UNSW SYDNEY

Student Conduct and Complaints

1 January – 31 December 2021

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report provides an insight into the incidence of plagiarism, breaches of the UNSW Student Code of Conduct and student complaints between 1 January and 31 December 2021.

Limitations

Information in this report is based on records of plagiarism, breaches of the Student Code of Conduct and student complaints on the UNSW Student Plagiarism and Misconduct Registers as at 6 April 2022.

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

UNSW Conduct and Integrity Office (CIO)
Division of Planning & Assurance
July 2022

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Conduct and Integrity Office (CIO)

The Conduct & Integrity Office supports UNSW's position as Australia's global university in research and educational excellence by ensuring that the principles of respect and integrity underpin the pursuit of knowledge at the University.

The CIO manages:

- Student conduct and integrity
- Research integrity
- Reports of wrongdoing
- Reports of sexual misconduct
- Complex complaints
- Prevention and engagement
- the UNSW Complaints Management System.

AT A GLANCE

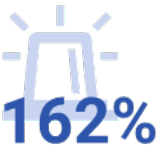
Continuing upward trend in plagiarism and academic misconduct cases (p5)

Small (but rising) proportion of the student population – especially during the pandemic (p5)

Less serious plagiarism continues to be main form of plagiarism (p5)

Faculty of Engineering leading in detection of academic misconduct (p12)

Exam misconduct lower as most cases identified as contract cheating (p12)



Increase on 2020

Contract cheating continues to be a concern as case numbers more than double (p11)

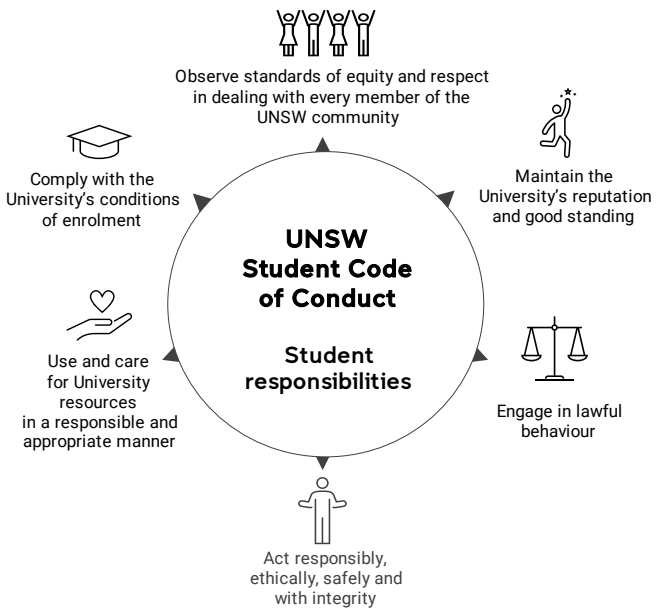
Record low non-academic misconduct cases (p16)

Fewer complaints compared to 2020 (p17)

Cases involving **Courageous conversations** continue to improve resolution timeframes (p19)

INTRODUCTION

Student conduct and integrity framework



The UNSW *Student Code of Conduct* (Student Code) describes a shared University-student responsibility to honour and promote a fair, honest, respectful, harmonious, and inclusive UNSW community; and outlines the standards of conduct expected of all students (Figure 1).

It is supported by the:

- *Plagiarism Policy*, which define plagiarism and its varied forms
- *Plagiarism Management Procedure* which sets out the process for poor scholarship and plagiarism, guided by the principles of fairness, consistency, timeliness, and education; and
- *Student Misconduct Procedure*, which outlines the process for handling complaints and reports of potential breaches of the Student Code.

Figure 1: Student responsibilities within the UNSW Student Code of Conduct

An educative approach

The University recognises breaches of the Student Code as occurring along a spectrum; and to adopt an educative approach to managing academic misconduct (Figure 2).

'Poor scholarship' and less serious (minor/moderate/ significant levels) plagiarism are recognised as deficiencies in academic skill rather than a breach of the Student Code. Accordingly, they are managed locally by Schools according to the *Plagiarism Management Procedure*. 'Serious' level plagiarism, which includes work which is wholly/almost wholly plagiarised; contract cheating; collusion or copying where there is evidence of intent and/or deliberation; or deliberate attempts to disguise plagiarism, is considered a breach of the Student Code. This level of plagiarism, along with exam misconduct, falsification of documents (admissions/ course related/ conferral), is considered a breach of the Student Code and managed under the *Student Misconduct Procedure*.

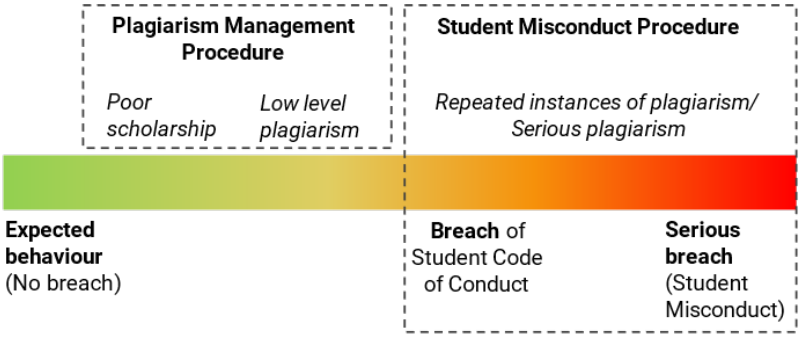


Figure 2: UNSW Management of plagiarism and breaches of the Student Code

OVERVIEW: ANNUAL COMPARISON

An annual comparison of plagiarism and alleged student misconduct cases ***raised*** over the last five years in Figure 3 shows a steady and continuing upward trend, with a 29% rise in cases[1] between 2020 and 2021.

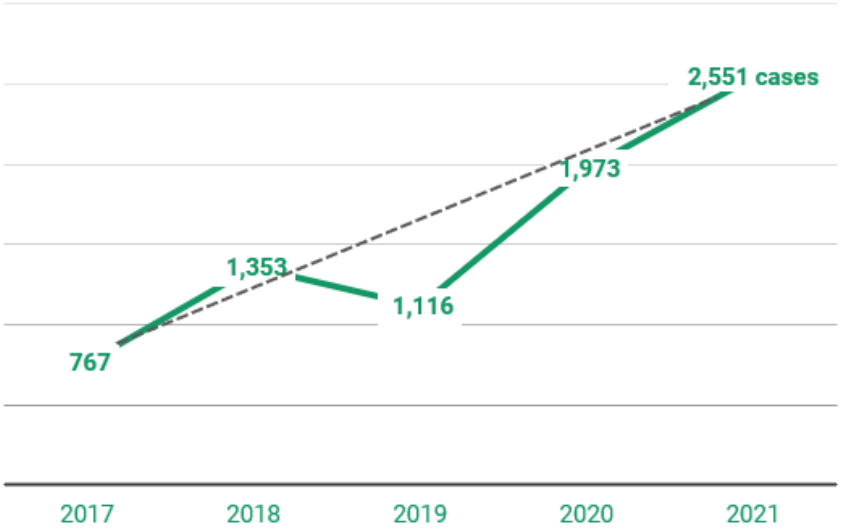


Figure 3: Annual comparison of plagiarism and student misconduct cases raised - 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend (% change on 2020)
Poor scholarship	N/A	N/A	N/A	86	98	↑14%
Less serious plagiarism	482	702	778	827	1,376	↑66%
Serious plagiarism	41	212	56	449	769	↑71%
Exam misconduct	82	68	81	459	224	↓-51%
Falsified documents (course related)	19	24	40	46	21	↓-54%
Falsified documents (admission/conferral)	107	299	112	53	41	↓-23%
Other academic misconduct	12	3	16	15	5	↓-67%
Non-academic misconduct	24	45	33	38	17	↓-55%
TOTAL PLAGIARISM & MISCONDUCT	767	1,353	1,116	1,973	**2,551**	↑29%
Student enrolments (Headcount)	59,210	61,902	63,067	63,958	59,993[2]	↓6.2
Total misconduct as proportion (%) of student headcount	**1.3%**	**2.2%**	**1.8%**	**3.1%**	**4.3%**	↑1.2

Table 1: Annual comparison of the number of plagiarism and allegations of misconduct raised - 2017-2021

Key points to note:

'Less serious' plagiarism continues to be the main form of plagiarism

'Less serious' typically recognises deficiencies in academic skill and experience as common factors and comprise concerns of 'Poor scholarship', 'minor', 'moderate' and 'significant' levels of plagiarism. Together they represented about two-thirds of plagiarism cases detected over 2021 and were managed by the respective Schools through educative approaches.

