copying	28	
Inappropriate citation	24	
Inappropriate paraphrasing	20	
Self-plagiarism	5	
Collusion	1	
Less serious plagiarism[10]	**546**	**43%**
Copying	304	
Collusion	103	
Inappropriate paraphrasing	65	
Inappropriate citation	39	
Self-plagiarism	35	
Serious plagiarism	**363**	**29%**
Contract cheating	232	
Collusion	71	
Copying	56	
Self-plagiarism	4	
Breach of the Student Code	**1**	**1%**
Unauthorised materials or property in exam	1	
Serious breach of the Student Code	**279**	**22%**
Unauthorised communication in exam	133	
Falsified documents (course related)	89	
Unauthorised materials or property in exam	30	
Falsified documents (Admission or conferral)	18	
Impersonation in exam	6	
Fabrication	6	
Gained prior knowledge of assessment	2	
TOTAL	**1,272**	

*Table 2: Breakdown of the 1,272 cases which were **substantiated/partially substantiated** in 2023 by type*

Faculty

As indicated by Table 2 and Figure 5 below:

- UNSW Business School's continued efforts in detection resulted in it recording the Faculty's highest number of substantiated cases in 2023 (296 matters), a 21% increase from 2022.
- Faculty of Law and Justice saw its highest increase in cases following a stronger focus on detection and registration of poor scholarship and less serious level plagiarism (representing 87% of all cases recorded in the Faculty). The Faculty recorded a 64% increase in cases, from 61 cases in 2022 to 100 cases in 2023.
- Faculty of Engineering focus on assessment design has seen its case numbers steadily returning to pre-pandemic levels, with 39% fewer cases (266 cases), down from a record high of 765 cases at the height of the pandemic in 2021. Most of the cases in 2021 may be attributed to the University's rapid shift to online learning and assessments.
- Faculty of Science, like the Faculty of Engineering, has seen a gradual decline in case numbers.

[10] Does not include 'Poor scholarship', which is examined separately in the table.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% change 2022-23
Business School	121	255	289	245	296	21%
Engineering	150	507	765	435	266	-39%
Arts, Design and Architecture	397	216	189	229	192	-16%
UNSW College			187	161	158	-2%
Science	229	215	410	223	118	-47%
Law and Justice	14	36	56	61	100	64%
UNSW Canberra at ADFA	62	105	78	45	62	38%
Medicine & Health	47	24	113	77	60	-22%
Not identified	7		30	9	2	
Total	**1,027**	**1,358**	**2,117**	**1,485**	**1,254#**	-16%

Table 3: Annual comparison of substantiated instances of plagiarism and academic misconduct by Faculty 2020-2023

#NOTE: This table excludes 18 cases of admission fraud,, which are not plagiarism or student academic misconduct

While not a Faculty of the University, UNSW College (formerly UNSW Global) has been included in this report as students undertaking Diploma courses at the College are UNSW enrolled students. All other UNSW College cases are handled internally by the College.

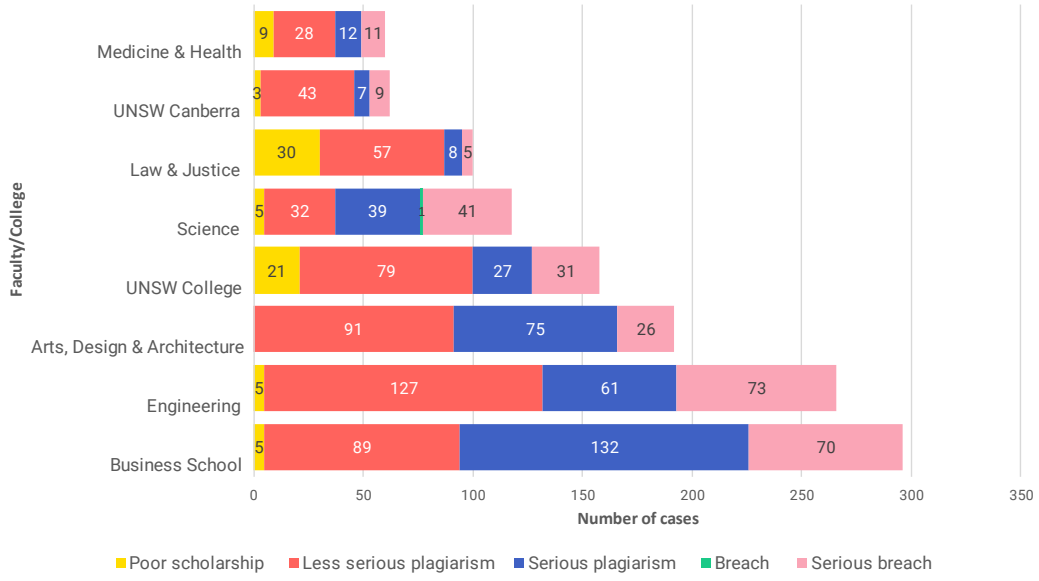


Figure 4: Plagiarism and academic misconduct cases by Faculty – excluding 2 cases in the DVC€ Board of Studies.

Courses

Following is a list of the courses ranked according to the number of substantiated findings of plagiarism and student academic misconduct. It's important to note that these is viewed by the CIO as examples of exceptional detection and awareness of academic integrity by course staff.

1. Responsible Business Professionalism (MGMT5050) – 97 cases
2. Business Decision Making (DPBS1100) – 46 cases
3. Data Structures and Algorithms (COMP2521) - 37 cases
4. Introduction to Programming (DPST1091) – 31 cases
5. Data Structures and Algorithms (COMP9024) – 28 cases

Plagiarism

As indicated in Table 2 (on page 9), just under half of the 1,272 cases substantiated and closed in 2023 involved a combination of poor scholarship (6% or 78 cases) and less serious level plagiarism (43% or 546 cases). About a quarter (29% or 363 cases) related to students found to have engaged in serious level plagiarism. Of the 363 cases, most (64% or 232 cases) involved contract cheating.

