

Falsified Documentation is again on the rise

Submitting fraudulent transcripts and medical certificates, for both admission and special consideration, increased in 2022, though remains lower than pre-COVID numbers. Back to source checks will continue to be a key detection tool.

Exam Misconduct has crossed into several allegation categories

There was a significant increase in the detection of exam misconduct, stemming from the continued online examination format. An extensive review of the data revealed many matters

STUDENT PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Plagiarism involves a student 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.

There is typically an ebb and flow in matters being referred to the CIO, generally reflecting alignment to the main examination period. The facts and circumstances of each referral of serious plagiarism influence how each allegation is investigated. In 2022 the CIO and the various Faculties closed 1,672 cases with 88% resulting in a substantiated or partially substantiated allegations.

Management of Plagiarism and Breaches of the Student Code

Figure 4 below illustrates how the different levels of plagiarism intersect with the University's Student Code of Conduct and the Student Misconduct Procedure.

Evolving categories of academic misconduct

As the University continued to meet the challenges that Covid-19 presented, it became apparent that new digital opportunities for academic misconduct were arising. A review drilled into the categories of collusion, exam misconduct and contract cheating recorded by Schools. A key emerging issue is how exam misconduct has continued to evolve after exams moved online in 2020.

Re-classification of cases

In previous reports, allegations of 'collusion' were limited to plagiarism cases, with categories of 'unauthorised communication' and 'unauthorised materials in an exam' used only in reports of exam misconduct. A review of entries on the Plagiarism and Misconduct Registers in the last three years show that 'collusion' has been used for both plagiarism and exam misconduct behaviour. Contract cheating became an increasing feature in submitted work as 'Serious plagiarism' and when exam misconduct is detected.

While collusion between students has been acknowledged in recent annual reports, this is the first year they have been actively reported. Following the review, a significant number of matters originally categorised as 'collusion' and 'contract cheating' that were specific to either a midterm or final exam were subsequently re-classified as 'exam misconduct,' to reflect the context more accurately. This re-classification saw a marked increase in numbers of exam misconduct from 55 cases to 360 cases in 2022.

Plagiarism

The re-classification of some matters in 2022 has impacted the trends for plagiarism. However, it is worth remembering that the less serious levels of plagiarism remain the bulk of matters reported, where inexperience is identified as a key mitigating factor.

'Copying' and 'collusion' between students remains the dominant means of detected plagiarism. Copying involves using the same or very similar words to an original idea or text without acknowledging the source; and 'collusion' is presenting work as independent work completed by the student when it has in fact been prepared, in whole or part, through unauthorised collaboration with other students.

Contract Cheating

Contract cheating has traditionally been included in the plagiarism statistics of past annual reports. As reported last year, the CIO has observed a rapid evolution of contract cheating models and the original service of ghost writing is but one part of the ever-growing contract cheating industry.

Contract cheating occurs when a student engages another person to complete work for them and then submits the work as their own. While this form of cheating has traditionally been dominated by 'ghost writing', this category has grown exponentially to include:

- x essay mills
- x online tutoring (where answers are completed by the tutor)
- x posting questions to course help services during online exams; and
- x impersonation of students for individual assessment, entire courses; and
- x in rare instances, entire degrees.

Contract cheating is treated as serious breach of the Student Code of Conduct Last year 261 matters were referred to the CIO to investigate. Of the 261 matters, 62 (24%) related to exam misconduct, 155 (59%) to assignments and 5 (2%) to quizzes. Where students admit to the improper use of a third party, a lesser penalty is generally offered, such as 0% for the applicable assessment. Penalties typically range from a 00FL for the individual course through to

Figure 5: Breakdown of Exam Misconduct after reclassification

Figure 6 Breakdown of Exam Misconduct arising from allegations of collusion and contract cheating

Note: In 2023 the Faculties will be asked to categorise collusion in exams as unauthorised collusion for future

The Discord Case Study

Discord is a free, voice and text communication platform that allows users to create and join virtual servers that can host multiple channels, which are essentially chat rooms for text and voice communication. Discord has become increasingly popular in recent years, particularly for gamers, but also for study collaboration.

A Discord-server chat conducted during the Final Exam for an Engineering course was anonymously referred to

Admissions Fraud

Several admission fraud clusters emerged involving international students and their Education

Penalty outcomes

Table 4 Breakdown of penalty outcomes for 2022 – Note: the number of penalties may exceed the number of matters as more than one penalty may be imposed.

The common outcome that spans both serious and less serious plagiarism is a penalty of 0% for the assessment task of concern. Both the Schools and the CIO issued this outcome in a total of 643 instances of plagiarism in 2022. This is a significant decrease from 2021, where it was issued a total of 1,134 times.

NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Figure 8: Number of non-academic misconduct cases substantiated between 2019 and 2022.

Of the 37 matters investigated by the CIO, 24 matters (63%) involved unacceptable conduct directed towards another person and the remaining 14 (37%) of matters involved misuse or damage to property.