[1] Each matter represents one or more concerns raised with a student.
[2] Source: UNSW Planning and Performance – STU007 – on 16 May 2022

Blurred distinction between assessment types

As in 2020, the shift to online assessments resulted in the blurring of exams and other forms of assessments, such as assignments. This may have contributed to:

A record rise in 'less serious' plagiarism

There was a 66% increase in the number of less serious plagiarism detected in 2021 compared with 2020. This may partly be attributable to the increased use of plagiarism detection in open-book exams.

A significant increase in 'serious' plagiarism

There was a 70% increase in the number of reports of serious level plagiarism in 2021 when compared with 2020.

This level of plagiarism is where the whole, or almost the whole, of the work submitted has been plagiarised and are referred by the School to the CIO to manage as potential Student Misconduct.

A significant number of the 769 cases raised as 'serious' plagiarism involved concerns of contract cheating (46% or 352 cases), collusion (29% or 221 cases), large parts of the work being plagiarised (14% or 106 cases), copying (12% or 89 cases).

Fewer reports of exam misconduct

The drop (55%) in reports of exam misconduct may be attributed to the increasing number of open-book exams with extended timeframes not being differentiated from other types of assessment tasks.

Significant rise in use of online help sites

In 2020, it was reported that about a quarter (24%) of the 128 instances of substantiated contract cheating and 15% of substantiated instances of exam misconduct involved students accessing Chegg.

In 2021, 75% (or 257) of the 335 instances of substantiated contract cheating and about 21% of substantiated instances of exam misconduct involving the use of *Chegg, WeChat, Discord* and other similar sites and services[3].

Number of student plagiarism and misconduct cases as a proportion of headcount continues to rise

While the number of student plagiarism and misconduct cases represent only a small proportion of the student headcount, it should be noted that this exponential growth occurred as the University shifted to an online learning environment. Of concern is the size of annual growth over the last two years compared with previous years (where the average growth between 2014 to 2019 was 1.5%).

Instances of plagiarism and academic misconduct are likely to be under-reported

The CIO expects, consistent with the academic literature, that instances of plagiarism and academic misconduct are likely under-reported. Academic staff have indicated that a key reason for under-reporting is their limited capacity and capability to detect them.

[3] Chegg.com, Discord servers and other similar websites enable students to post exam or assignment questions online to be answered within minutes or hours by 'tutors' or other students).

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

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.

As shown in Figure 4 below, the University closed 2,402 cases in 2021. Of those, most (88% or 2,117) of the cases closed were substantiated or partially substantiated. Of the 106 cases in which allegations did not proceed, about 60 cases were initially referred to the CIO as serious plagiarism but were returned to the school to manage as less serious level of plagiarism as they did not meet the threshold of serious plagiarism.

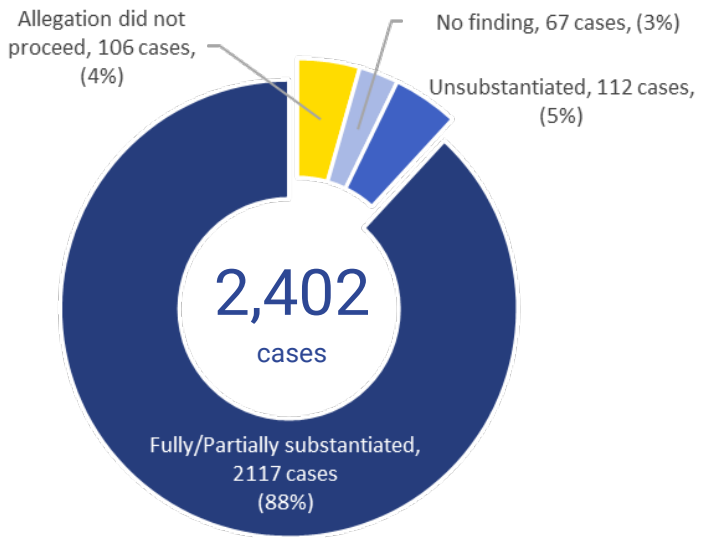


Figure 4: Plagiarism and academic misconduct matters closed in 2021

The following part of this report examines ***substantiated* or partially substantiated** student plagiarism and academic misconduct cases determined in 2021, and their outcomes.

	2020	**2021**	**% change**
Poor scholarship	86	75	↓13%
Less serious plagiarism	827	1,133	↑37%
Serious plagiarism	222	666	↑200%
Exam misconduct	190	187	↓2%
Fabrication	7	1	↓86%
Falsified documents *(admission/conferral)*	21	35	↑67%
Falsified documents *(Course related)*	28	16	↓43%
Gained prior knowledge of assessment	1	4	↑300%
Total	**1,383**	**2,117**	**↑53%**

Table 2: Comparison of cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct - 2020 and 2021

As shown in Table 2 above, the number of plagiarism and academic conduct cases increased by 53% in 2021 on the number of cases in 2020. This increase may be attributed to the continuing and significant increase in the number of cases of plagiarism.

Faculty

Faculty	2019	2020	2021	Trend (% change on 2019)
Arts, Design & Architecture	397	216	189	↓ -13%
Business	121	255	289	↑ 13%
Engineering	150	507	765	↑ 51%
Law & Justice	14	36	56	↑ 56%
Medicine & Health	47	24	113	↑ 371%
Science	229	215	410	↑ 91%
UNSW Canberra	62	105	78	↓ -26%
UNSW Global	-	-	187	-
Not recorded	-	-	30	-
TOTAL	1,020	1,331	2,117	↑ 59%

Table 3 Annual comparison of substantiated instances of plagiarism and academic misconduct by Faculty - 2019 - 2021.

While it is not a Faculty of the University, **UNSW Global** has been included in this report as students undertaking Diploma programs there are UNSW enrolled students.

The **Faculty of Engineering** continued its focus on similarity checking in code-based assessments, with most (82% or 629) of the 765 cases detected by the School of Computer Science and Engineering. Most (69% or 528) cases involved low-level plagiarism of the cases, with 'significant' levels of plagiarism accounting for two-thirds (65% or 356) of the 528 cases and just under half (47%) of all plagiarism and academic misconduct cases in the Faculty.

The **Faculty of Law and Justice** recorded its highest levels of plagiarism. Most (93% or 52) of the 56 cases were found to involve less serious levels of plagiarism – including 14 matters involving 'poor scholarship', 38 matters involving 'minor' or 'moderate' levels of plagiarism, and six involving 'significant' levels of plagiarism.