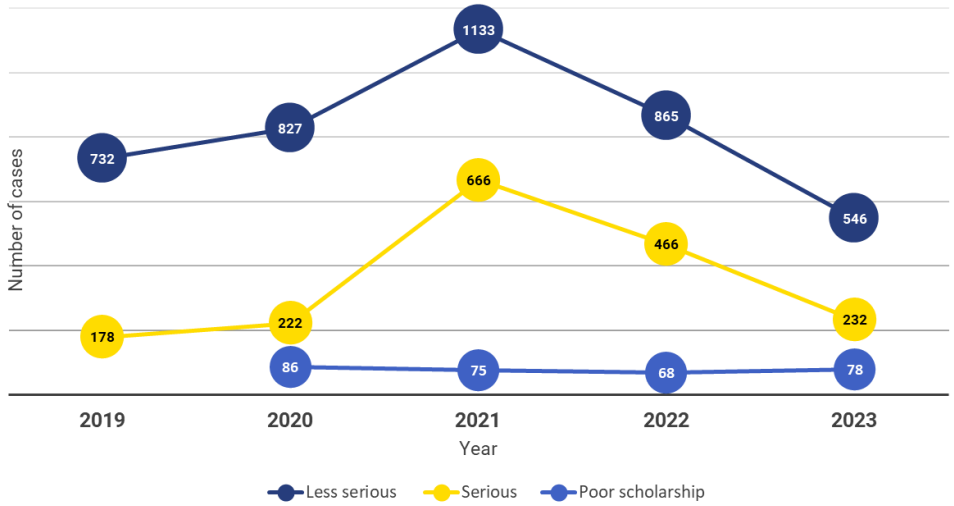


Figure 5: Annual comparison of levels of poor scholarship, less serious level plagiarism and serious level plagiarism.

NOTE: Recognition of 'Poor scholarship' commenced in 2020 following a full review of the Plagiarism Management Procedure in 2019.

It should be noted that while the level of serious plagiarism appears to be returning to pre-pandemic levels following a surge in incidents of contract cheating at the peak of the pandemic in 2021, the number of less serious plagiarism cases, where academic inexperience is often a primary factor, appear to have dropped significantly. While the drop in less serious case numbers may be attributed to the growth in the unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence (AI), which is categorised as student misconduct.

The CIO will be working with the faculties and School Student Integrity Advisers to encourage and support detection efforts and to facilitate the recording of less serious plagiarism and to refer more serious level plagiarism to the CIO.

Unauthorised use of generative AI

Unauthorised or unacknowledged use of AI in assessments is a form of cheating and is considered student misconduct. While there were no reports of unauthorised use of generative AI reported in 2022, the CIO began to receive a significant influx of referrals from Schools in the latter half of Term 1 2023 which has progressively increased over the remainder of 2023. All 166 cases referred by Schools to the CIO were substantiated as serious misuse of generative AI. As indicated earlier in this report, most of the cases involved the use of ChatGPT and Bard, as well as translation, text spinning and polishing (rewriting or paraphrasing) tools. Local school level detection and management of unauthorised use of generative AI and similar tools were not recorded in 2023.

The University is rolling out a new system to help standardise course outlines and ensure consistent information about the use of AI in courses. Assessments are also being redesigned to enable AI to become part of the learning experience and to ensure students are informed and critical users of the technology.

Contract Cheating

Contract cheating is when a student engages another person to complete work for them and then submits the work as their own. It represents a serious breach of the *Student Code of Conduct* and is managed according to the University's *Student Misconduct Procedure*.

In 2023, the CIO investigated and substantiated 232 cases of contract cheating. This is in comparison with 261 cases of contract cheating that were investigated and substantiated in 2022.

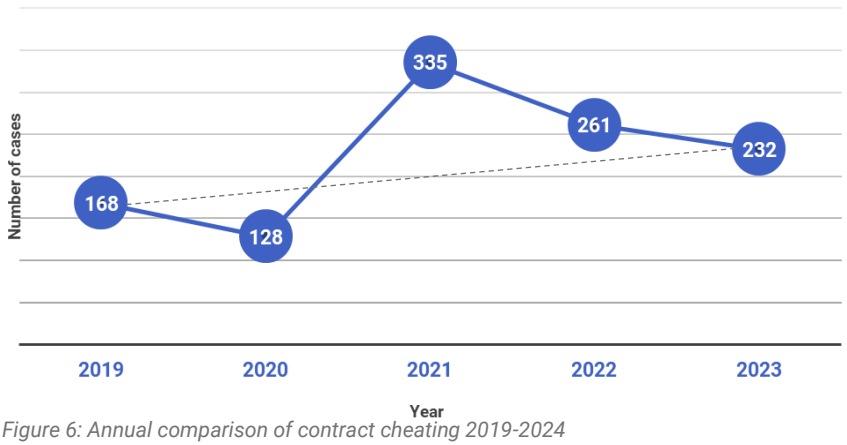


Figure 6: Annual comparison of contract cheating 2019-2024

While Figure 7 may indicate levels of contract cheating declining, the levels are still 38% above pre-pandemic levels. This this is due to the University's ongoing effort and increased ability to detect the various forms contract cheating – despite the rapid pace of its evolution over the years.

While 'essay mill' activity, 'tutoring' services - where 'tutors' complete the assessment on the students' behalf and students posting assignment and exam questions to course help services, such as Chegg during online exams - have continued, the University has observed more assertive efforts by contract cheating services to target UNSW students.