Just under half (45% or 17) of the 37 matters were found to be substantiated, with four students being permanently excluded from the university. One student was suspended, and the remaining students were issued with a formal warning.

Examples of substantiated cases include:

x

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

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

In 2022 the CIO received 476 complaints which represents a 9% decrease from 2021.

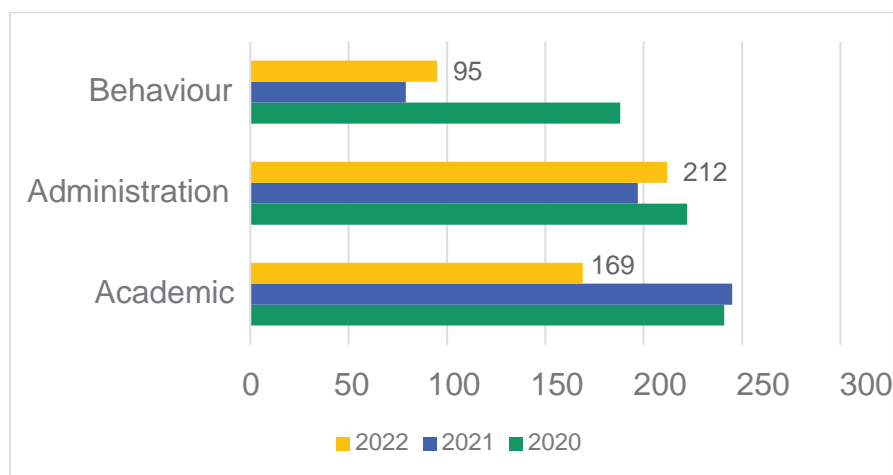


Figure 9 Annual comparison of the type of complaints received 2020 – 2022.

Table 5 below sets out the three main types of student complaints. Complaints about assessment grades were the most complained about issue in 2022, followed by service quality and complaints about other student behaviour.

Academic	Administration or Process	Behaviour
Assessment – Marking (71 complaints)	Service quality (52)	Student behaviour (48)
Assessment – Design (27)	Admissions (39)	Staff conduct (38)
Academic behaviour (21)	Special consideration (34)	Student academic conduct (9)
Course – Instruction (17)	Fees/finance (26)	
Course – Feedback (9)	Enrolment (25)	

Table 5 Categorisation of complaints in 2022

Note: The top five complaint areas over the past three years have all generally been trending downwards since 2020

Figure 10 shows the trend over three years of the top student complaints received in 2022.

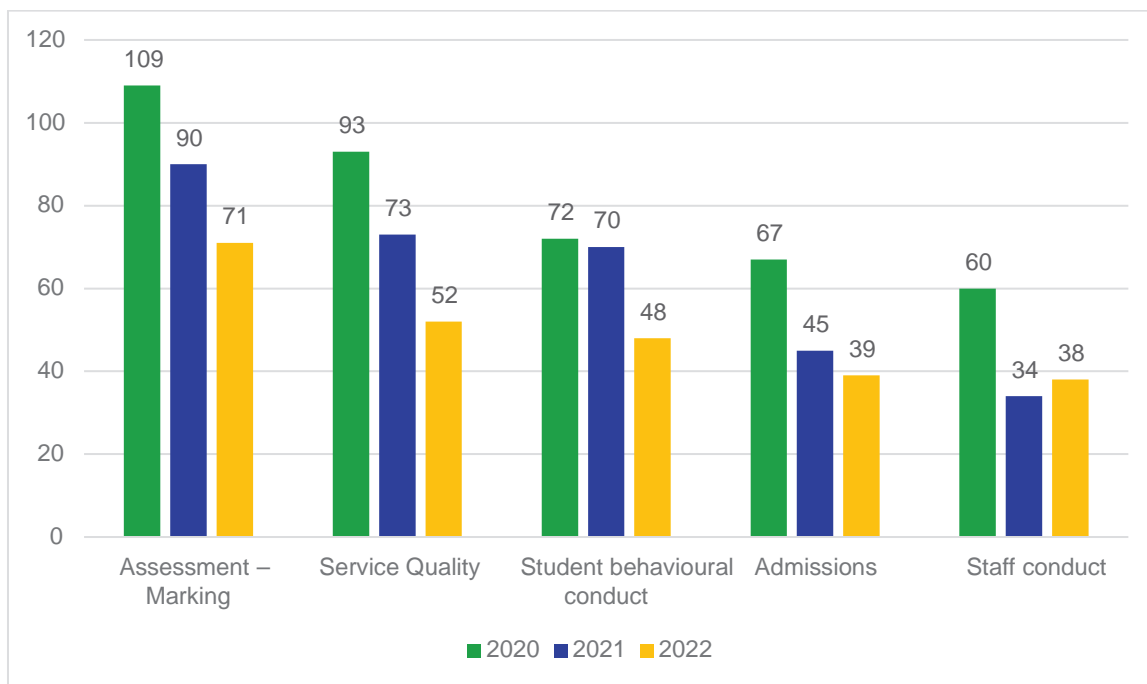


Figure 10. Annual comparison of complaint types received from students

Breakdown of the types of complaints received from students in their respective Faculty:

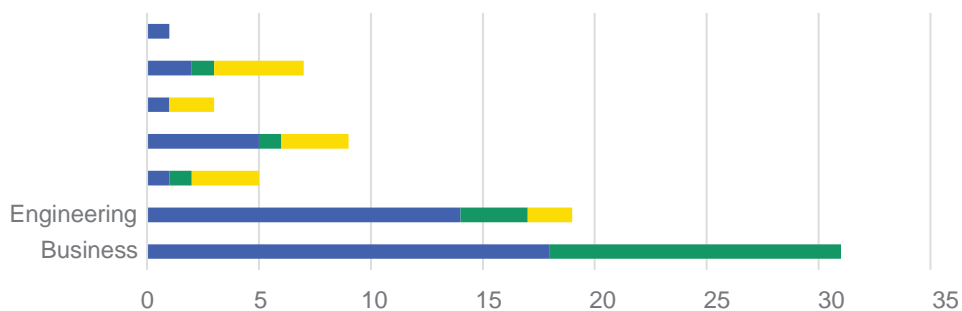


Figure 11 Breakdown of complaint types raised in 2022 by Faculty

Note: a further 408 complaints were submitted to the portal, but these were completed anonymously and/or did not indicate the Faculty of concern.

Student Complaint Outcomes

In 2022 a total of 461 complaints were finalised as follows:

x Complaint did not proceed	363
x Not substantiated	57
x Substantiated	17
x Feedback only	17
x Partially substantiated	3
x Advice/Query Only	3
x Not accepted	1

As indicated in Table 6 below, most (49%) of the complaints received by the CIO in 2022 were referred to the applicable School/Faculty or business area for resolution in line with the Student Complaint Procedures Stage 1 Local Process. This number is consistent with previous years.

Student Complaints Outcomes			
Outcome	2020	2021	2022
Referred	239	299	224
Response provided	111	55	85
No action/response required	132	101	68
Unsubstantiated	25	30	31
Referred to another process	74	13	19
Resolved through negotiated outcome	8	4	15
Withdrawn by complainant	14	11	9
Substantiated	4	3	3
Substantiated - action required	1	3	3
Not UNSW related	2		2
Insufficient Evidence		4	1
Referred to another organisation		4	1
Referred for action under the Enterprise Agreement		1	
Referred for investigation		1	
Total	665	525	461

Table 6 Breakdown of student complaint outcome for 2020 - 2022

RISKS & CONTROLS IN 2023

UNSW has identified one of its top operational risks as 'unethical behaviour, including admissions fraud, contract cheating, and lack of research integrity erode UNSW's reputation and academic integrity and devalues degrees'. The following table sets out some of the contributing factors and the controls in place to mitigate the risk.

Risk	Description	Controls
x Increasing % of students involved in academic integrity matters	Academic misconduct increases as online collusion and contract cheating develop, as unauthorised use of ChatGPT and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) grows, which compromises the quality and integrity of UNSW degrees.	x Continue to develop and implement digital tools and other resource to detect contract cheating. Work with Cyber Security, Records and Privacy and the PVCE Office to ensure the proper checks and balances are made.
x Increasing number of student misconduct matters		x Work with the Office of the PVCE and Schools to improve the depth of knowledge and experience to improve the measures to deter, detect and manage academic misconduct, including unauthorised use of ChatGPT and other generative AI.
x Pressure on students to succeed in getting into UNSW or in performance at UNSW		
x Increase in mental health issues resulting in impacts of the pandemic	Novel and constantly evolving means of cheating to evade detection	x As the Discord case study showed, there will always be novel ways to undertake cheating activities. The CIO is actively working with the UNSW Cyber Security teams to mitigate these risks
x Use of ChatGPT difficult to detect	Data and privacy breach to UNSW systems when students provide contract cheating providers with their Moodle login, with full access to other students' email addresses	x 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.
x Expansion of essay writing or exam attendance services available for students to use		
x Difficulty in monitoring on-line activities	Poor academic detection and management of plagiarism and academic misconduct at the local level	x 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. x Continue Community of Practice forums focused on academic integrity matters to support Faculty/School Student Integrity Advisers in managing plagiarism and detecting academic misconduct. x Raise the profile of reporting of student academic and non-academic

Risk	Description	Controls
		misconduct to academic and professional staff at Faculty/School level
	x Under-reporting of plagiarism and academic misconduct	x
	x Over-reporting by some academics, with referral of matters to the CIO which cannot proceed to investigations due to insufficient evidence.	

Risk

Description

Controls

- x Continue to implement Courageous Conversations¹
- x New CMS that is fit-for-purpose
- x