The **Faculty of Medicine and Health** recorded a significant increase in matters. Of note were 26 'serious' plagiarism matters involving students colluding on responses in *Prescribing Safety Assessment*, an optional subject in their program. Of the remaining matters, almost of two-thirds (65% or 76) of the 113 matters involved 'poor scholarship' or less serious levels of plagiarism.

The number of matters in the **Faculty of Science** almost doubled with the efforts of the Schools of Mathematics and Statistics, Physics and Chemistry detecting 205 cases of contract cheating. Most (91% or 187) of the 205 cases were in the School of Mathematics and Statistics, with almost all involved students posting one or more exam or assessment questions onto Chegg.com for response (see page 11).

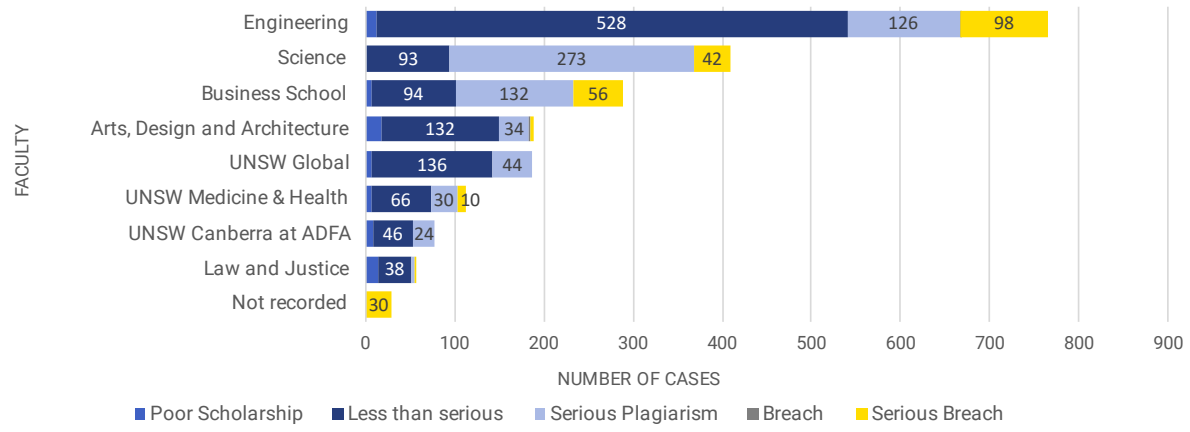


Figure 5: Plagiarism and academic misconduct matters by Faculty

Courses

Table 2 below lists the courses ranked according to the number of substantiated findings of plagiarism and student academic misconduct.

Poor scholarship		Less serious plagiarism		Serious plagiarism		Breach		Serious breach Student Misconduct	
ZZCA9202	7	COMP1511	205	INFS5710	55	SOCW1004	1	ENGG1811	19
DPBS1100	5	COMP2041	57	MATH1231	50	CVEN4103	1	MATH2089	18
GSOE9830	4	COMP9517	53	COMP3141	35			ACTL3141	18
MFAC1527	4	ENGG1811	51	MATH1131	33			CEIC6711	17
HUMS1010	4	COMP3231	46	MATH2089	32			MATH1081	13
ARTS1750	3								
CEIC4000	3								
CRIM1010	3								
PHCM9041	3								
JURD7514	2								
JURD7152	2								
COMM1110	2								
SAHT9110	2								
PSYC1027	2								
ECON1401	2								
ADAD9312	2								
75 cases of poor scholarship were substantiated across 41 courses		1,133 cases of less serious plagiarism substantiated across 228 courses		666 cases of serious plagiarism substantiated across over 142 courses.		2 cases of a breach of the Student Code substantiated in 2 courses.		241 cases of a serious breach of the Student Code substantiated across over 52 courses.	

NOTE: *The number of cases recorded are higher in this table as some students plagiarised or breached the Student Code in more than one course.*

Table 4 Top five courses with the highest count of substantiated findings of plagiarism and academic misconduct in 2021

Of note is that:

Figure 6: Qi Ming Education advertising Mandarin language lectures and instruction for a UNSW subject

- 94% (or 193) of the 205 cases of less serious plagiarism detected in **COMP1511** (Computer Science and Engineering) in Term 2 were found to be a 'significant' level of plagiarism and involved copying and collusion in one of two assignments, or in the final exam. Outcomes ranged from a 25% reduction in the assignment mark to a mark of 0% for the assignment/exam.
- 55 cases of serious level plagiarism (contract cheating) detected and substantiated in **INFS5710** (Business) in Term 3 involved students using worked solutions purchased from Qi Ming Education for a series of assignments (see text box on page 11). All 55 students received 0% on their assessments.
- 50 cases of contract cheating in **MATH1231** involved students posting one of more exam questions on Chegg for answers.
- The 26 Medicine and Health students enrolled in *Prescribing Safety Assessment,* conducted by the British Pharmacological Society, were found to have colluded during the quiz. This resulted in a finding of 'serious' plagiarism and a formal warning recorded against the students on the Student Misconduct Register.
- A single instance of serious misconduct would typically result in a 00FL (Fail) for the course. Students who admitted to the misconduct received a lesser penalty of 0% (Fail) for the assessment. Students with multiple instances of serious misconduct would typically result in suspension or permanent exclusion from UNSW.
- The number and size of student cohorts involved in cheating continue to grow.

Plagiarism

As indicated in Table 2, cases involving poor scholarship and less serious plagiarism, where inexperience are common mitigating factors, continue to be the main form of plagiarism and the most common form of deviation from acceptable academic conduct at UNSW.

Of note in 2021:

- **cases of 'less serious' and 'serious' levels of plagiarism continue to rise sharply**

  The number of less serious levels of plagiarism, which include 'minor', 'moderate' and 'significant' plagiarism, grew by 38% (827 cases in 2020 compared with 1,133 cases in 2021). Equally concerning is the threefold increase in the number of 'serious' level plagiarism cases in 2021, compared to already high case numbers in 2020 (222 cases in 2020 to 666 cases in 2021).

- **plagiarism continues to be reported in online exams**

  Identifying plagiarism in exams is expected to continue as exams continue to be fully or partially 'open-book', online and distinguished from other forms of assessments by tighter time limits for submission.

- **better detection has led to surge in findings of contract cheating**

  Changes to assessment design has had limited effect in deterring contract cheating, with substantiated cases of contract cheating increasing from 128 cases in 2020 to 335 cases in 2021 (162% increase). However, it has enabled better detection of cheating.

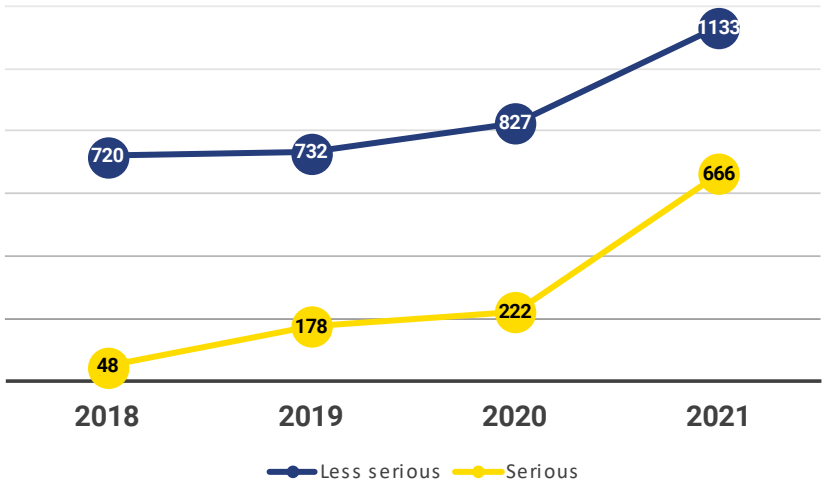


Figure 7: Annual increase in 'less serious' and 'serious' levels of plagiarism

	Poor Scholarship	Less serious plagiarism	Serious plagiarism
Collusion	7	367	175
Contract cheating			335
Copying	32	555	72
Inappropriate citation	17	72	
Inappropriate paraphrasing	18	111	1
Self-plagiarism	1	28	
Serious plagiarism			83
Total	**75**	**1,133**	**666**

Table 5: Breakdown of 'poor scholarship, 'less serious' and 'serious' level plagiarism into subtypes

As indicated by Table 2 above, copying, which involves using the same or very similar words to an original idea or text without acknowledging the source, was the most common form of plagiarism, representing almost half of cases of 'poor scholarship and 'less serious' plagiarism. This proportion is consistent with findings in 2020 and

2019. The number of collusion cases in 2021 are also consistent with levels in 2020 as Schools continue to detect similarity in responses in online exams and work submitted by students.