Of concern is the number of students who have shared their UNSW login credentials with third parties to enable contract cheating services to impersonate them online in assessments and in exams. The CIO reported last year that the practice presented a cyber risk to the University and risk to confidentiality as it enabled contract cheating services to access the University's learning management system, Moodle to gather students' email addresses and course materials, in that course and all other courses the student was enrolled in. Contract cheating services have then used the email addresses to target students with their services – in one case, impersonating the course co-ordinator in the email communication to students in the course.

As reported previously, investigation of contract cheating is now taking longer as the University has become more adept at detecting and uncovering instances of historical contract cheating. A school referral of suspected contract cheating involving a single assessment can quickly become a complex multi-course investigations as a CIO case manager may uncover that the student has engaged in contract cheating not only in one or two assessments, but through their entire course and/or their whole degree program. This included the example of a student who had not attended classes or engaged with course content throughout the Term but achieved a remarkably high grade in their final exam. This raised questions at the school and the case was subsequently referred to the CIO for investigation, resulting in a finding the student had engaged in contract cheating in the final exam and in other previously submitted assessments.

In 2023, the CIO investigated 199 cases which had been referred by schools for suspected contract cheating in a single subject or assessment. Following investigation, 78 of the 199 referrals (39%) were subsequently found to have evidence of contract cheating in multiple courses and/or assessments. Of the 78 cases:

- 63 (81%) resulted in multiple fail grades (00FLs)
- 15 (19%) resulted in fail grades (0%) for multiple assessment tasks
- 14 students were suspended; and
- 21 students were permanently excluded from the University.

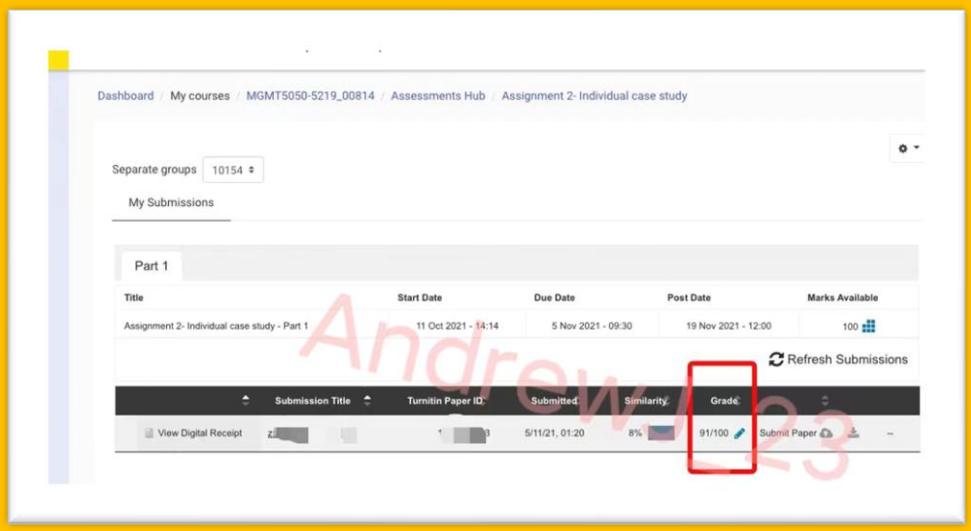
Contract cheating service ‘success story’ leads to UNSW graduate being caught

In May 2023, a complaint from a student alarmed at finding a contract cheating service advertisement addressed to their UNSW email led the University to uncover historical contract cheating by a UNSW graduate.

The email advertisement in simplified Chinese, read:

"Babes, the first [assessment name] for [course code] has already started. It's due on Monday. The back-to-school activities now are targeting [course code] with super low-price discounts. Friends who need help pulling up grades, controlling grades, or getting high scores, you can hit me up."

Attached to that email was a screenshot of a former client’s assessment result on Moodle, with the provider bragging about the part they played in their client’s high distinction score on an assessment. The CIO conducted a matching exercise with the course convener and identified a former student as the contract cheating provider’s client.



The CIO’s investigation of the former student’s submitted work uncovered further evidence that they had contract cheated throughout the whole of their UNSW program (six courses). As a result of the finding under the *Student Misconduct Procedure*, a penalty of 00FL (Fail) mark was applied to all six courses, along with ‘permanent exclusion’ from the University. This finding resulted in the UNSW graduate’s awarded degree being revoked.

Contract cheating with the advent of generative AI

While there has been much speculation that generative artificial intelligence (AI) would spell the end of contract cheating, this has not come to fruition. Instead, the University has evidence that contract cheating services are using generative AI to deliver almost instantly, seemingly, high quality outputs to the student as a premium service.

The CIO has managed cases in which there is evidence that the student has engaged a contract cheating service to complete an assessment. However, unbeknown to the student, the contract cheating service heavily used generative AI in completing complete assessments.

The University also has reason to believe that contract cheating services are using generative AI translators to expand their services into ‘new markets’.

Exam Misconduct

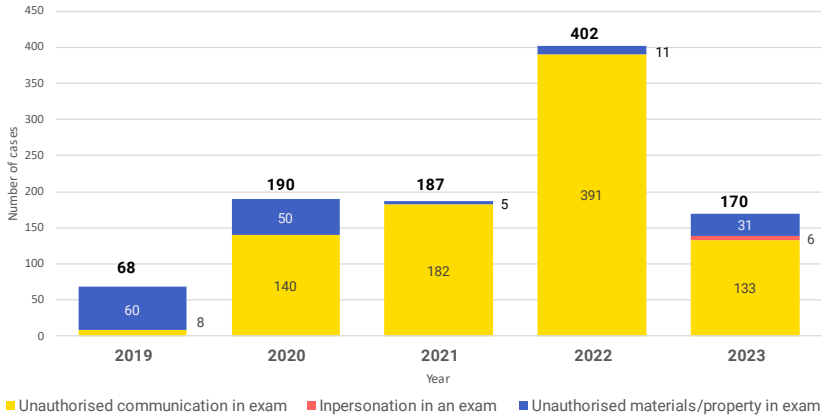


Figure 7: Annual comparison and breakdown of exam misconduct 2019-2023

In 2023 the University substantiated 170 cases of exam misconduct, As indicated by Figure 8 below, unauthorised communication during online exams continued in 2023, comprising 133 (78%) of all cases. As students return to in-person invigilated exams instances of unauthorised material or property detected in an exam remain high and 150% higher than pre-pandemic. While the University has previously detected impersonation of students in an exam the case study below describes the detection of a new form of impersonation.

Exam cheating via remote access

While the University has previously detected impersonation of students during in-person exams it has for the first time detected a person taking invigilated exams for students via remote access.

Exam invigilators in UNSW computer labs have detected students who had allowed third parties to remotely access their computers to complete the exams on their behalf.

In one such case, an invigilator noticed that a student appeared to be pretending to type and use their mouse, with their typing not reflecting what was displayed on screen. Upon questioning the student and accessing the computer that they were using, it became apparent that a third party was using software to view the student's screen and take full control of their mouse and keyboard to complete questions for them. The case was referred to the CIO for investigation and the allegation of exam misconduct was substantiated.

Falsified documents (course related)

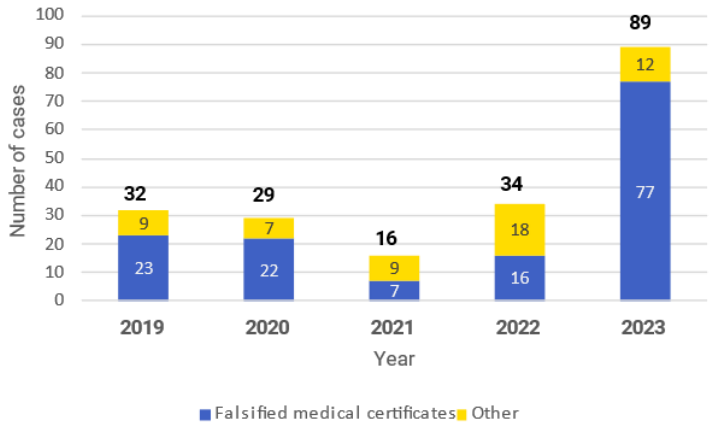


Figure 8 Annual comparison of cases of falsified documents 2019-2023

As shown in Figure 9, the number of cases of students found to have falsified documents to gain an academic advantage was more than double (162%) the number of cases in 2022. As with previous years, most (87% or 77) of the 89 cases of falsified course related documents detected related to the submission of one or more falsified/fraudulent medical certificates in support of an application for Special Consideration in an academic assessment, or for a fee remission. This included falsified COVID test results and falsified hospital admission reports.

Admissions Fraud

Admissions fraud remains a major concern for the higher education sector.

As Figure 9 shows, in 2023, the University detected 23 cases of admissions fraud, comprising:

- Five cases (representing 4%) of 124 back-to-source checks conducted by the University's admission team of documents submitted from119 tertiary institutions, one High School qualification, and four English language proficiency tests; and
- 18 cases arising from contract cheating and other cases investigated by the CIO, and anonymous whistleblower reports.

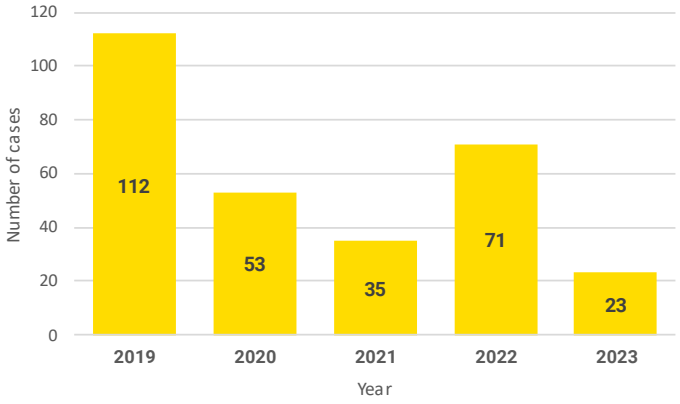


Figure 9: Annual comparison of substantiated cases of admissions fraud 2019-2023

As illustrated in Figure 9, there has been a 68% drop in the number of cases of suspected admission fraud in 2023 compared to 2022, which may be attributed the Federal Government's recent crackdown on student visas.

Admission fraud links to contract cheating

A comprehensive and large-scale admission fraud investigation of 36 international student enrolled at the University between 2017 and 2019 by the CIO found that that most of them had engaged in contract cheating.

These findings were presented by the CIO in a session entitled *The Supply Chain of Contract Cheating: The Sum of Its Parts—a Case Study of Investigating Admission Fraud and Contract Cheating at the University of New South Wales* at the:

- 9th European Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia in 2023; and
- 2023 Australasian Academic Integrity Network (AAIN) Forum, attended by 1,300 academic integrity professionals from over 70 institutions across Australasia.

The investigation findings also prompted changes to the CIO's standard operating procedures. Instead of investigating admissions fraud and contract cheating as separate breaches of the Student Code of Conduct, investigators will now also examine admission documents in cases where students have been referred to the CIO for suspected contract cheating. Similarly, where an allegation of admission fraud of an enrolled student is referred to the CIO will review completed coursework for contract cheating. Students who have entered the University with falsified documents and have not met the requirements for entry are permanently excluded and reported to the Department of Home Affairs.