Of note is the number of collusion cases at the 'serious' level was almost three times (198% or 130 cases) the number in 2020 (66 cases). Most of the instances of collusion occurred during online exams. The number of instances of copying at almost four times (381% or 130 cases) the number in 2020 (27 cases).

Contract cheating

Contract cheating occurs when a student engages another person to complete work for them and then submits the work as their own. This type of cheating has continued to rise significantly, and become more prevalent, since the shift to online learning and assessment. As indicated by Figure 8 below, the University experienced a record number of contract cheating cases in 2021, with the number of cases more than double (162%) the number of cases in 2020.

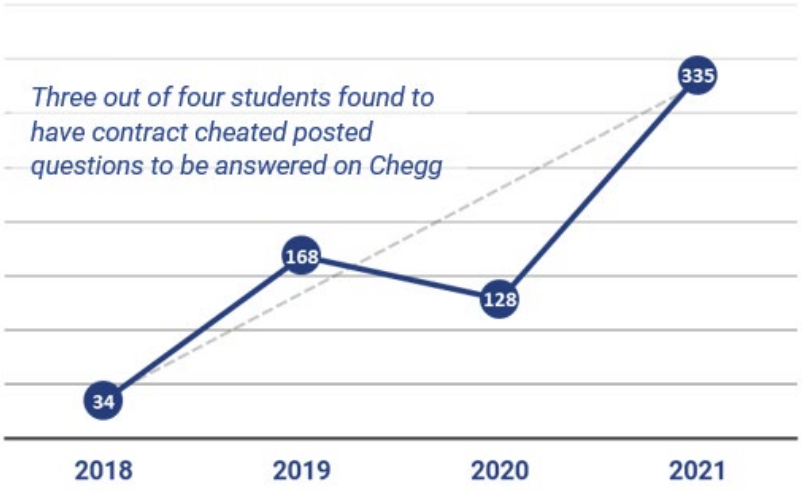


Figure 8: Annual increase in 'less serious' and 'serious' levels of plagiarism

There has been a proliferation of assessment help sites and services over the last three years. In 2020, the CIO reported that approximately one in four students found to have contract cheated had posted questions to be answered on Chegg. In 2021, 257 of the 335 cases (77% or three in four) of contract cheating involved students posting (mostly) exam questions to be answered on Chegg.com.

It should be noted that this is a widely reported and studied global challenge, which has been intensified with COVID-19 and the shift to online learning.

Models of contract cheating

The CIO has observed a rapid evolution of contract cheating models since the shift to online learning and assessments.

In 2019, 139 students were found to have provided a contract cheating service with access to their learning platform to complete the students' assessments online.

While academics had observed growing instances of note sharing on sites like Chegg and CourseHero since 2019, the shift to online learning and assessments has seen an exponential growth in the use of such sites, especially during exams.

Of concern is the rapidly growing increase in students using Discord servers to collude and source answers in exams. (see page 12)

In Term 3, the CIO uncovered another new development in contract cheating involving students buying worked solutions from a provider. The 'tuition' provider used *WeChat* and *Xiaohongshu*, instant messaging and social media applications, to promote lectures in a UNSW subject delivered in Mandarin by a former tutor in the subject and instruction on completing assignments and the exam. The lectures and 'answer sheets' distributed to students provided answers to actual course assessments.

Plagiarism misconduct

The CIO regularly monitors the UNSW Plagiarism Register to identify repeated (at least three) instances of 'poor scholarship', 'minor', 'moderate' and/or 'significant' levels of plagiarism since June 2020 (when the provision was introduced in the UNSW *Plagiarism Management Procedure*). In 2021, 43 students were identified with repeated instances of plagiarism and received a formal warning from the CIO that subsequent instance of plagiarism may potentially be regarded as Student Misconduct.

To date, there have not been further reported instances of plagiarism against any of the 43 students.

Exam misconduct

As shown in Figure 9, the number of instances of exam misconduct has remained high in 2021, with 187 substantiated cases of exam misconduct.

The use of random and unique exam questions by the School of Mathematics and Statistics enabled cheating to be detected more effectively. Unique exam questions allocated to students enabled academics to identify students seeking and receiving external assistance during exams. This included posts online to sites and services like Chegg, and collusion through online communication and discussions.

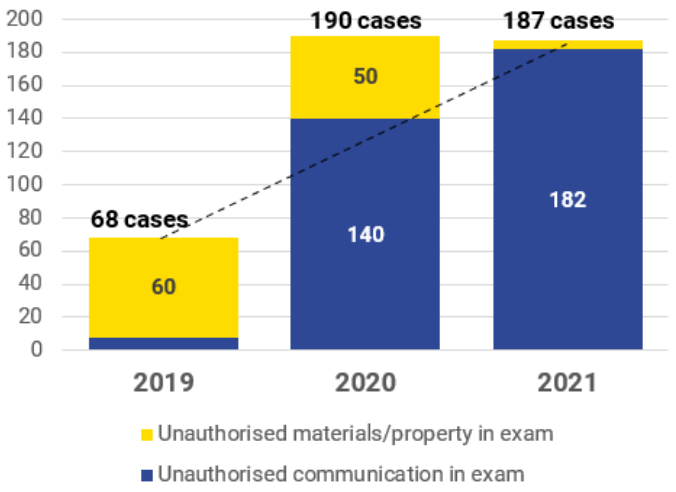


Figure 9: Breakdown and annual comparison of exam misconduct - 2019 - 2021

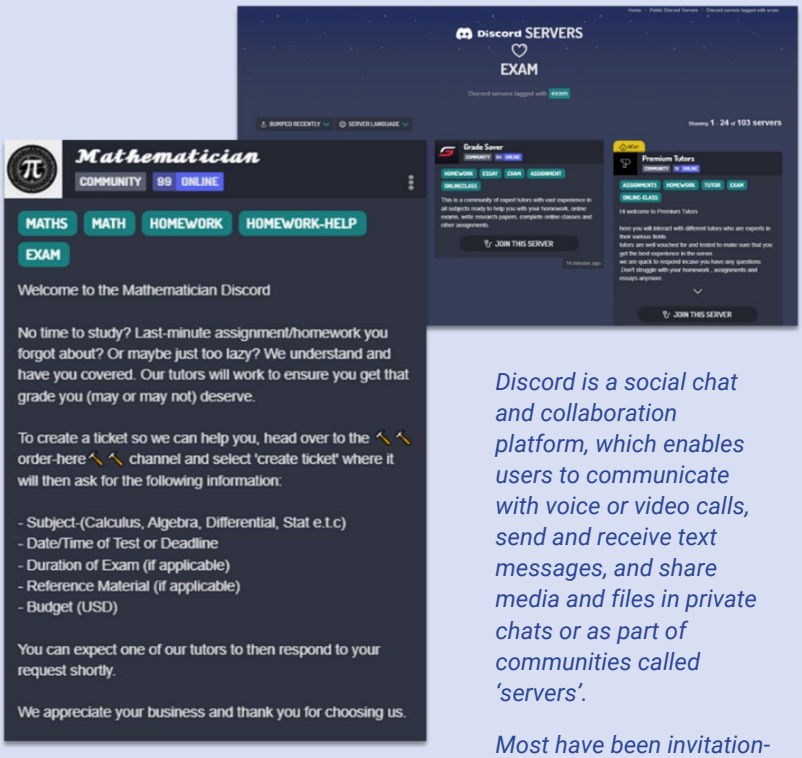
Exam chatter

As noted last year, the shift to online exams has seen a higher incidence of communication and collusion during exams.