Penalties and Outcomes

Penalty	*School applied outcome/ penalty*		*CIO applied outcome/* ***penalty***			
	Poor Scholarship	**Less than serious**	**Serious Plagiarism**	**Breach**	**Serious Breach**	**Total**
No penalty	4	9		1	1	15
No formal action					1	1
Warning with no mark reduction	6	20				26
Educative interview					2	2
Apology required					1	1
Warning with mark reduction	45	62				107
Student's original content marked while disregarding plagiarised parts	5	104				109
Resubmit without reduction of marks	14	18				32
Resubmit assessment with mark reduction	4	50				54
Resubmission required and mark capped at 50%		49				49
Resubmit and drop a grade		4				4
Mark capped at 50/100 (or 50%)		67	3		5	75
0% for assessment		163	239		157	559
00FL for course			148		110	258
Delayed graduation					1	1
Formal reprimand/ Formal warning			3		6	9
Suspension			9		8	17
Exclusion			18		15	33
Total	**78**	**546**	**420**	**1**	**307**	**1,352**

Table 4: Penalties and outcomes applied for substantiated cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct in 2023

NOTE: 1) More than one outcome may be applied to a case 2) a single penalty is recorded on the Student Conduct and Plagiarism Register even if the student has received penalties against multiple courses (e.g. a student will have a record of a single penalty of 00FL even if they receive 00FL for each of the 19 courses that they been found to have cheated in).

As Table 4 above indicates, for cases of less serious plagiarism, where inexperience or deficiencies in academic skill is often a mitigating factor, Schools have typically imposed 'a warning with a mark reduction or marked the student's original content in the submitted work or imposed a mark cap of 50/100 (pass mark of 50%) where 'Minor' or 'Moderate' levels of plagiarism were detected. For cases of 'Significant' levels of plagiarism, most Schools imposed a 0% (Fail) grade for the assessment.

The most common outcome 'Serious' and less serious (comprising 'Minor', 'Moderate', and "Significant') level plagiarism was a penalty of 0% for the assessment. Both the Schools and the CIO issued this outcome a total of 559 times, down from 643 times in 2022 and from 2021, where it was issued 1134 times.

The penalty 0% in an assessment is in most cases issued by the CIO as a reduced penalty when a student chooses to admit to the alleged misconduct as part of a Courageous Conversation. Where students do not make a full and upfront admission, and an investigation subsequently substantiates the allegation, then a Fail for the course (00FL grade) is the standard penalty. This was issued 258 times in 2023.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions

Suspensions are a severe penalty and applied only in cases involving the most serious breaches of the Student Code of Conduct. In 2023, there were 17 suspensions. This is three times (325%) more than the four suspensions issued in 2022.

Exclusions are a last resort penalty and are only used for the most egregious behaviour – commonly applied to instances of admission fraud, large scale contract cheating, and serious behavioural breaches of the Student Code of Conduct. In 2023 there were 33 permanent exclusions, compared to 38 permanent exclusions applied in 2022 to students engaged in large clusters of admissions fraud.

Procedural reviews

The purpose of a procedural review is to establish if the investigation undertaken was procedurally fair, and not to review the merits of the decision.

In 2023, no procedural reviews were recorded at the School level for less serious plagiarism. There were 43 procedural reviews of the 953 serious misconduct matters managed by the CIO. Two of the 43 cases reviewed (4.7%) were upheld. This is compared to 2022, which saw a total of 19 procedural reviews undertaken, of which two were upheld (10.5%). This shows that despite the number of procedural reviews more than doubling, the percentage of those upheld decreased.

These results reflect the CIO's robust investigation process, professionalism of its investigators, and its strict adherence to the University's policy and procedures.

NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Non-Academic misconduct refers to breaches of the Student Code of Conduct which do not directly relate to academic pursuits, such as conduct towards another person, misuse or damage to property or the University's reputation. Examples of unacceptable conduct include the use of offensive language, harassing behaviours and sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment and sexual assault).

This part of the report examines substantiated cases of student non-academic misconduct referred to the CIO for investigation in 2023.

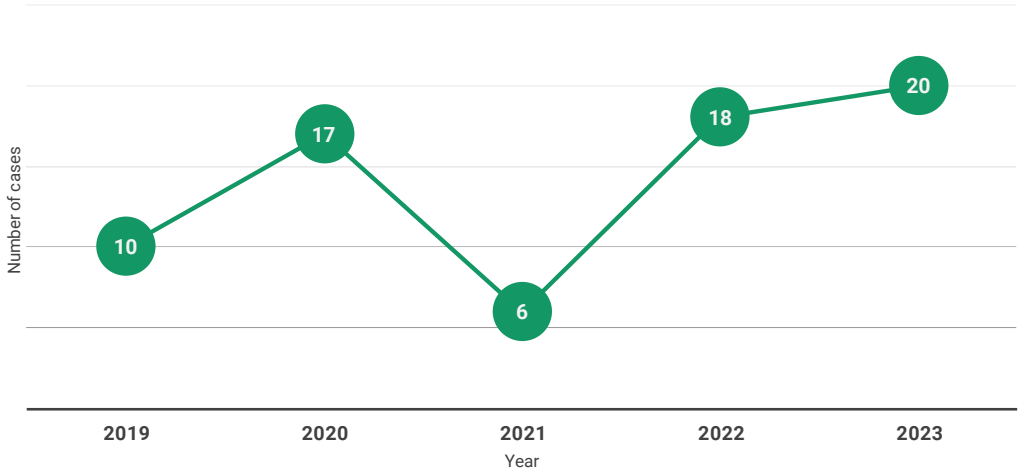


Figure 30: Annual comparison of substantiated student non-academic breaches of the Student Code of Conduct 2019-2023

Of the 46 non-academic cases investigated and closed by the CIO in 2023, 20 (44%) cases were substantiated or partially substantiated. Of the 20 cases, 10 (50%) of the cases related to conduct towards another person with the remaining half of cases relating to misuse or damage to property. The cases included:

- a group of students who were found to have attempted to enter a restricted access service tunnel deemed as a high risk confined space. Formal warnings were issued to all the students involved.
- a student who had created a fake UNSW testamur and circulated it online despite not having graduated yet. They received a formal warning.
- a student who had sent threatening messages to members of a group assessment they were participating in. They were suspended.

Of the substantiated cases of students engaged in non-academic misconduct, one student was permanently excluded from the University and two students received suspensions from the academic year. The remaining students received formal warnings or instruction to take educative or remedial action for their conduct.

It is important to note that this report does not include reports of Gendered Violence made through the Gendered Violence Portal. The University provides an annual report focused on all reports of gendered violence involving UNSW staff and students. This Annual report can be found at: Annual Report | Planning & Assurance - UNSW Sydney

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

This part of the report examines formal student complaints received by the CIO. Formal student complaints are managed under the *Student Complaint Procedure* and include complaints which could not be resolved at the local level or where the subject matter is serious or complex.

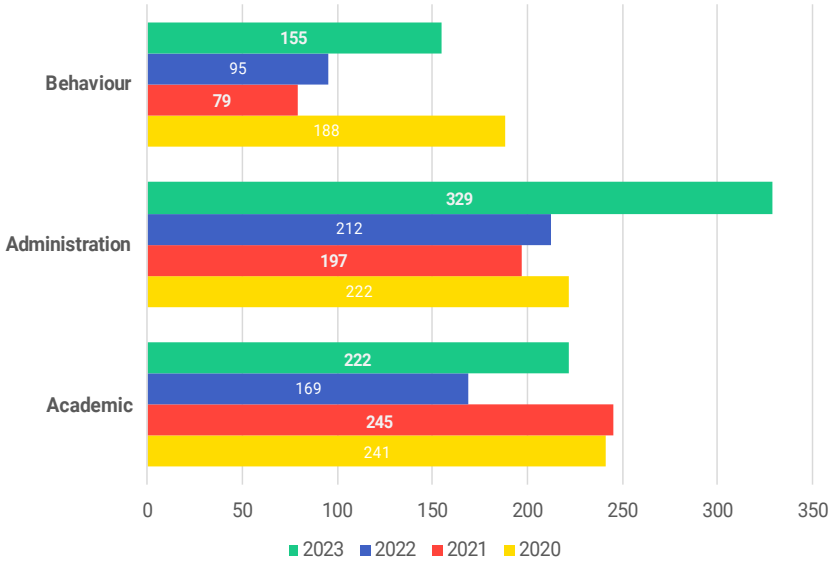


Figure 41 Annual comparison of the number and type of complaints received 2020 – 2023

In 2023, the CIO received 705 student complaints, representing a 52% increase on the 461 complaints received in 2022.

Complaints received are grouped as relating to the behaviour of other student or staff; University administration or process; and academic related.

Table 5 shows that assessment marking was the focus of most complaints from students, followed by complaints about the behaviour of other students and University service quality. Table 6 shows that the top five complaint areas over the past three years began to trend downwards from 2020 but picked up again in 2023. Of note is the (118%) increase in number of complaints about special considerations.

Academic	Administration	Behaviour
Assessment – Marking (114)	Service Quality (75)	Behaviour of other students (78)
Assessment – Design (31)	Special consideration (74)	Staff conduct (63)
Course – Instruction (20)	Enrolment (52)	Student academic conduct (7)
Course – Feedback (17)	Admissions (37)	Conduct towards another person (6)
Course – Professor availability (11)	Fees/Finance (34)	

Table 5: Categorisation of the most frequent complaints received in 2023

Top 5 complaint subtype	2020	2021	2022	2023	% increase between 2022 and 2023
Assessment – Marking	93	90	71	114	↑61%
Student behavioural conduct	109	29	48	78	↑63%
Service Quality	60	73	52	75	↑44%
Special consideration	24	34	34	74	↑118%
Staff conduct	72	45	38	63	↑66%

Table 6: Annual comparison of most frequent complaints 2020-2023

As indicated by Table 7 below, almost half (330 or 48%) of the 683 complaints closed by the CIO were referred to the local level to manage as students had not sought local level resolution before escalating the complaint. Of the remaining complaints received:

- Eight complaints were found to be substantiated
- 63 complaints were found to be unsubstantiated
- 107 complaints were determined to be feedback only; and
- 12 complaints were resolved through a negotiated outcome.

A breakdown of complaints by Faculty was not undertaken as most (96% or 674) of the 705 complainants did not indicate the Faculty which they were enrolled with.

Outcome	2020	2021	2022	2023
Referred to local level or other areas of the University for resolution	239	299	226	330
Response provided	111	55	85	109
No action/response required	182	101	67	107
Unsubstantiated	25	30	30	63
Referred to another process	74	13	19	18
Withdrawn by complainant	14	11	9	16
Resolved through negotiated outcome	8	4	15	12
Not UNSW related	2		2	9
Insufficient evidence		4	1	5
Referred to another organisation	4	1	1	5
Substantiated	5	6	6	8
Referred to UNSW Human Resources	1			1
Referred for investigation		1		
Total	**665**	**525**	**461**	**683**

Table 7: Comparison of outcomes of complaints closed by the CIO 2020-2023

CIO RESOLUTION TIMEFRAMES

The CIO has a diverse range of skills essential for the detection and management of student misconduct. Through the implementation of improved detection tools and investigative procedures, it continues to lead the strengthen its ability to detect and manage serious misconduct.

As indicated in Figure 13, half of the cases managed by the CIO in 2023 were finalised within 6 weeks of receipt, with the remainder taking 6 weeks or more to finalise.