In 2021, most (97% or 182 of the 187 cases) involved unauthorised communication in an exam. While most cases involved students posting on Chegg.com and communicating using *WhatsApp* and WeChat, the CIO began detecting the use of students colluding on Discord servers during exams.

The platform, which is more commonly used by the gaming community, is suspected of growing in popularity among students as forums for discussion or study groups – and increasingly, to discuss and collude in exams.

The platform also appears to offer to students contract cheating services.



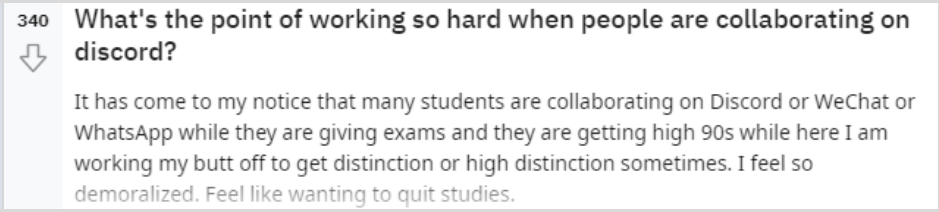
Discord is a social chat and collaboration platform, which enables users to communicate with voice or video calls, send and receive text messages, and share media and files in private chats or as part of communities called 'servers'.

Most have been invitation-only closed communities.

Cheating the student experience

The sharp rise in academic misconduct observed at the start of the pandemic is continuing to grow exponentially. This represents a significant and growing risk for academic integrity, to the University's reputation, and to student experience.

Students engaging in academic misconduct are cheating the student experience of those who are trying to do the right thing.



"I do not think their behavior is right! Posting all the questions of the quiz and getting answers directly from these websites made this quiz unfair" [sic]

"I finished all the Quiz questions by myself, however, later several friends told me all the questions and answers are available online one hour after the quiz open." [sic]

"Just google it and get high marks! My friends and I are both so angry about this issue."

Figure 10: Students expressing their frustration on online posts and in emails to the School and the CIO

There is a real risk that cheating could become socialised if no action is taken to openly recognise and address the problem.

Next steps

- Increase student communication to students (and by students) about the scams and unscrupulous contract cheating providers masquerading as 'tutoring' services.
- Raise student awareness that they may be breaking the law by promoting or selling academic cheating services, including selling assessments online
- Engage the student community in driving a culture of respect and academic integrity
- Openly communicate the University's efforts in detecting academic dishonesty
- Guide students on how to respond when they become aware of, or are approached to engage in, academic dishonesty
- Encourage reports of academic dishonesty
- Apply 'Exclusion for misconduct' (EM) in academic transcripts where a student has been permanently excluded for contract cheating.

Falsified (course related) documents

The number of cases of students found to have submitted falsified documents to gain an academic advantage halved in 2021 compared to the number of cases in each of the previous four years.

As with previous years, most (88% or 14) of the 16 cases related to the submission of a falsified/fraudulent medical certificate in support of an application for Special Consideration in an academic assessment.

Admissions fraud

In 2021, UNSW Admissions and Future Students referred 35 cases to the CIO where it suspected that documents provided by the students as part of their admission were likely to have been falsified.

All 35 students were already enrolled in an academic program at the University and were found to have submitted fraudulent documents to gain entry to UNSW programs. Of the students:

- 17 were enrolled in undergraduate programs
- Seven in post-graduate programs; and
- Two were enrolled in non-award programs.

Two of the 35 students were permitted to continue their studies after investigations revealed that the falsified documents had been submitted on their behalf without their knowledge, and that they would have otherwise entered their respective programs with their original documents.

The remaining 33 students received an outcome of 00FL (Fail) for the course and permanent exclusion from the University.

Admission fraud case study

In March 2021, following a referral by UNSW Admissions and Prospective Students of a suspected falsified supporting documents submitted by an international Education Agent, on behalf of a prospective student the CIO uncovered 43 cases of admission fraud.

The submitted documents comprised falsified transcripts and a testamur from the same Registered Training Organisation (RTO). On further investigation the CIO discovered that the RTO, had issued fraudulent academic documents that were relied upon to gain admission to UNSW academic programs. The fraudulent academic documents, dated between 2016-2019, falsely showed the 43 student applicants enrolled in, or having completed, the RTO course. Of the 43 applications submitted and accepted by UNSW on the belief that the RTO documents were genuine, a total of 36 international students enrolled at UNSW over the course of the past five years.

The CIO met with the RTO executives to discuss concerns about the fraudulent documents and notified the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA) of the suspected non-compliance with the Vocational Educational and Training quality framework and Standards for Registered Training Organisations. The University also reported the matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

A separate verification process is now in place at the University for any student applications that include this RTO's documents.

Admission fraud cases linked to contract cheating

Of the 36 students who enrolled at UNSW, the CIO was able to substantiate that a large number of the students had also engaged in contract cheating. A further case is under investigation, but the student has since left the University. Of those students still enrolled at the University, the typical outcome was permanent exclusion.

Penalties imposed

Penalty	Poor Scholarship	Less serious plagiarism	Serious plagiarism	Breach	Serious breach	Total
No penalty	9	20	9			38
Warning with no mark reduction	11	25				36
Educative interview			1			1
Remedial educative action only	3	6	29			38
Formal warning			30		3	33
Resubmit without mark reduction	5	25	2			32
Warning with mark reduction	23	113				136
10% reduction in marks	1	2				3
Mark student's original content in the work (disregarding plagiarised parts)	15	246	1		1	263
Resubmit assessment with reduction of marks	8	27				35
Resubmit and drop a grade		40				40
Resubmission and mark capped at 50%		78			1	79
Mark capped at 50/100 (50%)	0	117	2			123
Other mark reduction	1	1	1			3
0% for assessment		440	523	2	169	1,134
Fail (00FL) for course			112		67	179
Suspension			3		1	4
Exclusion			6		32	38
Revocation of award			1			
Total	**76**	1,140	72	2	279	2,215

Table 6 Outcomes for substantiated cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct in 2021.

As indicated by Table 6 above, a warning with, or without, a mark reduction, and marking the student's original content in the work (disregarding plagiarised sections) are the most common outcomes applied by schools for findings of Poor Scholarship.

For instances 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, marked the student's original content in the student's work, or imposed a mark cap of 50/100 (mark of 50%) for instances of 'Minor' or 'Moderate' level plagiarism. For instances of 'Significant' level plagiarism, most schools imposed a 0% (Fail) for the assessment.