CIO case resolution timeframes are subject to a range of factors, including:

- volume of matters on hand
  Typically, the CIO receives the bulk of case referrals from Schools after final exams each Term.
- case complexity
  As indicated previously, the CIO is increasingly detecting historical instances of contract cheating arising from case referrals related to a single assessment. Such cases typically take longer to investigate.
- student engagement with the process
  Generally, students are provided with a week to respond to each stage of an investigation. Timeframes may be drawn out where students do not engage in the process, or request extensions of time, to respond.

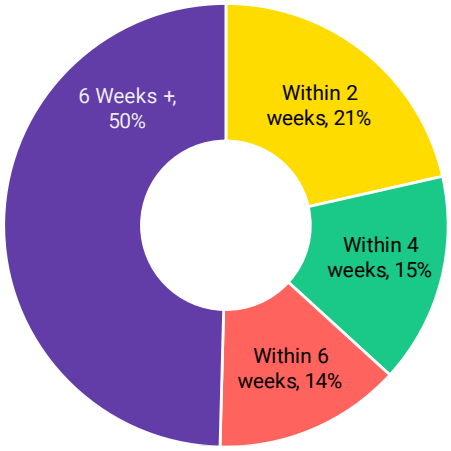


Figure 12: Average timeframe for closing serious misconduct case

Examples of serious misconduct cases which took longer to finalise in 2023 included:

- a complex matter of admissions fraud, which required correspondence with the Department of Home Affairs & an overseas university to resolve.
- a contract cheating referral in which it was found that a student had shared with members of a group assessment that they had engaged a contract cheating service to complete their work. In addition to this, a back to source check revealed that their admissions documentation had been falsified.
- a referral of suspected fabrication of references, in which further investigation by the CIO revealed the student had contract cheated in 16 courses.

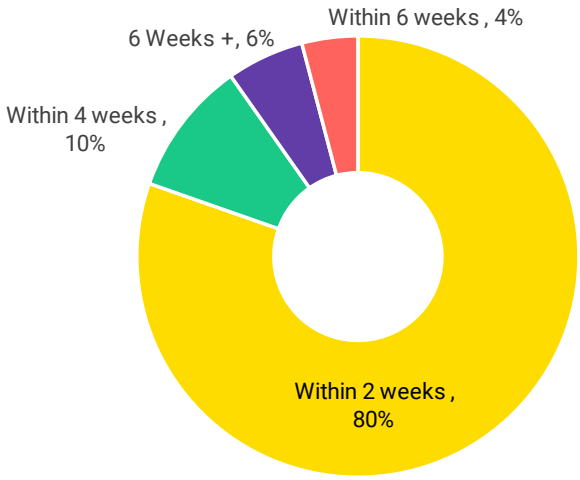


Figure 135 Average timeframe for closing a student complaint

In contrast, the median time taken to finalise most complaints from receipt was 11 days, as just under half of the complaints received by the CIO were referred for local level resolution[11]. More serious complaints take longer to resolve. In 2023, they included complaints about the behaviour of other students, sexual assaults, student academic misconduct and financial disputes, which required investigation.

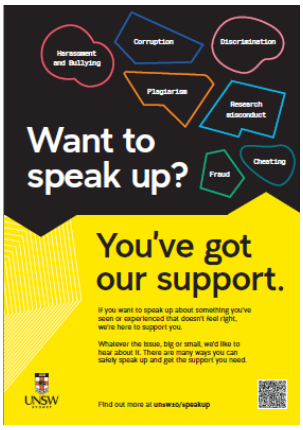
[11] Data on length of time taken to resolve complaints at a local level is not currently recorded.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

Focus	Key achievement

Education

Information, education and promotion of academic integrity



- Communication program under UNSW's SpeakUp Strategy to encourage the UNSW community to speak up about unacceptable behaviours, including plagiarism, cheating, harassment and bullying.

- Academic Integrity had a presence in the form of a dedicated Integrity Café at O-Week in Term 1. The stall's positive spin on academic integrity among students with products such as 'Truth Cookies', 'Honesty Pops' and 'No Fluff Floss' as give-aways. Volunteers from the CIO spoke with students. A total of 450+ community members engaged with discussing integrity and received an item from the Integrity Café.
- 5,000 support services postcards for Academic Integrity were inserted into O-Week bags handed out to new students

Student comments at the 2023 Integrity Café and other activities during Orientation Week

Everyone cheats and you won't catch everyone – Second year exchange student.

Why are we not allowed to collaborate with our friends when we are encouraged in high school to do it - First year UNSW student – high school leaver.

How does UNSW plan to monitor ChatGPT – you can't track my personal device - UNSW student

It's not cheating if you don't get caught. - Third year UNSW student

Engagement and education

- The CIO presented sessions to:
  - first year international students on plagiarism and expected conduct
  - Co-Op Scholars at their inductions on expected conduct and how to raise concerns
  - new PhD Students to educate and inform on misconduct; and
  - staff in LETS meet sessions on identification of plagiarism
- CIO presented *The Supply Chain of Contract Cheating: The Sum of Its Parts—a Case Study of Investigating Admission Fraud and Contract Cheating at the University of New South Wales* at the:
  - 9th European Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia.
  - 2022 Australasian Academic Integrity Network (AAIN) Forum, attended by 1,300 academic integrity professionals from over 70 institutions across Australasia.

  The presentation garnered significant attention, evidenced by keen interest, feedback and post-conference follow-up. It also facilitated the establishment of valuable connections with both local and international colleagues and collaboration efforts are in progress to advance CIO's capabilities in detecting contract cheating.

Focus	Key achievement

Prevention

Providing information and training to staff on use and detection of generative AI

- A Q&A webinar was held on 7 June 2023 with a panel to answer students' questions on:
  - UNSW's perspective on generative AI tools
  - how AI could shape the future of learning; and
  - what that means for UNSW students.