For Serious level plagiarism, including collusion and contract cheating, the CIO has maintained an educative approach by imposing a reduced penalty of 0% (Fail) for the in 523 cases of Serious plagiarism, where students admitted to the conduct through Courageous Conversations; and 00FL (Fail) for the course in 112 cases for two or more instances of contract cheating or not being truthful/forthcoming during their Courageous Conversation and/or in the investigation process.

As above, the CIO imposed a penalty of 0% (Fail) for the assessment in 156 instances of exam misconduct.

In 2021, there were 38 instances of permanent 'exclusion'. A penalty of 'exclusion' is typically issued where students have demonstrated a systemic disregard for academic integrity by contract cheating in three or more assessments; and/or have not been forthcoming when provided with the opportunity to admit to their behaviour; have been dishonest in the investigation process; or were found to have falsified documents to enter UNSW. Most of the cases (87% or 33) where exclusion was imposed related to admission fraud.

Appeals

Only 0.3% of cases determined by the CIO had appeals upheld. In 2021, of the 909 cases determined by the CIO, there were 42 appeals, with only three cases being upheld. All three cases were reinvestigated and determined by a different Investigating Officer and Determining Officer in the CIO, with allegations:

- substantiated in two of the cases, with new information being provided for one of the cases that wasn't available during the original investigation. Both students had a penalty of course fail (00FL) reimposed (that is, no change to the original determination and penalty); and
- not substantiated in the remaining case, and the student's marks reinstated, and their name removed from the Misconduct Register.

NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

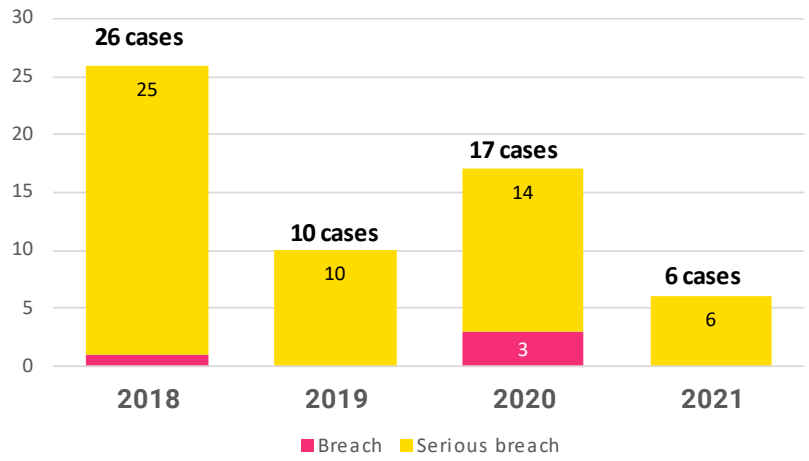


Figure 11: Number of non-academic misconduct cases substantiated over 2018 and 2021.

Non-academic misconduct refers to breaches of the Student Code of Conduct (Student Code) which do not directly relate to academic pursuits, such as conduct towards another person, misuse of or damage to property, resources, 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 and outcomes in 2021.

Of the six substantiated cases of a serious breach of the Student Code, five (83%) cases related to conduct towards another person. Of these:

- Two students were found to have used racist language towards other students. Students in both cases were required to provide an apology. One of the students also received a suspension for offensive language directed towards other students.
- Two students received penalties of permanent exclusion from the University. One for physical assault of another student and the other for submitting fabricated information to support their appeal against a fee remission application.
- One student was found to have contravened a health order during COVID lockdown and was issued with a formal warning.

A student who admitted to having offered UNSW course materials related to their postgraduate program for sale online was provided with a formal warning after the CIO considered mitigating circumstances.

Total outcomes	
Apology	2
Formal warning	2
Suspension	1
Exclusion	2
Total	**7**

Table 7: Outcome applied to cases 2021. NOTE: More than one outcome may apply to a case

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

This part of the report examines formal student complaints received by the CIO and managed according to the UNSW *Student Complaints Procedure*. Formal complaints are those complaints which have not been resolved at the local level or where the subject matter is serious or complex.

As indicated by Figure 12, the CIO received 521 student complaints during the reporting period, representing 20% (130) fewer complaints than was received in 2020.

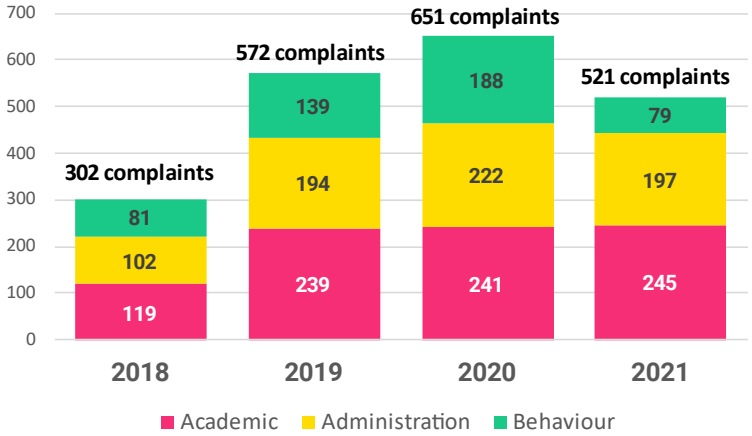


Figure 12: Annual comparison of the number and type of complaints received 2018 – 2021

Further analysis of complaints received indicate that there were far fewer (58% or 109) complaints related to the behaviour of other students or staff compared with the previous years, while the number of complaints about academic and administrative matters remained relatively constant.

Complaints raised	
2020	2021
Overall	
Total number of complaints: 651	**Total number of complaints: 524**
Student behavioural conduct (109)	Assessment - design (90)
Assessment – marking (93)	Service quality (73)
Staff conduct (72)	Assessment - marking (70)
Assessment – design (67)	Staff conduct (45)
Service quality (60)	Special consideration (34)
Academic	
Number of complaints: 241	**Number of complaints: 245**
Assessment – marking (93)	Assessment - design (90)
Assessment – design (67)	Assessment - marking (70)
Course – Professor availability (21)	Course - instruction (22)
Course – instruction (20)	Academic behaviour (22)
Course – feedback (17)	Course - feedback (11)
Administration or process	
Number of complaints: 222	**Number of complaints: 197**
Service quality (60)	Service quality (73)
Amenities/maintenance (42)	Special consideration (34)
Fees/finance (39)	Fees/Finance (30)
Special consideration (24)	Enrolment (19)
Enrolment (23)	Admission (15)
Behaviour	
Number of complaints: 188	**Number of complaints: 79**
Student behavioural conduct (109)	Staff conduct (45)
Staff conduct (72)	Student behaviour conduct (29)
Student academic conduct (7)	Student academic conduct (5)

Table 8: Breakdown of complaints 2021 compared to 2020

Figure 13 below provides a breakdown of the types of complaints received from students in the respective Faculty/School.

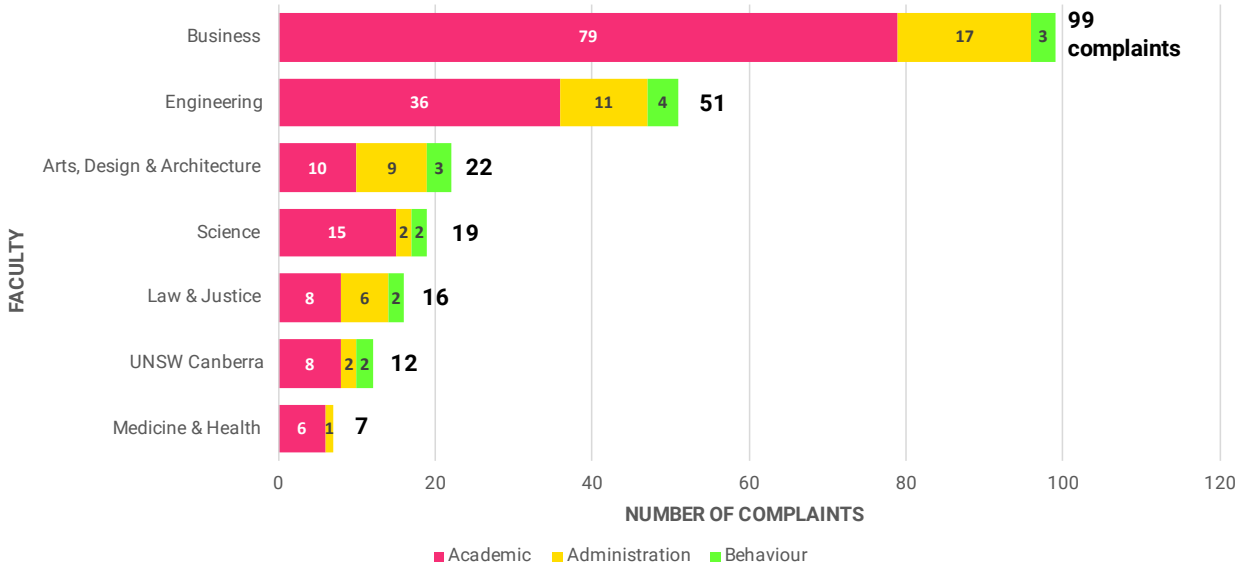


Figure 13: Breakdown of complaints raised in 2021 according to the complainant's Faculty/School

It should be noted that there were 349 (67%) complaints where students either submitted their complaints anonymously and/or did not indicate the Faculty in which they were undertaking their program. Of these:

- 42% (or 145 complaints) related to Administration, particularly service quality (63 complaints), fees/finance (25) and Special Consideration (18)
- 24% (or 85 complaints) related to Academic matters, particularly assessment marking (29 complaints), assessment design (13) and academic behaviour (13)
- 17% (or 61 complaints) related to the behaviour of staff (32 complaints), other students (24) and student academic conduct (5).

Outcomes

In 2021, the CIO resolved 525 complaints. Of these:

- 57% (or 299 complaints) were referred to functional business units or Schools for local resolution as most of the complainants had not indicated that they had attempted local resolution previously.
- 19% (101 complaints) did not proceed, as 75 (74%) of complainants had resolved the issues themselves or stopped engaging with the process
- 10% (55 complaints) were resolved by the CIO with the relevant business unit or School
- 6% (33 complaints) were investigated and concerns found to be unsubstantiated
- 2% (13 complaints) were referred for management under a different University procedure
- 2% (11 complaints) were withdrawn by the complainant

The remaining complaints comprised four complaints resolved through a negotiated outcome; and six were investigated with concerns substantiated and action required by the relevant area.

CIO RESOLUTION TIMEFRAMES

Figure 14 below shows the median days that the CIO has taken to determine serious student academic misconduct (including contract cheating) and non-academic misconduct (including sexual assaults and sexual harassment) cases over 2021. This includes cases of contract cheating, exam misconduct, admissions fraud and cases awaiting the outcome of criminal proceedings.

In 2021 the CIO managed the record increase in contract cheating cases, in half the time taken in 2020 (from an average of 54 business days in 2020 to 27 business days in 2021). Across all case types handled, the CIO average resolution timeframe decreased by 47% compared to 2020 - from an average of 51 business days in 2020 to 27 business days in 2021.

It should be noted that the average time taken to resolve cases in 2021 with a Courageous Conversation[4] was 25 business days. This is compared to an average of 69 days for cases without a Courageous Conversation (typically where a student declines the CIO's invitation to meet or denies the allegations and a formal investigation process is required).

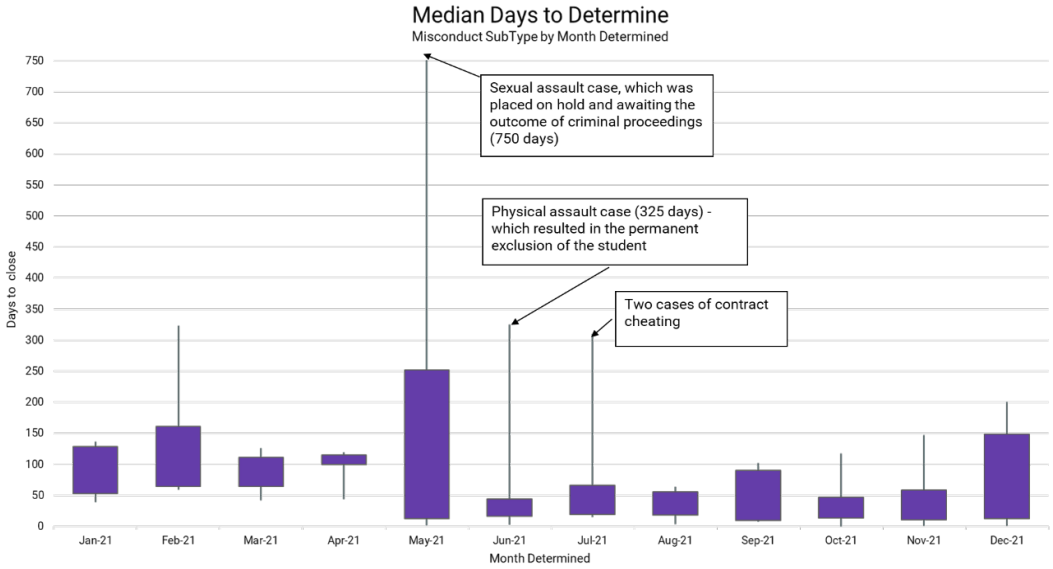


Figure 14: Median days to determine serious plagiarism and misconduct matters

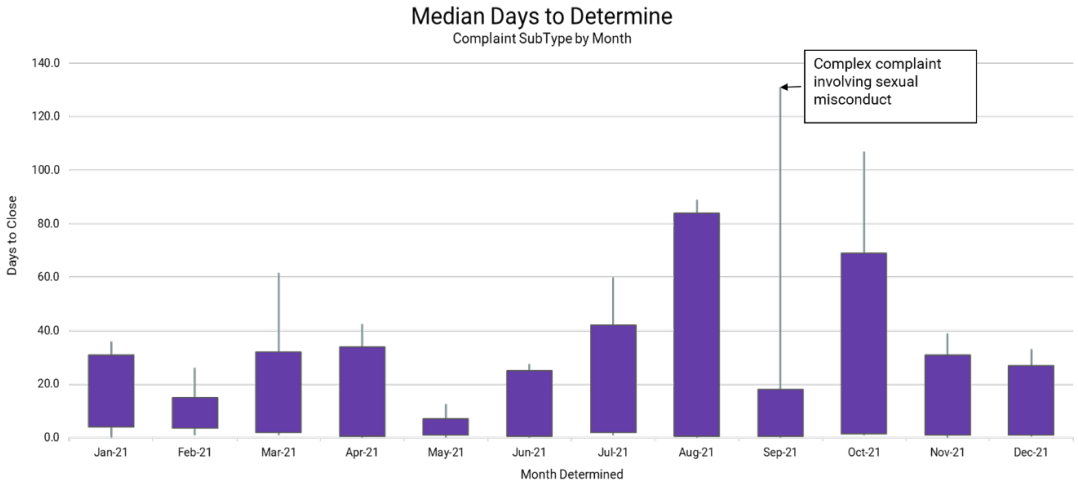
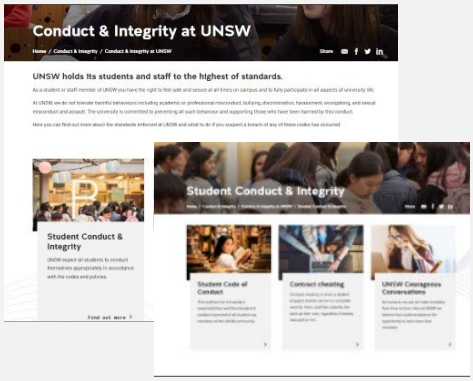