The panel speakers included Prof. Alex Steel (Director, AI Education Strategy UNSW), Dr Sasha Vassar (UNSW Engineering), Prof. Stephen Doherty (UNSW Arts, Design & Architecture), Michele Leeming (UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office), Dr James Bedford (Academic Facilitator, PVCE Portfolio), and session facilitator Katia Fenton (Arc Student Director).

- CIO SharePoint site updated to provide supporting information and resources to Schools
- Community of practice with the School Student Integrity Advisors (SSIAs) sessions.

Collaborating with a design student to create a contract cheating campaign

As part of a preventative and educative approach to build a culture of respect and integrity at UNSW, CIO collaborated with a UNSW design student to develop a Contract Cheating Campaign that would raise awareness amongst students and highlight:

- Cheating is never the right answer.
- There are UNSW support services available to students struggling academically.
- Cheating has serious consequences for any student found to have cheated.
- Working for a contract cheating company is illegal in Australia.

Posters with these messages were placed in almost 1,000 bathrooms across Kensington campus in early 2023.

Resources

Enhancing systems, policies & procedures

- A new *Complaints Management and Investigation Policy and Procedure* was developed to replace the University's policy on complaint management and seven procedures for managing complaints and misconduct, including the *Student Misconduct Procedure*.
- Work commenced on a new complaints and case management system for managing the Student Plagiarism and Conduct Registers.
- The University developed and implemented guidelines on use of generative AI and managing unauthorised use of generative AI.

Identifying and detecting instances of contract cheating

- CIO continued its ongoing development and improvement of its range of sophisticated data analysis tools for identifying unauthorised access to UNSW systems and potential abnormalities in assessment submissions.

Focus	Key achievement
	• Ongoing collaboration with experts in the field of metadata analysis, with the intention of developing a robust tool to use to better flag likely contract cheating in assessments. • Ongoing collaboration between CIO and School Student Integrity Advisers on detection and management of academic misconduct • PVC Education and CIO co-developed AI guidelines for staff and students
Response *Countering efforts of contract cheating services*	• Alerting students to contract cheating provider in real time when direct marketing campaigns are identified. • Working with UNSW IT to block contract cheating providers when identified • Educating students and staff on how to report contract cheating advertisements. • Working with Schools to enhance assessment design to minimise risk of integrity breaches.

2024 RISKS AND CONTROLS

UNSW's enterprise risk register in 2023 identified *unethical behaviour, including admissions fraud, contract cheating, and lack of research integrity erode UNSW's reputation and academic integrity and devalues degrees (#08)* as a top operational risk. Risk factors identified include:

Risk factor	Description	Controls
Increasing % of students involved in academic integrity matters.	**Poor student understanding of academic integrity** is leading to students cheating inadvertently	• A greater ongoing focus on student awareness and understanding of the importance of academic integrity. • Continue to promote a culture of integrity, including using both UNSW and TEQSA tools. • Continue to collaborate with Arc@UNSW and student representatives to develop and implement student generated communication on the importance of academic integrity. • Establish targeted education campaigns to educate students and staff on academic integrity matters • Participate and contribute to a TEQSA Forum on the management of contract cheating in higher education
Pressure on students to succeed in getting into UNSW or in performance at UNSW	**Admission fraud** is linked to student contract cheating	• Maintain vigilance in back-to-source checking of admission documentation • Recruitment agents • Back-to-source check on admission documents of students found to have engaged in contract cheating
Technology advancements making detection of cheating more complex	**Unauthorised use of ChatGPT and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) grows**, which compromises the quality and integrity of UNSW degrees.	• Provide students with information, education and clear instruction on when Generative AI may be appropriate • Continue to work with Turnitin and other providers to continuously improve detection and management of unauthorised use of generative AI • PVCE, Schools and the CIO to work on improving assessment design and strengthening detection and management skills • Continue to actively monitor developments of Generative AI • Maintain professional relationships with TEQSA, Academic Integrity Network and other like networks • Review of the UNSW *Plagiarism Policy* and *Plagiarism Management Procedure* to include Generative AI and process for managing unauthorised use of Generative AI.
Third party access to UNSW systems by contract cheaters	**Potential data and privacy breaches to UNSW systems** as students provide contract cheating providers with their UNSW login details.	• Continue to raise student awareness of contract cheating companies and individuals disguised as tutoring companies and the risks involved where students share their login details. • Actively work with the UNSW Cyber Security teams to mitigate and manage risks • Mandatory student training module to educate new students on cybersecurity risks.
Expansion of assessment writing or exam attendance services available for	Rapid **evolution and expansion of contract cheating services** has made it easier than ever for students to cheat	• Continuous improvement in detection and investigation capability – in staff skill and development and use of innovative technology • Ongoing development and improvement of the University's range of sophisticated data analysis tools for identifying unauthorised access to UNSW systems and detection of contract cheating and unauthorised use of generative AI in assessments

Risk factor	Description	Controls
students to use.		• Ongoing collaboration with experts in the field of metadata analysis, with the intention of developing a robust tool to use to better flag likely contract cheating in assessments. • Alerting students to contract cheating provider in real time when direct marketing campaigns are identified. • Working with UNSW IT to block contract cheating providers when identified • Educating students and staff on how to report contract cheating advertisements. • Working with Schools to enhance assessment design to minimise risk of integrity breaches.
Cheating is taking additional time and resources to detect & investigate	**Complex academic integrity cases becoming more resource intensive**, particularly contract cheating, and unauthorised generative AI.	• Appropriate allocation of resources across the University. • UNSW *Complaints Management and Investigation Policy and Procedure* and new Case Management System (CaseIQ) to simplify the administrative burden of managing misconduct matters. • Developing additional educative resources aimed at prevention.