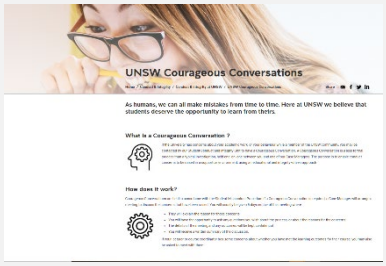
Figure 15: Median days to finalise formal complaints submitted to the CIO

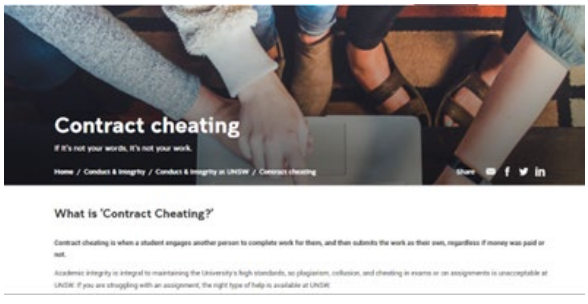
[4] Meeting between CIO case manager and student to give the student with an opportunity to admit to their behaviour in a supported environment. A student admission progress to a determination without needing a full investigation.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES 2021

Priority	Key achievements
Maintaining a fair and efficient process for handling plagiarism, student misconduct and complaints	Full and comprehensive documentation of the CIO's current standard operating processes and proposed improvements to inform the: • independent *Review of Complaint handling and Investigations* at UNSW, chaired by the former NSW Deputy Ombudsman • development of a business case for a fit-for-purpose University-wide complaint management system to manage complaints and investigations • the full review of the University's policies and procedures related to managing complaints and investigation of potential misconduct.
Maintaining academic integrity in another COVID-19 challenged year	• Managed another challenging year of misconduct case load, with a 162% increase in contract cheating cases. • Collaborated with the Learning and Teaching Unit, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education, on Academic Integrity in Online Assessment to provide resources and training to academics by academics on designing digital assessments with academic honesty in mind. That is, testing authentic learning vs rote learning. • Maintained *Courageous Conversations* online as many of the UNSW community were back into lock down in the latter half of 2021 or affected by travel bans and border closures. • Commenced research into factors that determine contract cheating • Comprehensive review and refresh of the CIO's complaints and student conduct and integrity website, including information on contract cheating and Courageous Conversations.
Deterring, identifying, and detecting instances of contract cheating	• Liaised with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to share UNSW's experience and initiatives designed to combat contract cheating. • Collaborated with analytics company, Nuix, on the proof of concept to advance detection of contracting cheating via data analytics. • Initiated discussions with the University of Southern Queensland on their digital tool for detecting academic misconduct with the view to enhancing the instrument to detect contract cheating. • Provided advice and guidance to academic staff on how to find assessment questions on Chegg and to refer concerns to the CIO. • Identified a number of new, emerging and evolving models of contract cheating and contract cheating service providers.







Priority	Key achievements

	• Continued to use technological solutions to detect unusual online activity.
	• Presented Courageous Conversations at the inaugural Australian Academic Integrity Network in October
	• Joint initiatives with Arc@UNSW, including:
	  - Events on Facebook with Arc Legal and UNSW Business School, *Legal Beagles – Academic Misconduct* (in July and also in October, during Academic Integrity Week)
	  - Academic Integrity competition jointly supported by the CIO and UNSW Business School during Academic Integrity Week 2021. The winning entry was *How to get HD - The Dumb way*.

Providing information and training staff to better detect and manage plagiarism and contract cheating	• Held four Community of Practice forum sessions over the year for Faculty and School Student Integrity Advisers and academics on:
	  - detecting and managing plagiarism; and
	  - assessment design to deter exam misconduct
	• Academic integrity forum held for Associate Deans of Education in September
	• Academic Integrity Teams site, which was established to replace the quarterly newsletter as a more dynamic and interactive forum to support SSIAs and academics in maintaining academic integrity, hit a membership of 195 participants
	• Presentations to, and forum discussions with, Schools on academic integrity.

2022 RISKS AND CONTROLS

Risk Description	**Controls** (Priority for CIO and indicative timeframe)
Academic misconduct increases as online/hybrid learning and assessments continue which compromises quality and integrity of UNSW degrees.	• Continue to develop and implement digital tools and other resources to detect contract and other forms of cheating, such as cheating in online exams and other assessments (Dec 2023) • Continue to collaborate with the PVCE Office to shift thinking at the University about how it assesses student learning and academic performance without exams. (Jan-Dec 2022) • Advise and work with Schools to improve the measures to deter, detect and manage academic misconduct in a digital environment.
Data and privacy breach when students provide contract cheating providers with their Moodle login, with full access to other students' email addresses	• Continue to raise student awareness of contract cheating companies disguised as tutoring companies and risks involved where students share sharing their login details, including the danger of blackmail, identity theft and being in breach of the *Student Code of Conduct*.
Poor student understanding of academic integrity leads to increased breaches of the Student Code of Conduct	• Continue to promote a culture of integrity whereby students are encouraged and supported to make ethical decisions. (Ongoing) • Raise CIO profile and work with Arc@UNSW, PVCE Office and Faculty/Schools communicate key messages promoting the importance of academic integrity. • Continue to work with Arc@UNSW and student representatives to devise and implement student generated communication (message and medium of delivery) focused on the importance of academic integrity and to deter academic misconduct. • Continue working with Arc@UNSW to improve student experience of complaint and investigative processes across the University.
Poor academic detection and management of plagiarism and academic misconduct at the local level	• Online and face-to-face information and training for academic/professional staff on detecting and managing plagiarism and referral of serious plagiarism and other academic misconduct matters to the CIO. • Continue Community of Practice forums focused on academic integrity matters to support Faculty/School Student Integrity Advisers in managing plagiarism and detecting academic misconduct. • Raise the profile of reporting of student academic and non-academic misconduct to academic and professional staff at Faculty/School level
Under-reporting of plagiarism and academic misconduct	• Make plagiarism and misconduct registers more accessible and easier to use. • Continue to support academics and School Student Integrity Advisers to gather evidence, manage, and/or refer cases of more serious misconduct to the CIO.
Complaint (case) Management System (CMS) not fit for purpose and impacting on efficient case management **Case resolution will take longer** as case complexity increases and requires more detailed investigation and resources. **Student and staff complaints increase as case resolution takes longer**	• Procure, develop and deploy a 'fit-for-purpose' case management system: - build business case to procure an appropriate software as a service (SaaS) solution (Oct 2022) - once procured, build/configure the solution to meet UNSW documented requirements (Feb – Oct 2023) - deploy and support use of the CMS (Oct – Dec 2023) • Continue roll-out of Courageous Conversations. • Clear Standard Operating Procedures developed and training for CIO staff. • Review management of complaints and investigations at UNSW to identify process ad service delivery improvements.

Key:
Very high risk = High likelihood and high impact on University education quality and reputation
High risk = High likelihood and moderate impact on University education quality and reputation
Moderate risk = Moderate likelihood and impact on University education quality and reputation
Low risk = Low/Moderate likelihood and impact on University education quality and reputation